November 2026 Issue 147

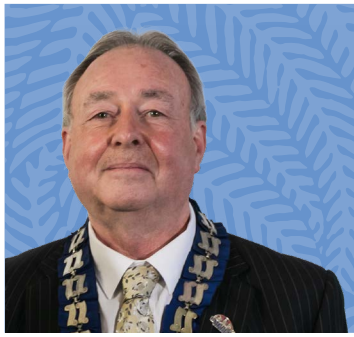
BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera O Kawatiri

Connect

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



Carmine rātā, Metrosideros carminea
Credit: Colin C. Ogle via: nzpcn.org.nz



Mayor's Message

Mayor Chris Russell

As summer approaches, my priorities remain reliable services, responsible spending, and a strong future for every community in Buller.

The Westport Flood Protection Scheme remains a significant focus. I undertook a governance review to examine how and why the project reached its August reset and recommend improvements to independent scrutiny and project oversight. Separately, Council's submission sought stronger governance with Buller representation, additional government funding, independent technical review and clearer reporting of costs, risks, and ratepayer impacts.

I have arranged an independently facilitated workshop on 25 November to review Council's first year, identify improvements and prepare for the decisions ahead. Our Annual Report records infrastructure progress while identifying service targets we have not met. These findings must inform priorities and measurable improvements.

I acknowledge our staff's hard work and dedication. They continue delivering essential services while responding to increasing central government demands, which bring additional workloads and costs for Council and ratepayers.

Head Start is the Government's process for councils to propose local government reorganisation. With decisions deferred until early 2027, Buller's interests and local voice remain my priority. Our Long-Term Plan must support dependable services and infrastructure.

Mining investment offers exciting opportunities for Reefton and the Inangahua Ward. Endura Mining is preparing Snowy River for production, while Rua Gold is advancing its proposed Auld Creek gold project. My focus is on local employment, business opportunities and planning for housing, infrastructure and services to support growth. Growth must respect our communities' heritage and character.

Full funding assistance for eligible Karamea Highway Special Purpose Road work through 2030 supports vital access for northern Buller.

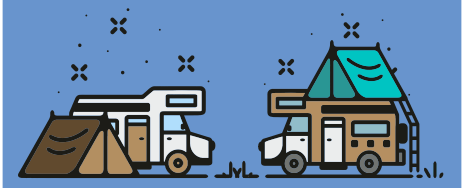
I will continue listening to our communities and working with councillors, staff, Development West Coast, iwi, neighbouring councils and government agencies to turn priorities into practical results.

Buller District Council's Freedom Camping Bylaw is under review, and we would like your feedback.

The Freedom Camping Bylaw is being reviewed to ensure it remains consistent with the requirements of the Freedom Camping Act 2011 and continues to reflect local circumstances in Buller. The draft bylaw aims to balance the benefits of freedom camping with the need to protect the environment, maintain access to public spaces and take into account the impact on local communities.

As part of this review, Council has carefully assessed all areas where prohibitions on freedom camping are being considered. The bylaw applies to freedom camping on Council-controlled land in the Buller District, excluding reserves.

The community is invited to make submissions by **4:30 pm on Monday 14 December 2026.**



Want to know more? Head to Buller District Council's engagement platform Let's talk Buller or pick up information from Council's offices in Westport or Reefton, Buller District Libraries, the Ngakawau Community Centre, and Karamea Information Centre.

