

Implications of Rural Change and the Use of Rural Tourism to Drive Economic Development:

**A Case Study Investigation into Westland District,
New Zealand**

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Abstract

Rural areas play a critical role in the national economy. They often form the backbone of the export economy and house significant proportions of the national population. However, recent decades have seen rural areas across the developed world experience an era of significant change as they seek to renegotiate their place within the context of economic and social change unfolding nationally and internationally. The changes that have occurred in these areas have been poorly understood in literature, government policy, and the media regarding how they differ, the challenges they face, whether they can regenerate or respond to social and economic change and the specific needs of marginalised groups in rural areas like Māori communities.

The purpose of this research was to understand how specific economic activities have encouraged growth or exacerbated the decline in rural areas and understand how various organisations and agencies responded to these changes. The rural district of Westland, New Zealand was selected as an appropriate case study because it had undergone significant economic, social and political change in recent decades. A document analysis, questionnaires with the public and ten key informant interviews were carried out between local council, community groups and local Māori to comprehend these changes.

The study found that post-productive activities that are predominately market-led like tourism positively promote growth, Westland. While the uptake of tourism has been successful in attracting revenue and visitors to the district, the rapid and aggressive growth of tourism caused issues as the Westland District lacked the infrastructural requirements, significant investment, and the demographic make-up to stimulate significant economic growth sustainably. Various organisations and agencies were found to be responding to these issues. However, they operated in an ad-hoc manner that primarily focused on increasing revenue and improving the visitor experience. This promoted growth and marginalisation of communities and the exacerbated the inevitable decline of those rural communities that have failed to market their point of difference. Furthermore, the relationships that have been established between local government and local rūnanga was tokenistic and failed to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The key lessons that this case study has for other rural areas are needing to manage and monitor growth and decline of rural communities effectively and collaborate with organisations operating in the development sphere to establish meaningful partnerships that not only have good economic outcomes but social ones too.

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To the dire wolves,
That set neat prints along these blank sheets,
That paused and then pounced
To help print these pages.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Rural areas and the small towns within have experienced an era of significant change as they seek to renegotiate their place within the context of economic and social change taking place on a regional, national and global level (Nel and Connelly, 2016). Media attention has often dramatised the fate of ‘zombie-towns’ and the seemingly bleak future of rural areas in New Zealand, and around the world, through the decline of population and primary industries, they have experienced (Eaqub, 2014). Contrary to this, some rural areas are growing at a rapid rate and help to form the backbone of a nation’s economy. This growth in rural areas is due to the fact these areas have changed in recent decades through the establishment of new economic sectors. While these areas developed because of their suitability for rural production activities such as agriculture, forestry, mining, and dairying, they have undergone a significant transformation to ensure their existence in the national and international economy (Flora, 2018). However, there is a lack of understanding of how these rural areas differ, the challenges they face, whether they can regenerate under these challenges if they can respond to social and economic changes and can meet the specific needs of marginalised groups in society such as Māori. Simultaneously throughout the country, there is a range of significant local examples of development and regeneration happening at the local level from which key lessons for the country can be derived.

Many of these growing rural areas have utilised tourism as a key economic driver to grow their local economy. The tourism industry is of growing significance in rural areas, and small towns as these places shift from production to consumption activities (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). Tourism is increasingly being recognised as a suitable replacement for traditional activities in rural communities (McGehee *et al.*, 2015; Roberts *et al.* 2017). It is an approach that has often been taken up by rural communities as a solution to support the problems related to declining from other industries rather than an approach adopted on its own (Walmsley, 2003). Governments at both central and local level may promote tourism to create employment opportunities, develop infrastructure and revitalise local economies; however, the benefits of this approach may be less than expected and inequitably distributed throughout rural areas.

This thesis seeks to explore how the role of tourism and the response of these organisations has impacted the economic development of rural areas.

1.2 Research rationale

Rural and small-town New Zealand often form the foundations of the country's export industries in value terms, and they are also home to a rapidly developing tourism industry (Nel and Connelly, 2016). Approximately 22% of the total population of New Zealand at the 2013 census resides permanently in rural areas with populations under 10,000 people (McAllister, 2017). The use of the term "rural" throughout this thesis refers to places with less than 10,000 people and consists of minor urban areas (1,000 to 9,999 people); rural centres (300 to 999 people); and rural districts (299 people or less). However, rural areas are often treated and perceived as homogenous regarding their economic development linkages, infrastructural requirements, investment potential, and demographic changes. In contrast, these areas are experiencing conflicting growth trends both economically and demographically, along with uneven geographical development. Some rural areas have experienced substantial growth and regeneration, whereas some have undergone decline and contraction for several decades. Furthermore, inadequate acknowledgement is given to the knowledge and perspectives of indigenous groups in the development of rural areas.

An understanding of rural areas, particularly within the New Zealand context, is important because there is a limited amount of information and understanding of how industry changes have affected the provision and usage of physical and social infrastructure and vice versa. In New Zealand, rural communities typically relied on primary and extractive industries such as agriculture, forestry, mining and dairying to ensure their economic well-being (Wilson, 1995). This reliance on the traditional primary industries has been replaced with alternative economic activities that have moved away from intensification and specialisation of production. Tourism in rural areas has been utilised as a critical local economic development strategy to shift away from the traditional extractive industries. The changing functions of small towns, combined with a societal shift from production to consumption is allowing for the emergence of these new activities in small New Zealand towns. However, there is a limited understanding of the changes that are occurring due to growth in rural tourism, and other developments that may be constrained by the lack of adequate infrastructure and services in these rural settings. Therefore, the rationale for this research is to explore the use of tourism for developing economic activity

in rural communities to investigate the lack of understanding that currently exists around how rural and small towns have responded to these key economic shifts.

1.3 Research context

The Westland District, a rural area, located in the West Coast region of New Zealand, has undergone significant shifts in the main economic drivers of the area and is facing significant issues as a result. The rural area was previously focused primarily on extractive industries such as gold mining and sawmilling as the district's key economic drivers (Cameron *et al.*, 2001). Today, the economic base of the district is more diverse with tourism and dairying (along with dairy product and manufacturing) being the main economic drivers (Westland District Council, 2018). Tourism in Westland has been steadily increasing whereas the traditional sectors have declined and face uncertain futures. While tourism itself cannot provide a complete replacement for the decline of these primary industries, it does provide the opportunity to broaden and diversify the Westland economy if managed carefully.

The Westland District has experienced significant growth in tourism and visitor numbers to the district and is a 'surge' region, as classified by the New Zealand Government (MBIE, 2017). While the area has always attracted visitors to the district because of its unique natural environment and geographic features, recent years has seen unprecedented growth in both domestic and international visitor numbers to the area. As a rural area, the infrastructure and facilities that are present within the district are inadequate or simply non-existent because these rural communities were not constructed to cope with a substantial number of visitors to the area. Several issues and opportunities have been identified because of the growth of tourism in the Westland District such as infrastructure, revitalisation of small communities and cultural heritage, cycle trails and employment from new businesses.

This thesis examines the development of tourism becoming a key economic driver, along with the issues and opportunities that have arisen for rural areas because of it. The Westland District is a particularly suitable location to explore this because of the changes it has experienced from traditionally being focused on primary industries to tourism. The roles of various organisations and institutions have played, and their responses in addressing the issues that have occurred will also be explored within this context.

1.3 Research scope

This research aims to investigate the role tourism has in rural areas as a key economic driver and the impact this sector has had on rural areas. The Westland District is used as the rural area as a case study example to highlight the issues and economic success that tourism has had on the area. This thesis builds upon research that has already been carried out into rural districts and small-town regarding restructuring, the consequent structural economic changes, globalization and post-productivism economies (Conrad and Pawson, 1997; Wilson, 2001; Pomeroy 2015; Nel and Connelly 2016). This study will also focus on the development of cultural and heritage tourism, events, and cycle trails as tourism resources due to their importance to the Westland District. Furthermore, it will also investigate the role various organizations and institutions have played in the development of tourism for economic growth in the area. The aim of the research is to address the following general research objectives through the use of the Westland District as a case study:

- Objective 1: Explore the context around the development of tourism in rural and small-town New Zealand and investigate the implications of this.
- Objective 2: Investigate the issues, opportunities and implications that have arisen from using tourism as a key economic driver for individuals, communities, indigenous groups, organisations and visitors to rural and small towns in New Zealand.
- Objective 3: Understand and assess the roles that various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions have played in the development of tourism as a key economic driver and their response to the issues that have arisen and explore the implications of their role for rural areas.
- Objective 4: Investigate the key lessons learnt through the development and management of tourism as a key economic driver in rural and small towns in New Zealand and what this means for achieving societal and economic outcomes that are sustainable for rural areas

A key aspect of this research is exploring the experience the Westland District has had and comparing this to previous literature published around rural and small towns. Five key research questions were proposed to help answer the research objectives. These are:

1. What are the key demographic and economic trends occurring within rural areas and the implications of these trends?

2. What are the key issues and opportunities that are currently influencing economic growth in rural areas on individuals, communities and visitors to the area and what are their implications?
3. What role do local and regional economic, political and community organisations, institutions, indigenous groups and agencies play in facilitating economic development in the Westland District?
4. How have various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions responded to the issues that have arisen and what are the key implications of their approaches for rural communities?
5. What are the key lessons learnt from the Westland District case study regarding the management of economic development to assess what this means for achieving societal and economic outcomes that are sustainable for rural areas?

1.4 Research structure

This thesis is set out in a series of chapters that outlines that the research was undertaken logically and progressively to answer the above objectives and research questions. Chapter one has briefly introduced the research problem and provided some context and the guiding theories which this research is based.

Chapter two will detail a review of the current literature surrounding the research problem. This chapter explores themes around small-town growth and decline, the factors that have contributed to these changes and examine the role and response of various organisations, agencies and individuals to these changes. The literature surrounding the role of tourism in rural areas as a response to these changes will be investigated to establish a framework for the rest of the study.

Chapter three outlines the approach that was used to undertake the research. This chapter will discuss the qualitative research methods that formed the main component of this research process. This chapter will discuss the reasoning behind the approach; the qualitative methods used such as key informant interviews, document analysis and questionnaires. A justification for the use of a Westland as a case study to undertake this research on rural change is also provided.

Chapter four introduces the case study area for this research which is the Westland District, New Zealand. The chapter outlines the key demographic and economic trends of the Westland District. It depicts and critiques the implications that the shift of key economic drivers away

from extractive industries to a rapidly growing tourism industry has had on the area. Furthermore, the role of various organisations, Indigenous groups and development agencies involved in economic development is also analysed and critiqued.

Chapter five outlines the results from the primary data collection process. This chapter provides an analysis of relevant documentation, along with a description of the key themes and ideas raised during both structured and semi-structured interviews that were carried out with key informants. This section identifies that there is substantial involvement of both local and central government in the Westland District regarding managing tourism for economic development purposes. Furthermore, the section identifies the variety of approaches that are being undertaken by organisations and agencies across the Westland District.

Chapter six provides a discussion of the research findings. This discussion answers the four key objectives of the research outlined above. The chapter discusses the overall significance of the findings associated with uneven development in rural areas, the issues and opportunities rural tourism provides, and the implications of the roles of various organisations operating in the rural context. The chapter concludes with key lessons that are learnt from the Westland District case study and assesses how they might be applied to other rural areas in a national and international context.

Finally, the research is concluded in chapter seven. This chapter will synthesise the research project and evaluate how the research has addressed the research objectives. Furthermore, the chapter will also discuss the future of the Westland District, and recommend possible strategies to ensure tourism development continues to have a positive benefit on both the local economy and communities residing in the district.

The following chapter will seek to establish a conceptual framework to understand and explore the current literature surrounding change in rural areas, organisations operating in them, and the use and implications of rural tourism.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse academic literature relating to changes experienced in rural areas and small towns to provide the theoretical framework for this research. This chapter will help to establish the key themes relating to the research within the wider literature available and direct the approach of the research to inform later the conclusions reached in the discussion chapter. This review is divided into four main themes that will help to understand and shape this research project. The first part of this literature review will focus on the various changes that have occurred in rural areas and small towns internationally. Following this, the various factors that have caused these changes are also analysed. Next, the institutional responses to change in rural and small towns is investigated by looking at the role and response of the public sector, the community, and Indigenous groups. Finally, the approach of tourism as a local economic development response in rural areas and small towns is examined in detail.

2.2 Change in rural areas and small towns internationally

2.2.1 Defining rural areas and small towns

Regional areas of a country are unique places that play a pivotal role in the economic, political, and social context of each country (Sampson *et al.*, 2011). These areas are predominately service centres, retirement areas, dormitory regions, tourist hubs and resource towns (Nel, 2011). Many small towns originate around resource extraction such as mining, while others develop due to their locality near a river or along the main travel route (Carlton-Laney *et al.*, 1999). For this thesis, areas considered to be "rural" are places that exist outside of urban centres and regions that contain 10,000 people or more and encompasses small towns that also fall within this definition. Nel (2018) defines rural to consist of minor urban areas (1,000 to 9,999 people); rural centres (300 to 999 people), and rural districts (299 people or less).

2.2.2 Change in rural and small towns

Recent decades have seen a dramatic change in rural and small towns across the world (Gibb and Nel, 2007). This change has resulted in some small towns either growing, plateauing or in decline. Some towns around the world operate in cycles of growth and decline over decades

and are ultimately impacted by global, national or localised trends that will dictate their current status (Knox and Mayer, 2013). Cities are more robust to changes in the global economy as opposed to small towns as they are more likely to have multiple industries that allow them to withstand downturns in certain economies (Haase *et al.*, 2014). In contrast to cities, small towns tend to be limited to singular industries which makes them more susceptible to the economic downturn (Hinderink and Titus, 2002). Small rural towns have typically relied on primary industries and have suffered the most economically speaking (Sampson *et al.*, 2011). These places have faced the reality of enduring a rural economy that is based on primary industries such as agriculture which has led to significant economic changes (Keller, 2001). Taylor *et al.* (1999) contend that one of the main challenges to establishing this is due to the loss of services since towns that can retain these industries and services can attract residents and visitors. It is important to study the effects of these changes on local communities' livelihood, sense of place, and security to understand the human element of any change (Wilson, 1995).

2.2.3 Decline of rural and small towns

The issue of small-town decline is nothing new. However, the decline in some places in comparison to other urban environments has become significantly more pronounced in recent decades (Kenyon and Black, 2001). Some academics have adopted a pessimistic and defeatist perspective regarding the development of rural areas and small towns so believe there is no real future for these areas (Gray and Sinclair, 2005). The depletion of a natural resource, the decline of local manufacturing or an economy based upon a primary industry that has significantly declined has led to the inevitable decline of some small towns (Kenyon, 2002). Atkinson (2009) attributes the decline of these areas to the loss of skilled people to urban areas and the resulting shortage of skills which threatens their survival. O'Hagan and Cecil (2007) note that many small towns in decline struggle to establish new jobs or even provide a diverse range of jobs that offer employment. Therefore, without these key economic drivers, employment opportunities and skilled individuals to actively participate within the economy then rural areas will experience an inevitable decline.

2.2.4 Growth of rural and small towns

Despite this, there is a debate between scholars as to whether all small towns are declining. In contrast to the previous section, some rural areas are experiencing periods of high growth. Sampson *et al.* (2011) state that single resource towns often experience 'boom' and 'bust' cycles. However, the growth or decline of small towns is significantly reliant on contextual factors such as the location and economic conditions of a small town (Ferreira, 2007). Van

Kierkerk and Marais (2008) challenge the claims that small town decline is inevitable and that the communities themselves can turn their economies around. Other scholars share this optimistic view (e.g., Collits, 2001; Gray and Sinclair, 2005) and suggest that strategic planning can promote successful development. For example, the small town of Tirau, New Zealand was able to respond to small-town decline by diversifying its economy through the development of tourism leading to a 'boom' cycle (Panelli *et al.*, 2003). This cyclic nature of growth and decline illustrates that small towns in rural areas are capable of surviving periods of economic downturn.

The growth of some small towns has grown at the expense of others (Keller, 2001). These towns are 'growth poles' or 'regional centres' (*ibid*). Regional towns can also be considered 'sponge towns' as they tend to absorb people and resources (Collits, 2001; Argent *et al.*, 2008). As a result, these towns have tended to capture growth more effectively than others. However, small towns that have experienced neither growth or decline have become resilient towns (McManus *et al.*, 2012). The resilient communities with a more diversified economy which are the ones that can survive cycles of 'boom' and 'bust.'

2.3 Key factors attributed to change in rural and small towns

There are multiple factors at the international, national and local level that have contributed to the growth or decline of rural areas and small towns. Despite this broad range of factors, they have had a predominately negative impact on small-town development. The factors discussed in this section include globalisation, economic restructuring and the impact of neoliberalism on rural areas.

2.3.1 Globalisation

Globalisation is a key factor identified as causing a mixture of positive and negative changes in rural and small towns. Many scholars attribute this factor as having a predominately negative impact on these areas (Knox and Mayer, 2013). As the world's economy has become interconnected and as domestic markets have been increasingly opened up to outside forces, international decisions and events beyond the control of small towns have been affecting them (Collits, 2001). Globalisation has resulted in the centralisation of various businesses and a movement of skilled people away from rural areas to urban centres (Knox and Mayer, 2013). This factor has meant many industrial sectors originally located in rural and small-town areas have struggled to compete with cheaper imports and found it more profitable to move operations to urban areas or overseas to take advantage of cheaper labour and production costs

(Friedman, 2005). Leigh and Blakely (2016) contend that many small towns have not adapted well to this new economic climate. This lack of adaptability has led to the decline of local economies in rural areas around the world as a result. Despite the negative impact globalisation has had on rural areas, globalisation has helped to facilitate growth through the uptake of the phenomenon known as 'glocalisation' where the local and global economies are of increasing importance to a locality (Swyngedouw, 2004; Van der Heiden, 2007).

2.3.2 Restructuring

Economic and political restructuring is another factor that has affected rural and small towns worldwide. Restructuring occurred as a response to the various domestic and international economic circumstances that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s (Bergman, 1981). This period of change in economic and political restructuring had adverse changes in rural areas and small towns (Willis, 2003). McClintock and Taylor (1999) note that government restructuring had the result of withdrawing people from rural areas. Abrams and Gosnell (2012) confirm this as they note several effects that restructuring had on small towns, particularly in rural areas as multiple small, inland Australian towns faced a significant decline during this period.

Restructuring policies had a significant impact on rural areas in the New Zealand context. Forth and Howell (2002) attribute the decline these areas experienced to external long-term structural changes such as government restructuring and the end of state agricultural subsidies. For example, in New Zealand, this period saw the restructuring of government departments, with the concentration of government services and businesses in regional centres (McClintock and Taylor, 1999). Willis (2003) notes that the restructuring process occurred quickly due to multiple changes that occurred in policies at the central government level. The process altered multiple aspects of New Zealand's economy such as how farming occurred, with farm aggregation, and the centralisation of industries that lead to the decline of many small towns that had relied on state support or primary production (Willis, 2003; McClintock and Taylor, 1999).

2.3.3 Neoliberalism

The restructuring of economic markets saw a shift away from Keynesian policies to the adoption of neoliberalism ones which has resulted in a significant change in rural areas. This phenomenon characterised as a set of political, economic practices that introduced policies such as privatisation, austerity, deregulation, and reductions in government spending to increase the role of the private sector in both the economy and society (Harvey, 2005). The

main aim of adopting neoliberal policies is to radically redistribute wealth and income rather than solely focus on its generation. One of the critical critiques Harvey (2005) and Heynen *et al.* (2007) notes about neoliberalism is that both wealth and power is only redistributed and reinforced within an elite minority of society which exacerbates social inequality and uneven development of various environments accordingly. Other authors presented similar critiques of neoliberalism concerning its interactions with the natural environment (Heynen *et al.*, 2007), and governance and role of the state (Plant, 2010).

Of interest to this research is the literature surrounding the changes neoliberalism has had in rural environments and the governance of this. Over the last three decades, rural places around the world changed because of market processes and commodification of nature. Longer term sociodemographic trends have exacerbated by a combination of globalisation and neoliberal economic policies that have profoundly restructured "the material, social and economic conditions of life in rural areas" (Bowler *et al.*, 2002; 2). The forms that this restructuring takes has varied but include the withdrawal of or cuts in expenditure on services, reduced subsidies to agriculture, the liberalisation of international trade, and a shift to policies encouraging efficiency, self-reliance, and competitiveness. Yet, while the social, economic and environmental impacts of neoliberalisation on rural communities and the farming sector were found to be well-documented in the literature (e.g. Jaffe, 2006; McMichael, 2012; Nousiainen and Pylkkanen, 2013; Wolf and Bonanno, 2014), there has been little systematic attempt to investigate the interplay between neoliberal principles and policies and the governing of rural environments. This lack of knowledge is a significant gap since "state regulation of the rural environment has increasingly been challenged, re-assessed and re-oriented by the application of neoliberal rationalities" (Woods, 2011; 259).

Within the New Zealand context, the adoption of neoliberal policies meant that the state significantly reduced its responsibilities for providing social services and instead constituted that it must work for the market competition. All of this has led to what Larner (1997) describes as new political rationality within New Zealand. This rationality assumes the precedence of economic life and holds that maintaining commercial efficiency and competitiveness should be the focus of governance in rural and urban environments. Unsurprisingly, this has had numerous implications for rural areas in New Zealand that are deliberated in the following sections.

2.3.4 Synthesis

The changes that have occurred in rural and small towns in recent decades is a result of several factors. Globalisation has played a significant role in both the decline and growth of these areas. The restructuring that has been carried out at national level resulted in mainly declining in these areas. Furthermore, the increase of urbanisation and uptake of neoliberal approaches to development has also marginalised rural areas due to the centralisation and privatisation of critical services. The following section will discuss the various responses that have been carried out to the changes that have occurred in rural and small towns.

2.4 Responses to rural and small-town change

There have been various responses to these changes that have occurred in rural areas in recent decades. This section will first discuss the institutional responses to these changes from the public sector, communities, and Indigenous groups. Following this, local economic development approaches that have been implemented to respond to these changes will also be discussed, with tourism being the focus as the principal economic development strategy applied for this review.

2.4.1 Institutional response to the change

The role of various institutions responded to changes that rural communities and small towns have experienced in recent decades in various ways. Often rural areas and small towns are either neglected in national policy or treated as a homogenous entity, making it difficult for them to react to change without institutional backing (Mayer and Knox, 2010; Nel and Connelly, 2016). Despite this indifference, the role and actions of various organisations and institutions significantly impact the people residing in rural areas. The policies and attention given to these areas influence a range of different aspects for these communities such as their lives, their security and their sense of place (Britton *et al.*, 1992). This section will analyse the literature surrounding the response of organisations and institutions in rural and small towns.

2.4.2 Public sector response to rural communities

Institutions in the public sector such as local and central government were noted in the literature to have a significant influence on the development of rural areas and small towns. The role of the state in economic development for rural areas in the literature was contested for several reasons. It is noted that often the state can act as a facilitator and enabler to ensure that an appropriate policy environment is established to allow development in these areas to occur (Everingham *et al.*, 2006). For example, Nel and Rogerson (2007) examined the role of South

Africa's national government in facilitating this type of development. They found that intervention at the national level in this context helped to create the conditions necessary for local action to occur. Thus, the state can play a vital role in facilitating change in this environment.

However, the type of response national government provides may not be effective in addressing the various concerns, needs, and issues facing rural areas and small towns. National governments often face a myriad number of issues with regional and small-town development considered as only one issue. As a result, policy development at the national level tends to focus on development primarily in large urban areas and categorise the smaller centres into an amorphous undifferentiated category as the regions (Nel, 2018). For example, the Regional Partnerships Programme was an initiative carried out by the New Zealand government that aimed to streamline central government support for economic development in the regions (Cheyne, 2015). However, the capacity of this initiative was limited as it failed to adequately provide explicit policy or guidance on how to address the needs of rural communities and small towns in New Zealand. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how intervention at the national level can provide adequate responses to ensure successful rural and small-town development.

Local government also has a pivotal role to play in local development response to the changes experienced in rural communities. Agencies such as local governments are often the best suited to deal with local issues (Nel and Stevenson, 2014). More often than not, strategies to stimulate economic development in response to economic changes are devised in on large metropolitan centres then transplanted to smaller urban centres which may not be entirely appropriate in specific contexts (Cheyne, 2006). Political decision makers that are involved and working at the local level within rural communities can make more effective decisions if “they have a better understanding of the affected community's history and identity” (Dampier *et al.*, 2014; 11). For example, the local government may establish partnerships and facilitate economic development by empowering community groups and help with the provision of infrastructure (Cheyne, 2006). This role as a facilitator is a crucial role of local government to establish the conditions required for rural communities to respond to economic changes on their own.

2.4.3 Champions and leadership in rural communities

The role of leadership is an essential economic determinant of growth at the regional level (Beer and Clower, 2014). The challenge of understanding leadership is even more significant when considering the leadership of places such as cities, regions or small rural communities

because the task of leadership appears more complex than deducing this down to a hierarchical organisation (*ibid*). Rodriguez-Pose (2013) suggests that leadership could be a missing variable in understanding why some cities, towns or rural areas grow and others languish. The ability of a community to capitalise on opportunities often depends on the presence of entrepreneurs as leaders to stimulate economic development (Bryant, 1989). Dampier *et al.* (2014) refer to a similar idea of entrepreneurial ethic; this is where entrepreneurs recognise an opportunity or threat and decide to capitalise on this for economic gain. These entrepreneurs or leaders are often referred to as champions and are shown to be the individuals pushing for change.

