**Development West Coast**

**DWC MONTHLY UPDATE**

**FEBRUARY 2014**

**Up close and personal with new CEO Joseph Thomas**

Joseph says he was keen to take on the challenge and opportunity of working on the West Coast with DWC. “I think there are real opportunities for organisations and communities to collaborate on the Coast towards achieving the right outcomes. I see my role as one of establishing an understanding and retaking relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders including whi, business, local and central government. One of my first tasks will be to listen and learn.”

He says the West Coast is a key region and makes a real contribution to the GDP of New Zealand and he believes there are opportunities to develop and grow the local economy.

“I don’t have all the answers but I believe it is about working with locals and facilitating and creating forums to unlock the potential and get the right outcomes for the West Coast. Good relationships, built on trust and confidence will allow us to progress discussions,” he says.

Mr Thomas also holds several governance roles including a recent Ministerial appointment to the West Coast District Health Board. He is a Chartered Accountant and an Associate Fellow of The New Zealand Institute of Management. He begins his role on March 10 and says he and Shelly are looking forward to joining the West Coast community.

**Regional profile proves Coast great place to live**

Did you know that in the year ended June 2013 the West Coast was the best place by international holiday tourists, beating Wellington, Taupo, Northland, and Nelson?  (*Or at least 60% of West Coast households have broadband compared with 47% in Manawatu and Whanganui, 31% in Gisborne and Hawkes Bay and 56% in Taranaki/Neckargemünd.*)

These are just some of the statistics that can be found in DWC’s ‘West Coast of New Zealand Economic Indicators Profile’. The profile provides a compilation of the most up-to-date statistical information for the region based largely on research and analysis by BERL Economics and also the NZIER, Statistics New Zealand and banking sector reports.

DWC Business Development Manager Helen Wilson says the document will help quantify DWC’s vision that “by 2022 the West Coast will be a more attractive region to live, work, invest and visit”.

“It is important the rest of New Zealand and locals know how the West Coast compares with other regions. The statistics show the Coast is a great place to work, live and invest,” she says.

The profile looks at all aspects of the region’s economy including how the Coast ranks in areas like education, health and lifestyle. It brings the data together in one publication which DWC hopes will be useful to Coast residents and visitors.

The statistics show the region’s fastest growing industries in the last ten years have been in dairy, health and services and coal and metal ore mining. In 2012 agriculture was the largest industry, followed by coalmining, heavy and civil engineering construction and road transport.

Most of the formal data in the first profile extends to the end of the 2012 calendar year so we are the year’s worth of the economic data in the profile will not include the 11 great walks of New Zealand, such as the Old Ghost Road trail.

The profile helps us get across the line to create a facility for locals and visitors. It will add huge numbers to events tourism which has potential to be big business for the West Coast,” he says.