

# GLACIER COUNTRY COVID-19 impact survey



*Te Ohu Whakawhanake o Te Tai Poutini*

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# COVID-19 impact survey

## Summary.

Development West Coast, with support from the Glacier Country Tourism Group, conducted a survey of Glacier Country businesses to gain a better understanding of the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey was conducted online, with emails sent to businesses in the Glacier Country. The survey received 103 responses (59% of all businesses in the area) between 5 to 12 February 2021.

## Key takeaways.

### Economic impact:

- 15.5% of businesses are no longer operating.
- 16 businesses have closed due to COVID-19.
- Businesses are operating at 20% capacity compared to normal years.
- 73% of businesses have reduced their staff because of COVID-19.
- 518 jobs have been reported as lost so far (393 full-time, 106 part-time, 19 casual).
- 62% of businesses indicated they will not survive the next 6 months without additional support.

### Social impact:

- 19 students potentially lost from local schools, as their caregivers are no longer employed in the community.
- 38 volunteers potentially lost to the community, as they are no longer employed in the community.
- 264 people have already left the community, as they are no longer employed.

### Actions to protect the business:

- 86% of businesses have taken action to 'pivot' their business.
- 92% of businesses have utilised the COVID-19 wage subsidy.
- 40% of businesses received support through the RBP programme.
- 17% of businesses received support through QUALMARK.
- 41% of businesses received a Small Business Cash Flow loan from IRD
- 30% of businesses received financial relief from their bank.
- 7% of businesses received rent relief.
- 24% of businesses have utilised the Jobs for Nature Scheme.

### Support needed (most common response):

- Reintroduction of the wage subsidy,
- Financial support from Government (grants or interest free loans),
- Creation of special economic zone,
- Tax / GST / ACC / compliance relief,
- Rates relief from Council,
- Flexible work programmes (like Jobs for Nature),
- Infrastructure projects in the area,
- Wellbeing support.

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## Economic profile

Glacier Country pre-pandemic profile March 2020

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Westland Glaciers – Bruce Bay	
POPULATION	1,170
EMPLOYMENT	1,028
GDP	\$119.3M
BUSINESS UNITS	174

**1,028** jobs in the Glacier Country prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: *Small area focus (Infometrics)*

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## Survey

103 survey responses (5 Feb – 12 Feb 2021)

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Total number of businesses in Glacier Country (March 2020)	Businesses to respond to the survey	Percent of total businesses
174	103	59%

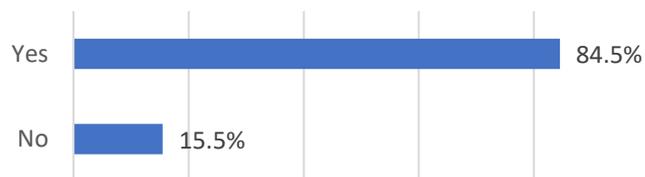
**59%** of businesses in the Glacier Country to respond to the survey.

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## Economic impact

Is your business still operating? 103 answered

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**16** businesses reported that they are no longer operating.

Note: of the 16 businesses no longer operating:

- 7 closed in March 2020 at the beginning of the lockdown.
- 4 closed between Apr – July 2020.
- 2 closed between Aug – Nov 2020.
- 3 closed from Dec 2020 onwards.

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At what capacity (%) is your business operating at compared to previous years?

84 answered, 19 skipped

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	MEAN	MEDIAN
CAPACITY (%)	28.5%	20%

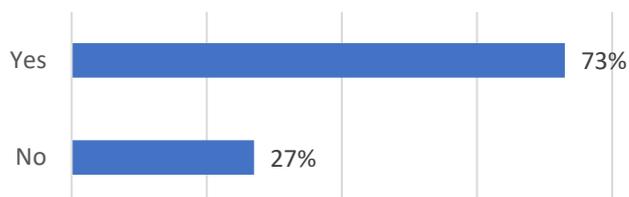
**20%** Is the median capacity at which businesses are operating compared to previous years.

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Have you had to reduce your staff numbers because of COVID-19?

