

# Labour's plan for the West Coast

## Labour's vision

Labour's vision is for a thriving regional New Zealand, where people from all around the country know that they are valued, and know that they can make a valuable contribution to New Zealand's social and economic life.

Regional development is an important concern for Labour. Regions are being left behind despite the best efforts of hard-working individuals and communities because of National's neglect of the provincial areas, combined with long-term decline of New Zealand's manufacturing sector. The regions must not become a place for 'ghost towns', where inhabitants have few meaningful prospects.

## The value of the West Coast

There are few parts of New Zealand more beautiful than the West Coast. Its stunning, rugged and exposed landscape has fostered close communities and a strength of character unique to the area. It is a valuable region for New Zealand.

However, the West Coast has not been valued by the National Government. National has failed to back the West Coast as it faces a shrinking economy, rising crime, and cuts to transport and health spending.

- Average weekly earnings in the West Coast Region fell from \$1,008 in 2016 to \$966 in 2017
- 16% fewer children passed the University Entrance exam in the West Coast last year
- The employment rate on the West Coast is lower than when Labour left office in 2008

Labour values the West Coast, and it has a plan to add value to the region. Labour and the West Coast will forever be linked through the township of Blackball, the birthplace of the Labour Party in 1908. Labour is proud of our West Coast roots, and we have a plan to restore real value to the region and its people.

## Labour will:

- **Invest in the health services the West Coast needs. Labour will commit to the redevelopment of Buller Hospital on the existing site, with all of the funding coming from the Crown – rather than through a Public Private Partnership. This will cost up to \$20m in capital**
- **Showcase the West Coast through tourism. Labour will support funding the upgrading and development of two cycle trails, the Ghost Road and the Wilderness Trail**
- **Add real value to West Coast exports. Labour will develop an export engineering hub based at Greymouth. Labour will invest up to \$1 million to work with engineering businesses across the West Coast to share expertise, identify common goals, and develop supplier and marketing information.**

## Buller Hospital

Labour will commit to the redevelopment of Buller Hospital on the existing site, with all of the funding coming from the Crown instead of a Public Private Partnership. This will cost up to \$20 million in capital.

Labour commits to developing a fit-for-purpose hospital, which reflects the community it serves. The new Buller hospital should be built on the same site as the existing hospital. This will ensure that the development minimises disruption to the local community, and to medical services.

**Let's do this.**



Labour will immediately stop any further planning for site B on Packington Street – which was selected by the National Party as the site for the new integrated Buller Family Health centre. National's preferred site is smaller and harder to access, offering little scope for expansion or development.

There will be no third party funding for this, the Buller Hospital will remain owned by all New Zealanders as it should be. Building the hospital using Crown finance will save up to an estimated \$1 million in fees.

### **Regional Cycle Trail Funding**

Labour will commit to gap funding the upgrading and completion of the 'Old Ghost Road' - Nga Haerenga NZ Cycle Trail. This trail is between Seddonville and Lyall, and consists of a number of huts, cycling paths, and camping grounds. It will also gap fund the upgrading of the West Coast Wilderness Trail which is two years overdue for completion. This trail runs between Greymouth and Ross.

Local MP Damien O'Connor has championed these local projects to demonstrate Labour's commitment to local West Coast economic opportunities. The Cycle trails will encourage new tourism opportunities for tramping and mountain cycling.

The Ghost Road will cost \$400,000 to \$500,000 for the first stage, and much smaller contributions (\$69,000, \$60,000 and \$14,000) in following successive phases. The West Coast Wilderness Trail will cost \$400,000 to deliver. These will both be funded from Labour's \$200m Regional Development Fund.

### **Export Engineering Hub**

Labour will add growing engineering exports to the West Coast to the Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Development Action Plan. We will work with the West Coast Governance Group who created the plan and Development West Coast to support businesses in the engineering sector across the West Coast to share expertise, identify common goals, and develop supplier and marketing information.

Subject to a satisfactory business case, we will make an additional \$1 million available to support this from Labour's Regional Development Fund.

This will help retain existing engineering expertise in the West Coast, especially that expertise at risk due to the decline in the local mining industry. It will also help those industries make the most of the international opportunities that their products provide.

This will enable Development West Coast to work with companies like Gray Brothers – who make gold screening equipment for the rest of the world, and Dispatch Engineering. Funding would be allocated to support projects such as market research, product innovation, or export opportunity exploration.

This project will help grow high-value jobs in engineering on the West Coast, and grow the value of engineering exports from the area.