Successful leaders help to stimulate economic development in rural communities. Beer and Clower (2014) found that successful leadership in places is more likely to result in successful economic development compared to places that are lacking this. The importance of leadership is increasing over time as economic growth becomes less dependent upon natural resources or essential advantages, and more of a function of the decisions made concerning infrastructure, the development of the workforce, and effective marketing (Beer, 2014). In small communities, this aspect of leadership is more important than in larger metropolitan areas as they are more likely to be overlooked by the processes and priorities of the central government (Beer and Clower, 2014).

2.4.4 Indigenous groups in rural communities

Indigenous groups play a significant role in development in rural areas. Indigenous communities across countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and Canada are increasingly becoming recognised as an essential part of the dynamics of rural and regional development (Beer *et al.*, 2003). While indigenous populations are a relatively small share of national populations, they often share a much more significant proportion of the population in rural regions (OECD, 2018). In recent decades, legal recognition has increased to recognise the rights Indigenous people have to land, sea, and resources required for regional development (*ibid*). This legal recognition is particularly important in rural areas where key economic drivers are agriculture, tourism, and mining as indigenous communities are typically younger and growing more strongly than non-indigenous populations.

Within rural contexts in many countries, there is often a weak connection between indigenous groups, agencies responsible for indigenous affairs, and constituencies and agencies involved in rural and regional development strategies (OECD, 2018). This disconnection is due to several factors. A challenging and difficult historical context and the challenges associated with

achieving self-determination and sovereignty has resulted in numerous institutional problems when considering rural and regional development. The historical context of assimilation, dispossession, and conflict has established strong distrust between indigenous communities and mainstream institutions (OECD, 2018). These tensions exhibited the various perspectives of these mainstream institutions that indigenous communities impede economic development because of conflicts arising over resource use and infrastructural projects. These conflicts are due to the variability in the institutional capacity of indigenous communities, and lack of coherence in governance (OECD, 2018). The governance and regulation of indigenous land are sometimes separate from its surrounding regional context, and in some cases, local governments do not have a strong relationship with the indigenous community to promote economic growth effectively. Furthermore, engagement processes that are implemented by the government and private sector are not always culturally appropriate (OECD, 2013; 2015).

Within the New Zealand context, Māori groups have started to play a significant role in regional development. Before development can be carried out, various steps such as consultation and decision making with iwi and hapū groups under the Local Government Act 2002 is a legal requirement. Kiddle and Kiddle (2014; 29) identify that cities such as Christchurch have had some success in such decision-making processes at all levels with mana whenua groups. However, the inclusion of other mana whenua groups in other across regionally areas of New Zealand was noted to be minimal and have instead opted in favour for the integration of a general, pan-tribal type representation.

2.5 Approaches to rural and small-town economic development

2.5.1 Local economic development

Small rural towns have the potential to develop new approaches to diversify their economies (Leigh and Blakely, 2016). The economic and political restructuring discussed above has forced many small-town communities to utilise entrepreneurial skills to seize opportunities to reinvent themselves and their economic base. Local economic development strategies have increased the level of control exercised over economic development by local urban agencies such as local businesses, local government, community organisations and non-governmental organisations (Leigh and Blakely, 2016). Local economic development is a process where either local governments or community-based organisations stimulate economic activity and employment within the region (*ibid*). The overall objective of local economic development strategies is to improve the existing resources within the community such as human capital,

natural and institutional resources. The driver of successful local economic development lies within the capacity of the community itself to attract businesses and maintain it (*ibid*). The focus is primarily on using local people with local approaches for economic outcomes and is identified through "initiative" and "entrepreneurship" in these communities for both economic and social benefit (Stohr, 1990; 3). The World Bank (2017) describes local economic development as building up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. Local economic development is a process by which public, business, and non-governmental sectors work together collectively to create better conditions that promote economic growth and employment opportunities (*ibid*). Thus, the overall purpose of local economic development is to produce an economic structure that enables and empowers an improving quality of life for communities.

There are some negative aspects associated with local economic development that may not be appropriate for some small rural communities to adopt. The critical weakness of local economic development is due to context. Each community faces problems that are unique to that locality and therefore general policies and strategies to support development cannot be overlaid without first understanding the context (Leigh and Blakely, 2016). Furthermore, some commentators suggest the term 'economic development' is problematic as it implies that this type of development strategy has measurable steps to showcase progress and excludes any notions of nonmarket resources (Eversole, 2003).

2.5.2 Rural tourism as a critical driver for local economic development

Tourism is seen as a local economic development response to changes in rural areas and often results in positive development. Tourism has been increasingly utilised by rural communities and organisations to promote local economic development as a critical economic driver for areas previously reliant on extractive industries. The types of tourism employed to reverse decline include eco-tourism, where people travel to locations to experience protected natural areas; heritage tourism, where people travel to areas that are deeply rooted in nostalgia. (Stuart *et al.*, 2005); Route-tourism and cycle-trail tourism where tourists travel along a set route are also perceived as beneficial to small towns where there are reduced competition and other small towns along the route work together to promote the region in its entirety (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). Indigenous tourism is also another type where Indigenous people are directly involved either through control or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016). However, Edwards and Coit (1996) note that the employment of tourism-related activities is not the overall solution to tackling economic issues in rural areas.

Tourism relies heavily on visitors not only being willing to visit the areas but also the wealth they bring with them (Halseth and Meiklejohn, 2009) and is thus dependent on multiple variables to be successful and sustainable.

The use of tourism for economic development in small rural towns needs to overcome several limitations to be successful. For tourism to be utilised successfully for local economic development, the literature outlines several successful attributes rural areas must have. Rogerson (2018) outlines best practice principles to enable successful tourism-led economic development. The principles focus on the current situation in the community, the availability of a 'tourism product,' and the actions that need to be taken such as monitoring and carrying out development projects to cater to a tourist market. Establishing a place as a tourist destination requires diversification of the area's economic base and a revitalisation of the community through the use of natural and heritage resources (Rogerson, 2018). A thriving tourist destination must have more than a single resource for tourism consumption and needs to combine a range of resources and activities to benefit economically from the industry. For example, tourist destinations need to provide various types of resources such as festivals, or arts to infrastructure and accommodation in order to be successful and also provide for the host community in the form of profits and quality of life (Rogerson, 2018). To successfully attract visitors to a tourist destination, they need somewhere to stay, buy food and other goods such as petrol (Keen, 2013). Therefore, communities need to ensure they have a diverse range of activities along with adequate infrastructure and facilities to be a thriving tourist destination.

The following section will explore in detail the various resources utilised for tourism purposes.

2.5.3 Impact of heritage tourism

The use of heritage for tourism purposes has grown significantly in recent years as tourists become increasingly interested in the narratives rural areas have to offer. An official definition of heritage tourism is "travelling to experience the places, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past, and it can include cultural, historical and natural resources" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2014; 4). These elements are particular to a community or region and can contribute to the pride, stability, growth and economic development of the area (Kadi *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, heritage cannot exist without a consumer so must be utilised as a resource in some form to ensure it remains intact (*ibid*).

Rural communities are also able to benefit from the establishment of heritage tourism for several reasons. A key reason is that heritage tourism in rural areas can provide a connection

for rural communities to understand their surroundings (Fisher, 2006). Buildings and existing infrastructure previously used for traditional rural uses for use in the tourist market are increasingly being revived (*ibid*). For example, the small town of Ross, New Zealand which has repurposed its historic buildings along with equipment and machinery associated with its gold mining era for use as a tourism resource (Balcar and Pearce, 1996). The development of self-guided walks, interpretation panels and brochures has attracted approximately 10,000 people annually to the township to understand this story and has also provided the local community with a point of difference (*ibid*).

One of the critical issues noted with heritage tourism in the literature was financial constraints to manage and protect these resources. To protect and manage this authentic heritage experience often requires unexpected or urgent maintenance or repair work that requires some form of financial support (Svensson, 2009). Many governments around the world have restricted access to traditional sources of public funding as a result of spending cuts and budget constraints (Kadi *et al.*, 2014). To compensate for this, many places that facilitate resources for heritage tourism to operate on a user-pays basis to provide financial leverage (Forsyth *et al.*, 1995). This user-pays basis means that in some cases, local heritage comes under threat because this funding to provide the physical maintenance and management is dependent upon the tourist market (Cipollari, 2010). For example, Svensson (2009) notes that many heritage sites such as museums typically do not make a profit and usually operate at a loss. Furthermore, the visiting of these sites by tourists is more likely to be seen as an activity while passing through on the way to another destination or attraction so are less likely to spend money experiencing this heritage (Taylor *et al.*, 1993). However, visitors to heritage sites typically benefited economic activity surrounding these areas as they were found to be more likely to spend money on eating out, drinking, retail, and other expenditures compared to recreational visitors (*ibid*).

The commodification of heritage and culture for tourism has impacted rural communities in several ways. Chang (1997) notes that the promotion of culture and tourism can be driven from the local community and establish stronger connections and appreciation with the surrounding rural landscape. Many people involved with heritage tourism in rural communities are often volunteers that have taken up responsibilities to manage and maintain heritage resources for the area (Svensson, 2009). The involvement of these volunteers indicates that heritage tourism provides benefits to rural communities such as empowerment, community co-operation, and

community pride (*ibid*). Thus, rural communities can utilise heritage to strengthen their community.

However, heritage tourism also has the potential to cause discordance within rural communities. This discordance was partially responsible to the ownership model surrounding heritage sites and whether they were held in private or public ownership (Hampton, 2005). Heritage sites held within private ownership may not have the same objectives that the local community may have (Chang, 1997). This contention between private owners and the community might cause conflict to arise as the community may also feel an attachment to a specific heritage site if it had played a role in the development of their community and have desires to revitalize or demolish a building that may not match those of the private owner (Svennson, 2009). Thus, it is crucial for rural communities to overcome the differences in objectives to ensure that heritage tourism can thrive (Chang, 1997). Furthermore, planners also need to ensure that the needs of these communities are also met to limit any dissatisfaction that may arise from this issue.

2.5.4 Impact of Indigenous tourism

The rise of indigenous tourism in rural areas has utilised as an approach to stimulate economic development. The increasing need to recognise and effectively implement the human rights of Indigenous peoples, along with travellers' sustained interest in the "exotic other," has been the fundamental drivers in the development of Indigenous tourism by governments, developmental organisations and entrepreneurial Indigenous communities (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016; 1082). Indigenous tourism is increasingly seen as a vehicle to address numerous problems experienced by more than 5000 different groups of Indigenous people located around the world (OECD, 2018). Indigenous peoples make up approximately 5% of the world's population, yet they account for "approximately 15% of the world's poor who continue to suffer discrimination, marginalisation, extreme poverty and conflict" (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016; 1082).

Indigenous tourism was viewed as a "double-edged" sword and comes with positive and negative attributes. Some literature noted that tourism for indigenous groups is positive as it can act as a mechanism for preserving, safeguarding, and promoting ancient cultures while still empowering marginalised or remote indigenous communities both socially and economically (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016). For example, the Ugandan Bigodi tribe, supported by the government, has utilised tourism to underpin development which included new schools and

increased sales of agricultural products that have led the tribe to an optimistic future (Lepp, 2008).

Despite this, the extent to which tourism has facilitated the development of positive socio-economic circumstances of indigenous communities remains questionable (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2010). There have been numerous accounts in the literature that tourism has had a limited impact on reversing socio-economic disadvantage faced by Indigenous people who are still hindered by the legacies of colonial history, ineffective, and misguided government policies and a lack of access to education, health services and employment (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016). Furthermore, tourism may not only impinge on Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, but it may also result in further commodification of Indigenous peoples and their culture as another tourism resource. Other negative impacts include racism, exploitation, disrupted lifestyles, battered ecosystems, inconsistent profit, eviction from traditional lands, destruction of habitat and inequity in project planning (United Nations, 2009; 72)

2.5.5 Events as a mechanism for change in rural areas

Events have also been a popular response to stimulate economic development in rural areas and small towns (Janeczko *et al.*, 2002). Rural communities in New Zealand have had a long association with festivals and events (Fountain and Mackay, 2016). Ma and Lew (2012) note this is a popular response to economic changes as it helps to attract both tourists, establish a positive reputation and boost regional economic development. While festivals have long provided rural residents with an opportunity to socialise and build solidarity within the community, many have evolved to become centrally important place promotion and rural revitalisation initiatives designed to attract outsiders such as tourists, investors and new residents (Fountain and Hall, 2002; Fountain and Mackay, 2016). For example, Hokitika hosts an annual Wild Foods Festival that attracts people from around the region and beyond. It has established a renowned reputation as a well-organised event that benefits the local economy significantly (Connelly and Nel, 2016). Fountain and Mackay (2016) use the example of Akaroa's French Festival to highlight how it has helped to revitalise the identity of the place in the face of local and global pressures. These events are beneficial for small towns as they encourage people to visit regions that they may not have gone to otherwise (Janeczko *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, many rural festivals are now expected to deliver both positive social and economic outcomes.

2.5.6 Impact cycle-trails for rural tourism

Cycle-trails are a key tourism resource that has been implemented to attract visitors to areas that have previously experienced a decline (Taylor, 2015). They have played a critical role in the economic development of rural areas (Beeton, 2009; Gill, 2004; Ryan *et al.*, 2014). Cycle trails in these areas often utilise existing infrastructure that was previously utilised for rural industries but no longer has a purpose such as railway lines, old forestry roads and converts them into multi-user recreational trails (Ryan *et al.*, 2014). Cycle-trails are a mechanism that has been employed in rural areas to attract a significant number of non-locals. The natural resources and environment these rural areas offer are described as sometimes referred to as destination trails in the literature (Bowker *et al.*, 2007). These types of trails attract a substantial number of non-locals who are overnight or day visitors to a region. These trails are typically longer than 40km and pass through regional landscapes and small towns which exhibit natural, rural, and heritage characteristics that provide visitors with opportunities for physical challenge, social interaction, and cultural or heritage appreciation (Taylor, 2015)

The development of cycle-trails has also had a mix of positive and negative social impacts on rural communities. While the literature surrounding cycle trails in rural areas does note that it can be difficult to properly comprehend the actual economic impact they have (Ryan *et al.*, 2014), cycle trails have a positive economic impact on these rural communities. Cycle-trails help to attract visitors to areas they may not have originally travelled to and enables the investment of revenue into the local economies. For example, Beeton (2009) found that the average economic contribution of a rail trail in Victoria, Australia, contributed an average of \$51.10AUD for each day spent on the trail. The economic impact of cycle trails was noted to also increase on cycle-trails that resulted in visitors having to stay over-night. Over-night stay on cycle trails was found to bring the highest amount of money into a community that also has flow-on effects for the local economy (Bower *et al.*, 2007). Business revenue also increased for those businesses located within proximity of cycle trails or in townships designated as an overnight stop-over point (*ibid*). Cycle-trails have also provided a demand in the market for tourism accommodation in rural communities (Cosslett *et al.*, 2004). This demand has led to the development of new businesses and the diversity of existing ones such as the growth of home-stays on farms. Therefore, cycle-trails have a positive impact on rural communities because it attracts new visitors to the area and increases revenue into the local economy.

The literature notes that the main benefits of cycle-trails in rural communities is with visitors and neighbouring land-owners as opposed to the broader community in the rural area (Bowen,

2009). Blackwell (2002) noted that the main community benefits from the development of cycle trails were that it not only stimulated local economies but also provided opportunities to increase the identity of these rural communities, as well as providing new opportunities related to health and well-being for them. Furthermore, cycle-trails have also resulted in social revitalisation through the upgrade of facilities, improved infrastructure, cohesion within and between communities on the trail, and increased heritage appreciation (Cosslett, *et al.*, 2004). However, the cycle-trail development also results in can cause tension with neighbouring land-owners who are often competing for space with recreational users, and some were found to be a nuisance to them (*ibid*). Despite this, the development of cycle-trails is shown in the literature to have an overall positive social impact on rural communities mainly.

2.6 Synthesis

This chapter has outlined the contemporary theoretical framework regarding the changes that rural and small towns have experienced, the factors that have caused this, the institutional responses these changes and the various economic development approaches that have been implemented to handle this change.

Rural areas and small towns across the world have experienced changes as a result of various factors. The shift away from the traditional extractive industries was found to be the key reason behind these changes. These changes were found to be due to factors such as globalisation, political and economic restructuring during the late 20th Century, and the neoliberalisation policies enforced on rural areas. These factors were found to result in both a mix of positive and negative changes for these rural areas and small towns.

The institutional response to these changes was found to be varied. The literature identified that the key groups involved in responding to these changes in a rural context were public sector agencies such as central and local government, community members and groups, and Indigenous communities as well. The public sector was found to primarily act as a facilitator to coordinate these changes and ensure adequate resources were in place for others to utilise. Community members, particularly those identified as leaders within a small town or rural area, were also found to have a critical role in making the changes that occurred in these areas a success or failure. Furthermore, Indigenous groups were also found to play a significant presence and role in rural areas but lacked strong connections with other institutions to effectively carry out positive and meaningful change for the rural area.

The primary approach investigated for responding to that changes that rural and small towns have undergone was tourism. The use of tourism for economic development in these areas was found to be a suitable industry for these areas to develop in the post-productive landscape that many rural environments exhibit. A range of different types of tourism approaches was noted to help stimulate further change including eco-tourism, heritage tourism, cycle-trail tourism, and Indigenous tourism. These approaches are best suited for rural areas and small towns as they utilise existing resources for the industry to capitalise on and do not require significant investment schemes and strategies to develop.

Thus, this research utilises the theoretical framework outlined in this chapter to inform the remaining project. It will cover the key themes that characterise the changes that rural areas and small towns have experienced. At present, there is a limited understanding of the changes that rural and small towns have experienced and the responses that have been taken to manage this to ensure the economic well-being of these places as a result of the growth of tourism. This study aims to contribute to the current literature around the changes rural areas are now experiencing using a case study. This will to help understand planning for these places in the future and offer insights into how these processes operate.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and validate in detail the methods that have been used to assess the rural changes that have occurred in the Westland District. The research design is discussed first. Following this, a justification for selecting a qualitative will be provided and explain how the data obtained from this method was analysed, organised and interpreted. The positioning of the research and the researcher is then explored. Following this, reasoning for the adoption of a case study approach, and the choice of the case studied. The precise approaches of data collection such as the secondary and primary research methods carried out are then deliberated. This includes an outline of the data collection methods taken for the literature review, documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and surveys used to inform this research project. Finally, the ethical considerations that relate to this research project are highlighted at the end of this chapter.

3.2 Research design

The design of the research that was carried out had several vital questions that were asked to determine the impacts of economic changes in rural areas with a specific focus on the Westland District. The specific research questions for this study were:

1. What are the key demographic and economic trends occurring within rural areas and the implications of these trends?
2. What are the key issues and opportunities that are currently influencing regional economic growth in rural areas on individuals, communities and visitors to the area and what are their implications?
3. What role do local and regional economic, political and community organisations, institutions, indigenous groups and agencies play in facilitating regional economic development in the Westland District?
4. How have various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions responded to the issues that have arisen and what are the key implications of their approaches for rural communities?

5. What are the key lessons learnt from the Westland District case study regarding the management of regional economic development to assess what this means for achieving societal and economic outcomes that are sustainable for rural areas?

A range of methods was employed to answer these research questions to enable the researcher to draw on a diverse assortment of sources of information to so that the research findings could be triangulated to ensure the validity of it. This is a technique of data collection that allows a study to be strengthened by combining several qualitative research methods to verify that the information obtained is accurate (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). This method reduced the likelihood of bias and unverified information that would be used to answer the research questions. In this study, three primary data sources were utilised. These were key informant interviews, document analysis and questionnaires. These triangulated for some key findings, while some sources contradicted the data obtained and were removed from the final data set before analysis was carried out. Therefore, the conclusions that are drawn from this project are more likely to be reliable and trustworthy.

3.3 Quantitative approach

This research project utilised a qualitative approach to address the proposed research questions which are typical of social science research. A qualitative approach is taken when the topic at hand has unmeasurable results because of the complex ideas and relationships surrounding it (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). The approach provides information about the ‘human’ side of an issue that explores the behaviours, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals. This approach entailed active and personal participation by key informants to collect and interpret their views. The collection of data from this approach allowed for the examination of the interactions that occurred within the local communities as the carried-out methods to successfully develop the West Coast region economically. The qualitative procedures employed were document analysis, structured questionnaires targeted for the community and local business owners, and semi-structured interviews with key informants that were involved with regional and local economic development in the Westland District.

This project used an inductive approach to carry out the research. An inductive approach is where the research starts from a specific observation and then eventually comes to a general conclusion (Walliman, 2015). This conclusion is then able to be utilised to contribute to the existing literature and body of knowledge about a specific topic. This project utilised inductive reasoning because it started from a specific observation that rural communities in small towns

in Westland are facing issues and various responses were generated to correct these. It will work towards a general conclusion about what can be learnt and examine options for the foreseeable future.

The employment of a qualitative approach has both strengths and weaknesses. A key advantage of using this approach for this research was that it allowed for the use of open-ended questions and probing to provide key informants with the opportunity to respond in their own words, as opposed to selecting from fixed responses (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). However, one of the key critiques of this approach is that the information the key informants provided was subjective and then interpreted by the researcher (Holliday, 2007). This presented a limitation to the research because of the potential for various conclusions made from a single data source (*ibid*). However, due to the complex human elements and the extensive scope of this research project, a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate method.

3.4 Positionality

This project has been undertaken as social research which means that it is positional (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). Positionality is the stance of the researcher about the research that is undertaken (Smith and Bower-Brown, 2009). It considers factors such as the age, ethnicity or position within the subject community and research. These factors are an essential aspect to highlight as it recognises that the research undertaken could not be carried out in an entirely neutral fashion.

The intentions and characteristics of the researcher influence both the research process and the outcomes of the project. The research was carried out by a student, rather than an experienced academic and this could have influenced the informants' perception of the study and overall quality of the research process. A male Pākehā has undertaken the research in their early twenties with a background in physical geography and statistics. While the researcher has no connection to the case study region, they grew up in a rural, small-town setting in New Zealand facing similar issues. The researcher's supervisor suggested the West Coast region as a case study, and from this, the Westland District was selected. The researcher positioned themselves in this research as an outside observer. This perspective as an 'outsider' influences the way that research is conducted because it altered the power dynamics in key informant interviews and how people contributed to the research process. The researcher recognised this and endeavoured to maintain both a neutral approach and open mind throughout the research process. The researcher was aware of their position as a post-graduate researcher from outside

of the district, and some research participants demonstrated they held more power by being more selective in how they chose to answer the research questions. Merriam *et al.* (2001) conclude that power is something to not only be aware of but also to negotiate in the research process.

This research was also partially funded and established through the National Science Challenges (NSC) project named '*Harnessing the hinterland: understanding the role of rural and small-town New Zealand as a powerhouse of our economy, and how they are contributing to rebuilding community*'. The general direction of this project has been aligned to provide a tangible outcome for this project. The NSC is a scheme established to "take a more strategic approach to government investment by targeting a series of goals, which if achieved, would have major and enduring benefits for New Zealand" (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2018). This research explored the role of regional economic development strategies within a rural area of New Zealand and the impact this has had on the communities in this setting.

3.5 Case study of Westland District

Adopting a case study approach was a vital method implemented for this research investigation. This approach allowed the extent of the research to be limited because external constraints meant that not every aspect of every incident could be studied comprehensively (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Flyvbjerg (2006) notes that using case studies is a necessary and sufficient method when researching social sciences that can provide in-depth knowledge about a situation. It enables an understanding of a topic regarding a specific time and place. However, this specificity that arises from case studies resulted in them being limited in their generalisability, particularly when applying the findings to other regions in New Zealand and internationally.

The case study of the Westland District, located in the West Coast, New Zealand was selected to meet the primary aim of this research project which focused on the change that has occurred in rural areas within the New Zealand context. The selection of the Westland District was an appropriate case study for this research for several reasons. As a rural area, it has experienced a significant change in the traditional sectors of its economy over recent decades due to restructuring processes and has experienced external forces like the volatility of the global economy. Recently, exponential growth within a growing tourism industry on the West Coast

has placed significant pressures on the district and provides a unique example of how local economic development has occurred in rural areas within the New Zealand context.

3.6 Secondary research

Secondary research was the first form of research undertaken for this research project. This method comprised of collecting data from an existing body of literature that had been produced by experts such as academics and practitioners. This phase of the research involved undertaking a literature review and an analysis of relevant legislation, planning and strategic documents.

3.6.1 Literature review

A literature review was undertaken before the collection of primary data. This approach is an essential component of academic research because it helps to position the current research project within the realm of research and debates that published around the topic (Gray, 2009). The literature review allowed the researcher to identify the scope of the project, identify the existing research and knowledge base surrounding the topic of rural change. It helped to inform and develop research objectives and questions to conduct this investigation effectively. This process involved a review of the literature and academic debates about the ongoing change in rural areas because of the growth and decline of various industries. Thus, it was important to look at the various factors that have brought about this change and the roles that various organisations and agencies have played in either facilitating or impeding on the development of these rural areas. Furthermore, it also investigates the various approaches that have been adopted to cope with economic change in rural environments.