Scan this QR code with your phone or tablet to visit **letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz**

Solar power project strengthens community resilience across Buller

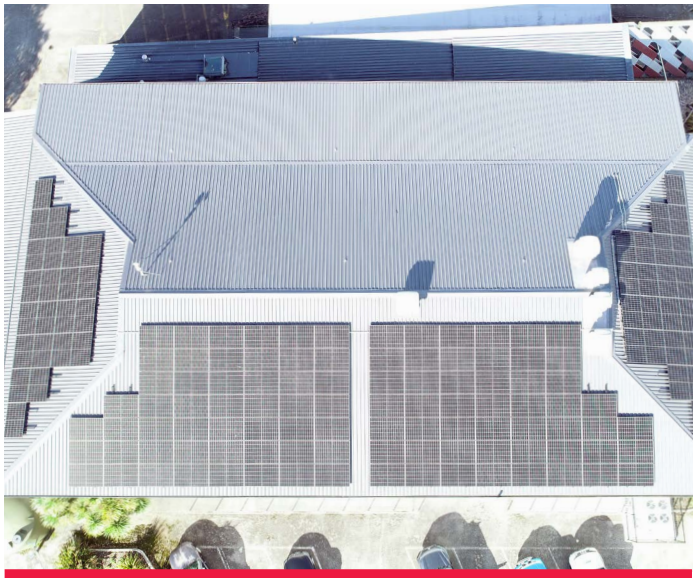
Buller District Council has completed a $330,000 solar power and battery storage project designed to strengthen community resilience and improve emergency preparedness across the Buller District.

The project was 75% co-funded by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) through the Community Renewable Energy Fund (CREF), with the remaining funding provided by Council.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and battery energy storage have been installed across six community venues:

- Ngakawau Hall
- Carters Beach Hall
- NBS Theatre
- Reefton Community Hall
- Maruia Hall
- Charleston Hall

The main purpose of the project is to improve resilience during power outages, rather than simply reduce electricity bills. The systems are designed to support critical electrical loads when the main power grid is unavailable, helping community facilities remain better equipped to respond during emergencies.



Solar panels installed on the NBS Theatre roof

Community halls and facilities play an important role during emergency events, providing valuable local spaces when communities need support. Having solar generation and battery storage available helps maintain essential power and improve the ability of these facilities to support their communities during disruptions and emergency events.

The systems have also been designed with potential future expansion in mind, allowing for additional capacity as requirements change over time.

Delivering the project was a significant undertaking, requiring extensive planning, coordination, and collaboration between Council and contractors. It also required commitment from those managing the halls in our communities to meet ambitious timeframes and ensure the installations achieved their intended resilience outcomes.

Leading the delivery was Council's own Josh Hawes, who worked closely with ESL and delivery partners Mill-Ark and Sunergy Solar to navigate technical, logistical, and operational challenges throughout the project. Their collective commitment and expertise ensured the project was delivered successfully and on schedule.

"The main goal of this project was to make our community facilities more resilient during power outages. It's about ensuring we have better options available to support our communities when they're needed most" says Josh.

Tokohau Samuels, ESL's General Manager, shared a similar sentiment noting:

"The project provided an invaluable opportunity for the local company to showcase its capabilities and highlight what can be achieved through strong local partnerships, collaborative delivery, and a shared commitment to community outcomes."

The completed project represents a substantial investment in Buller's community infrastructure and emergency preparedness by strengthening critical communications and power resilience across the district. It will help communities remain connected and better prepared during emergencies, contributing to a safer and more resilient Buller for years to come.

