

Connect



Great Coast Road
Credit: NomadAV

Keeping you up to date with news from your Buller District Council



Mayor Chris Russell

Mayor's Message

Welcome to the July edition of Connect. Although winter is far from over, the passing of the shortest day marks a turning point, and each extra minute of daylight brings a reminder that the seasons are always moving forward. It's been a busy few months for Council, with the completion of the 2026-27 Annual Plan being a significant milestone. Preparation of the 2027-2037 Long-Term Plan is now well underway.

Council remains focused on delivering practical outcomes that reflect the needs of our community. A key priority is navigating local government reform in a way that protects local decision-making, maintains affordability, and ensures Buller's voice remains strong in regional and national discussions. We will be workshopping our Head Start draft proposal on 24 July, with the final proposal due to be approved at an Extraordinary Meeting in early August, prior to it being submitted to central government.

We are also making steady progress on Local Water Done Well, with the appointment of three directors for the new regional water entity, Coast Waters Ltd. The first board workshop was held earlier this month in Greymouth.

The board of directors will provide independent governance to Coast Waters under direction set by the Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils. One of the board's key tasks will be to create a Water Services Strategy that ensures Coast Waters provides safe and sustainable water services into the future, while balancing the costs for ratepayers.

Council is continuing to strengthen its financial systems, reporting processes, and organisational capability to ensure we are making informed decisions and delivering value for our communities. By continuing to work together, we can balance community expectations with affordability and long-term financial sustainability, ensuring Buller remains a great place to live, work, and thrive.

DRAFT Reserves Management Plan 2026

Your Reserve. Your Place. Your Voice.

Help us to shape the future of parks and reserves in Buller by providing feedback on the Draft Reserves Management Plan 2026.

The Reserves Management Plan establishes the framework for managing and developing Council's 28 recreational reserves. The management plan guides the use, enjoyment, protection, maintenance, preservation and development of these reserves and their day-to-day management.

The Reserves Management Plan sets out the district-wide vision and objectives and includes a range of reserve management policies that guide how Council will manage reserves and make decisions about their use and development. It also includes a detailed description of each reserve, its vision, and short, medium, and long-term actions.

We want your feedback on the proposed district-wide vision and objectives, policies, and the reserve-specific vision and actions. By submitting your views, you contribute to creating a plan that ensures our reserves management and development incorporates your values and aspirations.

Submissions close Monday 3 August 2026. Scan the QR code below



**Love your reserve?
Have your say.**

Rates rebate success

Every year Buller District Council encourages residents who are on a low income or struggling to pay rates on the property they live in to check and see if they are eligible to save money on their rates bill through the Rates Rebate Scheme.

The scheme is overseen by the Department of Internal Affairs and provides assistance towards rates for low-income earners. Customer Services staff at Council's Westport and Reefton offices are happy to help ratepayers with the process and understanding the criteria.

Council took a proactive approach by following up with ratepayers who may have been eligible, raising awareness of the support available and encouraging more people to apply. Staff also contacted previous rebate recipients who had not yet applied, helping ensure they did not miss out on support they may have been entitled to. This positive engagement delivered excellent results, with the highest number of successful rebate claims received to date.



Westport Ward by-election

Nominations inviting individuals to stand for the vacant seat in the Westport Ward are now open and close at midday on 6 August 2026.

This is an opportunity for a community-minded person to join the other Westport Ward councillors and work for the betterment of the ward and district.

To stand, you must be aged 18+, a NZ citizen and enrolled on the electoral roll. You must be nominated by two people whose names appear on the electoral roll of the area that you, the candidate is standing for. You don't need to live in the area that you are standing for.

Westport Ward residents and those considering standing for the vacant seat can head to bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/council-elections/2026-westport-ward-by-election/ for more detailed information, along with a nomination form and information sheet for the by-election.

If more than one nomination is received for the vacancy, a voting process will be required. Voting papers will be mailed to Westport Ward electors in mid-September, with voting closing on 16 October 2026.

What's happening with Local Water Done Well?



Chair Darin Cusack, and board members James Ryan and Onno Mulder have been appointed to the new joint West Coast council-controlled organisation for water services delivery - Coast Waters Ltd.

Coast Waters is an independently governed organisation being set up by the Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils to deliver safe, reliable and financially sustainable water, wastewater, and stormwater services to more than 25,000 people from mid-2027.

If you want to know more, visit <https://www.coastwaters.org.nz/> or follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/CoastWaters.

Help your community and join one of Council's subcommittees

Buller District Council is calling for expressions of interest from people interested in joining Buller District Council's subcommittees.

