

The Westport Way



Isthmus.

Westport Concept Framework.
Buller District Council.
09 December 2024.

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How We Live In The Landscape

The first part of the concept framework is the Westport Way.

This is an exploration of the past, present and future patterns of settlement in the Buller District and Westport itself. By drawing on the knowledge of a landscape shaped by water we gain powerful insights into the identity of this place and how it shapes us as a community. In turn, this informs how we shape our place going forward. As kaitiaki or stewards of the land, how successfully we grow is entirely dependent on our enduring relationship with the landscape - because we are after all part of nature, not apart from it.

We interact with landscape by journeying through it, and we understand it like a mind map. We interpret it at a detailed scale of familiar features, and in all its vastness and power. District boundaries are arbitrary, but journeys and stories are interwoven. The moment you reach the brow of the hill and see the Tasman Sea, or the bend in the river are the moments you know you are home.

The land is shaped by water, and the land shapes where water flows. In Westport, water is ever present, and it defines the diversity of landscapes within the landscape - from Pakihi soils and coastal rainforest, to lagoons, dunes and fertile riverplain. In our first workshops the words used to describe this landscape were raw, powerful, vast, emotive and evocative of generational memories.