3.6.2 Documentary analysis

An analysis of the key documents that relate to the research topic is an essential part of case study development (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). The purpose of conducting a documentary analysis was to provide a source of information that existed independently from the primary research material attained by the researcher. Key documents provide an alternative perspective that is outside the scope of the research's primary objectives and is likely to have differing political, social, or cultural constructs that would provide an alternative viewpoint for the researcher (Patton, 2005).

The document analysis for this research is separated into two categories which are media articles and official government documents. Media articles were obtained primarily from online media websites and bookmarked for reference when required. An e-mail alert was set up at the beginning of the research process to identified articles published throughout the year

based on the keywords of the research objectives. These keywords included ‘West Coast New Zealand’, ‘Westland Tourism’, ‘Economic Development on West Coast’, ‘Westland’, and ‘Hokitika’. The emails alerted the researcher to recently published media articles daily to keep them informed on recent developments. Key articles were then selected based on their relevance to the research objectives. While some media articles analysed were biased to some extent, they offered a different perspective and opinion on the issues that have been addressed in this research.

The government documents were organised into three tiers of intervention based on their role in regional development for the Westland District. Table 1 below outlines these documents. The national level documents provided an analysis into the responsibilities that central and local governments had about local economic development and provided a framework on operational matters. The regional and local level plans and strategies provided a specific context for understanding the various issues and goals that were in place for the Westland District and the wider West Coast Region to promote economic development. The ‘Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Opportunities Report’ and the ‘West Coast Economic Development Action Plan’ outlines the issues the district faces and the intended course of action to remedy these in the foreseeable future.

Table 1: Key documents identified in the document analysis

<i>Intervention level</i>	<i>Name of document</i>
<i>National</i>	Resource Management Act 1991
	Local Government Act 2002
<i>Regional</i>	West Coast Economic Development Action Plan 2017
	Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Opportunities Report
<i>Local</i>	Westland District Council 10 Year Plan

This method provided a sound overview of the planning environment that the West Coast region is operating under and was particularly relevant to answering research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4. The legislation, plans and strategies were systematically assessed with key findings coded thematically based on the research objectives and themes identified within the literature review.

3.7 Primary Research

This research project utilised various methods to obtain primary data to collect data to answer the proposed research questions and add further insight into the current literature on small towns. The conduction of field research to collect primary data in Hokitika and the surrounding Westland District was done between the 26th August and the 30th August 2018. The primary methods used were interviews with various key individuals and organisations, and questionnaires are discussed below.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

The use of key informant interviews was an appropriate method to implement in conducting this research project due to its predominately exploratory nature (Gray, 2009). Carrying out these interviews is a crucial aspect of the data collection as it is considered one of the primary strategies employed for qualitative investigations (Merriam, 2009). These interviews aimed to capture the range of perspectives on the issues, and economic development approaches influencing the Westland District. A semi-structured approach to the interviews was employed to allow for a further discussion of information and detail that could have been of interest or relevance to this project (May, 2001). This allowed the researcher to guide the interview based on information the participant mentioned. Because of this approach, none of the interviews carried out asked similar questions throughout the research process.

Key Informants were selected based on a purposive sampling approach, where the researcher actively sought people with specialist knowledge on their involvement and experiences within the Westland District and the wider West Coast region. Table 2 outlines the key informants used to inform this research project. Interviews were conducted with ten participants in total. Before the commencement of each interview, each participant was provided with an information sheet outlining the project's aims and objectives and a consent form to sign (Appendix 1). The form was required by the University of Otago Ethics Committee. Nine out of the ten interview participants consented to have the interviews recorded. Seven interviews were carried out with key informants face-to-face. Three interviews were conducted over the phone and recorded via speakerphone. Contact with one key informant via e-mail correspondence also occurred.

Most of these individuals or organisations were initially contacted via e-mail or telephone before departure for field week. Three key informants were identified via a 'snowball' effect after being recommended by other Key Informants as relevant participants for this project.

Once contact was established, an overview of the research objectives and aims for this project was provided, and a list of key themes and possible questions was given to key informants upon request. Informants were asked if they would be available to participate in an interview based around these themes for approximately 30 minutes to an hour. All key informants that were contacted to carry out this project provided their consent to participate and use their interview as part of the study. The participants were labelled Key Informant 1 through to Key Informant 10 and were used to label their commentaries from the coding stage through to final writing phase. A copy of the interview schedule that was used to guide these key informant interviews is found in Appendix 2.

Table 2: List of Key Informants

<i>Key Informant</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Method of communication</i>
<i>Key Informant 1</i>	Westland District Council Mayor	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 2</i>	Heritage Hokitika	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 3</i>	Senior Planner at Westland District Council	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 4</i>	Community Development Officer at Westland District Council	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 5</i>	Natural Hazards Consultant	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 6</i>	Ngāti Waewae and Makaawhio	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 7</i>	Chairperson at Māwhera Incorporation	Face-to-face interview
<i>Key Informant 8</i>	Consultant for Wilderness Cycle Trail	Phone interview
<i>Key Informant 9</i>	Technical Advisor for DOC Hokitika Office	Phone interview
<i>Key Informant 10</i>	Development West Coast	E-mail correspondence

The semi-structured interview approach allowed for flexibility and adaption to the key questions and themes uncovered. After the first interview with Key Informant 1, the information revealed resulted in an alteration to the questions for the research. The questions that were designed before departure for the field week did not adequately capture the actual situation unfolding in the Westland District. The original questions that proposed centred on investigating the decline of small towns. After engaging in two key informant interviews, the questions regarding the decline of small towns in Westland were not entirely appropriate because of the growth the district has experienced from tourism. While the primary key

questions raised at each key informant interview were kept unchanged, some questions changed when the researcher noticed a common theme, an alternative set of questions was then raised throughout the interview.

Ensuring that the information key informants provided was accurate and kept confidentially is an important element to the research process (Boyce and Neale, 2006). The accuracy of the respondents' answers was ensured by recording and transcribing before analysing the data. One of the key informants who did not permit to recording due to concerns around privacy. The accuracy of this data was ensured by making detailed notes immediately after the interview finished and were sent to the key informant via e-mail to check the validity of these results matched what they said during the interview. The privacy of the other participants who consented to the recording of the interview was ensured because only the researcher listened to the recordings and transcribed them. These recordings were erased once they were transcribed.

The key informant interviews were all conducted in the field throughout four days from the 26th August – 30th August 2018. This short period provides constraints on this research project as the key informants that were targeted to carry out this research was based on their availability during this period. Only ten individuals or organisations were able to participate. The small number of interviews means that the findings from this project are only indicative and not substantive.

Some key informant interviews were conducted at the local marae to obtain the perspectives on the issues affecting local Māori in the Westland District. Before the start of the interview, the appropriate protocol was undertaken. Marae protocol included providing a small koha (*gift*) in exchange for the representative's time and knowledge and giving a pepeha (*introduction*) to make connections between individual's whakapapa (*genealogy*) (Mdntosh and Johnson, 2004).

3.7.2 Questionnaires

Preparation of a questionnaire was conducted to assess the communities attitude and perspective to development occurring within the region that would complement the information drawn from other sources. Questionnaires allow for information on the varying perspectives, opinions and social experiences of individuals, groups, or agencies that could provide unique insights into relevant issues that are specific to a context (McGuirk and O'Neill, 2016). An exploration of the perspectives of this population of Westland was identified as a way to gain

additional insight into their opinion on regional economic development occurring from outside of official organisations and agencies.

McGurik and O'Neill (2016) note that a questionnaire should only be filled out participants who have adequate knowledge about the questions being raised. As the questions raised focused on the issues in Westland, the perspectives of the community were essential to obtain. The population was limited to the township of Hokitika, the largest town in the Westland District due to time constraints meaning that other townships within the district could not be targeted. Hoinville and Jowell (1977) note that conducting questionnaires for research purposes should aim to capture a minimum of at least 50 responses in order for the data to be representative. A total of 32 questionnaires were completed. Thus, the results obtained from the questionnaires may not be entirely reflective of the perspectives of the wider community and business owners in other townships. All participants provided their consent before participating in the questionnaire and were offered an information sheet regarding the research project being carried out.

Gray (2009) outlines the best practice guidelines for developing a questionnaire. The development of the questions used for the questionnaire was carried out by these guidelines because it was important to avoid questions that were misleading, unclear, objectionable, leading and assumptive. Questions were laid out logically and presented professionally. Response categories were provided for most of the questions asked in the questionnaire. These questions had the potential to lead the respondent. However, this approach was employed to reduce confusion, time, and ease data analysis for the researcher. However, due to time constraints and limited printing options in the field, a pilot study could not be undertaken before the test to ensure the validity, clarity or reliability of the surveys before they were carried out.

The questionnaire was presented to various members of the public in Hokitika. A convenience sampling method was carried out to distribute these questionnaires as this was determined to be the most effective method due to time constraints. The sampling method used is a

type of non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the study" (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016; 2).

The beachfront area of the township was selected as the best place to conduct surveys as that would allow exposure to a wide range of residents of the community. The distribution of questionnaires was conducted mid-week on a fine day during the mid-day period as this was

likely to have the most amount of community members in the area. Questionnaires were dropped into small businesses such as local cafes, artist studios and administrative buildings. These were dispatched as a hard-copy and dropped off at local businesses during the morning and then collected at the end of the day.

3.8 Data analysis

Undertaking the data analysis of qualitative data differed to the process involved in analysing the quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis involved identifying key themes, trends, ideas and arguments (Gray, 2009). The content of the interview transcriptions and document analysis was categorised and analysed against the key research questions. The literature review identified the key arguments from various studies and authors around local economic development and allowed comparisons and conclusions to be drawn against the key ideas in the research findings. The transcription of the semi-structured interviews was carried out, and a list of codes was established to analyse these appropriately. The codes were then applied to the transcripts of each interview and each key idea raised was matched with a code. The document analysis was then used to provide further context and supporting evidence and triangulate the data to filter out sources of information that contradicted other sources. These key ideas, trends, issues and arguments were then able to be identified to form the discussion and offer a critical analysis of the findings of the research around regional economic development.

3.9 Ethical considerations

A key consideration during the research design stage and process is assessing ethical issues and assessing whether the benefits outweigh any potential costs (Oliver, 2010). Ethical considerations are an important aspect to consider because of the involvement of human participants. The research topic raised a limited number of ethical issues due to the uncontroversial nature of the project. However, these need to be understood and deliberated before undertaking primary data collection.

Before the collection of primary data, ethical approval was sought and gained from the University of Otago Geography Department on behalf of the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was attained as part of the National Science Challenge Research Project Harnessing the Hinterland submitted in November 2017. By this approval, an information sheet and consent form were provided to participants (Appendix 1). This outlined to them that their involvement in the research was entirely voluntary and that they could choose

not to answer any or all the questions raised. Permission was also asked to record the interviews being carried out, and participants had the option to withdraw or change any of the information they provided during the interview process.

The research also contains data concerning Māori knowledge and worldviews within the context of regional economic development in the Westland area. The University of Otago commits to ensuring rangatiratanga (*self-determination*) in research involving Māori. This commitment was met through consultation with the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee before the collection of this knowledge. The committee assessed whether the research would be conducted by culturally appropriate values and Ngāi Tahu's aspirations for Māori research. The committee had no recommendations, and once consultation with the committee was complete, engagement with participants of Māori descent could commence.

A significant ethical issue that was posed during this research process was ensuring the anonymity of the participants. The research was conducted within the Westland District which is a small community. The small population of this area meant that the content and style of a participant's response could potentially be identifiable to others within the community due to this factor, despite no specific name or job title provided. The anonymity of the key informants was ensured by providing general titles, or descriptions of an individual or organisation are provided in the document to distinguish between the various opinions and quotations.

3.10 Conclusion

This research aimed to understand the impact and challenges of changes in rural areas has had on the communities, agencies and institutions that are residing and operating within the context of the Westland District. This chapter has outlined the methods used to achieve this aim. A comprehensive qualitative approach was selected to undertake a thorough analysis of the past, present and future of the case study environment. This approach enabled insights to be obtained from a variety of people involved and affected by the changes in key economic drivers in rural areas. Ethical and positionality considerations were also discussed along with the limitations of the research methods employed during the research process. However, these issues were contemplated and were relatively minor in the research process.

Chapter Four

Case Study: Westland District

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain the merits of the selection of the Westland District as the case study for this research and contextualise the key aspects of the area to help understand the implications surrounding local economic development. The chapter focuses on aspects of two research questions by addressing the key demographic and economic trends experienced within the Westland District and examining the role local and regional organisations play in facilitating economic development in the area. It contains the results from key informant interviews, as well as data gathered from the literature on the historical and economic context of Westland.

The Westland District is a territorial authority located within the West Coast region along the South Island of New Zealand (Figure 1). The District extends from the Taramakau River at its most northern point to Awarua Point in the south and consists of a long thin strip of land between the crest of the Southern Alps and the Tasman Sea. The discovery of gold in 1864 in the Taramakau River which attracted thousands of people to the district who would eventually populate the area. While gold mining is still occurring in Westland at a less significant scale, the area has undergone significant changes in key economic drivers. Westland has developed from mining is a key economic driver to sawmilling to dairying and is now becoming a unique tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors to New Zealand. Within the Westland District, numerous unique natural features are part of the environment in the area. The District contains two accessible glaciers – Franz Josef and Fox Glacier – and natural lakes such as Lake Mahinapua, Lake Kaniere and Lake Ianthe.

This chapter will first substantiate how Westland is a “rural” area, outline the demographics of the Westland District and explore the implications of the uneven geographical distribution of the population. Following this, the historical context of the area is explored and the various shifts in key economic drivers that have occurred over time are examined. The implications of the various changes in economic regimes and the various austerity measures to neoliberalise the economy in Westland and New Zealand is also investigated. Following this, the role of various organisations and legislative contexts for economic development and the neoliberal

approaches these agencies have taken to stimulate economic development in Westland is explored.

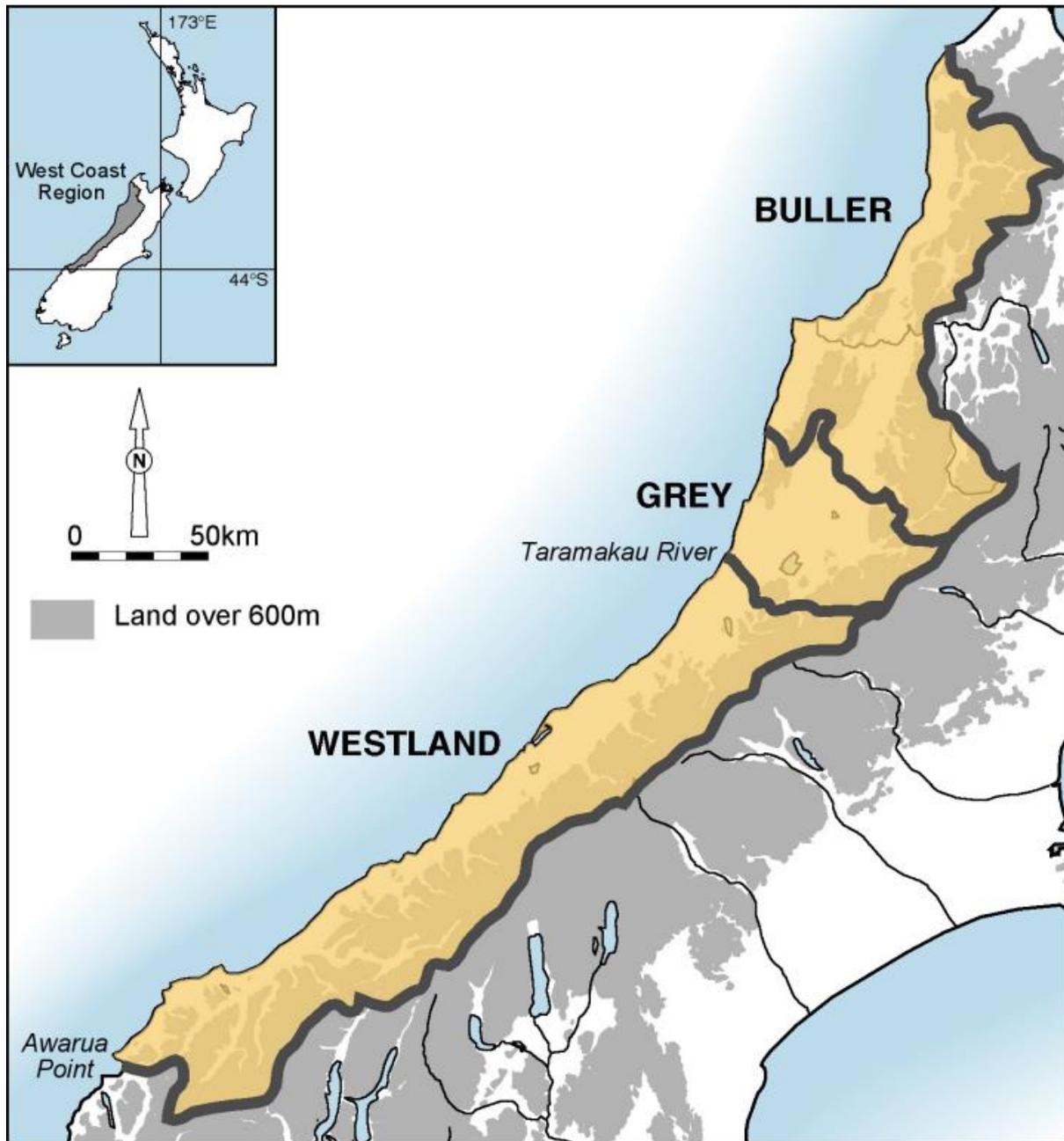


Figure 1: Map illustrating the location of three territorial authorities within the West Coast region (Cameron et al., 2001)

4.2 Justification of Westland District as a “rural” area

The use of the Westland District as a case study for this study is justified because it fulfils the definition of a “rural” area in New Zealand. Various rural areas across New Zealand are in various stages of growth and decline. Figure 2 illustrates that rural areas in the North Island of

New Zealand are predominately declining in size, whereas many of the South Island's rural districts have been growing steadily between 2001 and 2013. The Westland District has experienced a growth in population between 1 – 2% between 2001 and 2013 (Figure 2). At present, the Westland District is one of the most sparsely populated districts within New Zealand with a population of 8,307 people spread over an area of 11,880km² (Stats NZ, 2018). The use of the term “rural” throughout this thesis refers to places with less than 10,000 people and consists of minor urban areas (1,000 to 9,999 people); rural centres (300 to 999 people); and rural districts (299 people or less). Thus, the Westland District falls within this category of “rural” because the population is less than 10,000 people.

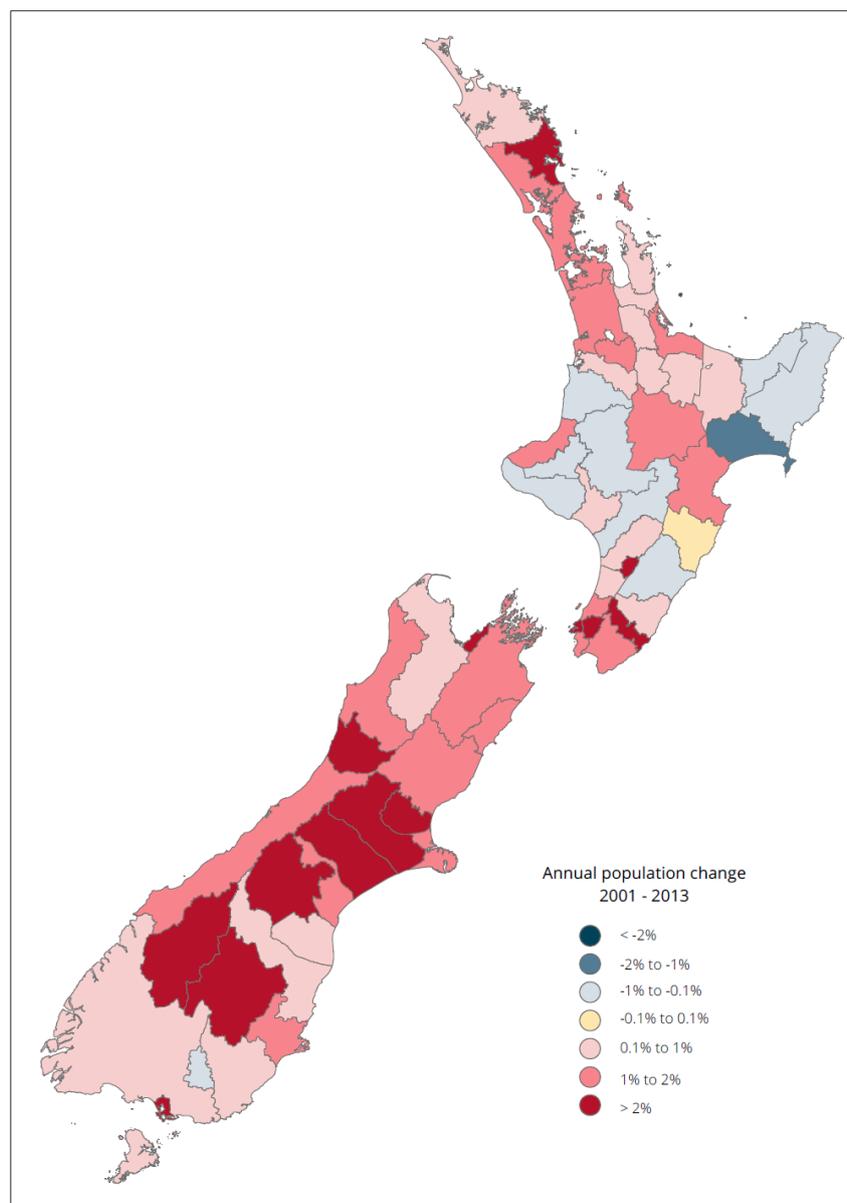


Figure 2: Rural population change according to territorial authority area (2001 - 2013) (Nel, 2018)

4.3 Demographic trends of Westland District

The distribution of the demographics around a district is important to understand to carry out economic development effectively. An understanding of the location of populations within the Westland District is important to investigate to comprehend where and how economic development can be carried out. The population of the Westland District is dispersed over a large geographic area. Figure 3 indicates that Hokitika is the largest settlement with the highest proportion of the population in the district. 63% of Westland's population resides in this township of Hokitika. In contrast to Hokitika, other settlements across the Westland District have a considerably smaller proportion of people residing within them. Other settlements across the district share a much smaller proportion of the total population and range between 3.5% in the township of Whataroa to 7.4% in settlement of Arahura. Figure 3 summarises the total proportion of other small towns within the Westland District.

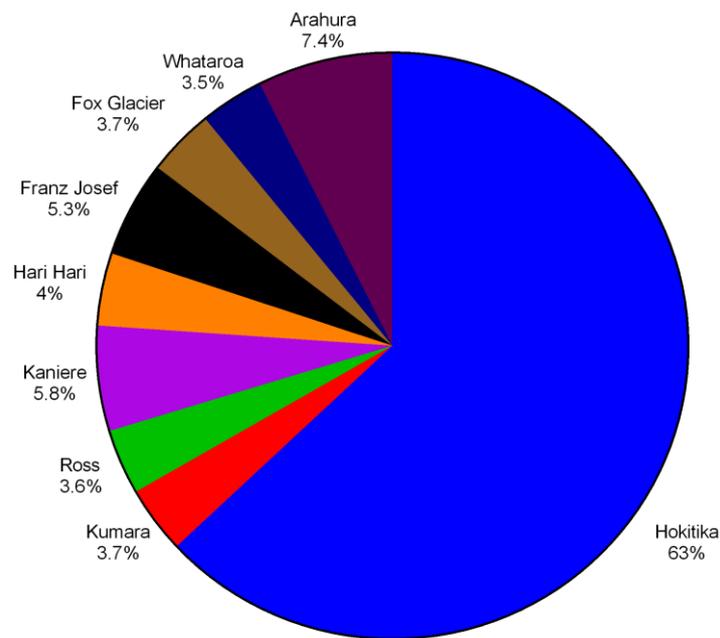


Figure 3: Population distribution across Westland District (Westland District Council, 2018)

Figure 3 suggests there is an uneven distribution of the population across the Westland District. This uneven distribution raises several implications for the wider district. A dispersed population over a large geographical area creates pressures on critical infrastructure such as roads, wastewater, and utilities that are provided by various agencies. Furthermore, the uneven dispersal of the population across Westland would likely result in the unequal development of rural settlements to ensure that critical infrastructure is adequate.

The total population of these settlements within the Westland District has undergone a mix of growth and decline in recent years. According to the 2013 Census, the overall trend of the population within the Westland District is in decline. Table 3 indicates that the settlements of Hokitika, Kumāra, Hari Hari, Fox Glacier and Whataroa experienced population loss between 2006 and 2013. In contrast to this, the settlements of Ross, Kaniere, Franz Josef and Arahura experienced an increase in population. The township that experienced the most significant loss of population in this period was Whataroa with a decrease of 28.9% of its population between 2006 and 2013. Arahura experienced the greatest increase in population with an increase of 35.6% of its population during this period.