102 answered, 1 skipped

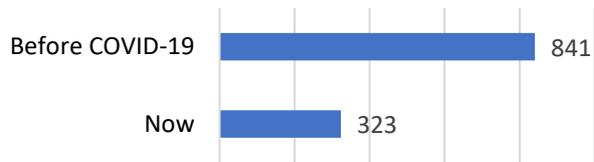
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**73%** of business have reduced their staff because of COVID-19.

## Staff numbers 85 answered, 18 skipped

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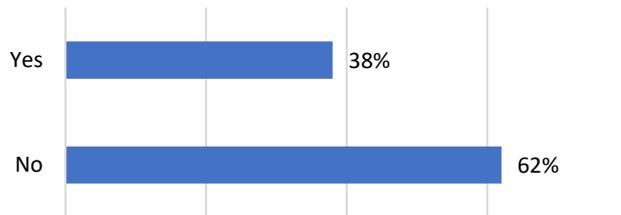
**518** jobs reported lost so far.

STAFF	Before COVID-19	Now	Jobs lost
FULL-TIME	616	223	<b>393</b>
PART-TIME	162	56	<b>106</b>
CASUAL	63	44	<b>19</b>
TOTAL	841	323	<b>518</b>

Note: these numbers are only what was reported by 85 businesses, so the actual numbers will likely be higher.

## If there is no change in the next 6 months will your business survive without support?

85 answered, 18 skipped



**62%** of businesses will not survive in the next 6 months without additional support.

At least **53 businesses** and an additional **184 jobs** will likely be lost in the next 6 months if there are no changes.

*Note: 53 businesses stated they will not survive in the next 6 months without additional support. These 53 businesses currently employ 133 full-time staff and 51 part-time and casual staff.*

### Selected comments:

*"We are a small family business, after investing our whole lives (33 years now) in this operation, we can't and won't let it fail."*

*"I understand that without tourists, there is no hope for my business to be revived and am now thinking about my next move."*

*"We have no option but to survive."*

*"We'll be burning reserves to survive and have a little over 12 months of reserves."*

*"We just need people to travel back to our country safely so we can function financially again. We have mortgages and bills to pay and giving away our accommodation to local travellers just isn't going to cut it."*

*"... if there is no sort of funding then I may have no choice but just to walk away as I will end up putting more money in that I don't have."*

*"We had a full season for the summer of 2019/2020 which allowed us to survive 2020. Without a season for 2020/2021, we will not be able to build cash reserves to pay fixed costs. All cash from the last season has now been exhausted. Personal savings have already been used to keep going but these will be spent within the next month. We will have no choice but to close by April if there is no assistance."*

*"My business does not rely completely on tourism but if no support is offered to those that do then my work is expected to slow to the point where it may not be viable to remain in the area."*

### What support would assist?

#### Most common responses:

- Creation of special economic zone,
- Reintroduction of the wage subsidy,
- Financial support from Government (grants or interest free loans),
- Tax / GST / ACC / compliance relief,
- Rates relief from Council,
- Flexible work programmes (like Jobs for Nature),
- Infrastructure projects in the area,
- Wellbeing support,
- Banks to be more helpful,
- Government backed overdrafts,
- Improved access to the region (i.e.. better flights/transport).

## Social impact

### Number of children in local schools 84 answered, 18 skipped

	Current staff	Staff no longer employed
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	50	19

**19** students potentially lost from local schools as caregivers are no longer employed in the community.

### Number of community volunteers 46 answered, 57 skipped

VOLUNTEER GROUPS	Current staff	Staff no longer employed
FIRE AND EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS	16	16
SEARCH AND RESCUE	14	9
CIVIL DEFENCE	24	8
ST JOHN	8	1
COMMUNITY BOARDS	8	-
PROJECT EARLY BIRD (TRAPPING)	5	2
LOCAL CHURCHES	4	-
SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS (CLUBS, SPORTS, ETC)	4	-
PLAYGROUPS/ KINDERGARTEN	3	1
OTHER GROUPS	3	1

**38** community volunteers potentially lost as no longer employed in the community.

### Selected comments: Fire and emergency volunteers

“All the ones that are staying predominantly are locals who have businesses that are linked to farming or infrastructure as opposed to Tourism. The tourism personnel are what has bolstered the brigades in the past, and currently leave a hole even as we look to recruit – i.e. it’s hard to recruit if the number of people living there has reduced, even if it was for just 1 or 2 seasons.”