2026 Draft Freedom Camping Bylaw

Crossword Challenge

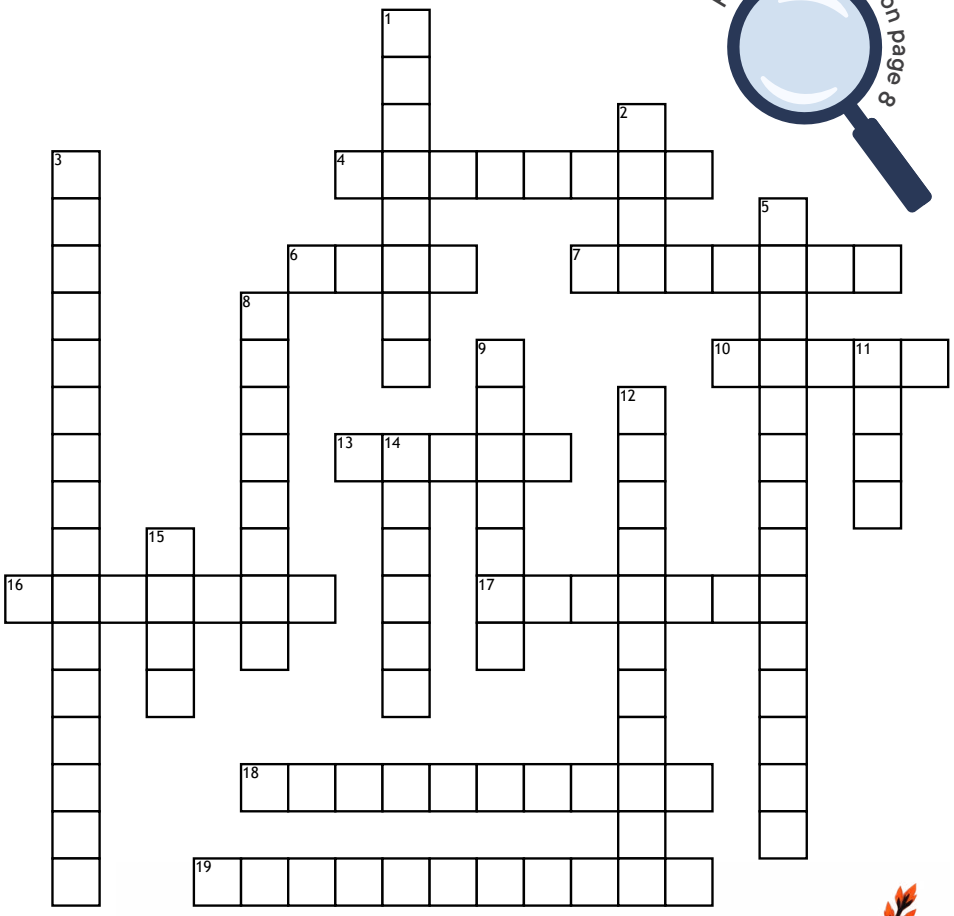
Find the answers on page 8

Across

4. What was the assessment outcome for all cemeteries in the district?
6. Proposed departure time for campers unless otherwise specified.
7. What land is not covered by the Freedom Camping Bylaw?
10. Freedom camping in these structures is proposed to be prohibited district-wide unless authorised.
13. What is the maximum stay limit set out in the Freedom Camping Bylaw 2026?
16. Council may issue infringement _____ for breaches of the bylaw.
17. The river mouth near Karamea where camping is proposed to be prohibited. _____ River Mouth.
18. The additional prohibited area identified during the review is De _____ Road.
19. Council had to assess under the Freedom Camping Act if the bylaw is the most _____ means to address the problem.

Down

1. A popular surfing location where freedom camping is proposed to be prohibited. _____ Bay.
2. Council must review the bylaw every _____ years.
3. The bylaw regulates freedom camping on public land managed and controlled by _____.
5. The Act that regulates freedom camping in New Zealand.
8. Freedom camping is generally prohibited in non-self contained _____.
9. The town where Bridge Street and The Strand are proposed prohibited areas.
11. Campsites must be left clean and _____.
12. One of Council's key objectives is protecting the natural _____.
14. One reason camping may be restricted is to protect public _____ and safety.
15. What New Zealand Act did Council assess when drafting the Freedom Camping Bylaw ensuring the new bylaw is consistent with it? New Zealand _____ of Rights Act 1990.



Answer each question in the crossword using the *Draft Freedom Camping Bylaw 2026* and the *Statement of Proposal*.

Want to know more?

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Green waste disposal charges to be reinstated at the Westport and Reefton Transfer Stations

Residents will need to pay to dispose of their green waste again at the Westport and Reefton Transfer Stations from 11 November 2026.

Most types of green waste have been accepted for free at both transfer stations since December 2024, when a trial began to test co-composting of mulched transfer station green waste with wastewater sludge from the Westport Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).

