

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Education-to-employment transition plans are being developed for all students in years 11-13. The Coasts Vocational Coordinator is currently working with these students, along with those students who are in their first year out of school. Transition plans for all 1,141 students will provide one-on-one mentoring and help.

A worrying trend of high levels of student absenteeism is being reported across the region. One in five children are missing one day of school per week, and this is particularly an issue for Māori children (both male and female). Estimates show close to 140 students have been identified as at risk of becoming a NEET statistic (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Work is underway to support these children to stop that from happening and help them succeed long-term.

The Westland Mayors Taskforce for Jobs is going strong. They have placed 70 rangatahi/youth into skills and apprenticeships so far this year, compared to the 117 that were helped last year. The Taskforce is also expanding its activities to include a new focus on helping vulnerable people into jobs and apprenticeships.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



1,467 The number of Jobseeker Benefit recipients in **March 2022**. This is -5.6% less than the same time last year, however this decrease is moderate compared to the national decrease of -11.8% over the same period.
 Source: Ministry of Social Development, Monthly Reporting



2,385 The number of Accommodation Supplement recipients in **March 2022**. This is -4.9% less than the same time last year, exceeding the national decrease of -3.6% over the same period.
 Source: Ministry of Social Development, Monthly Reporting



112 The number of migrant workers on Employer Assisted Temporary Work Visas. Of these 38% are in occupations classified as Managers, compared to the ratio nationally of 13%.
 Source: Immigration New Zealand, EATW Reporting, 4 April 2022

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- A Conservation Training Hub has been set up in Buller District Council to provide operational training.** It is a collaboration between Tai Poutini Polytechnic and Buller District Council, with both parties looking to work with other key providers in the area.
- The Stockton Mine located in Buller is actively recruiting workers.** It has secured a solid number of forward orders for its high-quality steelmaking coal allowing them to offer increased levels of work – at least in the short-term.
- The new Punakaiki visitor centre will begin construction this month.** It will bring tourism opportunities for the Coast and create jobs across a range of skill levels. The \$26m Kanoa funded project is being managed by the Department of Conservation.
- Businesses are keen to provide scholarship opportunities to help fill skills gaps across the region.** Several businesses have approached Development West Coast (the local Economic Development Agency) with a proposal to work together to encourage students to undertake relevant training and to return to the Coast.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- Westport retailers are facing some of their toughest months yet** with COVID-19 in the community, recent flood events, rising costs, and the winter trading lull approaching. Cancelled events including the Buller Marathon have had a big effect with many retailers' dependant on these events to see them through the winter months.
- West Coast DHB still have severe staff shortages,** with nurses working up to 12-hour shifts at Buller Hospital. The shortages are being exacerbated as trained staff are being attracted to other work areas where they can earn better pay - including non-skilled roles.
- Local councils are finding it hard to attract and retain skilled staff** particularly in the building consenting area. This is leading to long delays and backlogs in the processing of building permits and resource consents. Some workers have moved into central government positions that offer larger salaries that local councils cannot match.
- The vertical construction workforce shortfall in the region is large and growing.** It is estimated to be an average of almost 1,200 workers for the remainder of 2022 (66 percent of the 2020 workforce) and an average of over 1,600 for 2023 (90.9 percent of the 2020 workforce). These estimates do not factor in the ripple effect from delayed projects which are expected to exacerbate these shortages.

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Tracy Kerr recently completed the five-week Wāhine Toa development course run through the 'Connected' initiative at the Greymouth Work and Income office.

Tracy says she was feeling low and decided to do the course. With encouragement and support from other women on the course sharing their stories, she realised most of the women had no idea what sort of job they wanted or what sort they could do - and she was the same.

Having never farmed before, Tracy is now working at a beef and dairy farm in Westport and is part of the team milking 300 cows. "I am out fixing fences and milking cows, my whole life has changed," Tracy said. "I moved out of the caravan park and into a two-bedroom home provided by the boss."

"I love the cows; I enjoy being around them. "To the women out there feeling like I did, give it a go, give yourself a chance at a job on a farm". To read more see [here](#).

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Summarising feedback on the RWP Consultation Document
- Completion of the Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Workforce Plan