



BULLER
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera O Kawatiri

September 2026  Issue 146

Connect

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



Kākābeak, Kōwhai ngutu-kākā

Credit: Malcolm Rutherford via: nzpcn.org.nz



Mayor Chris Russell

With the arrival of spring comes a sense of renewal, growth, and optimism. As our community emerges from the winter months, we are reminded of the importance of working together to support the wellbeing, prosperity, and development of our district.

Since my last Connect update, several long running workstreams have moved from broad discussion into clearer choices. My focus has been on protecting Buller's voice, while keeping the district at the table on regional reform, Coast Waters, flood resilience, infrastructure funding and economic development.

The most significant governance work undertaken concerns the Government's Head Start process. The final regional proposal was reframed around detailed investigation of a single West Coast unitary authority, necessary to 'pass the gateway'. Participation would have enabled this but not committed Buller to that model. Buller District Council did not endorse the proposal at its Extraordinary Meeting on 3 August, a result that reflects the significance and complexity of the decision.

It was announced on 24 September that none of the 18 proposals submitted nationwide have unanimous regional support and that Cabinet must carry out further work over the next few months and into 2027 before

any proposals are progressed to the detailed design stage, or final decisions about the Head Start process are made. Any reform must deliver a better and more affordable outcome for ratepayers, while protecting local decision-making.

Coast Waters is in its establishment phase, with the inaugural board induction completed and its first formal meeting will be held online on 30 October. The shareholder focus is now on clear expectations, service continuity, fair staff transition, meaningful engagement with mana whenua, and resolving the affordability challenge associated with stormwater funding. The overall process has reinforced the need to get the fundamentals right.

Council has also adopted the 2024-25 Annual Report, advanced stronger procurement and audit oversight, addressed an inequity in recycling charges, considered the timing of the Buller Holdings strategic review, and completed the disposal of the Kawatiri dredge.

My strategic priorities are continuing to keep Buller's interests visible in regional decision-making, securing external support before committing local resources, maintaining momentum on flood protection and transport resilience, strengthening financial accountability, and advocating for practical opportunities that grow jobs, population and business confidence.

Westport Ward by-election

HOW TO VOTE

Voting has opened for the Westport Ward by-election

- Westport Ward voters will elect one new councillor when they go to the polls between Monday 14 September and Friday 16 October 2026.
- Voting papers for electors registered in the Westport Ward will be delivered to voters from 14 September – keep an eye out for your voting pack, which should arrive in your mailbox soon.
- Those with special circumstances are able to cast a special vote by visiting their local electoral officer, based at Council's Westport office in Brougham Street.
- For more information about how to vote, including details about special voting, click the following link: bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/council-elections/how-to-vote/
- You can view full information about the by-election: bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/council-elections/2026-westport-ward-by-election/



Voting closes at 12 noon on Election Day, Friday 16 October.

Your vote matters – make it count!



Your local candidates

Get to know Buller's candidates for the Westport Ward by-election.



Scan the QR code or visit the BDC website to view candidate profiles and videos.

bullerdc.govt.nz/candidates2026

Candidates are listed alphabetically by their surname.

Disclaimer: This candidate profile information has been compiled under the Local Electoral Act 2001. The Act provides that an electoral officer is not required to verify or investigate any information included in candidate profile statements and is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in such statements.

Candidate profiles

DUNLOP Andrew

My principal residence is within the Westport Ward area.

Voting for Andrew Dunlop, a 58-year-old Westport resident who has used common sense and practical ability through my life.

I believe a council that lives within its ratepayers' needs, listens to its communities.

I believe a strong representative is required to ensure ratepayers are represented fairly at the council table.



HAMILL Pauline

My principal place of residence is NOT in the Westport Ward area.

Who is Pauline Hamill?

If you're looking for someone who always agrees with everyone, I'm probably not your candidate.

I'm outspoken, I ask questions, and I fact-check before forming an opinion. I believe council decisions should be based on evidence, facts and sound judgement.

Council processes are complicated. I've been committed to explaining them in plain language. Whether it was my support for the Messenger arrangement or any other issue, you'll know where I stand and you'll know why.

When I was videoed driving on the footpath, I owned it. I accepted responsibility because that's who I am.

Powerhouse Road is split down the centre line. One side is Westport Ward, the other Northern Buller. I'm 300 metres on the wrong side, but Westport has always been my community.

On your behalf, I'll ask questions, check the facts and never expect you to just simply take my word for it.



