

PEOPLE ARE OUR GREATEST RESOURCE – He aha te mea nui o te ao – he tangata he tangata



Bless Groome was named regional winner of the TPP Young Enterprise Scheme (YES). Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) supports [The Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme \(YES\)](#) across West Coast high schools each year. The challenge sees teams of secondary students come up with a business idea, then plan and execute their venture under the guidance of local mentors and YES supporters.

Competing against eight other West Coast high school teams for the 2022 regional title, Westland High School student, Bless won the TPP YES title for creating Pride playing cards to help people understand LGBTQI+ terms. The business idea stemmed from her discovering she is aromantic earlier this year. Bless secured sponsorship from Gender Minorities Aotearoa for her first run of the game and has sold her first 250 packs.

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Director Strategic Initiatives, Vikki Roadley says, as well as supporting young entrepreneurs, the YES programme is a great way for Tai Poutini Polytechnic to collaborate and partner with our local community, creating links between secondary and tertiary education and encouraging students to participate.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



Economic activity on the West Coast grew 3.4% over the year to September 2022, outpacing the national average of 2.6%. The region's economy increased by \$79m to \$2,371m. [Learn more](#)

Source: Infometrics Quarterly Economic Monitor West Coast Region September 2022



Property Price Index for the West Coast had the highest percentage change in New Zealand for Oct 2022 vs Oct 2021 of 16.9%.

Source: TradeMe Property



The West Coast population has declined from 0.1% in 2021 to -0.6% in 2022. Buller has the second highest population median age in New Zealand at 53.6 years old while Westland is at 45.8 years and Grey at 49.9 years. [Learn more](#) about what this means for our future.

Source: Statistics NZ

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

OPPORTUNITIES

- The Government's Infrastructure Acceleration Fund (IAF) will provide investment of \$13.6m in Buller's Alma Road area.** New infrastructure upgrades will provide for 400 new homes to be built in the area. There is significant long-term unmet housing demand in the greater Westport area, and the IAF funded infrastructure will assist in opening new developable land and increase resilience against future climate change. Hokitika will receive \$3.5m, which will enable around 110 homes to be built for older people earlier than planned to help ease the housing shortage.
- A new pedestrian and cycle trail in Westport linking the Buller Bridge to Victoria Square and beyond is almost complete.** The connector trails have been funded through MBIE's \$300k [Tourism Infrastructure Funding](#). According to the Buller District Council is integral to the districts revitalisation strategy to position Buller as an attractive place to live, explore and invest.
- Te Tai Poutini West Coast Renewable Energy Strategy and Roadmap was released in November 2022.** The Strategy supports a low emissions economy. Te Whanaketanga Energy Action Group 2022 noted the Strategy and Roadmap identifies opportunities to unlock renewable energy investment and job creation on the Coast.
- Federation Mining reports the Blackwater Mine project is on track for completion of the decline development early next year**, before the drilling program begins towards the Birthday Reef. The Snowy River Mine currently employs 47 people with 80% residing on the West Coast. The processing plant, if approved, is projected to create 100 jobs when mining is expected to start in 2024. Construction of the plant is projected to create about 60 jobs for contractors. The project will draw on the skills and experience of local people and businesses and brings jobs and investment to a region that has suffered from job losses and depopulation following mine closures.
- West Coast launches the "Pretty Great Actually" tourism campaign**, targeted towards the domestic and Australian market. It is hoped to pique the interest of curious travellers with a quirky new campaign to draw them to the region.



UPDATES

- The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance's Restoring and Protecting Flora project has provided eight FTE jobs in Buller.** The work is making a difference, with the \$1.4 million Jobs For Nature funding allocated to habitat restoration in Buller/Kawatiri. [Learn more](#)
- 150 people attended the West Coast tourism summit, Manaakitanga ki Te Tai Poutini hui on 22 November 2022 in Greymouth**, as the industry readies for the return of visitors. The event provided an avenue for operators to come together and hear more about the latest developments, challenge the industry and forge a pathway to reinvent tourism on the coast. [Learn more](#)
- Regional Tourism Organisations from Canterbury and West Coast joined forces to relaunch tourism awareness** of tourism trade at a showcase event in Auckland. The regions united for the first time, promoting the complementarity and synergies between districts rather than competing for tourism dollars. This is a direct benefit of the Destination Management approach as required by the Minister of Tourism, the Honorable Stuart Nash. [Learn more](#)
- Hokitika's Zip Line Construction at the Treetop Walkway is underway** with the new zipline expected to open 23 December 2022 for the busy summer season. The new attraction is expected to expand the potential visitor demographic to include a younger thrill seeker market, enhancing the attraction and profitability in the region.

CHALLENGES

- Karamea community and businesses are facing the challenge of an 80% reduction in Heaphy track users** due to its extended closure caused by past flooding events. The track is not expected to fully reopen until at least October 2023. According to Buller Mayor Jamie Cleine, this is already having a negative financial and social impact on the community which is of grave concern.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE

Implementation of all nine of the year one activities in the [Te Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Workforce Plan \(RWP\)](#) are underway and a strong foundation has been established with partners contributing to the implementation.

COLLABORATION

- A recruitment expo** co-hosted by Go Tourism, Hospitality NZ, Connected, MSD, Te Pūkenga, MT4J, Upskill, and Workbridge provided an avenue for employers from the hospitality, accommodation, and tourism sectors to connect with potential employees.
- The WC Rangatahi Day Out** was the first of a series of events planned to showcase industries and career opportunities available on the coast, focused on the forestry sector in association with Ngai Tahu Forestry and Hahn Logging. The series is led by the Education to Employment broker and supported by the RSLG is designed to connect employees, educators, and workers to the labour market.

UPSKILLING

- 2023 Development West Coast Scholarships have been awarded.** The scholarships are designed to grow and retain highly qualified rangatahi on the West Coast by removing barriers to training and employment. The RSLG recognise the scholarships provide an avenue to help future-proof our labour market.
- West Coast Trades Academy reports high demand.** Three hundred and ninety students applied for places for 2023, resulting in an over subscription for those who were accepted by 49 places against Ministry of Education funded places. Local providers, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Whenua Iti and Grey District Mayors Task Force for Jobs have rallied together to fund all 49 places. WCTA is working towards obtaining additional funding for 2024. The academy provides students with an integrated pathway into further education, training or employment through closer alignment with schools, the tertiary sector and industry. Courses offered are aligned with the skills shortages in the West Coast.