Sludge is the solid material left over after wastewater treatment processes are complete. At this time, garden green waste disposal was made free to help obtain the extra quantity of material necessary for the composting trial.

Group Manager Infrastructure Services Anthony Blom says: "It was hoped that the composting trial would result in a beneficial use for both types of material, but unfortunately, the resultant product did not meet the necessary quality standards required for its intended commercial end use. As such, the composting trial has ended, with sludge disposal at the Kate Valley Landfill underway."



Green waste chipping at the Westport Transfer Staition

Without this ongoing requirement for additional green waste, council will reinstate a user charge for green waste received at the Westport and Reefton Transfer Stations from Wednesday 11 November 2026.

Green waste disposal will be charged for at $185 per tonne, including GST. This charge will replace the current 'free of charge' green waste fee entry in Buller District Council's 2026/27 Fees and Charges Schedule for Westport and Reefton. Please note, the schedule currently states 'Pricing set by contractor, subject to change.'

"The green waste received will still be shredded onsite, and the resulting material made available to the public to take away, free of charge, for use as untreated garden mulch. The reinstated disposal charge will cover the operational costs of processing and shredding the material" continues Mr Blom.

Residents utilising green waste disposal are asked to continue separating out cabbage tree leaves, flax, agapanthus, bamboo, stumps and branches over 300 mm in diameter from their green waste and dispose of them as general waste.

Get ready to choose your red refuse bin

Buller's new waste contract will start in July 2027 and includes kerbside collection of recycling and refuse in Zone 1, emptying of streetside public litter bins, and operation of the Westport and Reefton Transfer Stations.

A key change will be that properties in Zone 1 will receive a refuse bin which will be emptied fortnightly and the cost of emptying will be charged through a targeted rate. This change will affect all properties in Zone 1 and property owners cannot opt out of refuse collection.

Zone 1 covers Westport, the areas from Westport to the Mōkihinui Bridge, from Westport to Punakaiki, from Westport to Reefton (including Blacks Point), and from Reefton to Ikamatua.

Rubbish bin sizes

Eligible properties in Zone 1 can choose between 80 L, 120 L, or 240 L refuse wheelie bin/s per property.

80 L bin

Ideal for smaller households



Recommended if approximately **1 x 60 L Council rubbish bag** is used per fortnight.

120 L bin

Ideal for small to medium households



Recommended if approximately **2 x 60 L Council rubbish bags** are used per fortnight.

240 L bin

Ideal for larger households



Recommended if approximately **4 x 60 L Council rubbish bags** are used per fortnight.

- Every property in rubbish and recycling Zone 1 will receive one 120 L refuse bin and will be charged for the service as part of their rates invoice from July 2027, unless the property owner or property manager indicates they wish to receive a different bin size or number of bins. The cost will vary depending on the size of bin and the number of bins chosen.
- From **Monday 30 November 2026 until Monday 25 January 2027,** residents will be asked to select the bin size and number of bins they wish to use from July 2027 onwards.
- You will be able to select your bins online, or by filling out the paper form, which will be available from Council's offices in Westport, the Reefton Visitor and Service Centre, the Ngakawau Community Centre, and the Punangairi Visitor Centre in Punakaiki.

For more information about the upcoming changes and selecting your new bins, visit:
https://bullerdc.govt.nz/refusebins



Photography from Kete West Coast
https://ehive.com/collections/202148/kete-west-coast

Kete West Coast hosting transferred from Buller District Libraries to The Museum of Kawatiri

Buller District Libraries (BDL) is underway with a transfer of the Kete West Coast digital archive custodianship to The Museum of Kawatiri Trust.

The Kete West Coast digital information project was created in 2012 by the National Library to preserve the memories and stories of West Coast people. West Coasters were invited to add their stories, images, videos and audios to the Kete project.

After the National Library decommissioned the original website in 2022, the archived records which included 3000 images and documents, were migrated to BDL with support from Westland and Grey District Libraries.