“Due to the nature of all their work, at any given time we may not get a full crew (min 4), or be able to turnout within our Service Delivery Guidelines (SDG) (5 min).”

#### Impact of being short crewed

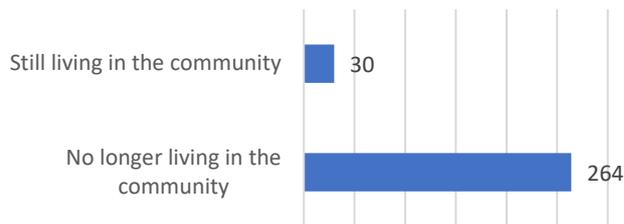
“Whataroa - Short Crewed 71%, Outside turnout SDG 57%, average turnout time 5 min 49 sec

“Franz Josef - Short Crewed 55%, outside turnout SDG 64% average turnout time 8 min 14 sec

“Fox Glacier – Short Crewed 60%, outside turnout SDG 64%, average turnout time 5 min 46 sec.”

## Of the staff who are no longer employed with you due to COVID-19, are they:

60 answered, 43 skipped



**264**

ex-staff have already moved away from the community.

## Action to protect the business

### Have you taken action to 'pivot' your business? 85 answered, 18 skipped

	RESPONSES
NO	14%
NEW MARKETING INITIATIVES	50%
NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	35%
SHIFT TO ONLINE SALES	21%
OTHER	56%

**86%**

of businesses have taken actions to pivot their business.

### Selected comments:

*"We have been trying to pivot to a more domestic market ... Prior to COVID-19 our market was approximately 95% international guests."*

*"What can we possibly do? We still online market like we did, we still deal with wholesalers like we did, we still try and provide the best product/service mix possible like we did. Tell me how we can 'pivot' when there is nothing to pivot to?"*

*"Attempting to take on work that would not normally be done by the business."*

*"We have introduced new products to cater more for our local market, but with limited customers probably not a lot more we can do, sadly."*

*"There are no alternatives for motel operation, especially in a remote area."*

*"We have pivoted products, we're digitally marketing at kiwis as hard as we can. We have cut costs and made our business much more efficient."*

*"Reduced expenses, delayed CAPEX, sold significant strategic assets to lower debt, owners not drawing any income despite full time work."*

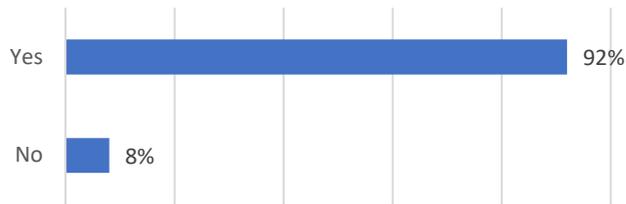
*"I have had to go to Europe to find work during the NZ winter. I am hoping the small business I get next season will see the business continue. I have also had to diversify into teaching English online."*

### Efforts to 'pivot' businesses

#### Most common efforts mentioned:

- Discounted prices,
- Worked with other businesses to create packages,
- Developed new products/services targeted to the domestic market,
- Marketing targeted at domestic visitors,
- Diversified into other areas,
- Increased online presence,
- Relocated business or taking up work further afield,
- Reduced operating costs.

## Did you utilise the COVID-19 wage subsidy? 89 answered, 14 skipped



**92%** of business have utilised the COVID-19 wage subsidy

## Selected comments: Did the subsidy cover all the support you needed?

*"It meant I could keep staff employed but it did not go far towards supporting the business."*

*"Helped significantly, but does/did not cover operating costs of business, which in fact have risen rather than fallen in last year."*

*"It was great, but it stopped and we still majorly need it to be able to operate the way kiwi tourists expect us (with a booking office etc.)"*

*"Not at all. As per every business the wage subsidy relieved pressure for staff to earn something ... but there are far more operational costs to be covered than just wages."*

*"The business is digging itself into a massive hole – need more wage support asap."*

*"No - not by a long shot. I have put in over \$100,000 of my own money to keep the business going this year."*

*"It certainly helped. Without it we would have struggled to start this summer season."*

