



MEDIA RELEASE – 5 March 2021

Westport 2100 – A job well done

Time is being called on the Westport 2100 Working Group. The Group, set up by the West Coast Regional Council and Buller District Council, was tasked with identifying the work required to enhance the resilience of Westport and engage with the community. Made up of community, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Waka Kotahi representatives, as well as elected members from the two Councils, the Group considered all the hazard information available and developed a set of priorities for civil defence, hydrology and operations.

Vin Smith, Chief Executive of the West Coast Regional Council, said that the contribution made by the Working Group had been invaluable, particularly that from the community members.

“I would like to offer my sincere thanks to this Group for the engagement and support of the Westport 2100 project,” he said. “Without the commitment and generosity of time and knowledge, particularly from the non-council representatives, we would not have been able to progress the identification and prioritisation of projects like we have.”

The priorities were presented by Chris Coll, Chair of the Group, to both Councils in late 2019. These were used by the West Coast Regional Council and a successful application was made to the Covid-19 economic stimulus fund to undertake the Advanced Flood Warning System project on the Buller River. At the time the Regional Council also consulted on the establishment of a rating district which is to be governed through a Joint Committee.

Sharon Mason, Chief Executive of the Buller District Council, said that there will still be a role for the community moving forward.

“Over the coming weeks, the two Councils will be drafting a new terms of reference for the Joint Committee. It is likely that the Joint Committee will be made up of Councillors (both district and regional), iwi and Waka Kotahi representation, and non-council community representation.”

The Joint Committee will continue to use the priorities identified by the Working Group as they make recommendations for flood protection in the future.

“The input of the Westport 2100 Working Group has provided momentum where previous work in this space has not succeeded,” said Mr Smith. “Their knowledge, commitment and independence has been a game changer, and there is an important lesson in that.”

ENDS -

Media contact

Vin Smith | Chief Executive | West Coast Regional Council | 027 261 4844

Sharon Mason | Chief Executive | Buller District Council | 027 248 8380