



## **MEDIA RELEASE – 3 April 2018**

### **Franz feedback summary released**

A summary of the feedback received on the future of Franz Josef has been released.

Comprising the responses of 102 submitters, the summary presents the information provided in the feedback and does not make any attempt to draw conclusions.

The *Natural Hazards Options Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis*, detailing three packages of options for the future of Franz Josef, was released for feedback in November 2017. The three packages identified consider how to *avoid nature's most significant challenges, defend against nature's challenges* or how to *live with nature's challenges*.

The Franz Josef Governance Group, consisting of representatives from local and central government, iwi, business and the community, met on Tuesday 27 March 2018 to start the review of this information and to map a pathway forward.

The Sponsor for the Project is the district Mayor Bruce Smith.

Simon Bastion, who was nominated to Chair the Governance Group, said that the Group was committed to working closely with the community to help make the right choices for a sustainable future for Franz Josef.

“This is a complex and challenging situation for those who have an interest in Franz Josef, whether it is to work, live, invest or do business”.

The options favoured by the community were not unexpected said Mr Bastion.

“Based on the information submitted through the feedback process, the Governance Group will be pushing to see Business Cases developed to assist with our further discussions with Government.”

The Governance Group also saw significant benefit in undertaking a wider master planning process in conjunction with the Business Case development to provide additional certainty to current operators and other investors.

“We recognise that the Township is in dire need of clear direction going forward, and are undertaking to assist with achieving this for the future,” said Mr Bastion.

A copy of the feedback summary is available at [www.wcrc.govt.nz/franzjosef](http://www.wcrc.govt.nz/franzjosef)

Franz Josef is unique in New Zealand. Situated on the Alpine Fault and next to the Waiho River, the area is subject to significant risk. However, it is these natural features that have made Franz Josef a nationally significant tourist destination. Over 500,000 visitors stay in Franz Josef each year, requiring significant investment (e.g. hotels, restaurants, council infrastructure and visitor activities). This investment needs protection if Franz Josef is to continue its unique role. However, the town has

few permanent residents which significantly affects its ability to locally fund natural disaster risk mitigation options.

This work is part of the wider Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Development Action Plan released in July 2017. Future-proofing Franz Josef recognises that current infrastructure improvements, such as raising the bridge over the Waiho River and stopbank repairs, are only temporary measures. The regional council commissioned Tonkin + Taylor and EY to undertake a Natural Hazards Options Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis to provide an appropriate evidence base to assist decision-making on the 'best way' forward for the town.

**ENDS -**

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