Table 3: The change in the population of Westland District communities from the 2006 to 2013 census (Stats NZ, 2018)

<i>Township</i>	<i>2006 Census (people)</i>	<i>2013 Census (people)</i>	<i>Total Change (%)</i>	<i>Type of Rural Settlement</i>
<i>Hokitika</i>	3078	2967	-3.6%	Minor urban area
<i>Kumāra</i>	315	309	-1.9%	Rural centre
<i>Ross</i>	291	297	+2.1%	Rural district
<i>Kaniere</i>	459	483	+5.2%	Rural centre
<i>Hari Hari</i>	351	330	-6.0%	Rural centre
<i>Franz Josef</i>	429	444	+3.5%	Rural centre
<i>Fox Glacier</i>	375	306	-18.4%	Rural centre
<i>Whataroa</i>	405	288	-28.9%	Rural district
<i>Arahura</i>	480	651	+35.6%	Rural centre

This data exhibits that various rural townships have experienced various rates of growth and decline and illustrates uneven development occurring across the Westland District. For example, the rural centre of Arahura has experienced a growth in the population of 35.6% of people whereas the rural district of Whataroa has lost 28.9% of its population. The variability in growth and decline creates further implications as planning for these rural communities cannot be treated homogenously because they are experiencing various rates of change for different reasons. The implications of this uneven development will be explored further in the discussion chapter.

The population of the Westland District is expected to grow at both a positive and steady rate between 2017 and 2025. The key informants did not believe that the Westland District was experiencing the type of small-town decline that occurred during the restructuring phase outlined in the previous chapter.

I feel like as a council we are not talking small town decline but instead think about the coast as a whole and developing the economy as a whole... however, we don't focus on the individual towns. But we take the lead from the community associations about what their issues are and what they like (Key Informant 3).

The anticipated development and growth of the Westland District is shown through the population projections for the district. Figure 4 depicts that the Westland District is expected to grow in population size between 2017 and 2025. The estimated population size of Westland in 2017 is approximately 8,810 people. The total population is expected to increase by approximately 282 people or a 3.2% increase by the year 2025. However, this estimate is based off data that has estimated the 2013 population of Westland to be larger than the official 2013 census population statistic of 8,307 used in Table 3 above.

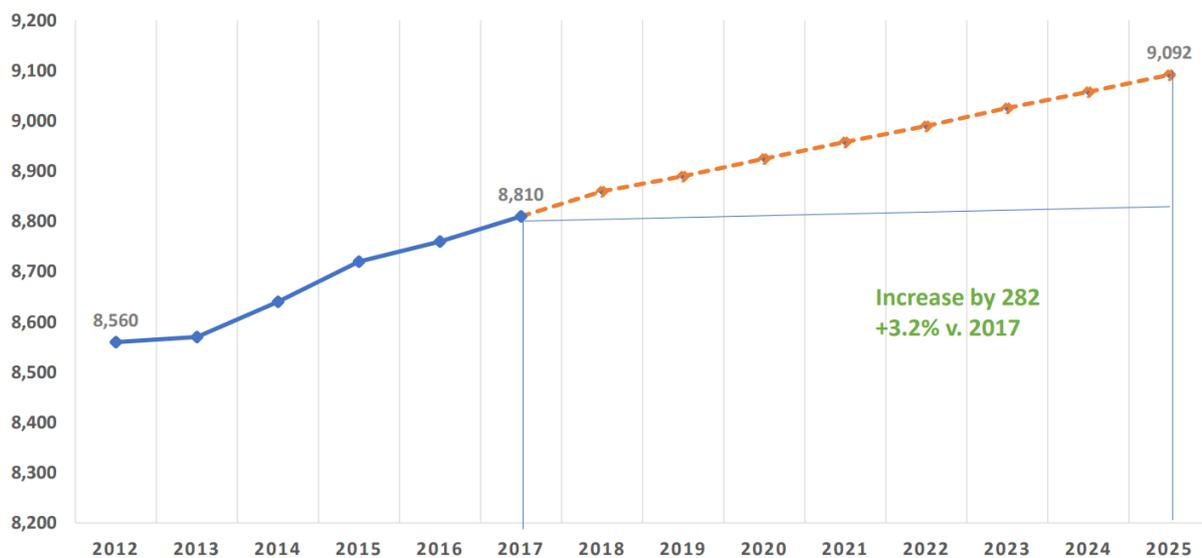


Figure 4: Population forecast of Westland District to 2025 (Tourism West Coast, 2018)

However, the location of this growth in population in the Westland District was not adequately forecasted in various documents. As the various settlements change through the loss and attraction of people to Westland, it is difficult to determine where this additional population will reside. The growth of population for settlements close to key attractions and industries would be expected to continue. However, rural settlements that have already experienced

declining populations are still likely to face inevitable decline as people seek to locate to townships with existing facilities and infrastructure.

4.4 Economic trends in Westland District

The Westland District has undergone significant changes in the key economic drivers throughout its history. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the historical context of Westland. This section seeks to provide a background into the growth and decline cycles that have occurred within the Westland District and explain the importance of tourism for the area which will be the main focus for the study.

4.4.1 Early Māori history

Māori played a significant role in the development of the Westland area. Māori legend claims that Maui, an early explorer, first made landfall in Aotearoa along the shores of Bruce Bay in South Westland over 1,000 years ago (Cameron *et al.*, 2001). Ngāi Tahu gained dominance from the 1700s through tribal warfare to control pounamu resources and became tangata whenua of the land to the present day (*ibid*). The pounamu resources were considered taonga (*treasure*) by Māori groups as pounamu increases mana (*prestige*) as passed from one generation to another (Key Informant 6; Key Informant 7). This importance resulted in the exploration of Westland area further inland and pounamu was then exploited by various iwi groups, and the pounamu was worked into slab adzes or finished ornaments, weapons, or tools (Cameron *et al.*, 2001). The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 by the leading chiefs of Ngāi Tahu. In 1860, the Arahura Land Deal with James Mackay was carried out on behalf of the Crown. The deal purchased a total of 2.8 million hectares of land within the West Coast for £300. Only 2,721 hectares was set-asides for reserves for Ngāi Tahu which was 5,650 ha less. Some reserves were removed from Ngai Tahu by 1887 by the New Zealand government because they were earmarked as areas of gold mining development (Te Karaka, 1998). By 1860, Maori occupation of the within the Westland area was limited, although there were still substantial Maori settlements throughout Westland. Because of this loss of land, dispossessed Ngai Tahu suffered for multiple generations from poverty due to the loss of land and access to mahinga kai (Cameron *et al.*, 2001).

4.4.2 Historical shifts in traditional economic drivers in Westland District

Understanding the shifts in key economic drivers in Westland is important to understand the various changes the area has undergone throughout its settlement. The gold rush era played a pivotal role in the development of communities and infrastructure across the Westland District.

The discovery of gold triggered a dramatic increase in the population occurred within the region compared to previous Māori settlement. The total population in the Westland District increased from 830 people in 1864 to approximately 50,000 people by the end of 1866 (Harrop, 1923). Hokitika in 1866 was the most populous settlement within New Zealand at the time with 25,000 and more than 100 pubs and 72 hotels at its peak in 1866. Hokitika during this peak is seen below in Figure 5 (Walrond, 2006). However, from 1867 the discovery of gold declined dramatically despite continuing for several years after. While gold mining still plays an important role in the economics of Westland, it is not to the same extent that it was historically. The decline of the industry resulted in a significant decline in the population of townships and communities as several itinerant workers and families left the West Coast for other regions in New Zealand (Pickering, 1993). These industry shifts indicate that the Westland District has experienced various cycles of significant growth and decline of the rural areas before.

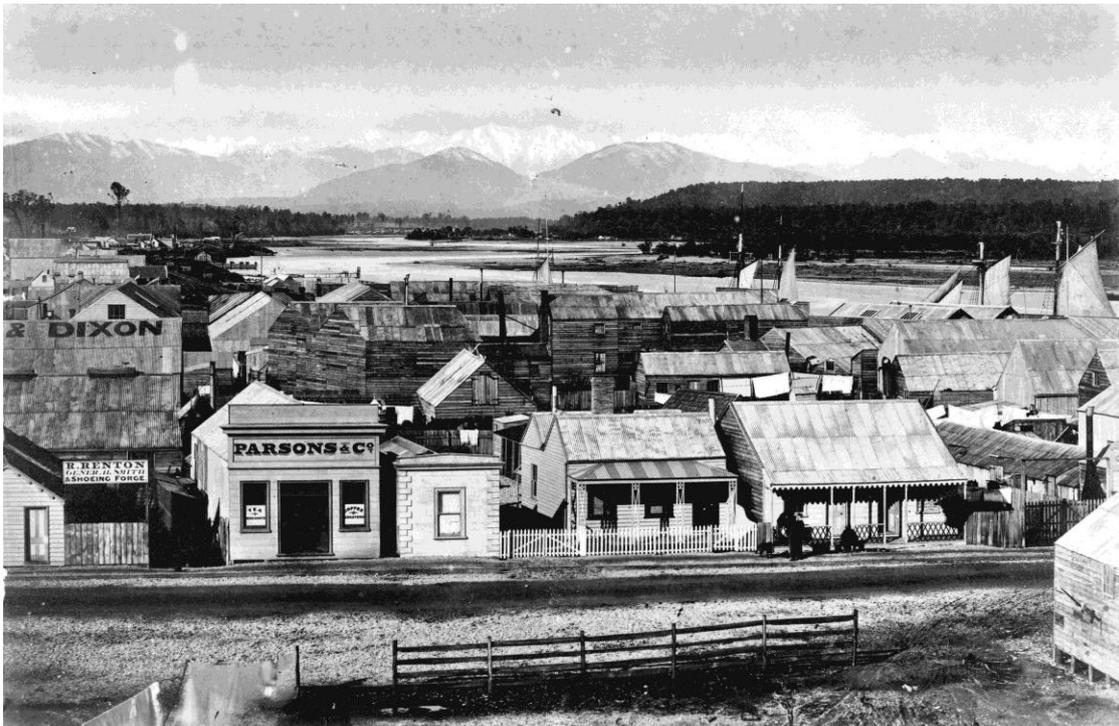


Figure 5: Hokitika township in 1870s (Walrond, 2006)

Following the decline of gold, other key industries in Westland and the wider West Coast area grew with significant investment by central government. Before the 1980s, Keynesian thinking dominated state economic policy in New Zealand. State control became a dominant feature of the economy after the Great Depression in the 1930s and was marked by high levels of state ownership of industry and resources, spatial interventions, and the regulation of individuals and firms (Roper, 2005). Under Keynesian thinking, “the principal objective of this mixed

economy was to promote full employment by encouraging the domestic production of a wide range of goods, regardless of whether New Zealand had a comparative advantage in all cases” (Dalziel and Lattimore, 2004; 15). In terms of spatial policy, an extensive system of regional industrial development support, in parallel with that in other countries, known as the ‘think big’ programme had been put in place after World War Two anchored on concepts of building catalytic projects which could ‘drive’ regional growth be they infrastructural or industrial in focus (Abbott, 2007). The West Coast region benefited significantly from this government programme and the investment schemes in various industries such as conservation, timber and saw-milling in Westland.

The period from 1945 to 1973 was regarded as the ‘long boom’ and the ‘golden years’ marked by high levels of employment, guaranteed export markets, and a strong welfare state. However, by the 1970s structural crises were impacting New Zealand. Externally this included the loss of privileged access to the UK market when the latter entered the then European Economic Commission, the oil price shocks, and a 30% fall in terms of trade made change inevitable (Connelly and Nel, 2016). Domestically, by the 1970s, stagnation, income decline, rising unemployment, and public debt had wrought their toll laying a basis for subsequent restructuring (Peet, 2012). Other economic problems included the overprotection of the economy, a rigid labour market, excessive regulation of the financial market, a large and inefficient public sector, high tax rates, and excessive regulation of business. The growing domestic crisis promoted the government to announce in the late 1970s that it would introduce a range of austerity measures that would cut government spending and devalue the dollar which would impact on living standards (Dalziel and Lattimore, 2004).

4.4.3 Restructuring of the Westland economy

These key industries have since undergone significant changes because of various policies implemented at the local and national level. The introduction of austerity measures from the 1980s saw the significant reduction of regional development interventions along the West Coast along with the rationalisation of state services, such as the railways, the timber industry and postal services took place. These changes weakened the economic vitality of dozens of small rural towns throughout Westland and the West Coast which had been heavily dependent on state-owned resource extraction activities (Britton *et al.*, 1992; Conradson and Pawson, 1997). The result of this policy shift was that:

the market-focussed policies of the government in the 1980s and 1990s meant New Zealand’s provinces were largely left to shape their economic destiny without central

assistance or interference beyond the trickle-down effects of national policies (Pratt and Lowndes, 2005; 139).

This ultimately enhanced the level of marginalisation that rural districts like Westland experienced. The combined effects of embracing neoliberalism, structural changes in the economy and its management have impacted differentially on various rural communities which have ultimately been left to those at the local level to intervene.

Dyer and Hurd (2011) found that the areas that were the most negatively affected from the period of restructuring that occurred were areas heavily invested in traditional extractive industries where either state disinvestment and/or the removal of trade tariffs led to the collapse or significant downscaling of the single dominant industry often in the absence of significant alternatives. The West Coast illustrates this example because it had a reliance on traditional extractive industries mining and forestry (often state-owned), witnessed significant changes in the form of job losses from site closures to the amalgamation of offices. The West Coast saw numerous state mining jobs and state employees generally fall 60% between 1986 and 1991 (Pawson and Scott 1992). In this area, towns such as Reefton experienced an 80% loss in the number of mining jobs, the outmigration of young people, and increased reliance on the private sector (Conradson and Pawson, 1997; 2009).

In recent years, the adoption of this neoliberal approach has helped to benefit the Westland District and the wider region to some extent. For example, rural areas small towns throughout Westland which experienced the loss of former dominant industries have moved into post-industrial activities such as tourism (Conradson and Pawson, 2009). However, not all rural communities have experienced these positive benefits that tourism has established and has now established additional problems because of its past legacies in traditional sectors. The following section will explore these changes that have occurred within the key economic drivers for the area, with the main focus being on the Westland District.

4.5 Current economic trends in Westland

An understanding of the main economic drivers is an important element to consider when discussing economic development. There have been some shifts in the key economic drivers in the Westland District over recent decades. Economically, the district has experienced several 'boom' and 'bust' cycles as these drivers changed. Key Informant 3 notes that

Westland is an area that hasn't done well economically for a number of years. Within that, the decline of traditional sectors, resource extraction, mining or logging...The

growth in tourism numbers overall, it has been positive, but it has new challenges we are trying to translate and grapple with (Key Informant 3).

The Westland District economy has grown positively in recent years. This is partially due to the economic growth of the West Coast region. For example, the West Coast economy generated \$1.87 billion in GDP and employed close to 17,000 people in the last 20 years (West Coast Regional Council, 2017). Overall, the region is growing at 2.2% per year over the last decade. Westland District is growing at the fastest rate over the last five years (3.9% per year GDP growth) as a result of the stronger tourism base. However, this growth is concentrated in just a few sectors such as minerals, dairy, construction and tourism. Figure 6 illustrates the changes in the amount of GDP each industry has contributed to the Westland District between 2015 and 2017. The figure illustrates that a majority of this is concentrated in the tourism and dairying sectors.

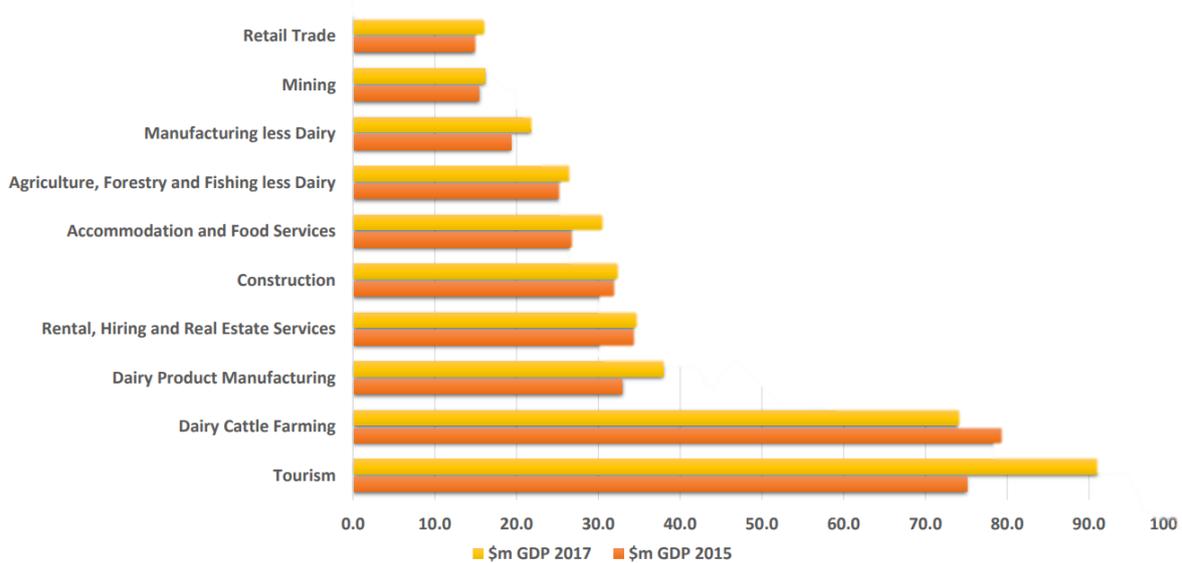


Figure 6: Ten main industries with the largest GDP in Westland District (Tourism West Coast, 2018)

The Westland District Council notes there are five main economic drivers in the Westland District. Figure 7 depicts the significance of each key economic driver regarding the proportion of GDP it contributes to the local economy. These drivers are tourism, dairying, dairy manufacturing and product, agriculture/fisheries/forestry, and mining. The most significant economic driver identified was the tourism sector which contributed 38% to the GDP of the Westland District. The smallest economic driver identified was mining which contributed 7%

to the local economy. Key Informant 4 notes that dairying has been a key economic driver for decades, but tourism is starting to take over.

Back in the late 70s and early 80s, dairying was our number 1 industry. It was the dairying that kept the local economy afloat and made things happen here. Dairying has continued to grow, but it hasn't grown at the rate tourism has in recent years (Key Informant 4).

While dairying still plays a significant role in economic development, data obtained from the Westland District Council separates the industry into two principal categories of dairying activities such as farming and dairy manufacturing carried out at Westland Milk Products.

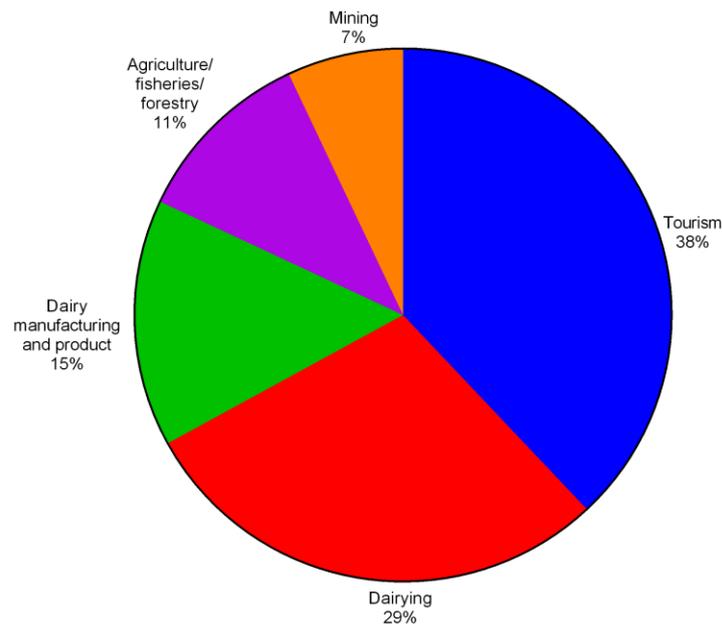


Figure 7: Main economic drivers in Westland District in 2017 showing the proportion of GDP each sector in comparison to others (Westland District Council, 2018)

Figure 8 highlights how key economic drivers have changed between 2000 and 2017. It illustrates how sectors such as dairying and tourism have steadily increased during this period and how traditional primary sectors such as mining, and agriculture have decreased in comparison. This indicates that there has been a shift in the role of different industries over a 17-year period and the Westland economy has become more reliant upon sectors such as tourism and dairying.

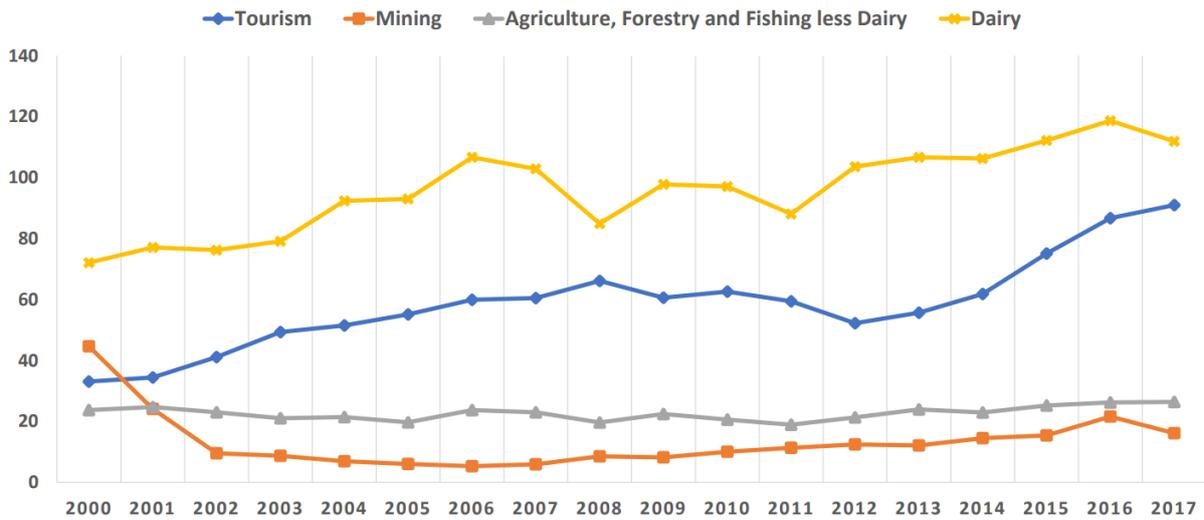


Figure 8: Westland District's main economic drivers (\$m GDP at 2010 prices) (Tourism West Coast, 2018)

The shift away from the traditional sectors to other areas such as tourism is a vital component to successful economic development for the Westland District. This shift away from extractive industries is more sustainable for future development. Despite this, some members of the community believe these sectors should still play a vital role in the future economic development of the district but need to take a sustainable and modern approach to development. Key Informant 3 notes that

Everyone would like to hold onto the traditional sectors but move them into a more sustainable and modern framework. Not everyone, but a lot of people would. By that, I mean that a lot of the people I talk to understand that mining today is not the same as it was in the 1950s, but they still see a role for mining (Key Informant 3).

As this section has shown, tourism currently plays a significant role in the economic development of the Westland District. Therefore, tourism will be the primary economic driver that is examined when considering economic changes in the Westland District in the following chapters.

4.6 Rural tourism in Westland District

Tourism is now a key economic driver in the Westland District and has resulted in several positive and negative elements for the rural district. This thesis focuses on several rural settlements involved in rural tourism that are all located within the Westland District context. These various settlements have experienced several benefits and constraints from the growth of the tourism industry. Table 4 assesses whether the various impacts from developing the

tourism industry have benefited or constrained further economic growth and community development in Westland in general.

Table 4: The impacts of tourism on rural development (adapted from Fonseca and Ramos, 2013)

<i>List of impacts of rural tourism</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Constraints</i>
<i>Generation of jobs</i>	✓	
<i>Diversification of economic bases</i>	✓	
<i>Improvement of rural areas' image and promotion to visitors</i>	✓	
<i>Encouragement of entrepreneurship and co-operation between rural actors</i>	✓	
<i>Heritage protection</i>	✓	✓
<i>Seasonality of tourism</i>		✓
<i>Reduced and funnelled incomes (i.e. accommodation, Air BnB)</i>		✓
<i>Limited interaction with rural activities and populations</i>		✓
<i>External organisations positioned as the main beneficiaries of the new incomes</i>		✓
<i>Cultural and environmental pressures</i>	✓	✓
<i>The remoteness and the distance to the main urban centres</i>	✓	✓

4.7 Resources in Westland's rural settlements for tourism development

The various townships throughout Westland have several resources that have been utilised for the tourism industry and is outlined below. The main focus of this section will be on the activities that have benefitted and constrained tourism development in Westland.