*"No. It certainly helped, but operating costs (insurance, rates, utilities) don't stop."*

*"The wage subsidy only covered the period of Level 4 lockdown. The other operational fixed costs from March 2020 have now exhausted all cash reserves built up in last year's high season."*

## Did your business utilise any of the following forms of COVID-19 funding?

89 answered, 14 skipped

	NO
REGIONAL BUSINESS PARTNER (RBP)	40%
QUALMARK	17%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	59%

**40%** of business received support through the RBP programme.

### Selected comments: Was the funding helpful?

*"Majority of the funding was only able to be used to assist with marketing initiatives. I think we are in the situation now that no matter how much marketing we did the people are still not coming."*

*"Yes, it made us look at ourselves and the business. it reinforced what we were thinking."*

*"Yes, helpful but as a district we are not seeing the numbers of travellers required."*

*"Funding was beneficial for assisting with digital strategy development."*

*"it was very minor in the big picture of costs, helped with doing forecasts."*

*"No because the domestic marketing strategies are just of very little help for a remote place like Franz Josef."*

*"Yes and still working with our accountants on re-forecasting cash flow and the future of the business."*

*"For the future when the borders open yes. Current benefit is 0."*

*"Sort of. 1 company was great, 1 was not. I did get a lot out of the funding, it was good. But I am beyond needing advisory services, the money would be better spent to help me cover wage and rent bills or to cover my own marketing efforts instead of marketing advisory."*

*"Very much so, would love to see more initiatives like this."*

*"Saved us \$1k on work we were having to do."*

*"The idea that you should teach businesses to fish is useless and a waste of resources if they can't afford to buy a fishing rod. Accountants and consultants have financially benefited from resources that could/should have been applied differently and more directly to businesses."*

	Applied for	Application successful	Planning to apply
SMALL BUSINESS CASH FLOW SCHEME (IRD)	39	37	1
FINANCIAL RELIEF FROM YOUR BANK	30	27	4
RATES RELIEF	8	1	7
RENT RELIEF	18	6	28
INSOLVENCY RELIEF (COVID-19 BUSINESS DEBT HIBERNATION SCHEME)	0	0	2
STRATEGIC TOURISM ASSETS PROTECTION PROGRAMME (STAPP)	10	6	0
JOBS FOR NATURE	25	22	2

**39** businesses applied for the Small Business Cash Flow Scheme.

## Selected comments

Was the funding helpful?

### FINANCIAL RELIEF FROM YOUR BANK

*"The bank only gave us 3 months then back to full payments I have tried to get the bank to allow us to go on interest only but no luck yet."*

*"Our bank has offered interest only for 6 months, and then extended for another 6 months. While appreciated, this is not enough, and we are often using overdraft to pay the mortgage and other expenses."*

### SMALL BUSINESS CASH FLOW SCHEME

*"Small business loan is a joke as connected to number of employees rather than turnover or GST paid."*

### JOBS FOR NATURE

*"95 percent of my staff are on essential work visas, ... it would go against their work visas conditions if I put these staff on Jobs for nature."*

*"We are a small business with two new mothers ... working for DOC is not an option for young parents."*

### STAPP

*"The 500k grants were wasted money and went to businesses that could have accessed other funding ... This has created a division in the community."*

### RENT RELIEF

*"We tried hard to communicate with our landlord for more rent reduced but it can't work. We still need to at least pay for 50% rent for each month. "*

*"No rent relief was offered to us, even though our landlord repeatedly asked their landlord, he ignored all their calls and refused any rent relief at all."*

*"My landlord is supplying 60% rent relief. My landlord cannot sustain this reduction in income."*

### GENERAL COMMENTS

*"Applied for nothing. We just want our customers back i.e: borders open to foreign tourists whom love the West Coast."*

*"Too busy trying to keep afloat to try and apply for the grants. Too many hoops."*

*"These schemes gave us a little relief at the time but not for the long haul, where our business is almost 100% reliant on international tourism."*

*"Staff have taken up to 50% wage reductions to help keep the business in operation. Very generous of them."*

# Support needed

If anything, what support do you need to stay in business until 2022 and beyond?