BDC has eleven Reserve and Hall Subcommittees that work with the Council to manage the many reserves and halls in our district. They operate campgrounds and community halls and manage community reserves, including the development of Reserve Management Plans, and deal with a wide range of issues and responsibilities. They bring a local voice, and provide general guidance and support for Council regarding how these community facilities are maintained and developed.

The Creative Communities Subcommittee manages administration of the Creative Communities funding scheme locally. This scheme aims to increase participation in the arts at a local level and increase the range and diversity of arts available to communities. It is a partnership between Creative New Zealand and local authorities, with each local authority responsible for delivering the scheme in its area. The Creative Communities Subcommittee assesses applications and makes decisions about the funding received annually from Creative New Zealand.

Subcommittees are included within the Council's Governance Structure and ensure that decisions are made at a local level. Council staff liaise with the subcommittees and provide support.

Residents can submit their expressions of interest to join either of the subcommittees from Monday 27 July 2026 until 5:00 pm Monday 31 August 2026.

The expressions of interest will be reviewed by the Group Manager Community Services and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Community Committee, then confirmed by the Community Committee at its September 2026 meeting.

The Terms of Reference for the Reserve and Hall Subcommittees and the Creative Communities Subcommittee outline the roles, responsibilities, Council's duties and the delegated powers.

By joining one of the subcommittees, you will help bring your community's voice to the table and assist Council to maintain and develop these vital community assets.

You can submit your expression of interest by:

- Completing the [online form](#)
- Downloading and dropping off the completed form at Council's offices in Westport or Reefton
- Emailing your completed form to governance.assistant@bdc.govt.nz



Scan the barcode for more information.



Carters Beach Hall
Credit: NomadAV

Waste updates

Enviroschools in Buller moving from strength to strength

The Enviroschools network on the West Coast continues to grow, with nine Buller schools and early learning centres now involved in the programme: Karamea Area School, Granity School, St Canices, Westport North School, The Nurture School, Maruia School, Reefton Area School, Sacred Heart Primary School and Reefton Early Learning Centre.

Enviroschools is supported by the Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils, with the West Coast Regional Council joining the partnership for the 2026-27 year. The programme encourages tamariki to become catalysts for change and make a positive difference to our environment.

Local facilitators work alongside students, teachers, whānau and communities to plan, design and implement sustainability actions across key areas including Living Landscapes, Nature Connection, Zero Waste, Water of Life, Māra Kai & Food Systems and Te Ao Māori. A range of professional development sessions are also held for teachers.



Credit: Enviroschools



Westport North School māra kai

Credit: Enviroschools

Westport North School joined Enviroschools in the 2025-26 year has a passionate team of kaiako and students keen on learning in their local environment. They have a beautiful māra kai on the school grounds and a hardworking garden group that looks after the māra as well as cooking and sharing the mahi, learning and kai with fellow students.

In February, Year 7-8 students took a deep dive into the Orowaiti Estuary. Together with DOC rangers, they carried out marine metre squared investigations, identifying species and observing the variety of life found within the estuary ecosystem. They also spent a day on the Denniston Plateau in May studying *ki uta ki tai* (mountains to sea) life, learning how the wider water catchment influences the biodiversity and ecology of streams and rivers all the way to the coast with West Coast Regional Council staff. Students enjoyed exploring the plateau and Whareatea Creek, learning about roroa (great spotted kiwi), and discovering how predator trapping helps protect our native wildlife. Native skinks were spotted in the rocky landscape and kōura in the stream!

The Nurture School also joined in 2025-26 and is a forest school that grew from the belief that connection through meaningful learning is the foundation

for great education. Nature serves as their classroom, with children learning outdoors each day. Their approach is inspired by international best practice yet grounded in the Buller landscape and community partnerships.

Students from **Sacred Heart School** in Reefton made a splash with some hands-on water activities in August. They explored the water cycle and discovered just how little of Earth's water is fresh, safe and available to drink. A highlight was the field trip to a local creek where they found all sorts of freshwater creatures like mayfly and caddisfly larvae while learning how to monitor stream health.

Across the district, Enviroschools students are helping build a more sustainable future through activities such as biodiversity restoration, native tree planting, predator monitoring, school gardening, composting, waste minimisation and nature-based learning. These projects help connect young people with their local environment while developing practical skills and leadership opportunities.

Buller District Council is proud to support Enviroschools as it empowers and helps young people develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to care for their environment and contribute positively to their communities.

Community Grants



The Community Grant Fund supports local groups and organisations working to make a positive difference in our district

If your project aligns with Council's Community Outcomes and benefits the community, we encourage you to apply. This funding helps bring great ideas to life and supports initiatives that make our district a better place to live, work and play. This year, Buller District Council is moving from two funding rounds to just one, with a total of \$70,947.48 available for distribution.