4.7.1 Environmental resources

The abundant natural resources in the district have provided a significant resource for many of the settlements and have acted as both a significant benefit and constraint for tourism development for Westland. The conservation estate is the most significant tourism resource for the Westland District because the area has the largest conservancies with 1.8 million hectares of land that is all managed by DoC alone (Cameron *et al.*, 2001) The Conservation Estate takes up 83% of the total geographical area of the Westland District (Key Informant 4). The natural resources within this conservation land are utilised by several settlements and have been promoted regionally, nationally and internationally as well. These include the Hokitika Gorge, Lake Kaniere, Lake Mahinapua, and Dorothy Falls. The rural settlements of Franz Josef and Fox Glacier have also utilised the area's natural resources successfully to capture visitors to these areas. Franz Josef is one of the busiest and fastest-growing tourist centres on the West Coast; it has up to 6,000 tourists a night in peak tourist season (Key Informant 1). Although smaller and quieter than Franz Josef, Fox Glacier is growing in popularity and provides accommodation and facilities for visitors to the southern part of Westland Tai Poutini National Park. The natural resources within the area include attractions such as the glaciers and glacier hot pools (Westland District Council, 2018). Furthermore, some rural settlements also have endemic species not found elsewhere. The township of Whataroa also has New Zealand's only breeding colony of kōtuku (white herons), found along the banks of the Waitangiroto River (Key Informant 1). Thus, the environment within the Westland District is a significant resource for the tourism industry and economic development.

However, several implications have arisen from the use of natural resources for tourism and economic gain in Westland. The Department of Conservation (DoC) is the sole agency responsible for the management and monitoring of the conservation estate for tourism purposes to stimulate economic development in Westland. DoC provides visitor services which are informed by a National Visitor Strategy (1996) that aims to meet the challenges of increasing visitor numbers and providing well-constructed facilities to cater for a wide range of visitor

types and expectations. However, the National Visitor Strategy is over 20 years old and published when visitor numbers from tourism were significantly lower than they are at present. Thus, there is a strong likelihood that the reasons for visitors to the district and the wider region have changed since the strategy was adopted.

A key implication DoC has faced with increasing visitor numbers is their role in the protection and promotion of these natural resources for both domestic and international visitors, which has become increasingly scrutinised in recent years as visitor numbers increase annually. Of particular concern is the ability for DoC to obtain a sufficient amount of revenue from these natural resources in order to provide adequate infrastructure and services for these visitors to use in the form of car parks, toilets, rubbish bins and general maintenance (Key Informant 9). Many of the attractions in the Westland District provide limited, if any, revenue to provide facilities and manage them effectively. Thus, there are calls for DoC to ‘neo-liberalise’ and find strategies to obtain this revenue to be able to invest in the conservation estate. The introduction of a border levy fee of \$35 in 2018 for each international visitor will help to mitigate these costs (Bramwell, 2018). This raises other concerns around whether these resources should be marketed like other commodities for visitor consumption. These natural resources play a significant role in the reason visitors are attracted to Westland originally and must be managed appropriately for tourism use.

4.7.2 Heritage resources

Heritage preservation has also acted as both a major benefit and constraint for the development of tourism in Westland. Many of the rural settlements offer rich historical resources for tourism as many of the settlements were established on gold mining in 1864. Many of these settlements have strong historical narratives that reflect their past. For example, the settlement of Hokitika was once one of New Zealand’s most populous centres because of the gold rush (Westland District Council, 2018). Furthermore, this historical narrative was portrayed in the novel *The Luminaries* which won the Man-Booker Prize in 2013 (Key Informant 2). Numerous other rural settlements throughout the district also have a strong heritage. The townships of Ross and Kumāra were established during the gold rush and became key centres for mining because of rich alluvial goldfields (Westland District Council. 2018). The township of Kumāra has experienced several stages of growth and decline over its history. The town experienced significant growth during the gold rush era, but this declined dramatically following the decline of the mining industry.

The West Coast Wilderness Trail (established in 2010) has played a critical role in highlighting this heritage. Various settlements such as Kumāra, Ross and Hokitika are positioned along the trail. Ross is positioned at the start and endpoint of West Coast Wilderness Trail which has resulted in new businesses and tourism enterprises emerging in the township such as the i-Site centre and various interpretation panels that portray this narrative (Key Informant 2). Furthermore, Kumāra has experienced a renaissance in recent years, and new businesses have been established due to the introduction of the West Coast Wilderness Trail that has reversed previous decline (Westland District Council, 2018). However, the positive benefits of the cycle trail have been concentrated in the northern end of the Westland District and have only provided any significant benefit to the communities the cycle trail directly passes through.

4.7.3 Cultural resources

Culture in the Westland District is also a significant resource that the tourism industry has utilised for economic development that has acted as both a benefit and constraint for the area. There is a robust Māori presence within the Westland District. The use of indigenous cultures for tourism purposes has several implications associated with it. A key issue that needs to be addressed is the inappropriate use of Māori culture in tourism in Westland. Zygadlo *et al.* (2001) note there has been an inappropriate use of Māori culture previously in Westland which has had a negative impact on local Māori. For example, some traditional practices and performances have changed for tourism because the culture has been taken out of context due to misrepresentation and tokenistic gestures on behalf of tourism operators seeking to develop tourism further in Westland. Furthermore, it results in a depreciation of taonga Māori, and a takes away the authority local Māori have over their culture and heritage.

Furthermore, many rural settlements such as Hokitika have a vibrant arts and culture community, and exhibits have provided an additional resource for the settlement. The culture is seen through the multiple events hosted throughout the year at Hokitika. These events include the annual Wildfoods Festival, the Driftwood and Sand Exhibition on Hokitika beach and Feral Fashion (Key Informant 1; Key Informant 3). Furthermore, there are numerous artist studios and carving shops located within the CBD of Hokitika. Events are also carried out in the township of Kumāra and attract people to the township from outside the district such as the Kumāra Races and Kumāra also the start point for the annual Coast to Coast race that has gained popularity in recent years.

4.7.4 Synthesis

The Westland District has undergone various changes in regard to its demographic and economic trends. This has had several implications for the area. Demographically, uneven geographical development of various rural settlements means that addressing issues arising from growth and decline in Westland will be challenging. These changes in the population of this district have been significantly influenced through the shifts in economic approaches at a national level (i.e. Keynesian to Neoliberalism) and key economic drivers (i.e. a decline of extractive industries to post-productive activities like tourism). The rise of a market-led approach through the promotion of tourism in the Westland District has helped to stimulate economic growth. However, the neoliberalisation of various resources like the environment, heritage and culture for tourism purposes has provided significant benefits and several implications. The following section will analyse the role of various agencies and organisations have had in economic development within the Westland District and investigate further the influence of neoliberal approaches on the district.

4.8 Role of organisations in facilitating tourism for economic development

4.8.1 Central government involvement in economic development in rural areas

Central government currently provides limited support for economic and community development outside of their involvement with export industries and lead sectors. The two key ministries that are involved in economic development in rural and regional areas in New Zealand are the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Ministry of Business Innovation, and Enterprise. The activities of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) almost entirely focused on benefit support with limited funding set aside for usually short-term community initiatives. These include an interagency initiative to extend a range of government services into rural areas for regionally development purposes. Similarly, the subsidiary Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) funds community development advice and staff positions for up to three years in selected, deprived areas, adding about nine towns on a rotating basis per year. The crucial other ministry, the Ministry of Business Innovation and Enterprise (MBIE), focuses on improving government processes to support businesses and to assist them to enter the export market, and more recently to access energy, communication and natural resources.

Within the Westland District context, these ministerial departments have primarily facilitated market-led approaches to development in the area to stimulate growth. Previously, there has

been evidence that these ministerial departments have exhibited the minimal nature of central state support for localities and regional areas in New Zealand, meaning that the mandate for development in the peripheral areas has devolved to the local level and corresponded with the privatisation and rationalisation of activities elsewhere (Peck, 2013). Recently, the MBIE was involved in actively seeking to develop the economies of Westland and the wider West Coast. The development of the West Coast Economic Action Plan 2017 exhibits the actions of the public sector in investigating the potential of the region. This document clearly illustrates the focus on stimulating economic growth from devising market-led strategies to grow the key economic drivers instead of prioritising the well-being of the communities on the West Coast instead.

The development of the Economic Development Action Plan 2017 exhibits the market-led approach central government has taken for rural regions of New Zealand. For the Westland area, the document assesses various projects considered critical for economic development in the area and assesses their economic viability and benefits for the wider region. The plan outlines five key actions that will benefit the Westland District and the broader region in the foreseeable future. Table 5 below illustrates these actions and the implementation of them across the Westland District.

Table 5: Key actions that benefit Westland District from Economic Development Action Plan 2017(West Coast Regional Council, 2017)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Example in Westland District</i>
<i>Growing the West Coast visitor economy</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extending the Hokitika Gorge experience 2. Future-proofing Franz Josef 3. Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy 4. Culture and Heritage Tourism Development 5. Implementing the West Coast Tourism marketing plan
<i>Making it easier to do business</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single window regulatory processing initiative 2. Disposal of low conservation value land
<i>Supporting economic diversification</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing sustainable wild whitebait fisheries 2. Wind-blown timber from conservation land 3. Growing the digital economy

<i>Improving connectivity and infrastructure</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investment in road resilience 2. Investment in key visitor routes
<i>Developing a regional network of world-class cycle trails</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Coast Wilderness Trail extension

As the above table indicates, the key implication of this document is the fact this Action Plan is primarily focused on developing the visitor experience instead of developing stronger communities. With the potential to become a Masterplan for the Westland District, it which raises concerns because no direct action targets the improvement of social aspects of rural communities in the area. While some actions will provide some benefits to local communities such as improved infrastructure and growing the digital economy through the installation of ultra-fast broadband, the document is focused on growing the tourism sector and the visitor economy. Therefore, there are potential social implications for various rural communities throughout Westland and the wider West Coast region that may not benefit from the Action Plan.

There has been increased recognition by the central government to provide adequate funding in rural and regional areas. Since 2008, regional policy has been further downgraded, such that in 2013 the national budget for this policy was reduced from just under \$4NZ million per annum to just \$200,000NZ (NZ Treasury 2013). All of this has led to a scenario in which state support for local level development, particularly in regional and rural areas, has fallen. The development of the Provincial Growth Fund in 2017 has been a recent step taken by the state to address these concerns for rural regions around New Zealand. This is funding that the New Zealand Government has allocated over a three-year period to invest in regional economic development. The West Coast region was identified as a surge region that would qualify for this funding. The PGF has three investment tiers that can provide funding for regional development projects, key sectors such as tourism, and infrastructure projects. Funding is granted depending on the type of projects that are submitted and then assessed by a panel board whose primary function is to advise the government on projects. However, the final decision on a project is from the ministers; not the panel so has the potential to be influenced by the current concerns of the minister granting the final decision. Furthermore, the implementation of the PGF only benefits regional and rural areas that have been identified as ‘surge’ regions.

While the West Coast falls within this definition, it does not provide funding for other areas that may be experiencing significant decline which may exacerbate uneven development in regional areas across New Zealand.

4.8.2 Local government involvement in rural areas of New Zealand

Within the New Zealand context, the role of local government has changed over the past two decades to prioritise a market-driven, neo-liberal approach to economic development. Under the Local Government Act (2002), the focus of local government was primarily for promoting ‘four well-beings’ within their communities. In the context of this research, the most important is that was ‘social and economic well-being’. However, reforms were carried out on this legislation in 2012 attempted to curtail and focus local government activity on basic functions only. The amendments to the Local Government Act replaced the well-being requirements detailed in the ‘purpose statement’ with the new and significantly narrowed down responsibility namely that they

meet the current and future needs of communities for good quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses (New Zealand Government, 2012a, 2012b).

Nel (2015) speculates that the amendments to this Act have been carried out to reflect an increased desire to pursue a more market-led approach by central government and give themselves the ability to intervene, ostensibly in favour of market interests or public good. This has been exhibited in the development of the recent involvement of central government with the Provincial Growth Fund which has sought to intervene directly by providing funding to areas experiencing significant growth.

4.8.3 Local government involvement in Westland

The Westland District Council is one of the key planning agencies responsible for the development of the communities within the district. The role of the district council and part it plays in economic development within the region is established through central government legislation such as the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA 1991) and the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002). In the context of the RMA (1991), sustainable management also refers to the management, use and development of these resources in a way that enables the economic well-being of people and communities. The RMA (1991) itself seeks to provide a balance between environmental and economic concerns about the economic imperatives of the marketplace. However, it should be noted that the RMA is not an economic

development Act. The enablement of economic development is promoted and supported by a variety of Government subsidies, agencies and policies (Wright, 2013). This was seen in the interviews carried out which illustrate the perspective of council members on how economic development, particularly tourism, should be managed effectively by local government. For example, a key informant interviewed at the Westland District Council argues that

Tourism is very important for Westland and supports the majority of businesses in Hokitika especially... From a council perspective, we want to be able to create an infrastructure where we can help to promote all that and push tourism without actually getting fully involved in the establishment of it (Key Informant 3).

The Westland District Council takes a facilitative and permissive approach and offering some forms of funding to support this financially. For example, funding is provided to specific tourism organisations to manage and promote the economic development of the Westland District. The Westland District Council provides \$100,000 to Tourism West Coast for operational funding on an annual basis to facilitate this economic development conducted by the organisation (Key Informant 3). The implications of providing this funding are discussed below.

To meet the current and future needs of the communities for good quality infrastructure, local public services and carrying out regulatory functions the Westland District Council develops and implements various planning documents. These include documents such as the District Plan, the Long-Term Plan and Annual Plans to present these strategies and provisions for the wider district. The Westland District Council Long Term Plan 2018 – 2028 addresses economic development in several ways. It outlines the importance of growing tourism effectively for multiple communities throughout the Westland District such as Ross, Franz Josef and Fox Glacier (Westland District Council, 2018). The 10 Year Plan outlines that growth from tourism will continue to increase over the next decade and will be a significant contribution to the economy of the district but will likely place a strain on critical infrastructure and services the council provides (Westland District Council, 2018). However, there is also recognition that the small ratepayer base that is used for funding severely restricts the amount of funding that can be mobilised to invest in this infrastructure. The 10 Year Plan notes that the growth of tourism is currently unsustainable and could potentially lead to the failure of key council assets. The plan provides a balanced approach to development and outlines both community and social implications the district is expected to face within the next decade. It is not solely focused on tourism nor seeks to prioritise economic development from other key economic drivers.

4.8.4 Other key players in tourism development in Westland

Numerous organizations and agencies operate at the local level outside of government in the Westland District. These agencies typically source their funding by either a collective of territorial authorities in the area, central government and from treaty settlements. From these funding pools, they are tasked with fulfilling the economic mandates and objectives of their funders to achieve positive economic outcomes for the district.

4.8.4.1 Local Māori

Māori throughout Westland have played a significant role in the development of the area. Since the 1980s, the New Zealand government and various Māori tribes have been engaged in a reconciliation and compensation process to redress historical breaches of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Reid and Rout, 2016). This has led to substantial settlements in which tribes have been awarded a combination of money, property rights, rights to purchase Crown Lands, a formal apology from the Crown, and a range of co-governance arrangements with local, regional, and central governments in their tribal territories.

In the Westland District context, the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 has provided opportunities for local Māori to participate in the economic development of the area actively. Ngāi Tahu Pounamu is an example of a successful initiative carried out in the Westland District that is built upon conventional economic structures (Barr and Reid, 2014). In 1997, the New Zealand government vested ownership of all pounamu in the iwi, Ngāi Tahu. This ownership transfer was part of the Ngāi Tahu treaty settlement claim. Under this scheme, the iwi invested in an online tracing, marketing, and sales portal for the sale of authentic Ngāi Tahu Pounamu jewellery. The harvesting and manufacturing process is undertaken at the hapū scale by Ngāti Waewae. The hapū utilises multiple individuals and family pounamu carvers to supply their physical and online shops (Barr and Reid, 2014). This has significantly benefited both hapū and individual carvers involved in the scheme to contribute a portion of their turnover back to benefit the tribe. In the case of individuals, this return goes to the hapū, while in the case of the hapū this money goes to the iwi and is then invested into social and cultural initiatives (Reid and Rout, 2016). This has had a significant cultural and economic benefit for local Māori and has provided opportunities to enter the tourism landscape that is growing in the Westland District.

At present, Poutini Ngai Tahu consists of two Papatipu Runanga namely Te Runanga o Makaawhio Runanga and Te Runaka o Ngati Waewae. The perspectives from Te Rūnanga o

Ngāti Waewae were the main rūnanga that helped to inform this research project due to resource constraints and limited timing from other local rūnanga.

4.8.4.2 Development West Coast

Development West Coast plays a critical role in tourism and economic development in the Westland District. Development West Coast is currently governed by a Deed of Trust that outlines the key objectives of the organisation which is to promote sustainable employment opportunities and generate sustainable economic benefits for the West Coast in the present and future context. Key informant 10 outlines that the role of Development West Coast was set up as a charitable Trust in 2001 to manage, invest, and distribute income from initial government funding of \$92 million. This initial funding was provided by the government to compensate for the loss of indigenous forestry and the privatisation of infrastructure on the West Coast during the 1990s. The fund is managed in a way to ensure that funding remains available for future generations of West Coast communities.

The 2018 Development West Coast Annual Report showed how these funds were reinvested. An overview of these reports indicates that they have established a substantial fund generated from interest earnings of the original government funding package. The report illustrates that the interest generated was used to support Development West Coast operations along with an annual grant made to three district councils on the West Coast, with \$400,000 provided annually to upgrade various facilities and infrastructure in the region. The report suggests a preference for funding facility upgrades rather than economic development. The exceptions are for general business mentoring, and a few direct investments into West Coast business ventures in agriculture and tourism, via commercial finance through loans and equity investments in West Coast businesses to help them develop or expand their operations (Development West Coast, 2018). Thus, their objectives seek to stimulate economic growth to ensure that the area can compete within the local markets instead of purely for social benefits for the wider community.

The facilitation of community projects is unevenly distributed depending on the risk a project may take and financial return it will provide. For example, Development West Coast helped to establish a cranberry co-operative but was found to have lower economic returns than anticipated despite the potential benefits such as employment and diversity for the community the cranberry farm would be placed in (Connelly and Nel, 2016). However, the poor performance of the farm has seen the cranberry farm being sold. The subsequent failure of a

this and several other investments such as ice cream manufacturing led to a strategic rethink on the part of the organisation which now, controversially in the region, adopts a more conservative approach to development. Instead, the organisation distributes the interest annually, this being \$5.4 million in 2018. There are competing views of what kind of role Development West Coast should play. Some think it should act more like an economic development agency and play a more proactive role by investing in and attracting industry and business development (Key Informant 1; Key Informant 10). Others point to its status as a charitable trust and the commitment to manage the \$92NZ million endowments from the government for future generations indicating the more conservative approach which the trust is currently following.

4.8.4.3 Tourism West Coast

Another key organisation involved in tourism and economic development of the Westland District is Tourism West Coast. This organisation plays a key role in tourism development throughout the Westland District and the wider West Coast region. The management role of Tourism West Coast in Westland is responsible for marketing the wider West Coast region and developing a strategic tourism alliance with businesses and tourism operators throughout the region (Cameron *et al.*, 2001). They are directed by a board consisting of District Council and industry representatives from Westland, Grey and Buller Districts.

Part of the responsibility that Tourism West Coast has is to develop a marketing strategy that will effectively 'sell' the West Coast to attract domestic and international visitors to the region. However, the agency is driven purely by the need to grow the tourism industry in Westland and the West Coast through greater economic outcomes, increased GDP expenditure, higher visitor numbers and increased employment opportunities (Tourism West Coast, 2018). The 2017 – 2021 objectives outlined in the strategy reflect this focus for Tourism West Coast on economic gains (Tourism West Coast, 2018). The strategy fails to address any possible social issues that may arise from the marketing of communities as a destination for visitors. Furthermore, the strategy seeks to grow visitor numbers and get people to stay in the region for longer but fails to consider to any extent how they would be accommodated for or the infrastructure and services that would be required. In 2016, Tourism West Coast estimated that 1,358,700 people visited the West Coast and expected this figure to grow to 1,824,619 visitors by 2021. The complications that arise from this anticipated growth in visitor numbers need to be adequately addressed before the area is further marketed to potential visitors to ensure that the West Coast and Westland District can develop sustainably.

4.9 Synthesis

The above analysis into the Westland District has served two primary purposes. This chapter has justified the selection of Westland as an appropriate case study because it is a rural area that has experienced significant growth from the booming tourism industry. It has also justified why tourism is the focus of this thesis for examining economic development. This chapter has sought to answer two research questions proposed in the previous chapter around identification of key demographic and economic trends and the implications of these, as well as the role of various local and regional organisations in facilitating economic development in Westland.

The key demographic trends identified was that rural settlements had experienced a mix of declining and increases in population. There is an uneven distribution of the population, with most of the population in Westland is significantly concentrated in settlement of Hokitika, and the remaining population dispersed into a mix of rural centres and districts throughout the area. However, it is expected that the population of Westland will have an increase in population by 2025.

The key economic trend identified in this chapter was that tourism and dairying are the two most significant economic drivers in the Westland District. There has been a substantial decline in the traditional extractive industries such as mining and agriculture in recent decades as a result of restructuring and the rise of neoliberal approaches. Increasing importance has been placed on tourism as a key economic driver and the utilisation of market-driven approaches to utilise various resources that are able to be employed for tourism purposes. This importance is expected to increase in the foreseeable future as the number of visitors to the Westland increases and has various implications that will be discussed in the following chapter.

The various organisations that were identified to play a key role in facilitating economic development were local government and central government agencies such as DoC and MBIE. These organisations are bound by legislation to ensure that development within Westland is undertaken appropriately and benefits both visitors and residents to the area. Other organisations such as Tourism West Coast and Development West Coast that are not bound by legislation also play a significant role in facilitating economic development for Westland.

Thus, this chapter illustrates that rural areas have undergone significant changes because of an increased focus on neoliberal practices to stimulate economic growth. The employment of tourism has enabled rural settlements and towns that have appropriate resources to be used to benefit from growth to some extent. However, not all settlements are geared towards the

exploitation of these resources, nor are they readily able to be marketed for the tourism industry which has also marginalised those rural settlements. The following chapter seeks to explore the issues and implications that the growth of the tourism industry has had on the Westland District.

Chapter Five

Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from key informant interviews, questionnaires and document analysis to answer the remaining three research questions. It seeks to explore aspects of three key research questions about tourism as a critical economic driver in the rural environment of Westland. The following research questions frame this chapter:

1. What are the key issues and opportunities that are currently influencing regional economic growth in rural areas on individuals, communities and visitors to the area and what are their implications?
2. How have various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions responded to the issues that have arisen and what are the key implications of their approaches for rural communities?

The previous chapter identified that tourism is the key economic driver for the Westland District and will be the focus of this chapter. This chapter will illustrate how tourism has driven change and growth in a rural setting. The issues relating to tourism that are influencing the economic development of the Westland District will first be examined. These are related to the issues around getting visitors to stay longer, pressures on infrastructure and facilities, freedom camping, and the value of tourism. Next, issues related to specific resources such as heritage will be explored. Following this, the actions various institutions, organisations and Indigenous groups have taken to respond to these issues will be deliberated and will examine the approaches that have been implementing to correct these issues. This includes the marketing of alternative natural resources and icons to establish a point of difference, place branding, and cycle trail development.

5.2 Issues associated with the growth of tourism

Tourism was found to be one of the key activities influencing economic development and growth in the Westland District on individuals, communities and visitors to the area. This section of the results will focus specifically on the various aspects of tourism that have resulted in positive and negative implications for the Westland District. The key issues that key informants raised related to tourism included the value of tourism in Westland, freedom

camping, inadequate infrastructure and services, establishing a point of difference between communities, and the overall perception of the Westland District. These issues will be discussed below.

5.2.1 Community perspectives on tourism

Figure 9 summarises the key issues that the Westland community has with tourism. This data was collected from a series of questionnaires carried out with members of the public and local business owners located within the township of Hokitika. The data is drawn from 32 structured interviews. Informants were provided with a questionnaire and asked to rank various issues from most important to least important. The most frequently identified element in the findings was associated with tourism was around encouraging visitors to stay longer in the Westland District, with 22% of respondents saying this was the most important issue related to tourism. Other issues such as obtaining funding to provide activities for tourists, freedom camping, and infrastructure and facilities were also considered to have a similar level of importance within the community. Figure 9 notes that the least important issue shows that marketing and promotion of the Westland District were identified by the fewest number of respondents as the most important issue.