Most common responses:

- Reintroduction of the wage subsidy,
- Financial support from Government (grants or interest free loans),
- Creation of special economic zone,
- Tax / GST / ACC / compliance relief,
- Rates relief from Council,
- Flexible work programmes (like Jobs for Nature),
- Infrastructure projects in the area,
- Wellbeing support,
- Marketing support,
- Banks to be more helpful,
- Government backed overdrafts,
- Borders to re-open,
- Clear communication (on when borders will reopen and what support will be available),
- Improved access to the region (i.e. better flights/transport).

## Selected comments

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

*"... a large interest free loan with an amount each month available to draw down if needed and then after the borders open 15 years interest free to pay back what could be up to \$2-3 million dollars borrowed ... We back our business to be able to pay back a loan but our first choice would obviously be any grants or funds available as the less debt we can take on over this period the quicker we can recover."*

*"We have had some nice fluffy feel-good support to pivot, re-brand, re-imagine. We have had some valuable financial support to look after our staff until they could leave. We now need financial support (not a loan) to keep the business ticking on so that the foundations of Glacier Country tourism infrastructure are still here when visitors can travel again. That will create jobs, return kids to the school and do what we are good at which is creating tax revenue for central government."*

*"At the present budget we need at least \$180k to get us through to next November."*

*"some sort of grant not a loan, as my company already has high loans, as we would not be able to pay both loans back or when that could be based on borders, we have approached our banks and they are no longer as keen to support tourism based business that mainly depend on overseas tourism, as they also have no idea when the borders will open up and that to then is a reason not to loan more money to us."*

*"Having exhausted all cash reserves and fast exhausting personal savings, cash subsidies are needed to pay for the fixed operating costs that must*

*be paid regardless of guest traffic and revenues. Until borders reopen and international visitors return to NZ, there is no way to keep going based on domestic visitors."*

### SUPPORT NEEDS TO BE ONGOING

*"Any help will be greatly appreciated but needs to be based on continuing until borders reopen and visitors start to reappear in this part of the world."*

### POTENTIAL CRITERIA FOR SUPPORT

*"Franz Josef businesses and particularly the helicopter companies have pumped huge money into the region's economy and the country's coffers through taxes. I know a scale or criteria was mentioned ... as being required to measure how much each business got, perhaps that could be used as a gauge for the scale of what was available to each company based on the amount of taxes they had paid over the last five years."*

*"For Subsidy payments, an independent accountant office should review the overheads of each individual business that applied. That regulates the amount of support each business is getting. You cannot treat accommodation and an activity providers the same. That would be like comparing apples with bananas."*

### WAGE SUBSIDIES

*"I can't see the business surviving beyond this year without support to pay wages."*

## Selected comments continued

### INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

*"Government to construct cycle ways through the area to act as a draw card to the region for days when glaciers are not flyable and glacier walking tracks are closed."*

*"Get those glacier access roads open ... start work ASAP. Get the new bridge built ... now. Get started on the river protection works."*

*"Move the township in stages north to a safer location. There has been lot of work put into this in the past."*

*"Larger planes flying into Hokitika (should have been done years ago!)."*

*"... large projects in the area that may bring more workmen, eg Fox Glacier Access Road. This would also assist in making us a more desirable destination once tourism does start to come back."*

*(Better infrastructure) ... "Continuous power. Continuous communications line. (We seem to be quite behind the eight ball when it rains). A State Highway that is protected from 'events'. Water that doesn't run out."*

*"A cycling track from Okarito to Fox Glacier."*

### BORDERS TO REOPEN

*"To stay in business and to thrive I need the borders to open safely."*

*"Borders open with Australia as a minimum as Kiwis will not make the glacier region as a regular journey. (they have been fantastic)."*

### RATES / COMPLIANCE / DOC RELIEF

*"some form of help for compliance and rates to help to keep our doors open."*

*"... we would be extremely appreciative of any help that is able to be offered with rebates or grants for wages, rent, rates, insurance, CAA costs, DOC concession costs etc."*

*"Relief from DOC - very high cost of landing fees in the National Park and hunting tramping and climbing parties."*