A New Zealand Libraries Partnership Programme fund has supported the transfer and ongoing management of the collection over the past five years, at no cost to ratepayers, but with the recent end of this funding, a long-term custodian was required to continue preserving this valuable community heritage resource.

Buller District Council Group Manager Community Services Manager Krissy Trigg says BDL are delighted that the Museum of Kawatiri Trust has formally accepted responsibility for the collection.

“We’re very pleased the Trust are taking on the ongoing management of the collection and that it will continue to be cared for by an organisation dedicated to preserving West Coast heritage,”

“The Kete West Coast collection plays an important role in preserving the photographs, stories and history of our region and we would like to thank our West Coast district library partners for their continued support of Kete West Coast.”

BDL will continue to work closely with the Trust to ensure a smooth transition of the collection and the Kete West Coast website will continue to operate on the e-hive platform: **https://ehive.com/collections/202148/kete-west-coast**.

DEVELOPMENT WEST COAST

Te Ohu Whakawhanake o Te Tai Poutini

Community Resilience and Vibrancy Fund *(CRV Funding)*

Funding for practical projects that strengthen West Coast communities

Development West Coast is supporting community projects that improve resilience, strengthen important local facilities and help create vibrant places where people want to live, work and visit.

Funding at a glance	**Who can apply?**	**Assessment focus**
• $10,000 to $300,000 per request • DWC may fund up to 65% of eligible project costs • The balance may include cash, external funding and appropriate in-kind contributions • In-kind support is assessed case by case and must be reasonable and verifiable • Projects should start within 12 months and finish within 18 months	• West Coast-based not-for-profit or charitable organisations with a community purpose and appropriate governance structure. • Local authorities may be eligible where a project is beyond normal business-as-usual responsibilities.	• Trust Deed and Fund alignment • Community need, support and readiness • Economic and community benefit • Sustainability and ongoing viability • Co-funding, leverage and value for money

What can be funded?

Community Facilities – Capital Works	**Community Facilities – Energy Resilience**	**Beautification and Place Activation**
Upgrades, renewals or adaptations that keep important community facilities fit for purpose, accessible and sustainable.	Energy systems and related works that improve resilience and reduce the operating pressure on eligible community facilities.	Community-led projects improving town amenity, visitor experience, local identity and community confidence.

Key dates and how to apply

Round Two: 1 February to 8 March 2027 **DWC decision:** 12 April 2027	**Application Process** 1. Complete the application form and attach the required documents. 2. Submit it to the relevant district council. 3. Councils may provide recommendations and local insight. 4. DWC completes assessment and due diligence. Trustees make the final decision.
Project not ready yet? Use the Expression of Interest form if the project still needs scoping, quotes, approvals, co-funding or governance decisions. An EOI helps councils and DWC understand future projects but is not a funding application or guarantee of funding.	

For Application form, guidance and submissions, contact:

GREY DISTRICT COUNCIL	BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL	WESTLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
info@greydc.govt.nz	grants@bdc.govt.nz	communities@westlanddc.govt.nz

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 (Wilsons 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/

Crossword answers

Across

4. Prohibit
6. Nine
7. Reserve
10. Tents
13. Three
16. Notices
17. Oparara
18. Malmanches
19. Appropriate

Down

1. Tauranga
2. Five
3. Loacal Authorities
5. Freedom Camping
8. Vehicles
9. Reefton
11. Tidy
12. Environment
14. Health
15. Bill

Meetings
November to December 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.

Inangahua Reserve and Hall Subcommittee Formal Meeting

- 19 November, starting 4:30 pm
  Inangahua Junction Hall

Ordinary Council Meeting

- 25 November, starting 3:30 pm
  Clocktower Chambers

Community Committee Meeting

- 9 December, starting 3:30 pm
  Clocktower Chambers

Risk and Audit Committee Meeting

- 9 December, starting 5:30 pm
  Clocktower Chambers

Ordinary Council Meeting

- 16 December, 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

Please visit Buller District Council's website bullerdc.govt.nz for to check for any updates to the Council meeting calendar

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

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