



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

13 July 2017

New funding gives life to West Coast economic opportunities

Today's funding announcement for economic development on the West Coast is being described as a life-giver to opportunities in the region.

A study released last year said despite economic under-performance in recent years, there was potential for further growth in the mineral and tourism sectors, and opportunities to diversify the region's economy.

The Tai Poutini Economic Development Action Plan, which is based on the study's findings and recommendations, was launched today during a visit to the region by Ministers, including Minister's Barry, Goldsmith and Upston.

"This plan provides clear pathways for us to grow our businesses, attract investment and make the West Coast an even more desirable location in which to work, live, and play," says West Coast Regional Council Chairman Andrew Robb.

"The West Coast is full of potential and opportunities, and the funding that supports implementation of the plan will give life to those opportunities."

Mr Robb, who also chairs the West Coast Regional Growth Governance Group that developed the action plan, believes one of the significant benefits of the funding announced today will be the opportunity for the West Coast to diversify its economy.

"We have had significant growth in tourism here on the Coast and the action plan will see further investment in that area. But that is not the only sector benefitting."

Initiatives in the plan include efforts to support commercial whitebaiting operations, potential legislation changes to enable ongoing access to timber on conservation land felled by natural events, and get the maximum benefit from the rollout of Ultra-fast Broadband.

Mr Robb says the plan represents a region-wide approach to economic development, incorporating the three territorial authorities.

"I would like to acknowledge the support of the mayors and councillors of the three district councils, and the regional council, for their patience, support and confidence as we have developed this action plan.

"All of the initiatives supported through the funding announced today will bring significant benefits to the whole West Coast region.

“The fact so many government ministers joined us today and announced such significant support demonstrates that our confidence is justified and widely shared.”

Implementation of the action plan will be overseen by the West Coast Regional Growth Governance Group with support from the Government’s Regional Growth Programme.

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Media contact

Andrew Robb | Chairman | West Coast Regional Council | 027 483 8253

Mike Meehan | Chief Executive Officer | West Coast Regional Council | 021 289 8636

The West Coast Economic Development Action Plan can be downloaded from wrc.govt.nz/actionplan