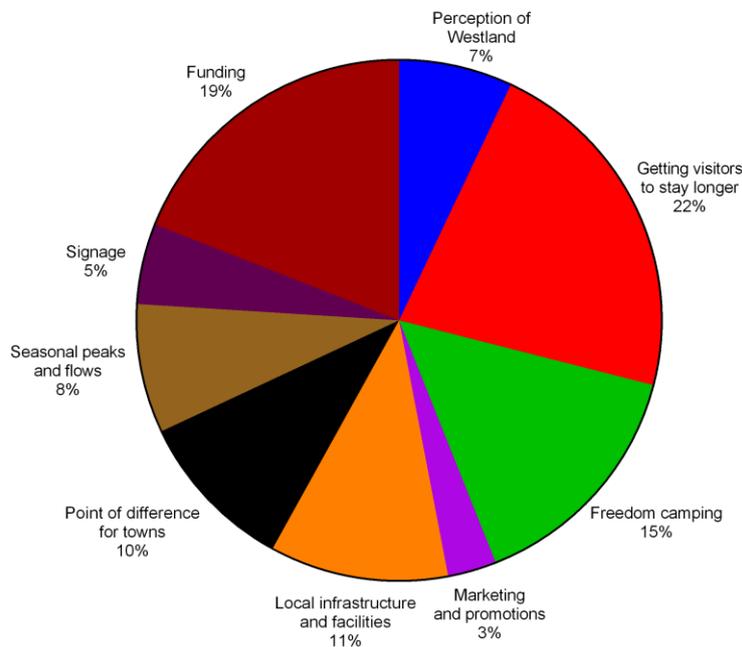


Figure 9: Community members perceptions of the most important issues related to tourism

5.2.2 Encouraging visitors to stay longer in Westland

A central issue that was raised by key informants that have limited economic development in Westland is encouraging visitors to stay longer. This is a critical issue for tourism development

as the number of time visitors stays in the area influences the amount of revenue that is placed into the local economy. Research surveys were undertaken by Tourism West Coast between January-March 2018 in the largest settlement in Westland. It found that 21% of visitors stay in Hokitika for less than 1 hr and 15% for between 2-4 hours. Further, 18% would stay up to half a day, 23% up to a day and 18% more than a day longer if they knew more about Hokitika (Westland District Council, 2018). This illustrates that visitors to Westland do not intend to stay for extended periods of time. This could be related to the lack of knowledge around the diverse number of attractions in the Westland District. Key Informant 1, 3, 4 and 8 noted that the main attractions tourists know about in the Westland District are the Hokitika Gorge and the Glaciers and that there is limited knowledge of other features or things small communities have to offer. This is confirmed by Key Informant 8 who notes that

The problem with the structure of tourism here is that you have got two key things – the glaciers and Punakaiki which are the two key things people come to have a look at and then go somewhere else like Queenstown (Key Informant 8).

For Westland in particular, many of the townships are only seen as a brief stop-over point on the way to somewhere else. For example, large townships like Hokitika are often perceived as only a pit-stop on the way to another location rather than a destination itself.

The most common complaint is that [Hokitika] is really just seen as a stop-over place, people come in just for the night and think they can get down to Franz in an hour and a half because that is what Google says, but actually, it is a hard drive (Key Informant 2).

The lack of a point of difference between townships often results in visitors staying for shorter periods of time because they will only want to see the well-known attractions. This has negative implications for economic development for Westland as it means less revenue is being generated for local economies in small townships. Visitors to the area often believe there are only a few key icons to see and that they can do them all within a day. For example,

There are some tourists that come through and Chinese people in particular who come through, get a rental car in Christchurch, drive to the Coast and think they can then drive to Queenstown in 2 or 3 hours and have no idea of the distances on the Coast for all the things that are available to see. We are hoping we can change that perspective on things, but it is going to take time, it is just a matter of changing that perspective (Key Informant 4).

This illustrates that visitors to the Westland District may not understand the geographic scale of the district and not recognise the value in taking more time. However, encouraging visitors to stay longer requires the marketing of various other attractions visitors. Attempts to redress

this issue have predominately been through the development of an icon for each township. For example,

The Hokitika Gorge is the main magnet for the township of Hokitika. There is a tourism strategy that outlines the plan is to have 6 icons and then sub-icons under that for the West Coast. It is a bit controversial because some people go to the gorge and never go to Hokitika... They are extending the track so that it is actually a loop walk to keep people in the area for longer (Key Informant 2).

The development of these icons as a point of difference for these townships has encountered several issues. Key Informant 1 notes that the selection of these icons was carried out as a survey by Tourism West Coast to see what aspects of each settlement could be marketed effectively. Key Informant 1 notes that

People looked around and said what have we got? We have Lake Mahinapua, the glaciers, Hokitika Gorge. We thought alright, the glaciers have always been an icon. Let's market the Hokitika Gorge as an icon and that is what really started the ball rolling for Hokitika. You cannot go anywhere else that has the same environmental and unique features. This business of selecting an icon and marketing the icon to the people ends up attracting people to the area and surrounding towns (Key Informant 1).

Regarding the Hokitika Gorge, Key Informant 2 notes multiple hurdles need to be overcome before this can successfully be established as a critical point of difference for visitors.

"There is not enough parking [at the Hokitika Gorge], the road isn't sealed, they're gradually sealing, it's not easy to get to either. I think it is really poorly signposted as well even from here (Key Informant 2)."

For smaller communities across the Westland District, the development of the key icons to attract people to stay longer has been limited. Key Informant 4 notes that many of these settlements have struggled to address this issue due to funding constraints and other priorities. However, the potential for these townships to capitalise successfully on these is significant. Key Informant 3 notes that

I think most of these towns have potential because they are all on the route from Arthur's pass through to the glaciers and going further onto Otago. I think it calls for some imaginative ways to get people's attention. Some of these towns need a real point of difference, and you can kind of tell some are sleepy little towns past their hey-days, and some are a bit of both. The ones that don't have the glaciers nearby like the one in between Hokitika and the glaciers they are struggling because they can't identify their point of difference (Key Informant 3).

Thus, the positioning of the townships along the state highway is critical. Establishing a point of difference for these settlements is essential as it provides visitors with an opportunity to stop while travelling through the Westland District and possibly provide revenue for the local

economy. Table 6 outlines the key point of difference for various settlements across the Westland District and the current issues they face in developing this further to capitalise on the economic development opportunity it offers.

Table 6: The point of difference identified for Westland settlements and the issues they currently face in capturing the economic development from tourism

<i>Township</i>	<i>Point of difference</i>	<i>Current issues</i>
<i>Hokitika</i>	Hokitika Gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not enough parking - Need to extend the walking loop - Redevelopment of road - Signage directing people to the attraction
	Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of a rock wall has eroded the main beach - Lack of rubbish bins and toilets along the main beach and Sunset Point.
<i>Ross</i>	Gold mining heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrading i-Site centre - More interpretation panels required to portray the mining heritage of the township
<i>Whataroa</i>	White Heron colonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing infrastructure to carry out White Heron tours for domestic and international tourists - Signage to inform the public that area is only natural habitat for White Heron in New Zealand
	Geothermal hot springs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Still in early discovery and research phase associated with studies being carried out on the Alpine Faultline - Infrastructure requirements to establish springs and accessways
<i>Franz Josef and Fox Glacier</i>	Glaciers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future-proofing the townships. - Extended issues with flooding from the Waiho Rover - Earthquake risk from Alpine Fault

<i>Arahura</i>	Pounamu from Arahura River	- Telling the associated narratives around the discovery of pounamu and sources
<i>Kumāra</i>	West Coast Wilderness Trail	- Still in early development stages, lack of interpretation panels, self-guided tours

5.2.3 Infrastructure issues

A key issue associated with the growth of tourism is the pressures placed on infrastructure because of increased visitor numbers. The high level of the seasonality of tourism in the Westland District means that there is significant pressure on infrastructure and services during the summer months and a low during the winter. Key Informant 2 notes that the Westland District has

a very seasonal economy here. From October through until about April we have the tourist season, and it then dies... It is quite challenging for many businesses to operate and get through the winter season (Key Informant 2).

Despite this challenge during the winter period, the number of visitors during the summer period increases significantly. Figure 10 illustrates this high level of seasonality for tourism on the West Coast in general and shows the number of visitors during the summer months is substantially higher than during the winter period.

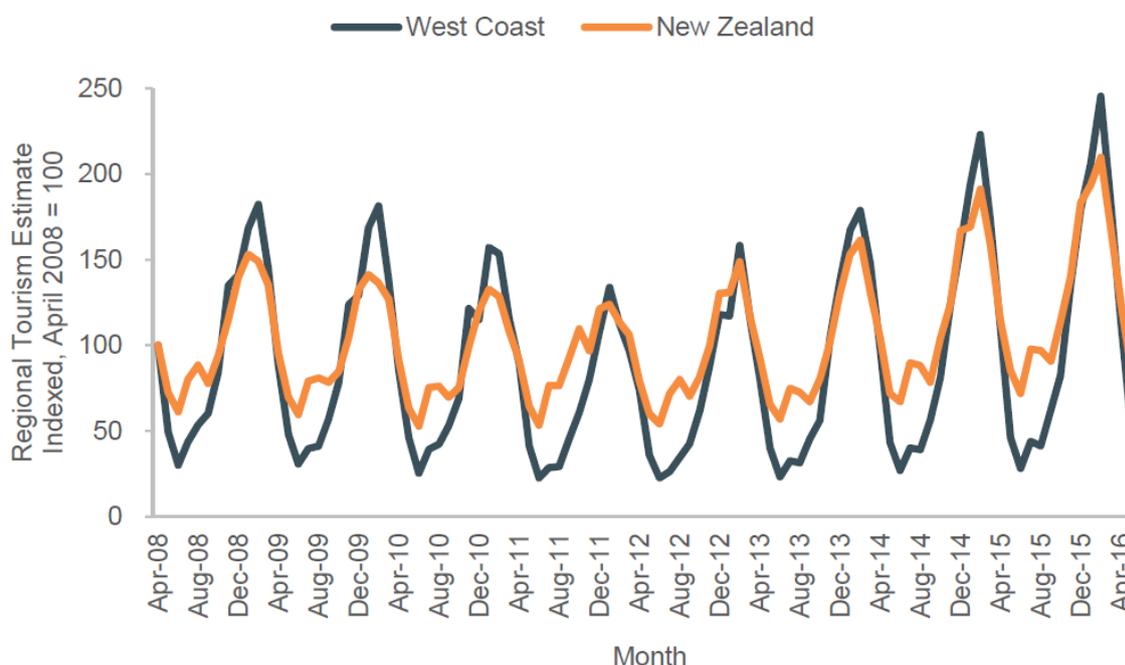


Figure 10: West Coast tourism estimates illustrating the seasonality of visitors to the area (West Coast Regional Council, 2017)

This means that there is significant pressure on infrastructure and services during this period, including accommodation, car parks, amenities, water resources, waste management, and work-loads. For example, the key visitor attractions such as Franz Josef and Fox Glacier receive an estimated 600,000 visitors per year which results in high demands for infrastructure and services, particularly during the summer months where the number of visitors is highly concentrated. However, providing this infrastructure for the peak of the season has several issues. Key Informant 3 notes that

As a council, we are looking at our infrastructure and trying to make sure that it is responding as well... particularly in a place like Franz where you have to plan the infrastructure to cope for its peak. It is really expensive to do that, and the peak is getting crazier and crazier and bigger, but it isn't sustained. So trying to figure out how much to provide for, that is a real issue... probably the biggest challenges when dealing with tourism because how much do you need to provide since the ratepayers are paying for it basically (Key Informant 3).

The main concern is that ensuring this infrastructure can cope at the peak of the season is often carried out at the expense of the ratepayer. An infrastructure problem is providing basic facilities such as public toilets and rubbish bins which are subsidised significantly by the Westland District ratepayer.

One of the problems we have had is just that there isn't enough public toilets, not enough rubbish bins to cope with the surge of tourists especially at the peak of the season (Key Informant 4).

However, providing adequate facilities to handle this peak in the tourist season has various challenges. Key Informants noted that the total number of visitors to the Westland had increased year on year, so future proofing this infrastructure to accommodate growth is also an issue. At present, Key Informant 1 notes that

"At the peak of the season, 6,000 people go through Franz Josef each day, and all want to have a pee. Moreover, the [ratepayers] have got to provide the facilities for 6,000 a day (Key Informant 1)."

As the Westland District only has a small ratepayer base, there is a limit to the amount of infrastructure that can be provided for visitors. This is due to the disproportionate ratio of visitors to residents in the Westland area. For example, the township of Franz Josef has 330 ratepayers to cover the infrastructure requirements to meet 6,000 visitors a day at the peak of the summer season (Key Informant 1). Ratepayers raised concerns regarding infrastructure with local authorities in the submissions to the Long-Term Plan 2018 – 2028.

There was a lot of submissions to the annual LTP. Quite a number of people came forward and put forward their case for sealing the roads, wanting all sorts of facilities within the community to cope with problems associated with tourists but because there is only a small ratepayer base, there is a limit to what council can do (Key Informant 4).

However, it is believed by Key Informant 3 that ratepayers understand the need to accommodate these facilities for the growing number of tourists but are unsatisfied at the lack of response from the central government. For example, Key Informant 3 notes that

The ratepayers do recognise that the economy has changed, but they are not happy that neither central government nor visitors themselves seem to be contributing themselves to the serious infrastructure costs and the planning costs that we do that is important for services (Key Informant 3).

The Department of Conservation (DoC) has recognised there are several issues associated with the infrastructure they are responsible for addressing. A strategy that has been employed by various organisations is the promotion of other attractions within the area to alleviate the infrastructure pressures associated with tourist hotspots. As Westland covers a significant geographical area and has a range of tourist resources available for use, the district has numerous options to disperse visitors. For example, DoC has been involved with developing a strategy with Tourism West Coast to develop the campaign called ‘Top of the South’ that seeks to draw visitors away from hotspots such as Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, particularly during the summer peak (Key Informant 9). This would benefit the district as it would disperse the visitors throughout the area instead of resulting in a high concentration in a specific location at any given time. However, dispersal of visitors across the district was found to be an inadequate response as locations that are not tourist hotspots, such as Franz Josef, do not have the appropriate infrastructure to handle lots of visitors. For example, a popular freedom camping site near Whataroa experiences high volumes of overnight visitors during the summer season (Key Informant 1). However, DoC currently only has the resources available to send a ranger there one day a week to empty rubbish bins. The dispersion of tourists is worst thing DoC can do because it places a strain on DoC’s current capacity, forces locals out and results in further dissatisfaction (Key Informant 5).

Multiple key informants noted that the peak of this tourist season is continuously extending further into the winter months. Table 7 outlines some of the perspectives of key informants that were asked the question “*do you think the tourism season is extending? If so, how?*”. The key informants agree that the tourist season is continuously extending, but there is still a distinct difference between summer and winter months.

Table 7: Quotation table summarising the answers to the question “do you think the tourism season is extending? If so, how?”.

<i>Key Informant</i>	<i>Quotation</i>
<i>Key Informant 4</i>	Compared to this time last year, we are already up from the number of people we had this time last year quite significantly, and this is the end of August before the tourist season has even started. That proves that the peak for the tourism season is constantly extending, the tourist season now means we have a smaller winter, which is only June/July now.
<i>Key Informant 1</i>	People involved in the tourism industry are going away for their holidays in July, and that is it, want to get back by August, prepare for the upcoming season and be ready for when people start coming through again. At the peak of the summer season, you can hardly move in the i-Site. There are so many people making enquires, wondering what to do, making bookings during this summer period.
<i>Key Informant 3</i>	It does seem like the peak is expanding more. But there is still a really big difference between say July and January... But now it is just a constant stream especially during summer, summer is longer.

5.2.4 Road and road safety issues

The pressure the growth of tourism has had on roads and road safety within the Westland District has also affected communities and visitors. Several roads across the district remain unsealed, and several one-lane bridges restrict the movement of traffic, especially during the peak season (Key Informant 3). Key Informant 1 notes that this results in numerous traffic accidents every year.

“Road safety is a big issue. That is because our roads weren’t built for today’s requirements and had a number of one-lane bridges... Traffic is a huge problem... we get head-on collisions every year (Key Informant 1).”

Furthermore, several tourist hotspots have unsealed roads not suitable for campervans and buses. Key Informant 6 says that

During the summer, the towing companies do really well because there is always at least one campervan a day that needs to be towed because they tried to go down an unsealed and loose gravel road... lots of vehicles also drive off into drains next to the road too (Key Informant 6).

The lack of adequate roads throughout the Westland District is due to the fact they were constructed before the growth of the tourism industry and were not designed to cope with a large number of visitors to the district. Roads in the area were constructed for traditional rural uses with low vehicle traffic (Key Informant 1). This is exhibited in the quotation below.

In the 70s I would drive down to Fox Glacier [from Hokitika] once a week... and I'd never ever pass another car because there was no one around. It is not like that now. The number of cars is huge. Traffic is a huge problem because when they built the roads, they built them with the intention it would have no traffic. That's why there are so many one-lane bridges over the district (Key Informant 1).

5.2.5 Marketing of Westland District

Another critical issue associated with tourism was related to the disconnect between communities and organisations responsible for marketing the Westland District. Key Informant 6 noted that many communities are already at capacity and are unable to cope with more tourists at present because of a lack of adequate infrastructure and services. Franz Josef was used as an example of this. During the summer season, the township was often overcrowded and did not have the facilities to cope with the number of visitors that needed accommodation and other facilities such as tourists. However, the organisation Tourism West Coast continues to focus on increasing the number of tourists to the Westland District. Key Informant 6 believes there is a disconnect between prioritising the needs of the existing communities and the tourists that visit the Westland District. They note that

all Tourism West Coast cares about is numbers. All they want to do is sell and gear everything towards tourists. They are not properly thinking about the communities that have to live here permanently... Many small towns are already overflowing at maximum capacity, and they still want to get more people here! They just aren't thinking it through properly (Key Informant 6)

This illustrates that there are issues regarding the relationship between communities and organisations marketing the district. The focus solely on the number of visitors to the district is given a higher value than the existing communities that must accommodate the influx of tourists which may have a negative impact on the economic development of the area.

5.2.6 Freedom camping

Freedom camping from tourism is a key issue that was raised by key informants that impact individuals, communities and visitors to the area. Budget travellers are a key group of tourists that visit the Westland District. The main concern that was raised regarding freedom camping was the environmental impact the activity had across the district; Key Informant 1 notes that

“We have environmental issues with freedom camping or inappropriate camping... The environmental impacts of people shitting in the bush, crapping in the streams is a huge concern for the community (Key Informant 1).”

These concerns are echoed by other key informants as well when questions around freedom camping were raised. Key Informant 2 notes that there is a lack of adequate infrastructure and services to accommodate freedom camping which results in adverse environmental impacts.

There is very poor infrastructure around here for freedom camping in the first place. There are toilets going in for all the small settlements, but it isn't enough for people staying over. Another problem is rubbish. Along the beach and waterfront and the Sunset point, there are no rubbish bins, so that is costing the council a lot of money to go and pick their crap up. It is an unresolved issue (Key Informant 2).

Because of these concerns from the environmental impact freedom camping has, many key informants are concerned whether or not the activity should legitimately be able to take place within the Westland District at all. Key Informant 4 notes

“There has been a lot of reaction from local people in different places saying they don't want freedom campers here because they leave their rubbish, on the side of the road, poo in the bushes, and just haven't got the facilities for them” (Key Informant 2)

The response to freedom camping in the Westland District was mixed with some key informants being in favour, recognising the benefits that freedom camping brings into the local economy.

“Freedom camping is wonderful for our local economic development because they can stay here, we can feed them, water them and in turn, they bring money into our local townships in one way or another (Key Informant 4).”

The overall perception of freedom campers in Westland District was typically neutral, with key informants recognising that the activity had both positive and negative attributes associated with it. Key Informant 3 summarises this by saying

There is a mixed reaction to freedom camping down the Coast. Some communities are very strongly against it; they say they already have camping grounds that freedom campers can go into and use. Some communities are all for it and want to provide freedom camping facilities within their towns. There are mixed views on that at the moment (Key Informant 3).

Many businesses and community members do recognise the potential benefits that freedom campers bring to the local economy. The Westland District Council has attempted to respond to issues relating to freedom camping through the introduction of a bylaw. A bylaw was

introduced previously in 2013 but had a negative impact on the local economy of multiple townships. Key Informant 3 affirms this by saying

We had a Freedom Camping Bylaw towards the end of 2013, but it was pretty tough as it said no campervans or self-contained or non-self-contained in any of the townships or a km from any of the townships. That got challenged by the campervan associations. But this new council that we have now wants to put a bylaw back in but will be more pinpointed towards actual problem areas and at the same time putting in some facilities with government funding, specifically for freedom campers (Key Informant 3).

Therefore, the local authorities have recognised the economic benefits that freedom camping brings to the Westland District and have opted to take a more explicit approach to facilitate this activity and minimise the impact it has on the surrounding environment.

5.2.7 Value of tourism

Another major issue raised by the key informants that were restricting the economic development of the Westland District was associated with the value of tourism. The value of tourism was often associated with a lower income in comparison to the income of those working in another industry that is a leading economic driver in the Westland District. Key Informant 1 notes that

Quite frankly, everything is too cheap here. Alternatively, our people working in tourism aren't getting paid enough. Take for example a gold miner vs people working in tourism. A gold miner works the same long hours like someone in tourism, but the gold miner might pull in \$100 – \$110k a year. A tourism man working the same amount of hours might only get \$50k. That distorts the value of what he can bring to the community (Key Informant 1)

The distortion of the value of tourism is seen in the direct comparison to people employed in other key industries and the overall perception of the socio-economic status of the Westland District. Key Informant 2 notes that

There is a sense [Westland] is a lower socio-area because most jobs are mainly minimum wage except for maybe three industries. The milk powder company in town pays quite good money, gold miners make big money, and DOC pays government rates, so that is also reasonably good money. You've got three areas where people are earning good money, but there is a lot of minimum wage jobs around in all the tourism-related activities (Key Informant 2).

Furthermore, the seasonal aspect of tourism in the Westland District also distorts the value of the industry in comparison to others. Those who establish their own business within the tourism industry in the area may face additional pressures than other industries would experience because it is highly seasonal and is dependent upon visitors stopping and spending money.

“For those who have their own businesses, you’ve only got a 6-month window of opportunity to make any money and have to manage that really carefully. Many businesses do fall over or close down over winter (Key Informant 2).”

The issue associated with this lower worth of the tourism industry means that other critical economic industries within Westland are more desirable for the public to find employment in instead of the tourism industry. The value of tourism within the Westland District needs to increase to attract people to work in the industry to ensure that the district can capitalise on the role tourism plays in economic development for the region. Key Informant 1 affirms this through the following quotation.

“Getting the yield up so that the person serving coffee can get paid \$25 an hour instead of the minimum wage is quite critical to make it work if we want to transition away from extractive industries (Key Informant 1).”

However, raising this yield from tourism has several key challenges. The type of tourist coming through to visit the Westland District typically do not spend a significant amount of money in businesses which are reliant on the tourism industry. Key Informants were asked the question “is the type of tourists coming to the Westland District able to increase the yield of tourism?”. A summary of the key responses is shown below in Table 8. These quotations indicate that Chinese tourists and budget travellers are the largest groups visiting the district but tend not to spend a significant amount of money in the first place

Table 8: Quotation table of responses to the question “is the type of tourists coming to the Westland District able to increase the yield of tourism?”.

<i>Key Informant</i>	<i>Quotation</i>
<i>Key Informant 2</i>	People are noticing that Chinese tourists, in particular, don’t tend to spend a heck of a lot of money. They will tend just to spend money at the supermarket and then accommodation. But they don’t go out dining, drinking; they don’t actually buy much in the shops... Then you have your budget travellers; they don’t spend a lot of money on pounamu or fancy dinners.
<i>Key Informant 5</i>	People do tend to lump tourists into one group here, but it really is quite complex and a whole lot of different behaviours. Some are just people coming over for the weekend from Christchurch who would typically spend a lot more than Chinese tourists and people in campervans who are the dominant tourist groups.... But for people who operate craft shops reliant on tourism, they don’t find much benefit because they don’t really spend anything and if they do, they screw you down in

price. Some people are quite hostile to the Chinese and freedom campers in particular because of it.

This lack of spending is attributed to the fact that there is often difficulty in extracting value from many of the attractions in the Westland District (Key Informant 1). Many of the attractions in the district such as the Hokitika Gorge and the glaciers are currently free to access and use because of many being on the conservation estate. Key Informant 9 notes that the costs of establishing and maintaining these attractions are often difficult to cover through the existing funding mechanisms in place. Therefore, there is a need to address this issue.

5.2.8 Summary

In summary, there have been several general issues that have arisen from tourism within the Westland District. One of the most significant issues identified was getting visitors to stay longer in the area and recognise there are multiple attractions available for tourist consumption. The provision of adequate infrastructure and services was also another key issue that was exacerbated by the seasonal aspect of the industry, inadequate roads, excessive marketing and the susceptibility of the district to natural hazards.

5.3 Issues associated with the use of heritage resources for tourism

Heritage was raised as an essential aspect of tourism that is being utilised to promote economic development within the Westland District. However, there were several issues raised regarding the use of heritage for tourism from the key informants. These included the lack of narratives being told, the introduction of earthquake strengthening laws the loss of a museum, funding issues and the community's perspective on heritage in general. These issues will be discussed below in the following sections.

5.3.1 Limited accessible narratives available for tourism

The key issue surrounding the use of heritage tourism for economic development was the lack of historical narrative being told across the Westland District. This lack of narrative was mainly attributed to the fact that the use of heritage for tourism within the Westland District was still in the early development phases. Key Informants were asked questions regarding the stage this form of tourism was currently in. Table 9 illustrates there is a mixed perspective on this with one key informant noting that it is "at a very raw stage", while another key informant believed that telling the heritage of Westland has always been particularly useful.

Table 9: Quotation table is showing the response to the question "What stage do you think heritage tourism is at in Westland?"

Key Informant	Quotation
Key Informant 2	I think it is still at a very raw stage and definitely not up to standard. It is at a pretty raw level really. The thing that amazed me when I first came here was the whole lack of tours and making use of all the good stories and things to show people.
Key Informant 3	I think we are at a good stage now and it is gaining momentum. Westland as a district has always done a good job of telling its history, particularly with the narrative of gold mining. There are multiple groups around working on heritage projects all the times that work with the museum to put up interpretative panels and that sort of thing. Ross and Kumāra are doing a good job there, with their memorial gardens for example for Chinese gold mining community.

