



COUNCIL'S ENTRIES INTO THE LGNZ EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The finalists have been announced for the 2015 Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) EXCELLENCE Awards and we're extremely proud to announce that Grey District Council has TWO entries in the finals. The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding leadership role local government plays within communities. LGNZ President Lawrence Yule said local government is the lifeblood of New Zealand's communities and makes contributions to people's lives on a daily basis. "Through these EXCELLENCE Awards, we are able to demonstrate the value we provide to community, economic development, infrastructure and the environment."

Our entries

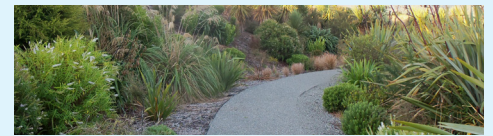
**EXCELLENCE Award for
Community Impact entry:
Grey District Identity Project**

An extensive project designed to grow confidence and pride in the Grey District which included rebranding, a 'real stories' campaign, 150th celebrations and development of a Signage, Interpretation & Public Art Framework.



**EXCELLENCE Award for
Environmental Impact entry:
Cobden Aromahana Sanctuary
and Recreation Area**

Restoration of the Cobden wetlands and development of a former dump site into a recreational asset.



Council is very pleased to have the hard work by ourselves, our partners and our community recognised by entering these awards and being selected as finalists. Mr Yule said it was very gratifying to see the number of smaller councils featuring among the 15 finalists.

We encourage people to visit our website and read about these projects, including You Tube clips of Mayor Tony Kokshoorn talking about the positive impacts these projects have had on our community as a whole. At the time of printing this newsletter, the winners had not been announced. Please check our website for more information, www.greydc.govt.nz.

Mayor's Comment



Council has just completed the 10 year plan. It is a budget for tough economic times where doing nothing is not an option. The District is making a transition from extractive industries slowly but surely to sustainable industries.

After huge job losses in the coal industry over the last five years, the Grey District now only employs around 70 people at Solid Energy and Roa coal mines. Coal will have a place in future but it will not employ the many workers it has in the past.

Farming has good growth potential and tourism will go from strength to strength together with service industries, manufacturing, building, commerce, health services, fishing, education, gold mining and advances that the Greymouth Ultra Fast Broadband roll out will bring.

The job losses have been painful but Council is positioning the District for steady growth during the next 10 years. Over the last 10

years Council has invested more than \$90 million on infrastructure, which will be a springboard for future growth. Sewerage schemes, expensive upgrades to Drinking Water Standards, \$11 million Aquatic Centre, cycleways, viewing platforms, recycling, Cobden Aromahana Sanctuary & Recreation Area and an \$11 million stadium (which is also an IL4 Post Disaster Emergency Centre). It has been hard work but we have raised a huge amount of the finance needed through sponsorship and donations.

The Grey District Council has the highest cash reserves of the district councils coastwide and the lowest average rates. We are under the average rates charged by the 68 district councils in New Zealand. Our 10 year budget plans to stay below the average rates charged New Zealand wide.

At present we have \$9 million dollars in cash reserves deposited in the bank. The \$9 million is reserved for infrastructure and District wide projects any time in the future. The new 10 year plan increases reserve funds to a healthy \$16 million.

This year's draft rate rise of 4.3% was reduced

to 3.7% after successful collaboration with other Coast councils by negotiating a joint insurance agreement that made huge dollar savings for ratepayers. West Coast councils are working together on shared services, which is a good sign for the future and will make big savings for ratepayers.

We are starting to fundraise for projects from the Greymouth CBD Renewal process, which has been widely consulted on over the last nine months. This is just the start of multi-million dollar projects in the CBD revamp that are many years overdue. Just as we did with the Aquatic Centre and Stadium, we will use a mixture of fundraising, rates, sponsorship and donations to enable projects over the coming years, which will keep rate rises in check and at the same time build modern amenities attracting more visitors to the Grey District and the new facilities will continue to make the District a great place to live.

There is lots to do but with Council making tough decisions, the District will make excellent progress well into the future.

Tony Kokshoorn



GREYMOUTH-MĀWHERA CBD RENEWAL

In undertaking the Greymouth-Mawhera CBD Renewal, Council endeavoured to consult with our community as much as possible in order to deliver the best outcomes suited to our unique environment and characterful community.

