

## TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



**A number of Westport building/construction firms have been forced to drop to a four day working week** due to delays receiving building consents. With the shortage of housing, and the building supply chain problems, the delay in consents only adds to their woes. This will potentially have flow on effects for new local apprentices as they will be the first to be stood down if the situation worsens.

**Parts of the region's economy are faring better than others in the tourism and hospitality sectors.** Recent statistics reveal that the visitor spend in Westport and Reefton is up, with the towns enjoying a large economic boost from domestic visitors. Some of the spending can also be attributed to the number of additional trades people in the Buller region who are helping to repair the damaged homes and infrastructure from the 2021 flooding.

**The ongoing labour shortages are being exacerbated by vaccine mandates, and this is causing concern for some employers.** A large number of employers are struggling with loss of staff as a result of the vaccine requirements, especially in the hospitality and in-home health care areas. The DHB lost over 100 positions with most in the non-clinal workforce.

**Staff shortages are especially being felt in other areas including the retail, tourism, and health sectors.** The local councils and the economic development agency have reported difficulty recruiting a range of qualified professionals from engineers and consent planners through to digital/IT staff and marketing managers.

## TRENDS AT A GLANCE



**Total filled jobs increased by 7.3%** from December 2020 to December 2021, equating to 1,240 more filled jobs. This is compared with a national increase of 3.9%.



**Mid-aged cohorts are primarily driving growth in filled jobs across the region.** Between December 2020 to December 2021) the three groups with the biggest growth were:

- 30-34 years (270 filled jobs)
- 35-39 years (250 filled jobs)
- 40-44 years (160 filled jobs)



**The total number of jobseekers from December 2020 to December 2021 decreased by 130.** This is a decrease of -7.7% compared to the same time last year.

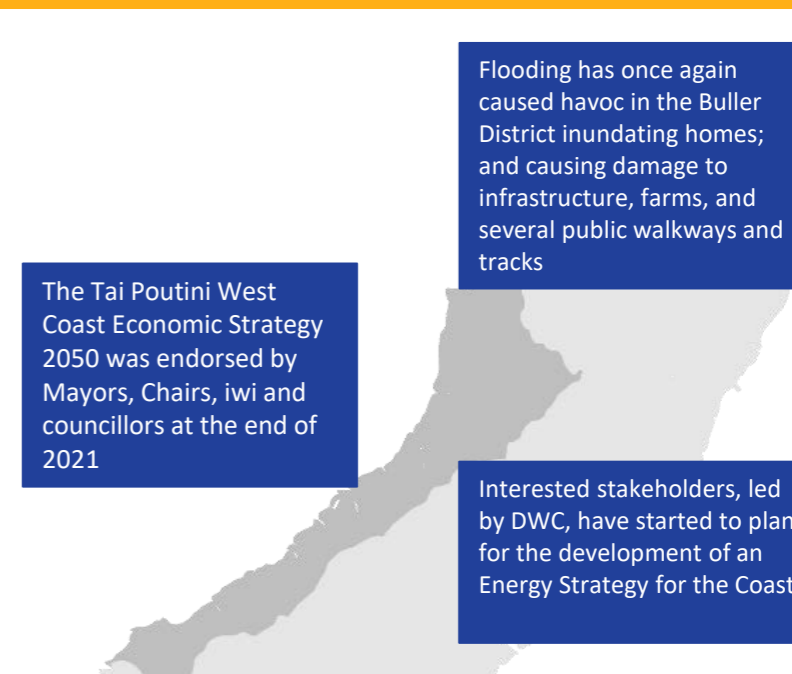
## TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. The three mining companies in Reefton are reported to have found the staff needed to run their operations.** However, housing for the workers is challenging, and together the companies have purchased a local motel. Work has commenced on turning it into long term accommodation units for the workers.
- 2. The local economic agency Development West Coast (DWC) are currently working on a recruitment campaign to attract workers to the Coast.** They are planning that the campaign is similar to the very successful Nelson/Tasman 'Pick Nelson' and 'Catch a Job' campaigns.
- 3. The inaugural Development West Coast Tertiary Scholarships have been awarded to five West Coast students.** The scholarships are designed to grow and retain residents on the West Coast by removing barriers to training and employment. Valued at up to \$32,500 per student, the scholarships also offer summer work and guaranteed employment on the West Coast on completion of the applicant's tertiary study.
- 4. Tai Poutini Polytechnic are developing a number of environmental related courses.** These include short courses for DOC/conservation workers such as chainsaw, hiking, river crossing and a specific course for those working on the Arahura Strategic Waterway Restoration project. The last project is led by Māwhera Incorporation, who received \$3m of Jobs for Nature funding and \$2.8m from the provincial growth fund to restore the Arahura River.

## TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- 1. The two recent civil defence emergencies have meant challenges for both businesses and residents.** The recent flooding from the 'red' weather event predicted over Waitangi Weekend meant many domestic visitors planning to visit the area cancelled their bookings and retailers had to shut their doors.
- 2. Nurses are in short supply on the Coast.** Te Nikau (Greymouth) Hospital has significant staff shortages, especially qualified nurses in the critical care unit (CCU). To help address the staff shortages they have moved the children's unit in the hospital to the CCU. The shortages are not Coast specific, but nation wide with a shortage of appropriately trained/qualified CCU nurses.
- 3. A number of initiatives in the region are on hold under the 'Red' traffic light setting.** With the mandated limits on people, several significant events have had to be postponed including jobseeker events, Farmlands AgFest West Coast, and the Hokitika Wildfoods Festival. This has flow on effects to businesses, from the loss of potential tourism and visitor spending.
- 4. A job speed dating event held in South Westland late last year was not very successful.** Touted as the new way forward, the speed dating did not work in this part of our region. Although there was good engagement from employers, the turnout of job seekers was disappointingly low. This in part has been attributed to the low numbers of jobseekers in the area, either having left the area or already being part of the Jobs for Nature job sharing programme.

## TE TAI O POUTINI | WEST COAST REGION



Flooding has once again caused havoc in the Buller District inundating homes; and causing damage to infrastructure, farms, and several public walkways and tracks

The Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Strategy 2050 was endorsed by Mayors, Chairs, iwi and councillors at the end of 2021

Interested stakeholders, led by DWC, have started to plan for the development of an Energy Strategy for the Coast

## OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Completion and finalisation of the draft Tai Poutini Regional Workforce Plan
- Targeted stakeholder/sector engagement on the Regional Workforce Plan