HILL Jack

My principal residence is within the Westport Ward area.

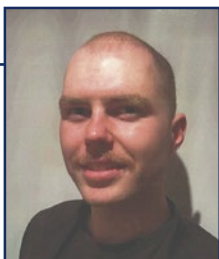
Buller faces significant challenges: economic uncertainty, rising living costs, pressure on ratepayers, and the need for stronger, more united leadership. I believe our district can do better.

As a Buller District Council insider working in the governance space, I understand how Council operates, the legislative framework we work within, and where meaningful improvements can be made. I will advocate for a Council that is efficient, transparent, fair, and focused on delivering results for our communities.

I firmly believe Buller's high rates are a symptom of a much broader issue. Lasting affordability won't come from cost cutting alone, but from growing our economy. By attracting investment, strengthening partnerships, and supporting sustainable industries, we can create jobs, improve financial resilience, and reduce long-term pressure on ratepayers.

Buller has enormous potential. With innovation, sound planning, and collaborative leadership, we can build a stronger future together.

For a true future for Buller. Vote Jack Hill.



McCORMACK Paul

My principal residence is within the Westport Ward area.

I've lived in Charleston for eight years.

I'm committed to living in Buller as a retired member of the community. Like other Buller citizens, I want to see Buller survive and thrive, and the community to regain confidence in the Council.

I first worked on the Coast in 1976 as a junior doctor at Grey Hospital. My life experience has been in health as a doctor, a senior manager and chair and then as a ministerial advisor.

I was Chairman of the West Coast DHB in 2009-2014. I was instrumental in getting the hospital built in Greymouth.

Through my life, I've found that in almost every sector, "it's all about people" I'd like to serve this community as one of your Councillors.

The Council faces a confronting future with political demands and unreasonable constraints.

My priorities are:

- Transparency and Accountability
- Prioritising activities
- Building the Confidence of the Community
- Financial prudence



PALMER Glen

My principal residence is within the Westport Ward area.

I own and operate a local engineering company that has a long history of local engineering, construction and services. It is now also providing engineering supplies to the coast with travel to Haast and Wanaka on a regular basis.

My education was finishing high school in Christchurch (1968) and then completing NZCE (Mechanical) in 1971 while working full-time.

I returned to Westport in 1981 and over time took over the family business along with my brother Leigh. I am in a position to provide a wide range of skills which could compliment the present councillors experience and would support a more united focus on the best direction for our future. Given that there are more jobs and projects than there is money available, I can see the importance of having good cost benefit analysis for the right decisions that our future depends on.



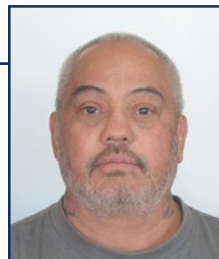
WARD Douglas

My principal residence is within the Westport Ward area.

I live in Westport. I was born in Kaiapoi but am Buller now through and through. I worked at Talleys and currently work in the mining industry. My kids go to St Canice's and Buller High School. They play rugby basketball and volleyball. Westport is our home.

To be honest I just want to know the answers. I've got the same questions as everyone and I want to ask the questions you have and let you know the answers that are given. No sugar coating.

Thanks for giving me a chance.



Community survey

What matters most to our district survey

As we embark on shaping Buller's next 10-year plan with our community, we would like to hear your thoughts on what Buller District Council should focus on in the coming years.

Shaping our next 10-year plan is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that our actions and projects align with what's most important to our community. In order to understand what matters most to you, we are carrying out a short survey.

Council's key services are maintaining local roads, footpaths, parks and reserves; managing rubbish and recycling; supporting community facilities such as libraries, pools, playgrounds and cemeteries; planning for future growth and development; protecting the environment; promoting community wellbeing, emergency management; and ensuring compliance with public health and safety requirements.

We would like to know the top three services you think we should focus on over the next ten years. Tell us why these services are important to you.

We also deliver a range of community services and facilities that contribute to quality of life, wellbeing, and a thriving district. These may include community events, community development initiatives, environmental programmes, arts and cultural activities, and providing support for community organisations.

Beyond this, identify the top three additional services you think we should focus on over the next ten years. Tell us why these additional services are important to you.

Share your views with us by filling out our survey, it will take approximately five minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary; all questions are optional, and you can exit the survey at any time.

Giving feedback is one of the most powerful ways communities in New Zealand can shape local government decision-making. It will help us understand where we should focus our efforts in the future.