What Council's nine month period of consultation unearthed was a community full of creativity and ideas, who are excited by the prospect of change in our town centre. Our citizens' sense of identity and place is articulated in the Vision:

The Greymouth-Māwhera CBD will be a vibrant and inviting destination, a place for people to do business, to linger, gather and enjoy.

Our CBD will celebrate the town's natural environment, its climate, rich culture and heritage, its inspiring people and the stories they have to share of this place.

This is the community's plan and it has been shaped by the following feedback:

- 569 survey respondents
- Over 1,500 people contributing their 'sticker dots' on the Visual Preference Poll posters
- More than 50 people chipping in for the CBD Clean-Up
- Over 400 people visiting the CBD Renewal Pop-Up Information Shop
- 3,484 people engaging on social media
- 934 people engaging with us online

Thank you to everyone who contributed!

Stay up to date on project progress on our website:
www.greymouth.govt.nz/renewal



RATES REBATES

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides for a rebate on rates of up to \$610 to low income home owners.

The income abatement threshold is \$24,440 - if your income is more than this, you may still be eligible for a pro-rata (partial) rebate.

Applications are now open for the current rating year (1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016).

Further information and application forms are available from the Rating Department.

RATES EASY PAY

There are several convenient ways to pay your rates. You can pay by:

- Internet banking
- Phone banking
- Cash, cheque or eftpos
- Visa or Mastercard
- Direct debit (weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly)

Direct debit forms are available from the Rating Department.



EXPERIENCE A PICTORIAL JOURNEY WITH THE RESILIENT WEST COASTERS OF THE GREY DISTRICT

COMMUNITY FUNDING

The following funding rounds are available to groups in our community. Funding rounds for all schemes are in September and March/April each year. The full criteria for each scheme can be found on our website and application forms will be available online or at Council offices when funding rounds are open, www.greydc.govt.nz/funding.

Creative Communities Scheme

Funding for arts and cultural projects that increase participation in arts and benefit local communities.

Some recent recipients include:

West Coast Theatre Trust, Pou Mahi a Iwi - Cultural Work Centre Trust, Limelight Drama, Mental Health Awareness Week Art Exhibition Group 2015

Sport New Zealand Rural Travel Fund

Grey District school and sport club teams can apply for Sport NZ Rural Travel funding.

Some recent recipients include:

Suburbs Schoolboys Rugby League, Awahono School Grey Valley Basketball Team, Paroa Junior Soccer Club, Waro-Rakau Schoolboys Rugby League



West Coast Amateur Sports Trust

This fund assists sports people in the Buller, Grey and Westland Districts who have been recognised by their sports body to have potential to reach national representative level. The monies granted help our talented youth to participate in training and/or competition that will help them towards reaching a goal in line with the Trust's objectives.

Recent recipients:

Ethan Kelleher - Bowls, Chester Mama - Basketball, George Schroder - Swimming, Charlotte Lucas - Cycling



Follow them on Facebook:

Development West Coast Amateur Sports Trust



Photo of Mayor and Councillors by Stewart Nimmo

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

A recent anonymous statement to the newspaper from within Council claiming some Councillors were planning a vote of no confidence in their Chief Executive is entirely untrue. In fact, last February Councillors voted unanimously to renew the contract for the current Chief Executive, Paul Pretorius, for a further two years. Mr Pretorius has indicated to Council that he will probably not be seeking to renew his contract after this term, which marks 18 years' service to the District.

Reacting to the faceless allegations, Councillors unanimously reconfirmed full confidence in the Chief Executive at the June 2015 Council meeting and thanked Mr Pretorius for his conscientious and loyal commitment to the Grey District Council.

Council noted that the leaks to the newspaper from the anonymous insider were completely inaccurate.



Paul Pretorius, CEO



Mayor Tony Kokshoorn turning the first sod at Mingha Bluff

MINGHA BLUFF SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY

Major safety improvements are on the way for drivers travelling between Christchurch and the West Coast, with construction now underway on the State Highway 73 (SH73) Mingha Bluff Realignment, just east of Arthur's Pass Township.

The \$22 million project by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) will take around two years to complete and is one of five critically important highway projects included in the Government's accelerated regional highways package announced last June.

"SH73 is a crucial link connecting Christchurch and the West Coast, and this work will significantly improve the safety of that link," said NZTA Highways Manager, Colin Knaggs.