This fund is budgeted annually in the Council's Annual Plan, ensuring a regular and predictable funding process. It is contestable, and funding is not available for individuals or commercial activities. Each applicant can receive funding only once per financial year (1 July–30 October). Due to high demand, not all applications can be funded.

Applications are open from 1 July – 30 October for the 2026/27 financial year.

! Important information

One funding round for this financial year (2026/27)



Applications open
1 July – 30 October 2026



Total funds available
\$70,947.48



For further information

<https://bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/community-funding/community-grants>

Scan the QR code
to learn more





Port Manager Annie Bell

New Port Manager steps up

Buller District Council's port operations coordinator Annie Bell is embracing change and a new challenge with her recent secondment to the position of port manager for the next two and a half years, alongside harbourmaster Domonic Venz's secondment to the role of regional harbourmaster for the same period.

Ms Bell was employed four years ago as harbourmaster's assistant for previous harbourmaster Curly James, her first public service role after a 20-year career in hospitality. Curly sadly passed not quite a year into her employment, and she was given more responsibility and the role of port administrator.

"I launched myself into creating new digital systems to replace the previous paper-based reporting and became our team's champion for the use of SharePoint, archiving and reorganising old files. This was a great way to get to know people in a range of departments across the Council and I completed an online information management course to consolidate these skills. I was also involved in developing the new Westport Harbour website" she says.

Domonic was appointed harbourmaster in 2023, and his fresh approach redirected the port team's focus towards making Westport Harbour "the best port". Over the past three years, he has invested time into building Annie's knowledge of navigational

safety, and she has completed extensive health and safety training, enabling her to fill in as deputy harbourmaster as required over the past year, and transition into the role of port operations coordinator.

"I've enjoyed building a broad skills base with Domonic's mentoring and direction and now feel confident managing the day-to-day running of the commercial side of port operations, safety management, and have also achieved technical competence with the bar sounding process.

"I'm proud of what I have been able to achieve here and am grateful that the Council enables newcomers to grow into careers. I've found the people skills I learned in hospitality to be valuable when working with the fishing fraternity. Westport Harbour is a great place to be, and I'm enjoying the opportunities provided by the new developments, pushing the port to stand on its own two feet, driven by wise spending and always looking for opportunities to fairly increase revenue for the port."



Regional harbourmaster appointed to enhance maritime safety across the West Coast

Buller District Council (BDC) is seconding its harbourmaster to the role of regional harbourmaster in July following the Ministry of Transport's allocation of a \$1m Regional Maritime Safety Grant to West Coast Regional Council (WCRC) last year.

Domonic Venz will take up this role for 2.5 years, focussing on commercial shipping and recreational craft use across West Coast ports, as well as key rivers and lakes.

The new regional focus extends the scope and function across the Coast. The role is about ensuring navigational safety through education and assistance. The harbourmaster can take compliance action through delegated powers, if necessary, but this is a last-resort option.

WCRC Group Manager Regulatory & Policy Matt Smith says the role will provide a single point of contact for watercraft management and oversight, helping drive maritime and water safety initiatives across the region.

"The regional role brings the West Coast into line with the rest of the country. Many other regions, including Otago and Southland, already have similar roles focused on promoting maritime safety and supporting safe recreational and commercial use of waterways."

Current BDC Port Operations Coordinator Annie Bell will be seconded to the port manager function of Mr Venz's current BDC role for the same period.

"We are pleased there will be a smooth internal transition for the management of Westport Port, with Ms Bell's secondment to the port manager position making the most of staff capability within the existing team" explains BDC's Group Manager Corporate Services Lesley Crichton.

BDC has signed a memorandum of understanding with WCRC and the Grey and Westland District Councils to deliver the full West Coast Maritime Safety programme of funding. This covers five individual projects of which the regional harbourmaster role is one.

Dog registration

We're going digital - provide your email address and consent at registration in 2026 and we'll send your form electronically next year. Easy!

REMINDER: Dog registration is due 31 July 2026

All dogs in Buller need to be registered

If you own a dog, now is a great time to check that your four-legged friend's paperwork is up to date.

- **Do you have a new dog?**
- **Has your dog recently been microchipped or desexed?**
- **Did your dog pass away in the last year?**
- **Are the contact details we hold for you up to date, including an email address?**
- **Have you moved house recently?**

Making these changes now will make your dog registration paperwork super simple to complete later.

For more information go to:
bullerdc.govt.nz/dogs-and-animal-control/dog-registration/

Email
info@bdc.govt.nz with the subject line 'Dog registration'

Call
Call the Animal Management team on 03 788 9647

Talk to us
Drop in to the BDC Customer Services desk in Westport or Reefton.

Once you have received your form, you can call into Council's offices in Westport or Reefton to pay and pick up your green tag.

