



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

Media release

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Economic development moves into the next phase

The West Coast Economic Development Governance Group held their final meeting yesterday. With changes to the delivery of economic development nearing completion, the Governance Group's primary role has been accomplished.

The Governance Group was originally formed as a short term entity to provide oversight of the Regional Growth Study and implementation of the Economic Development Action Plan, released in July 2017.

Andrew Robb, the out-going Chair of the Governance Group, is pleased with the progress that has been made in the economic development space, acknowledging the work behind the scenes by the lead agencies driving forward the various initiatives and the oversight by the Group's members.

"I would like to thank the past and present members of the Governance Group," said Mr Robb. "The Group, and the various lead agencies, have made a significant contribution over the past two years and they are to be applauded for their determination in seeing progress made."

A public update on the initiatives in the Action Plan, released in March, provided a snapshot of where the initiatives had got to. Mr Robb noted that there is more to look forward to.

"We are excited about the prospects for the future of the West Coast, particularly those to be leveraged through the Provincial Growth Fund. Although I note we also have some key challenges to address as a region."

Recent work across the West Coast has contributed to the development of a new economic development vision. Endorsed by the Mayors and Chairs, the vision sets out the strategic direction for economic development on the West Coast.

Development West Coast and its Economic Development Unit will now be responsible for the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy for the region, ensuring that the goals identified are achieved. Additional support is being provided from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment and the Government's Provincial Development Unit to help develop the expressions of interest received into sound and robust 'investment ready' applications.

Mr Robb said that business should have confidence in Development West Coast overseeing this work.

"The feedback from the business representatives on the Governance Group was very positive about DWC taking the lead in this space; something we agree has been missing in the past."

A large number of projects have been put forward for submission to the Provincial Growth Fund in the coming months. Some of these have already been submitted and are being reviewed by the Provincial Development Unit.

"We are looking forward to announcements from Minister Jones in coming months," said Mr Robb. "The regions of New Zealand are where the opportunities lie, and the West Coast is full of potential."

Further information about how applications can be submitted to the Provincial Growth Fund, with assistance from DWC's Economic Development Unit, will be published in the next few weeks.

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