The project will improve safety on a 5km length of SH73 from Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek, which is narrow at many points and has tight corners that restrict visibility for road users. Mr Knaggs said the project would provide a safer and more forgiving route, with many tight curves removed, dips and hollows smoothed and a wider 9m carriageway.

For more information on this project, please visit the NZTA website: www.nzta.govt.nz

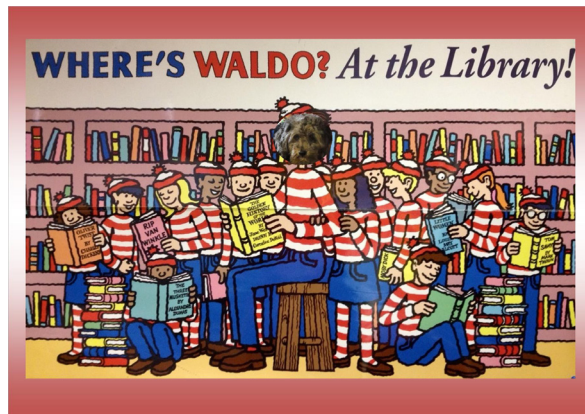
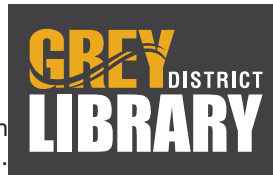
READING WITH WALDO

A literacy initiative from the Grey District Library

At the beginning of June, the Grey District Library launched an innovative literacy programme with the support of Karoro Learning. **Reading with Waldo** provides the opportunity for children to read aloud to a gentle, non-judgemental listener.

Waldo is a six year old Lowchen who comes to the Library on Wednesday afternoons with his owner, Katie Shannon, and is available for children to read aloud to him. Research has shown that children can increase in reading confidence when reading aloud to a dog as the dog doesn't put any pressure on the reader and creates a non-judgmental audience - "dogs listen attentively, do not laugh, judge or criticise (and) allow children to proceed at their own pace".

During the five week pilot earlier this year, a growing number of children visited the Library on Wednesday afternoons to read with Waldo. At the end of the trial run, parents and grandparents reported increased confidence in reading skills. One regular four year old visitor, who is just learning to read, has been practicing at home more diligently so she can read to Waldo.



Following the success of the pilot, Waldo will return to the Library next term from Wednesday 22 July 2015. Children who want to visit or read to Waldo can come to the Library on Wednesday afternoons from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.

Bookings can be made by phoning the Library on 768 5597 or just drop in.



NEWS BITES

Council rises in website rankings

Every year, the Association of Local Government Information Management (ALGIM) conducts an annual survey of council websites throughout New Zealand. Evaluation is measured on a number of different aspects, including compliance with NZ Government Web Standards, functionality, accessibility, online services provided and response times to enquiries.

This year the Grey District Council had a very positive result with **our website rising to 26th place out of 78 councils** (up from 62nd place last year). This is largely due to the new website and the increased functionality it has – further enhancements, such as online services, are planned in the future.

The full list of rankings can be viewed online: www.algim.org.nz

ITO graduations happening in September

We'll be holding our annual Trades Graduation Ceremony at the end of September to celebrate people who have completed their industry training organisation (ITO) qualification in the past 12 months.

This is an opportunity for the Mayor to publically thank the graduates, employers, family and friends for their hard work and support.

Signage and interpretation about to be rolled out

Council staff have been hard at work collaborating with the community groups which applied for funding under the Signage, Interpretation & Public Art Framework for installations in their communities. These include Lake Brunner/Lakes District Promotion Group, Greymouth Business and Promotions Association, Greymouth Heritage Trust, Greymouth i-Site, Cobden Aromahana Sanctuary and Recreation Areas Inc, Blue Penguin Trust, Kahuna Boardriders Club, Dispatch & Garlick Ltd and the Blackball community.

Keep your eye out over the coming months as signage, interpretation and public art is rolled out which tells the 'real stories' of our District.

Aquatic Centre moves to summer hours shortly

The Aquatic Centre will move to summer hours at the end of August. This means the pool will open at 6am, Monday to Friday.

If you're looking for a fun and energetic way to stay fit, why not try their awesome aquacise classes? The full timetable can be found on our website: www.greycdc.govt.nz/pools