However, the lack of interpretation panels and guided tours within large settlements was perceived by Key Informant 2 to have an adverse effect on the impact heritage tourism had on economic development. This was highlighted through the publication of the book ‘The Luminaries’ by Eleanor Catton which won the Man Booker Prize in 2013 which is set during the gold-rush era in Westland. Key Informant 2 notes that

The year the Luminaries came out, there was a huge surge in tourism for two years that was really noticeable. And people were walking around going well where is it, where did it happen? Where is the old part? So with a film coming out, probably in 2019, we have to be ready for it because it will bring people here like any other movie site around the place... it will still bring a huge number of people here, and we aren't quite ready for it, but there is that sense of urgency that we need to get that together (Key Informant 2).

This lack of historical narrative was exacerbated by the lack of a museum in the Westland District that was closed to the public because it was found to be earthquake-prone. Key Informant 2 notes that the museum was the primary method for illustrating this narrative. The displays and narratives that were previously available to the public have since been placed in storage. Key Informant 2 notes that

We have things like the museum which was a very good one that was closed down due to its seismic risk. Most of the displays have been put away in storage, so we have lost

our museum in the last two years... that museum used to be a pretty good tourist attraction and a good wet weather activity, but that is gone now. They are going to rebuild it, but that is probably going to take two years to do that (Key Informant 2).

Therefore, the utilisation of heritage and the depiction of historical narratives for tourism purposes is still under development. The lack of a functioning museum for the public to access these narratives and interpretation panels around the township illustrate this.

5.3.2 Earthquake strengthening

The introduction of earthquake strengthening bylaws has placed a significant constraint on heritage resources for tourism in the Westland District. The introduction of the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 came into force on 1 July 2017 which included a new national system for building identification and assessment and a publicly available national register of buildings that are earthquake-prone (Key Informant 5). Several buildings throughout the Westland District were earthquake-prone. Two key categories affected heritage buildings fall under. Key Informant 5 says

There are two categories – earthquake prone or dangerous. The Carnegie Building [in Hokitika] at most was just earthquake-prone and means you had a period to re-strengthen, clean it up and then reassess it later. It was never dangerous...It will be interesting to see what happens when the new lot of assessments have been carried out by the council... The council staff is quite inconsistent with their assessments (Key Informant 5).

Figure 11 depicts the Carnegie Building cordoned off because of being assessed as earthquake-prone. This building was a significant historical resource for the Westland District. This prevents both domestic and international visitors from learning about the history of Westland and how it has developed over time. The Carnegie Building was established as a library built with money donated by Scottish businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and resulted in numerous Carnegie libraries being built between 1883 and 1929, including some belonging to public and university library system (Key Informant 2). They are particularly crucial for townships such as Hokitika because it highlights the culture and historical importance of the area.



Figure 11: Carnegie Building cordoned off for earthquake strengthening (Carrol, 2016).

New regulations around buildings that require earthquake strengthening have limited the opportunities to develop heritage tourism for economic development. This is seen in the uncertainty surrounding various buildings in Hokitika that may also be closed due to their seismic-risk. Key Informant 2 notes that

There has been a number of announcements from the council about the 19 buildings they have on a list that they have question marks over because they don't have any engineering reports for. Because we are a high seismic risk area so now, all those buildings are at risk (Key Informant 2).

These buildings play a significant role in depicting the historical narrative of the Westland District and are a critical element in developing heritage tourism for the area. However, developing this area for tourism may be restricted unless action is carried out by individuals or organisations to find solutions for the issues that have arisen from earthquake strengthening legislation.

The future heritage of Hokitika and Westland has a big question mark hanging over it. We have lost a huge amount of our buildings because they fall into disrepair and get to the point where they have to be demolished, and the seismic thing is a really big problem (Key Informant 2).

However, it was noted that the assessments carried out on these buildings is inconsistent and no uniform approach has been adopted for undertaking this. Initial assessments that are carried

out may note that a building is only 17% earthquake-prone and then the second approach will place this at 100% earthquake prone (Key Informant 5). For example,

The museum building should have never have been closed in the way that it was. It was said to be up to 67% earthquake-prone which caused much damage, and we lost the museum because of that. It caused a huge amount of stress to staff...Then another assessment was done which is usually pretty typical and came back with a higher figure to allow partial reoccupation of the Carnegie building (Key Informant 5).

However, Key Informant 5 hopes that the adoption of policy implemented from central government under the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 will help to standardise these assessments, but a standardised assessment has yet to be enforced. For example, it was identified that owners of heritage buildings were able to merely get reassessments of their buildings done until it produced a finding that meant the building would not be considered earthquake-prone which places both the owner and local authorities in a difficult situation.

The council is in a difficult position as well because the building owner might have a reassessment done even if it has an assessment on its file, but the council can't take the report they like either and have to look at it much more closely. There had been some law changes within that area. It is a difficult area, and it is tearing the heritage out of small-town New Zealand, and larger towns and cities as well (Key Informant 5).

This results in further uncertainty for the development of heritage tourism in the Westland District and is an issue that needs to be addressed by key organisations if historical buildings are to be preserved. If left unsolved, the heritage of small-town New Zealand is likely to be lost altogether (Key Informant 2). Establishing a sufficient amount of funding to carry out the work required to strengthen these historical buildings is another challenge faced before heritage tourism can contribute to economic development in Westland. The funding that is available to owners of heritage buildings to carry out earthquake strengthening is dependent on whether they are publicly or privately-owned. Key Informant 2 notes that

If [a heritage building] is privately owned, there is only one fund provided which is run through Heritage New Zealand. They provide some money but won't cover all of the costs. It is up to the owner to deal with that. Insurance won't cover it either. But if the building is publicly owned, there are quite a few more funds like Lotto, but in order to obtain that sort of funding, you have got to raise half of the required money yourself. The problem is that if it is a heritage building that is privately-owned, there is very little funding so have to do it all yourself (Key Informant 2).

This places significant pressure on owners to raise funds required to carry out the earthquake strengthening works. Some owners have struggled to raise sufficient funds and have let

buildings fall into a state of disrepair. Key Informant 1, 2 and 5 note how the owner of a heritage building living in Auckland has refused to conduct the works for earthquake strengthening due to a lack of available funds. Therefore, the funding required to strengthen these earthquake-prone buildings has negative implications on the economic development of Westland.

5.3.3 *Community perspectives on heritage resources for tourism*

The development of heritage for tourism purposes in Westland has experienced issues relating to its role in tourism and economic development. There have been debates within the community about the demolition of heritage buildings so space can be utilised for other economic purposes. Some members of the Westland community would prefer the

“old and derelict buildings to be knocked down and replaced with something better suited to the community’s needs (Key Informant 7)”

In contrast to this perspective, heritage groups believe these buildings are vital for the culture of towns in Westland and need to be saved. For example, a historic building located in Hokitika was faced with the threat of demolition in 2012. Key Informant 2 notes that

We had been in an argument with the community over an old building they wanted to destroy and demolish. It was a building that was built in 1908 and one of few two storey buildings in town and has quite a good heritage story around it, and it wanted to be converted into a car park for Mitre 10. We challenged that application for consent and got us into quite a sticky situation in the town because many people ended up hating us. However, we saw that it was a key part of the town’s heritage story and important for the overall integrity of it... in the end, we ended up buying the building because it was the only way we could actually save it without going to the Environment Court and spending hundreds of thousands on it (Key Informant 2).

Many of the key informants believed that heritage only caters to a specific group of tourists and has a specific place in the tourism landscape. For example, Key Informant 4 notes that

There is a place for [telling the history], but I think there is also a place for showing what they have got now, and what they can use and show off now. There are always people coming through that are interested in the history of a place. But that doesn’t cater to everybody’s interests. So tourism here has got to cater to a wide variety of interests if we want the area to benefit economically (Key Informant 4).

Therefore, the mixed perspectives on heritage within the community present further issues for developing this aspect of tourism for economic development purposes. Many key informants perceive heritage as having a specific place in the tourism landscape of Westland and believe this needs to be protected. However, there is evidence that community members would also rather see economic development occur outside of heritage development to accommodate growing visitor numbers.

5.4 Role of Institutions and organisations in Westland District

5.4.1 Community perception on the role of institutions

Various institutions and organisations at both the local and national level were found to be heavily involved in tourism either directly or indirectly. Community members and business owners believed that they play a significant role in tourism and economic development. Figure 12 depicts the responses for the question “*In your opinion, what should be the main activities local government should be involved in for tourism?*”. This question was raised in the questionnaire that was given to community members and business owners to assess their perspective on the role of local government in tourism development. The main activities council should be involved in are the provision of funding, providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, and planning for tourism in general. Only 6% of those questioned believe that the council should have no role in tourism at all.

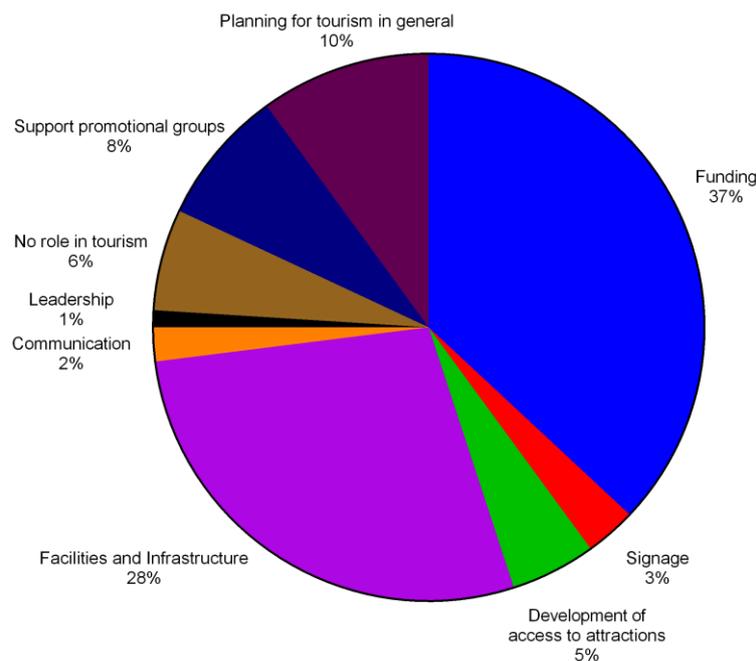


Figure 12: Community responses to the question “*In your opinion, what should be the main activities local government should be involved in for tourism?*”

The following sections will examine how institutions and organisations have responded to the various issues that have been outlined above and examine what their role is. First, the responses that both local and central government provide will be examined followed by the additional responses provided by other government departments. Next, the response of these institutions

and organisations such as Indigenous groups and Development West Coast to infrastructure and facilities will also be examined as well.

5.4.2 Response from local government

Local government has played a significant role that tourism has on economic development in the Westland District. One of the key roles the Westland District Council plays in tourism is providing funding to promote the district and establish activities for tourists to participate in and stimulate economic development. Funding established by the council enables communities throughout Westland to conduct projects that seek to improve their township to make it make inviting for visitors to stop. Key Informant 4 provides an example of how funding of \$8,581 from the Major District Initiative has been utilised by the community of Kumāra to establish the Kumāra Chinese Miners Memorial Reserve.

Council gives out township development funding that all comes in from rates. Some townships are spending funds on very innovative things like the development of the Chinese memorial gardens in Kumāra. When it is completed, it is going to be a huge drawcard for Chinese tourists coming to the West Coast who are coming through. It is mainly taking shape because of the huge number of Chinese tourists that are coming through now (Key Informant 4).

Other sources of funding from local government have also been utilized for tourism. This includes grants to the administration of the Regent Theatre (\$60,000), Tourism West Coast (\$86,000), Enterprise Hokitika (\$39,000), Hokitika Driftwood and Sand (\$5,000) and street decorations to various communities throughout Westland (\$9,309) (Key Informant 4). Furthermore, the district council also funds visitor centres and local promotional roles in the area as well (\$238,000 in 2014). However, outside of these, the district council believes it has limited involvement in economic development or tourism.

There is a couple of grants we provide, but we don't get directly involved in economic development or tourism promotion. We support Tourism West Coast with a grant; we provide funding to Development West Coast. We also fund various community associations in various townships which are not specifically business or tourism operators per se, but a lot of them are involved are connected with tourism in one way or another (Key Informant 3).

5.4.3 Response from central government

The central government has played a critical role in the economic development of the Westland Region. The establishment of various funding pools for the Westland District to carry out various projects to stimulate economic development has been the primary role of central government. However, the funding that central government has provided in the past was found

to have a minimal impact on rectifying the issues associated with tourism and economic development in the Westland District. For example, Key informant 1 says that

In 2001, the government agreed to establish a \$120 million fund as an economic development package that failed miserably...it just didn't work. It did some good things, but it also did a lot of bad things...the investment decisions they made would be 9 times out of 10 disastrous (Key Informant 1).

This indicates that the management of this funding has not been successful and the investment decisions that were made to stimulate economic development in the region were poorly made. However, there has been examples of funding provided to Westland and the wider West Coast region that has been successful. For example, the organisation Development West Coast was established as a charitable trust with an initial fund from the central government of \$92 million (Key Informant 10). While the funding was provided as an adjustment package to mitigate the loss of indigenous forestry and the privatisation of infrastructure during the late 1990s, it has been successful and is still providing funding for economic development activities today.

Central Government has funding available specifically for development related to the tourism sector. For example, the Tourism Infrastructure Fund (TIF) of \$981,300 was provided to townships throughout the Westland District to assist with infrastructure projects in Kumāra, Whataroa, Ross and Hokitika (Westland District Council, 2018). The funding enables the local government to construct and upgrade existing toilet facilities and provide accessible facilities for visitors. Funding sources such as this one are critical in ensuring that visitors and communities have the appropriate facilities in place to deal with being a surge region.

The primary source of funding that was discussed in key informant interviews was the Provincial Growth Fund. This is funding that the New Zealand Government has allocated over a three-year period to invest in regional economic development. The West Coast region was identified as a surge region that would qualify for this funding. The Provincial Growth Fund has three investment tiers that can provide funding for regional development projects, key sectors such as tourism, and infrastructure projects. In contrast to previous funding packages that has been allocated to the region in the past, the Provincial Growth Fund was a good solution to issues that have restricted economic development for the Westland District. The critical difference between the funding packages is mainly down to scale. Key Informant 8 notes that

The key difference between previous pools of funding that the central government has provided, and the Provincial Growth Fund is down to the scale of it. Previous funding was only a few million here and there – enough only ever to cover a feasibility study in

the first place. These studies were then never acted upon because the funding would run out (Key Informant 8).

This difference in scale means that funding can be utilised effectively. Key Informant 8 reaffirms this by noting that

“The Provincial Growth Fund has huge opportunities because it is a much larger pool of funding over a three-year period that will allow things to happen past the feasibility study stage (Key Informant 8).”

This funding has already started to address some of the critical issues that have been identified above. For example, the issues around a lack of facilities and infrastructure for visitors to the region has been remediated through successful applications to access this funding. Key Informant 4 notes that

We were successful in that first funding round [of the Provincial Growth Fund] in getting 5 of the 6 applications through. So Franz Josef now has new toilets on its main street. Fox Glacier ones are complete. There are also four other locations about where they are being placed (Key Informant 4).

Therefore, the provision of funding from central government has helped to address issues associated with tourism has a positive impact on economic development for the district. As the Westland District has a distorted visitor to ratepayer ratio, the investment from government agencies is vital to ensure that the region can benefit positively from being a surge region.

5.4.4 Response of Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation plays a critical role in the economic development in the Westland District. The primary method of management DoC carries out regarding tourism is granting concessions to various groups and individuals. Key Informant 9 notes this concession system encourages the use of the land and helps to advocate the protection of conservation land. Key Informant 2 notes the granting of a concession to carry out helicopter tours around the Hokitika Gorge has a negative impact on tourism for the Westland District. Key Informant 9 rebuts these claims because

The work DoC does with recreation and tourism concessionaires, like helicopter companies, guiding companies and others is all about encouraging the use, enjoyment and advocating for conservation. The entire purpose of having the concessions is to acknowledge that the conservation land can be used in the first place, but still making sure that people go through a process to recognise that it should not be used in an inappropriate way (Key Informant 9).

The vital issue that Key Informant 2 had with this perspective from DoC is that the use of concessions to allow various activities such as helicopter trips would have a detrimental effect

on the quality of tourist experiences in Westland. However, Key Informant 9 notes that without the granting of these concessions by DoC, then the potential to utilise the vast amount of conservation land for economic development purposes and allow a range of different options for tourists then it is likely that economic growth for the district would be restricted. Therefore, the DoC plays an essential role in maintaining a balance between protecting the conservation estate in Westland and promoting economic development for the region.

However, the significant growth in tourist numbers has prompted questions around whether DoC can sufficiently protect and promote the environment (McCammon, 2018). The unprecedented number of visitors wanting to visit and experience natural resources in Westland like the glaciers, national parks and walking tracks has meant that the department is struggling to juggle access to visitors without sacrificing the environment. Key Informant 9 notes that, while DoC does have the capacity at present to conduct its current operations, the expected increase in visitor numbers over the next five years will see its capacity over-stretched. This was attributed to the absence of an updated visitor strategy that depicts the current tourism environment for both Westland and the broader New Zealand context (Key Informant 9). The current Visitor Strategy was published well over 20 years ago in 1996 and does not exhibit the changes to the conservation estate that have occurred since. While Key Informant 9 notes that DoC can work alone in isolation to manage and protect the conservation estate, they are beholden to government policies around growth for tourism which are aimed at increasing visitor numbers further.

5.4.5 Response of Indigenous groups

The role of the local rūnanga and iwi has also played a significant role in tourism and economic development of the Westland District. The development of the Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy has been implemented by Ngāi Tahu Tourism, a division of the corporate arm of the iwi Ngāi Tahu, as a mechanism to facilitate an Indigenous approach to tourism in Westland. Ngāi Tahu has several key investments in the Westland District. This includes glacier tours, accommodation, and thermal spa experience. Furthermore, the local rūnanga are also tourism sector though pounamu which takes the form of river and bush tours and retail sales. The development of this strategy is seen as an opportunity to provide a Māori tourism trail or pathway that both tell a story either through interpretation panels or art installations at key sites, and a path for visitors to follow through the region that captures the major attractions, destinations and Māori tourism operators (West Coast Regional Council, 2017). It is hoped that

the development of this strategy will be able to support whānau, hapū and individual Māori to take up the economic opportunities arising from the growing tourism industry.

For local Māori, tourism is not only a significant economic opportunity but also provided an opportunity to reconnect with their ancestral lands. Key Informant 6 discussed the group they had established as an entrepreneur called Hikoi Waewae. The purpose of this group was to enable local Māori to reconnect with their ancestral lands to learn the histories of their ancestors, obtain knowledge of flora and fauna and how their ancestors utilised these resources among other things (Key Informant 6). These tours have been extended to domestic and international visitors to Westland as well to benefit both economically and ensure these narratives are kept alive.

However, there was some critique from key informants that the current tours operated to portray this narrative was insufficient. It was found that the local rūnanga has contributed little to tourism in Westland. Key Informant 2 notes that

One person here does Arahura tours where someone takes tourists out around the river mouth because this is where all the pounamu comes from, they look for pounamu and then bring them into town to carve them up. There is very little the rūnanga has done for tourism... There is nothing else like interpretation panels, no information. People walk around here and get blown away by all the greenstone shops and not realising that there is a story that this is the centre of greenstone industry and what it means for Māori and that sort of thing (Key Informant 2).

This perspective that rūnanga had done little for tourism was challenged with evidence in several newspaper articles. Cropp (2018) contradict the claims from Key Informant 2 and say that Ngāi Tahu rūnanga Ngāti Waewae has been active in addressing issues around infrastructure and freedom camping that has arisen from the increasing number of visitors to the area. They have constructed of four user-pays freedom camping pods throughout Westland District. The sites have electric charging stations that can cater to both certified self-contained vehicles with toilets and showers and those without (Cropp, 2018; Key Informant 6). The primary objective of establishing these sites for freedom campers was to mitigate the negative impact freedom camping has on the environment. This investment into infrastructure is important to ensure that there are adequate facilities around the district to cope with the increasing number of visitors to the area. Thus, rūnanga have started to actively work towards resolving the issues that have been outlined above.

5.4.6 Relationships between institutions and organisations

The relationships between the various organisations have impacted the overall response to the issues that have arisen in the Westland District. Key informants were asked about whether or not the relationship between local authorities and other organisations such as Development West Coast or local rūnanga was coherent or occurring in an ad-hoc manner. Table 10 outlines the responses from multiple key informants. This illustrates that the key informants had a mixed perspective on whether the relationship between organizations was ad-hoc or not.

Table 10: Quotation table showing responses to the question of whether the relationship between organisations in the Westland District was ad-hoc

<i>Key Informant</i>	<i>Quotation</i>
<i>Key Informant 3</i>	The relationship isn't ad-hoc. But I guess there have been a few things in the 4 years that I have been here that have been new so they have been tensions in terms of working out what the processes around that should be. One of them was the district economic stimulus fund (DESF) that the government put in a million dollars for each of the districts here and said it is up to councils to prioritise it... Anytime you have a government agency providing a funding and Development West Coast has a role in the local council, there is potential for miscommunication or understandings, so we worked through that alright... But I think the visions are generally the same."
<i>Key Informant 2</i>	I wouldn't say it was completely ad-hoc. There is a strategy, but the main problem is trying to coordinate everything... concerns from people that all the money is going directly into the tourists that don't actually have to live here. We are making all these things nice and pretty but only for their benefit.
<i>Key Informant 1</i>	The relationship between the organisations is ad-hoc. I don't know why it is like that though. Small towns have strong-minded people very strong-minded people that don't really want to work in with anyone else. But they do a great job...Development West Coast does things that are fantastic and some things that are bloody abysmal and just doesn't seem to work that well. Tourism West Coast is well regarded and internationally has done very well... They're not linked in with a common goal or a common plan. They are getting better at communicating.

Key Informant 8

The relationship has been okay, but it was definitely ad-hoc at the beginning... it has been difficult pushing projects forward when some of the key people don't understand someone's vision for the place, or they think ideas are 'fluffy'.

A key finding was the relationship between the local rūnanga and local authorities in the Westland District that has developed as a method to resolve the various issues that have arisen. This is illustrated through the recent collaborative efforts between local authorities and local rūnanga. The appointment of two people from Ngāti Waewae and Makaawhio to have a voice on the council meetings was a recent decision made by the Westland District Council to establish better relationships. Key Informant 1 notes that

We just had our first meeting this month and was the very first meeting the rūnanga has attended. The meeting before that we debated it and gave approval for it to occur and then went and approached them to ask if they would like to do this... We are all involved in so many things together like every resource consent we work together. As our biggest tourism operator, we are involved with them all the time, and in the future, we are involved with them as well (Key Informant 1).

However, this decision to invite two representatives from the two rūnanga in Westland was predominately viewed as tokenistic when raised with local Māori. The two representatives are able to participate in debates, but they do not have any voting rights to participate in these decisions actively.

The council has decided to add two rūnanga members with one from Ngati Waewae and Makaawhio to sit as the whole council, not as voting members, but they can observe and take part in the debate (Key Informant 6).

Under Section 8 of the RMA 1991, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi should be considered when carrying out decision-making. Key Informant 7 emphasised that a key principle in the Treaty be the idea of a meaningful partnership between Māori and Pākehā. However, this relationship that has been established provides no decision-making power for the local rūnanga. As the most extensive tourism operator within the Westland District, Māori is treated more as a stakeholder than a partner (Key Informant 6). In order for this relationship to be treated as a proper partnership, Māori needs to be one of the first people being consulted regarding these decisions rather than another stakeholder to talk to (Key Informant 6).

Key Informant 7 notes that this relationship was only initiated because of various organisations plans for the development of a new Pounamu centre and Westland Museum. The purpose of the construction of this facility will help to address several issues related to tourism and heritage within the Westland District. Key informant 8 notes that it will enable local people to retain, present, educate, understand and appreciate the histories and learn how the communities across the Westland District have become what they are today. The development of this facility would directly target both the local communities and visitor markets. Key Informant 8 believes the facility will help to encourage the exploration of the district and help people understand the narratives the area must tell. Key Informant 6 believes the development of this facility will also allow Māori to research and understand their whakapapa and further celebrate their culture. However, it was noted that the development of this facility was only allowed to occur if some form of ‘partnership’ was able to be established. Key Informant 7 notes that this agreement was carried out despite mixed opinions between Māori groups such as local rūnanga, Māwhera Incorporation and Ngāi Tahu on the development of the facility. They believe that the collaboration between development agencies and Māori is a tokenistic gesture and not an entirely appropriate way to showcase Māori culture.

5.4.7 Synthesis

The primary role of institutions such as local and central government is to provide funding that can be utilised to provide adequate infrastructure and services in Westland. Other organisations and Indigenous groups in Westland were also found to supplement this funding and also aid in the provision of this infrastructure and facilities. The following section will further discuss the general responses that have occurred in more detail.