Prices this year are:

- **Desexed - \$80.00**
- **Entire - \$100.00**

If you use your dog principally for herding or droving stock your dog is eligible for our working dog rate.

- **Desexed - \$52.50**
- **Entire - \$80.00**

Dogs that support a person with a disability or medical condition may not be subject to registration fees, at the discretion of the Compliance Manager.

REGISTER ON TIME AND BE IN TO WIN!



WIN FREE DOG REGISTRATION
FOR THE LIFE OF THE
REGISTERED DOG

Register your companion dog with Buller District Council by 11:59 pm on 31 July 2026 and you could win free dog registration for the life of your dog. Simply complete and pay for your 2026/27 registration online or at Council service centres in Westport or Reefton to be automatically entered - one entry per registered companion (non-working) dog.

The draw is open to eligible Buller residents aged 16+ who meet responsible dog owner requirements. The prize covers standard registration fees for the dog's lifetime (conditions apply).

The winner will be drawn shortly after the closing date and contacted directly.

Don't miss out - register on time, support responsible dog ownership, and give your furry friend the chance to be set for life.



BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL
**ANIMAL
MANAGEMENT**



Terms and conditions apply.
For more details:
Scan the QR code or visit -
bullerdc.govt.nz/dogs-and-animal-control/dog-registration/

Water Notices & Meeting ads

Water supplies

Council would like to remind consumers to flush their taps 30 seconds in the morning, prior to use. This applies to all supplies including rainwater. Visit Council's website 'water - plumbosolvency' for details. There are different levels of water treatment in Buller.

The Cape Foulwind water supply (Wilson's Lead Road and Bulls Rd) is for stock use only and is not intended for human consumption.

A permanent boil water notice applies for Little Wanganui Subdivision, Mōkihinui, Ngakawau/Hector, South Granity and Waimangaroa.

For more information contact Council or your local water supplier for Ngakawau/Hector and South Granity.



You can sign up to Council's email list and receive key information about your local water supply under bullerdc.govt.nz/do-it-online/water-supply-update-sign-up/

Wastewater

Council operates sewerage treatment plants in Little Wanganui, Reefton and Westport.

Please don't flush any wipes, including those labelled as flushable, or paper towels, into the toilet.

People who have a connection to the Orowaiti sewerage scheme are reminded that they should no longer be using septic tanks and should be connected to the reticulation.



For more details contact Council or visit bullerdc.govt.nz/infrastructure/wastewater/

Stormwater

Please consider stormwater and wastewater separation. Stormwater that enters the sewer must be treated as sewerage. This can cause sewer capacity problems during prolonged and heavy rain.

The majority of the stormwater is discharged untreated into the district's rivers. Please consider this when discharging fluids into the stormwater system. If you wouldn't want to swim in it, it shouldn't be going into the stormwater and needs to be disposed of as wastewater.



For more details contact Council or visit bullerdc.govt.nz/infrastructure/stormwater/

Meetings

July to August 2026

All Council and committee meetings and workshops will be livestreamed to Council's Youtube channel Buller District Council.

The 2026 meeting calendar can be found at bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/council-meetings/
Please check the calendar for any updates and additional meetings.

Public Excluded Workshop: West Coast 2027-2030 Land Transport Programme

- 29 July, starting 12:00pm
Clocktower Chambers

Ordinary Council Meetings

- 29 July, starting 3:30 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Extraordinary Council Meeting – Local Government Head Start proposal

- 3 August, starting 1:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Waimangaroa Reserve and Hall Subcommittee Formal Meeting

- 4 August, starting 4:00 pm
Waimangaroa Domain Hall

Workshop: Long-Term Plan - setting the scene

- 12 August, starting 1:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Public Excluded Workshop: Punakaiki Campground lease

- 12 August, starting 4:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Ordinary Council Meeting

- 26 August, starting 3:30 pm
Clocktower Chambers

If you would like to join the meeting, have any questions regarding these meetings, or would like to address Council during the public forum part of the ordinary council meeting please contact:

Governance Secretary
Email governance.assistant@bdc.govt.nz or
Phone 0800 807 239



Please visit Buller District Council's website bullerdc.govt.nz for to check for any updates to the Council meeting calendar

Westport office
6-8 Brougham Street, PO Box 21,
Westport 7866, New Zealand
Freephone 0800 807 239
Phone 03 788 9111

Reefton Visitor & Service Centre
67-69 Broadway, PO Box 75,
Reefton 7851, New Zealand
Phone 03 732 8821
Phone 03 732 8391

24 hr Noise & Animal Control Services
Phone 03 788 9115
After hours Operations emergencies
Phone 03 788 9119 Westport,
or 03 732 8821 Reefton

**Be
informed**

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www.bullerdc.govt.nz/newsletter

bullerdc.govt.nz