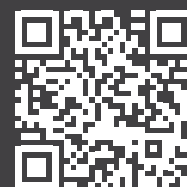
Tell us what matters most.



You can give us your feedback:



Online:
via **Let's talk Buller**
or scan this QR code



OR complete this survey and



Email:

submissions@bdc.govt.nz with the subject "LTP Survey"



Post to:

Buller District Council, PO Box 21,
Westport 7866



Deliver:

You can drop your completed survey off at Council's Westport office, the Reefton Visitor and Service Centre, our libraries in Westport or Reefton, the Ngakawau Community Centre, and the Karamea Information Centre.

**Survey closes on Monday 26
October 2026 at 4:30 pm.**

Community Grant Fund FY 2026/27 open now

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

bullerdc.govt.nz/your-council/community-funding/community-grants

Scan the QR code
to learn more



Host responsibility this festive season

Are you hosting an event in the upcoming holiday season? It may require a special licence.

A special licence allows alcohol to be sold or supplied at a one-off event that is not covered by a regular alcohol licence. Examples include fundraising dinners or events, community fairs, concerts, sports events, and charity functions.

The person or organisation running the event must apply for the special licence at least 20 working days before the event takes place. You will need to demonstrate how alcohol will be sold safely and how you plan to prevent alcohol-related harm. Conditions may include checking identification, limiting serving hours, providing food and non-alcoholic drinks, and ensuring intoxicated people are not served.

Special licences help make events safer by ensuring alcohol is managed responsibly. They also help organisers follow the law and protect the wellbeing of guests and the wider community.

By requiring approval and supervision, a special licence balances the enjoyment of alcohol at events with the need to keep people safe.

Use our [special licence flowchart](#) to help you find out whether a special licence is necessary for your event.

**Planning an event
this summer?
Don't get caught out
by alcohol licensing
deadlines.**

[Click here to find out more](#)



Waste updates

Buller's waste footprint

Find out how much refuse and recycling was collected in the Buller District in the year 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026.

The total amount of refuse generated in Buller was 2,535 tonnes

Transfer Stations (Westport and Reefton)

REFUSE  **2,100t**

RECYCLING  **1,276t**

Karamea

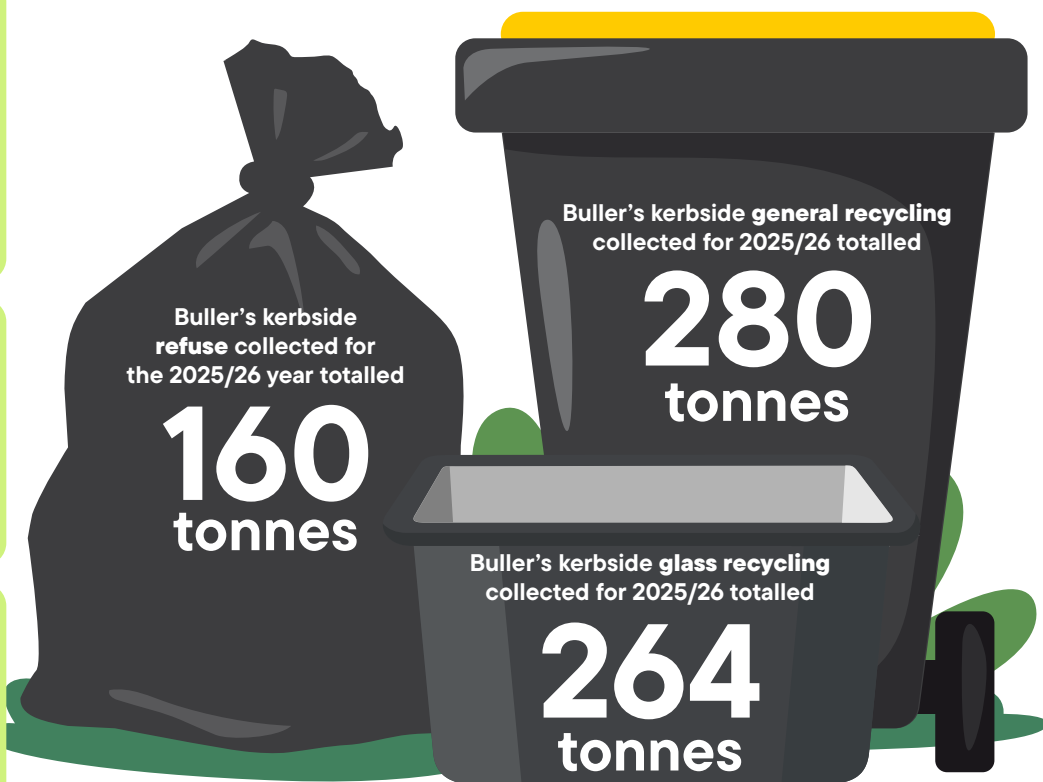
REFUSE  **188t**

RECYCLING  **24t**

Maruia

REFUSE  **87t**

RECYCLING  **23t**



Buller District general recycling quantities

Material diverted from kerbside collection and transfer stations
(note landfill material is not recycled).