### MARKETING SUPPORT

*"Assistance to help co-ordinate events to attract domestic visitors."*

### SHIFT IN MARKETING FOCUS

*"A completely new Brand Strategy/story with associated imagery for the region (not the specific business) to position us as market-ready for future tourism. Sustainable, ethical, environmentally connected, regenerative, immersive, cultural. Taiao - the interconnected wellbeing of the area and how we offer tourism experiences that respect and honour this."*

### JOBS FOR NATURE

*"We need DOC Jobs for Nature to continue. Hopefully we will be less reliant on the DOC scheme when occupancy improves. The flexibility of the scheme is fantastic."*

*"Continuation of alternative flexible employment, eg jobs for nature to prop up lack of business."*

### WELLBEING SUPPORT

*"Moral / Motivational/ Health & Wellbeing support - such as seminars/ coaching/ motivational speakers/ dealing with challenging business environments/ a jolly good community 'relief' party / comedian / comedy show to lift our spirits."*

# General comments

## NEED TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES

*"Do you really want to see the social fabric of these two townships decimated due to people moving away looking for work and local businesses to close??"*

*"We need this town to survive as it's taken years to make it become a tourism asset for all of New Zealand, and I am not just talking about the glacier, I am also talking about people and the business that make this a community."*

*"Fox needs to attract families to work here - it is vitally important that families are targeted in advertisements. Fox is a wonderful place to live and work and bring up a family. We need families to move here - not more young single people - if we want our school to remain."*

*"All the quality staff that have been built up over the years are having to leave, what are we going to do when business starts up again."*

*"If we can get the right support that would ensure the town and community will be ready for when it gets back to normal it will help to retain the school and volunteer services. It also gives the staff that businesses have invested in security to stay in the area."*

*"If we cannot get support then there will be closures and job losses the town will look dead not a place to come and enjoy."*

*"It is important to maintain the tourism businesses until international visitors to return, this is imperative for the survival of the communities."*

*"We are likely to have to make a decision to stop operations by April if there is no government assistance. Franz Josef risks dying with businesses unable to survive. The entire town is hanging by a thread."*

*"We are running out of funds to stay open this is an urgent matter. We need help or Fox Glacier will become a ghost town."*

*"If locals are moving away because they have no jobs - that would mean we are out of business too."*

## UNABLE / UNWILLING TO LEAVE

*"Due to owning property with a mortgage the option to rent our house or sell is virtually non-existent making leaving the area difficult."*

*"We have invested in a house and business in Franz Josef and have no option but to stay here as we cannot sell any of our assets due to the uncertainty of whether Franz Josef will be saved."*

*"With two young children we did not want to uproot our life here."*

## MENTAL WELLBEING AND HARDSHIP

*"Although money is an issue for all West Coast businesses at the moment the mental state of the owners right through to casual staff is a massive underlying issue that isn't being addressed."*

*"Mental health is now a big issue and the stress is taking its toll."*

*"The stress and mental health state of fathers, mothers and children is very concerning. It's hard to watch families not having enough money to feed their children. There is no alternative for these families."*

*"You just feel after (XX) years in business that you are the failure if the business now collapses."*

*"In addition to supporting business - additional support (is needed) for families that may find themselves in financial difficulty."*

*"Our company restructured from over XX staff to XX, straight after lockdown which is by far the hardest thing I have done in business, and may have to lose even more if there is no funding."*

*"With job losses comes other issues, staff have financial commitments with banks etc. With no job the stress, health and wellbeing on them and the business owners will be enormous as the banks come down on them or they shift away to try and meet their commitments."*

## **DIFFICULT TO PIVOT TO DOMESTIC MARKET**

*"I agree with the (border) closures, but it is destroying our business and our finances. Our business is 90% overseas tourists and there is no way to change that to local tourist. New Zealanders do not "do" B&B. The very very few guests we have had are 'emigrant' kiwis."*

*"Stop sitting back and thinking domestic will adequately replace the foreign visitor spend .... it won't, it's not. These two towns are dying from a thousand cuts. HELP."*

*"Our product does not really appeal to the domestic market so it's really hard for us without international tourists! Kiwis just go and walk on the tracks on their own."*

## **WEST COAST HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN / NOT LISTENED TO**

*"My sincere sympathy to everyone on the West Coast. I feel like we are the forgotten ones with our lives and money tied up in this area and all we hear about is Poor Queenstown!! It's time that everyone was treated the same. The borders are closed for at least another year and we all need some help or reassurance. It's scary times for us all!!"*

*"I'm filling this out as although I am not a big business, I feel I still count towards the impact this virus has had on our area, there will be many like me I'm sure. I don't expect anything but to be counted."*

*"I have written letters to ministers but gotten generic responses that made it clear, that there is no or minimal understanding of the area we operate in."*

*"Fox and Franz are a big draw card to bring people down the West Coast. They help support the greater West Coast and New Zealand but are often forgotten about when there is a disaster because of the 'can do' resilient nature of the community."*

*"(People here) ... are so used to be left alone or being let down by officials that they don't hold out a lot of hope in promised words with no action - which is what we see a lot of."*

*"The words 'resilient' and 'unprecedented' are thrown around a lot at the moment. For the community here we are aware if this wasn't the West Coast we wouldn't lose power regularly, emergency channels would always work, bridges wouldn't wash out after locals had been pointing out problems for some time etc. It is very frustrating knowing that somewhere else in the country would never be left cut off for two weeks at a time. We can only imagine the carnage and backlash after a couple of days let alone weeks, but here we get "you guys are resilient". The country knows we'll start a generator, kill an animal if anyone is getting low on food, helicopter companies will pick up supplies at their own cost, we'll check in on the neighbours and we'll still be here in a couple of weeks' time functioning the best we can without fuss. Every time an event happens here it is under reported, dealt with slowly, underfunded and the flow on effects are hard on businesses and families. This event has just dragged out much longer than anyone first thought and due to our remote location we are struggling with contingency ideas. It would be nice to see the area get some real help when it once again needs it but has finally run out of resilience. We also need to remember a lot of our industries have been shut down / minimized in the region and for the last decade + we have been encouraged by government and officials to invest ourselves in tourism instead."*

## **CLARITY NEEDED ON BORDERS & POTENTIAL SUPPORT**

*"It would be helpful if we had a clearer picture of when or if borders are going to open this year. Even Travel Bubbles to certain countries. As things are presently, it is difficult to try make plans for the future of the business."*

*"We need to know whether we will get help or not as soon as, because then we will know our situation and it is our lives that are being effected and nobody should have this dragging over their heads each day wondering what is going to happen."*

*"We need answers very soon whether it be no or yes of funding so we can make choices now for our company and our staff."*

## **A MORE SUSTAINABLE / EQUITABLE FUTURE**

*"We recognize each community and region will have its own needs but also that there are many areas that have the willingness and capability of providing support to those that need it too - a "levelling" of sorts seems to be taking place and this may be something to try to maintain into the future - in that way the falls are not so steep, even though the peaks may not be so lofty and the latter is not generally a thoughtful or sustainable place to be."*

*"We feel fairly confident that as we have always catered predominantly to the domestic market, mostly due to our beliefs in staying sustainable, and keeping our footprint as light as possible, that we are on somewhat stable ground. Our main concern is the protection of the area as that is what our business, and most in this area, are reliant on. Degradation to natural beauty, wildlife and quality will further negatively affect this region so it is even more crucial to get this right now. Not only to support and market the natural beauty but to involve and show NZ'ers that there is a different way, and one that we can all look forward to in the future and be proud of. NZ can lead the world in this, and the West Coast can be in the forefront but it needs the support and backing of a wider audience than the locals, of which there are so few and who are so stretched, so also needs expertise, innovation and guidance."*

#### **FIRST BREAK IN 15 YEARS**

*"This summer was the first summer break we have had in 15 years. We are fortunate that we have no mortgage or debt and I get the pension. We have a good veg garden and chooks. My partner is living in Chch supporting her elderly mother and I am carrying out deferred maintenance."*

#### **OUT OF OUR HANDS**

*"Basically, we are now operating in a 1980's /1990's trading environment, yet with 2021 costs ... We have less than half of the revenue to pre Covid-19, yet most of our outgoing costs remain the same, not a great mix really, and sadly we cannot do much about it, it is out of our hands, it's the impact from the Government's decisions, which we know they had to make and respect them totally for what they have done to keep us all safe."*

*"Very sad to see a town of such hard-working people dying, where everyone has invested so much time and money. Due to no fault of their own."*