 **Plastics #1, #2 and #5**
75t

 **Tins and cans**
139t

 **Garden waste**
894t

 **Paper and cardboard**
275t

 **Glass**
507t*

**42.4% of all waste collected
was diverted from landfill**

Recycling contamination

This refers to the quantity of materials deposited into recycling bins that cannot be recycled, such as plastics different to #1, #2 and #5, soft plastics and materials with multiple components.

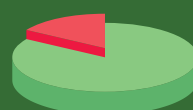
**Buller's average
contamination
rate 2025/2026**



32.8%

(Down from 39% the previous year)

**National average
contamination
rate 2025/2026**



16%

1,639 tCO₂e

Reduced through recycling

Thanks to Buller's recycling efforts last financial year, the region reduced carbon emissions by an estimated 1,639 tonnes. Equivalent to taking around 350 passenger vehicles off the road for a year.



Reduce Reuse Recycle
BULLER
Shaping our district

*Note, data is by weight not volume. While volumetrically there is a significant quantity of plastics in the recycling stream, glass is the most dominant material by weight.

Dog registration



Buller District Council's Animal Management team is pleased to announce a winner has been drawn in this year's inaugural dog registration competition.

Taika, a four-year-old black labrador from Punakaiki is the lucky recipient of free dog registration for the remainder of his years.

His owners, Richard and Evelyn, told us a bit about Taika's story.

"Taika hails from the Craigieburn Forest area, near Mt Cheeseman and was the only boy in a litter of five born (to his Mum - also named Forest) in 2022. His dad was from Hokitika. He manages to stay in touch with his mother and sisters and took part in a 'family reunion' in April this year.

"His favourite pastimes include several walks a day, chasing foam balls on the tideline and he loves to run alongside a bike. He has a particular talent for games of hide and seek, and enjoys meeting new people, happily settling in for a pat (just in case a snack might be on offer). His good friend Peter rewards him with a pigs' ear every now and again".

Despite this busy schedule, Taika also manages to fit in kiwi avoidance training with the Department of Conservation. Kiwi avoidance training helps reduce the chance of a dog injuring or killing a kiwi and is a

requirement in some areas that have kiwi and other ground-dwelling native birds.

Richard explains that Taika has been trained to not chase the neighbours' chooks, or birds at the beach or river – but living adjacent to the Paparoa National Park means wild goats are always a potential distraction.

Group Manager Regulatory Services Simon Bastion congratulates Taika, Richard and Evelyn on winning the draw and says: "We are pleased with this year's dog registration numbers, with over 1900 dogs registered across all categories district wide.

"We thank those who registered their canine companions on time – it is great to see residents supporting responsible dog ownership in Buller."

BDC's new competition initiative meant that all companion (non-working) dogs registered by 31 July 2026 which met responsible dog ownership criteria were entered in a prize draw to win free registration for the remaining life of the registered dog. The competition will become a regular feature on the council calendar going forward.

Water and meeting notices

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

September to October 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.

Extraordinary Council Meeting – Reserves Management Plan Hearings and Deliberations

- 29 September, starting 9:00 am
Clocktower Chambers

Workshop: Freedom Camping Bylaw

- 30 September, starting 1:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Ordinary Council Meeting

- 30 September, starting 3:30 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Workshop: West Coast Regional Council Submission

- 7 October, starting 1:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Workshop: Long-Term Plan Infrastructure Strategy

- 14 October, starting 1:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Extraordinary Council Meeting – West Coast Regional Council Draft Submission

- 14 October, starting 3:00 pm
Clocktower Chambers

Mokihinui Reserve and Hall Subcommittee Meeting

- 22 October, starting 10:00 am
Mokihinui Hall

Creative Communities Subcommittee Meeting

- 28 October, starting 10:30 am
Clocktower Chambers

Ordinary Council Meeting

- 28 October, 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

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