5.5 Responses to Key Issues

5.5.1 Getting visitors to stay longer in Westland

A pivotal response to issues relating to economic development in the Westland District has been focused on developing cultural and heritage tourism to establish a point of difference. The Westland District has numerous cultural and historical narratives and assets that can be utilised to grow the visitor economy and increase the economic returns. This has been a key initiative that has been championed by the range of different agencies such as the District Council, Development West Coast and a private consultant. Key Informant 8 is currently developing a project that will help to implement these into the current tourism landscape and respond to various issues relating to tourism and heritage that have been outlined above. The project aims

to create a network of connected heritage and cultural businesses and experiences through a range of different initiatives. Key Informant 8 strongly believes that developing these further will help to establish a key point of difference between the various communities within the Westland District and will attract tourists to stay longer in the region to participate in these activities. Table 11 below summarises the main aspects of the project and the various organisations that will help to provide funding. The funding required to carry out these activities is managed by the Westland District Council, Development West Coast, Tourism West Coast and other smaller trusts.

Table 11: Outline of plans to establish a point of difference in settlements throughout Westland

<i>Township</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Individual/ Agency/ Organization</i>	<i>Agency/ organisation/institutional response to developing points of difference further</i>
<i>Hokitika</i>	Further development of commercial business		Provide opportunities for existing and new businesses to open and grow within the CBD of Hokitika, staff training, a Chinese business cluster
	Promote town environment	District Council, Tourism West Coast and DWC	Promotion of beachfront, quayside and North Spit, CBD and wider Hokitika interpretative walk/cycleway, Seaview Terrace Historic Precincts, Mobile Apps, Mahinapua Creek interpretative centre
	Marketing		More signage along the state highway and side street signage to advertise iconic sites like Hokitika Gorge
<i>Kumāra</i>	West Coast Wilderness Trail	Individual/ Champion, District Council and West Coast Wilderness Trust	- Redevelopment of surrounding buildings in Kumāra for further accommodation. Each building utilises the original history of the restored buildings through pictures, placemats and books (Key Informant 2)

			<p>- Council has provided funding for other residents in the township to clean up their front yards. Multiple interpretation panels established around Kumāra (Key Informant 2)</p> <p>A cycle trail that will connect Kumāra – Kapitia – Goldsborough – Stafford – Hokitika. The trail will run through various gold mining cemeteries. These will have interpretation panels to portray this narrative (Key Informant 2).</p>
<i>Ross</i>	Focus on heritage	District Council/DWC	<p>A major upgrade of the heritage and information centre with new interactive interpretation, town enhancement and signage, town heritage and Donnelly’s Creek Goldfields walks, Ferguson’s Bush Gateway to South Westland Memorial and viewpoint enhancement.</p>
<i>Whataroa</i>	Feasibility studies	DWC/ University/ Community	<p>Alpine Fault Interpretative Centre Feasibility Study and town enhancements, geothermal spring development</p>

5.5.2 Development of cycle trails

The development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail has played a crucial role in tourism and stimulating economic development for the Westland District. The trail has helped to emphasise a key point of difference for several settlements throughout the district. The trail has utilised aspects of eco-tourism and heritage tourism to attract visitors to the district. Numerous key informants note the success of this. For example

The cycle-trail is really what is breathing life into the area. The people are a lot older and are more interested in the histories of the area, so they are willing to look around and spend money on accommodation and eating out – that type of thing. So the trail is perfect for that group of tourists (Key Informant 2).

The development of the trail was initiated from the central government. The trail was part of the New Zealand Cycle Trail project and is a New Zealand government initiative that was co-founded with local councils and charitable trusts that have helped to establish the network of cycle trails. The West Coast Wilderness trail was part of this project, and Key Informant 1 confirms this.

In 2010, John Key came along and said we are going to build a cycleway. So that was what is now called the West Coast Wilderness Trail that goes from Greymouth through Kumāra, up through cowboy paradise, through here [Hokitika] and down into Ross. It really helped to breathe life into some of the towns that would have disappeared off the map entirely (Key Informant 1).

Figure 13 illustrates the current path of this cycle trail and the townships it currently goes through. This shows that it passes through townships such as Kumāra, Hokitika, and Ross. The establishment of the cycle trail has resulted in visitors staying in the Westland District for more extended periods of time. For example, Key Informant 8 notes that the average length of stay for visitors in Westland has increased from 3.1 to 4.2 nights since the trail has been established. These visitors are staying in the townships that can provide accommodation and facilities such as Kumāra, Hokitika and Ross.



Figure 13: Map of the current trail of the West Coast Wilderness Trail (West Coast Wilderness Trust, n.d)

One of the key benefits of the cycle trail is the role it has played in revitalising townships to stimulate economic development. Key Informant 1 and 4 notes that the revitalisation of the township was initiated by an individual who took advantage of the economic benefits the cycle trail would bring to the district. The revitalisation of these townships would not have occurred if individuals invested in the district and the establishment of the cycle trail.

[A couple] bought the old Royal Hotel [in Kumāra]. They invested their energy and time into completely restoring this building and setting it up as a base for the cycleway trail for people to stay...the town is just thriving now. Two things made that occur. One the cycleway trail. The second was a family (Key Informant 1).

They purchased the Theatre Royal Hotel in 2010. The previous state of the township was in decline, derelict vandalised and in total disrepair (Gurden Consulting Ltd, 2017). The restoration of the Theatre Royal Hotel shown below in Figure 14 resulted in the further restoration of other buildings within the township to accommodate tourists and cyclists needing a place to stay and rest. This included the restoration of the Bank of New Zealand building into two luxury suites, McEnaney's Cottage with four individual rooms and the Burridge's Cottage into two-bedroom accommodation (Gurden Consulting Ltd, 2017).



Figure 14: Theatre Royal Hotel in Kumāra alongside SH73 (Source: Author)

The West Coast Wilderness Trail has provided a success response to the various issues that have arisen from tourism and stimulate economic development for the Westland District. In response to the issues around getting visitors to stay longer in the Westland District, several individuals and organisations throughout the district have established businesses that provide accommodation and other services to riders on the trail. Key Informant 2 notes that people only

tend to stay 1.25 nights on the West Coast However, the success of the trail and associated businesses to accommodate riders has seen the average length of stay increase to 4.3 nights (Gurden Consulting Ltd, 2017). This increase in the average length of stay for visitors has also resulted in several new businesses opening. Table 12 below summarises the key businesses that have opened since the trial began. At least 30 direct jobs have already been created because of the cycle trail and rider numbers are expected to double within the next five years (Key Informant 8).

Table 12: New businesses established in Westland District as result of West Coast Wilderness Trail (Gurden Consulting Ltd, 2017)

<i>Business</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Staff</i>
<i>Theatre Royal Hotel</i>	Kumāra	Hotel was completely restored to include a new bar, meeting room, inside and outside dining and six luxury rooms for visitor accommodation.	Between 15 and 20 full time and part-time. Shared owner.
<i>Six Miners' Cottages</i>	Kumāra	A mix of luxury and standard accommodation facilities for visitors.	
<i>Kumāra Route 73 Café and Motel</i>	Kumāra	Café for visitors along SH73 and day-pit stop for cyclists. Also some accommodation available.	Two owners
<i>Greenstone Retreat</i>	Kumāra	Visitor accommodation in restored three bedroom villa, four-bed dorms and campervan/tent sites	One owner
<i>West Coast Scenic Waterways</i>	Mahinapua	Scenic cruise attraction and kayak hire. Also four visitor accommodation units.	Two owners and one part-time staff
<i>Totara Bridge Station</i>	Ross	12 visitor accommodation units, 25 powers and unpowered camping sites, café.	Two owners and one part-time staff

<i>Wilderness Trail Shuttle</i>	Hokitika	Three shuttle vans, three trailers and depot for transporting gear to and from pit stops	Owner and two part-time staff
<i>Cycle journeys</i>	Hokitika	70 bikes including 10 e-bikes and depot	Two part-time staff

The establishment of these businesses has primarily been carried out by people who have lived within the West Coast or have some family connection to the region. Key Informant 1 notes that

The majority of them have got a coast connection or families with a coast connection...No one comes in fresh and says I think I'll build something, or I am going to do this (Key Informant 1).

The establishment of these businesses related to the cycle trail has also been strategically positioned by these people to provide further economic benefits for the local economy of townships. For example,

There are two cycle businesses and what they have done is that they've put together packages and base everything in Hokitika. The main objective of Tourism West Coast is to get people to stay on the West Coast for at least two nights. At the moment, people tend to only stay for 1.25 nights per trip. If we get them to stay 2 nights, then it almost doubles what we get from tourism. It is things like having the cycle trail businesses [in Hokitika], they bring people in off the trail, put them in a hotel/motel for the night and then take them back out to finish off, so they are putting quite a lot of money into the town. People are starting to realise the value of that (Key Informant 1).

The extension of the West Coast Wilderness Trail is another crucial project being utilised to address the issues that have arisen from the economic development of the Westland District. The trail currently attracts approximately 10,000 new visitors to Westland who spend on average \$207 per day. Key Informant 8 notes this “injects an estimated \$8 million into the Westland District’s economy.” This increase in economic activity is attributed to the higher socio-economic group of visitors that are taking advantage of the cycle trail. For example,

I think what is happening now with the cycle trail, that is bringing in a higher socio-economic group, money is not a major issue, 90% kiwis, and they've extended the tourist season on either end because they are more willing and hardy enough to come even when it's getting a bit cold, even now there are people coming through (Key Informant 2).

Therefore, the development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail has had a positive effect on tourism and the economic development of the district that is exhibited through the revitalisation

of the various settlements throughout Westland and the establishment of new businesses as well.

The heritage of the Westland District has also played a key role in developing the West Coast Wilderness Trail as a tourist attraction. The connection between heritage and the cycle trail is necessary because the key routes that have been utilised for the cycle trail were previously used for other purposes such as gold mining and hydro-dam construction (Key Informant 5). However, there is a lack of interpretation panels along the trail to adequately inform riders of this past. For example,

We are strongly promoting heritage as part of it and have various heritage aspects to the trail and promoted as we get more interpretation panels along there. The only reason the cycle trail is there is gold mining in the 1800s. Kumāra had a late gold rush, and there was a problem with water. They had to bring water in through water races and poured water into Kumāra... then they decided to construct a hydro scheme... All that roading today is now utilized by the cycle trail... the trail has just linked up a lot of the existing tracks and built new ones as well. So basically, gold, hydro, forestry and railway were the key setups for the cycle trail to be successful today but there are no interpretation panels yet at this stage to tell that story (Key Informant 5).

The cycle trail is expected to develop its connection with the heritage of the area further. The development of the Seddon's Trail will incorporate the gold mining narrative to capture visitors interested in this aspect.

[Kumāra residents are] trying to establish is the Seddon's trail through areas of Goldsborough and Stafford which had a lot of gold mining through the area at the time. We are trying to create a self-guided tour of these key sites because people don't go to these places but there is heaps of gold digging around here (Key Informant 2).

5.5.3 Place-branding to alter public perception of Westland

Place-branding around the Westland District has been a response to address the issues around the perception of the Westland District positively. Tourism West Coast has carried out the marketing behind the branding of the West Coast region as the 'Untamed Natural Wilderness'. For example, Key Informant talks about this branding and notes

You see it everywhere now. That is good because it means that people can come to the coast and they can see all these places from Karamea right down to Haast and realise you can't see all this in one day and have to take time to allow several days if you want to see all the key attractions (Key Informant 4).

This suggests that the branding has helped to depict the range of different sites to see within the area and that there is more than just the Hokitika Gorge and the Glaciers. Furthermore, it has helped to inform visitors to the area that the sheer number of sights to see within the

Westland District alone means that it cannot be carried out within a day or two. The branding has been successful and won the LGA Award for Economic Development because of its success for economic development in the area. Figure 15 below depicts this branding for the West Coast region.



Figure 15: Current branding Tourism West Coast uses to market the region (Tourism West Coast, n.d.)

The branding has been well perceived by the community members as well. Key Informant 4 notes that

The community loves it because it has done so well to attract the tourists. And the branding is spot on; it is untamed wilderness. It is wild. We have the Tasman Sea which is a wild sea that you don't get elsewhere; you don't go swimming in it because it is so dangerous. There are vast areas of land especially up in the mountains which very few people have gone through. You're going into countries that virtually no one has gone into apart from making the track, a real wilderness (Key Informant 4)

The brand spearheads a comprehensive marketing strategy carried out by Tourism West Coast to increase visitor numbers, dispersing visitors throughout the region and increasing their length of stay. These objectives were reflected in the West Coast Economic Development Action Plan (2017), with seven of the Governance Group's 14 headline initiatives relating to growing the visitor economy in the Westland District. Key Informant 4 notes that the previous 'West Coast of the Southern Alps' brand was not resonating with visitors and the region was experiencing a decline in tourism. Following consultation with tourism operators, the 'Untamed Natural Wilderness brand' was adopted.

Therefore, the branding of the area has provided a successful tool to change the perception of the Westland District regarding tourism and stimulating economic development. It has done well to market other vital attractions within the district to inform visitors that there is a range

of iconic attractions that can be visited in the district. Furthermore, the community has responded well and believed it is an accurate representation of their place.

5.5.4 Events and festivals to attract visitors for longer

Events play a critical role in the economic development of the Westland District, particularly in attracting visitors to the district for extended periods of time. Events have the potential to make townships iconic outside of their region. For example, the Hokitika Wild Foods Festival is a renowned annual event that has gained an excellent reputation across New Zealand. Key Informant 3 noted that the people they interviewed for jobs who were from outside of the district often said they knew about Hokitika because of the Wildfood Festival.

I think now the awareness is so widespread that I think most people in New Zealand when you mention Hokitika they also think of Wild Foods, and a lot of people would have been there and formed whatever sort of impression of the town (Key Informant 3).

This illustrates the significance an event can have on a township because it establishes a positive reputation and image of the place with visitors. Establishing an iconic event for a township can have a positive economic benefit for the local economy. However, the development of an iconic event, particularly one that is situated in a remote area like the Westland District requires persistent and resources. For example, Key Informant 1 notes that

If you want to put your town properly on the map, have an iconic event. You have to remember that when you start it, it won't be iconic. But if you grow it, and grow it well, then it will be iconic. The Wildfoods Fest generates according to the latest reports was \$6.5 million for the local economy from that one-day event alone. It fills the town for three days; the event is Hokitika's biggest brand... An iconic event that adds huge value to a region that is a little bit deprived and isolated (Key Informant 1).

However, there are several issues associated with hosting an iconic event in a district like Westland. One of the key issues with hosting events on a large scale is that they lose money due to a lack of profit generated. While events do facilitate visitor spending for the local economy indirectly, the running of the event will typically run at a loss overall. For example, Key Informant 2 notes that

Events like the Wildfoods festival pretty much lose money. What they do instead is provide an opportunity to make money so they can have a stall there and sell 5,000 whitebait patties but the council under-writes it. Last year they broke even, but that was only because they got a \$50,000 sponsorship from somebody. If they hadn't have had that they would have actually been \$50,000 down (Key Informant 2).

This illustrates that if additional funding had not been granted to support an event, then it would experience a significant loss in revenue. Thus, to ensure that events can be utilised effectively

for economic development in the Westland District, they need to be supported by organizations with access to funding.

Another critical issue with hosting large events in Westland is the lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities in small townships to accommodate significant numbers of people. This has been experienced with a lack of accommodation facilities such as hotels and motels for people to stay when coming to Westland for the event. Key Informant 3 addresses these issues by saying that

The biggest issues with events though are accommodation and running out of beds for that weekend basically, even though it wasn't at its peak. Not all the campgrounds were full, but all the motels were full, and people had to take buses from Greymouth (Key Informant 3).

Despite these issues, events in Westland are typically run quite well. This was due to the success of the various relationships and coordination of various groups to facilitate the event. For example,

There has been a lot of planning and trial and error over the years. There is a really close relationship with the police in terms of the actual event and the weekend of it. Making sure they know what is happening, where they are going to be based and all that. There is clear communication to the participants as to what our various bylaws are, rules around carrying glass, alcohol, traffic management plans and that sort of thing (Key Informant 3).

Therefore, events have played an essential role in attracting visitors to the Westland District and has provided an opportunity for the local economy. The development of an iconic event helps to establish an excellent reputation for the district. However, there are several issues associated with hosting an iconic event. The costs associated with running these events often run at a loss and requires funding from various organizations to stay afloat. Other issues associated with events in small towns also highlights the lack of adequate infrastructure available in small towns that are unable to cope with the influx of people attending the events. Despite this, the events have established strong relationships and protocols to operate effectively to ensure that the reputation of these events remains intact.

5.6 Conclusion

A clear picture of how tourism has changed the rural landscape of Westland has been reported throughout this chapter. This chapter has presented the primary data sourced from various key informants, documents and newspaper articles that have illustrated, been involved or had experiences with the role tourism has had in economic development in the Westland District.

Most key informants claimed that tourism has resulted in numerous issues for the area such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of facilities, the need to encourage visitors to stay longer within the district, the impacts of freedom camping and the value of the industry in comparison to other key economic drivers. It was noted that various institutions, organisations and Indigenous groups have been active in responding to these issues by providing funding, infrastructure and facilities to address the issues that have arisen. However, the relationship between these groups was found to be ad-hoc at best and exhibit elements of tokenism between local authorities and local Māori groups.

The key research findings indicated that tourism has dramatically changed the Westland District, but the previous dominance of the traditional primary industries has led to several issues that have meant implications for literature associated with rural and small-town change. It noted that rural areas are not currently equipped to handle a significant influx of visitors to the area because the infrastructure was not designed to accommodate this purpose. Furthermore, the findings suggest that organisations and agencies have geared their focus towards increasing their capacity for economic development from tourism but have provided limited consideration for the societal impacts of the rural communities spread throughout the region. Instead, there is an increased focus on how these communities can market themselves and offer a unique experience for visitors, rather than focusing solely on the needs of the community itself. The following chapter will assess and analyse the qualitative research findings against the relevant literature and theories outlined in Chapter Two. It will seek to appraise the extent to which the results complement or challenge the existing literature and address the present research problem from a wider perspective.

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was, through a case study, to assess the changes that have occurred in rural areas and understand the impact that tourism has had on the Westland District. The geographic spread, low population and isolation of many communities in the Westland District presents a challenge for understanding how the changes of rural and regional areas should be planned for appropriately. This chapter seeks to make further connections between the main findings of this study and discusses the implications of this about the literature published around changes in rural and small towns. The research objectives will be answered in the following order for this chapter:

- Objective 1: Explore the context around the development of tourism in rural and small-town New Zealand and investigate the implications of this.
- Objective 2: Investigate the issues, opportunities and implications that have arisen from using tourism as a key economic driver for individuals, communities, indigenous groups, organisations and visitors to rural and small towns in New Zealand.
- Objective 3: Understand the roles that various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions have played in the development of tourism as a key economic driver and their response to the issues that have arisen and explore the implications of their role for rural areas.
- Objective 4: Investigate the key lessons learnt through the development and management of tourism as a key economic driver in rural and small towns in New Zealand and what this means for achieving societal and economic outcomes that are sustainable for rural areas

Objective 1: Explore the context around the development of tourism in rural and small-town New Zealand and investigate the implications associated with this.

6.2 Uneven development in rural areas

The neoliberal nature of rural tourism has raised several implications for the development of rural settlements in Westland. A key implication is that rural areas that have increasingly

adopted tourism approaches to stimulate economic development have experienced the uneven development of rural settlements. An unexpected finding of this research was that various rural settlements in Westland were experiencing a mixture of both growth and decline. This can be partially explained by Harvey's (2006) recognition of geographically uneven development, and his argument that "capital moves its crisis tendencies around geographically as well as systematically" (Harvey 2010; 12). The Westland District exhibits this uneven development because it is growing economically, mainly from tourism, but has experienced a decline in population in various rural settlements across the district. This aspect of uneven development is important to recognise when planning for rural areas as it demonstrates that some settlements may be in different stages of a 'boom or bust' cycle (Sampson *et al.*, 2006). Despite local economic development initiatives and positive gains from key economic drivers such as tourism and other industries in rural areas, this cannot always reverse decline in these locations. This is because capital obtained from these economic development initiatives is not evenly distributed throughout a district, especially in a rural district, like Westland, that covers a significant geographical area. Therefore, planning for small towns and rural areas needs also to consider responses to not only growth but also actively consider how declining, and shrinking towns should be planned for in the foreseeable future due to its inevitability (Hollander *et al.*, 2009).

This mix of growth and decline in Westland that has resulted in uneven development could also be due to net-migration as people move to and from these rural areas for various reasons. Brabyn (2017) notes that small towns typically had a declining population from net migration loss, but some also gained population as well due to lifestyle opportunities that rural areas offer. This was seen in this research with towns such as Whataroa experiencing a loss in population, and others such as Arahura experiencing a growth in population. The establishment of the marae at Arahura in 2014 would explain the increase in population as Māori migrated back to their ancestral land for cultural and lifestyle reasons, supporting these claims. The increase in populations in rural settlements in Westland is more likely due to lifestyle reasons than tourism alone. It was noted in the research that people often come to the West Coast for their retirement and to live a slower pace of life. Brabyn (2017) notes that many towns in rural New Zealand are near high natural amenity that is close to the coast or among the mountains. The Westland District was found to exhibit these characteristics and have a high amenity value with a significant proportion of the conservation estate, lakes, and alpine environment that is appreciated by the locals and visitors to the area. It is important to comprehend this reason for

migrating to rural settlements for lifestyle choices to adequately plan for these places to ensure they function appropriately

However, the findings found that some rural settlements throughout Westland were experiencing either population loss and in decline. This was interesting as the perspectives of key informants and documents interpret the district as an area experiencing significant growth. This perspective could be skewed due to the significant amount of tourist numbers and the success of other key economic drivers that would suggest that the entire Westland area is experiencing an ever-increasing amount of growth. However, Matanle (2017) cautions that growth from these key economic drivers in rural areas does not mean that this growth and development is evenly distributed. In New Zealand, there is sustained growth in minor urban centres because they can maintain a steady long-term growth in domestic and international investment and migrants, whereas more regional and rural settlements have experienced a divergence of development which more accurately describes the situation unfolding in Westland. For example, townships such as Hokitika have experienced sustained and continued development over the years because of its ability to maintain and attract investment from domestic and international sources.

In contrast to Hokitika, various other rural settlements throughout Westland have experienced different fates. While rural settlements such as Franz Josef were found to have experienced positive development and growth, others have not shared a similar tale. Key Informant 1 noted that South Westland Area School in Hari Hari had amalgamated other primary and secondary schools in the district due to the loss of staff and qualified people to run these facilities in these rural settlements. Many rural townships across New Zealand have also seen local authorities shut down essential services, such as schools and road maintenance and are contemplating the closure of the community themselves (Matanle, 2017). However, the impact the loss of schools has on rural communities requires further investigation as the literature note that the closure of schools has on rural communities is contested as to whether it contributes to the decline of the township (Kearns *et al.*, 2009; Slee and Miller, 2015). Nonetheless, the loss of crucial services and facilities inevitably restricts the ability of these towns to benefit in the foreseeable future positively and further exacerbates uneven development in these rural areas.

6.3 Rural tourism implications

The use of tourism in rural areas like Westland has a mixture of positive and negative implications for economic development. The growth and success of tourism in a rural area like

Westland has provided an abundance of opportunities to diversify, develop and supplement other key economic drivers and industries in the region to become an increasingly resilient district. Matanle (2017) notes that the use of tourism for many rural communities across New Zealand has also resulted in these places experiencing dramatic growth. This dramatic increase in tourism that has been adopted in rural areas needs to be planned accordingly. Keller (1987) warns that planners should be cautious of the fast rate of development in disadvantaged regions and this still rings true for rural areas undergoing these changes from tourism. While tourism development can catalyze economic growth, the management of tourism in Westland should take account of the inevitability of the implications that arise from adopting neoliberal practices and the uneven development of rural settlements as rural tourism takes a market-led approach to generate revenue.

The following section will discuss the key strengths, weaknesses and implications that have arisen from the use of a neoliberal approach like tourism has on rural areas. First, this section will explore the use of natural resources for tourism. Next, the use of Māori culture and festivals will then be explored. This is followed by a discussion of the use of heritage resources for rural tourism.

6.3.1 Natural resources

The conservation estate has been utilised heavily by the tourism industry in Westland and has resulted in various consequences. The natural resources in the area provide a crucial drawcard for visitors to the district with an incredibly diverse range of natural resources from lakes to glaciers. Tourism, particularly in rural areas in the South Island, has been instrumental because of its ability to utilise this environment by casting the remote and marginal regions into unspoiled and unpolluted areas awaiting consumption (Conradson and Pawson, 2009). Organisations have sought to capitalise on these natural resources and market them to both a domestic and international market. The use of place-branding that has been implemented as an approach to promote tourism in Westland has contributed positively to economic development in the area. For example, this was seen in the use of place-branding for the West Coast region as the ‘Untamed Natural Wilderness’ undertaken by Tourism West Coast. The branding was found to positively capture the identity of the Westland District according to various key informants. Capitalising on the natural landscape through this branding has helped to strengthen local communities, consolidate the identity of Westland and the wider West Coast region, help locals identify with their area and helped to revalue the endogenous natural resources (de San Eugenio-Vela and Barniol-Carcasona, 2015). This suggests that marketing

these resources have helped to affirm and positively reflect Westland's identity as a place of abundant, untouched natural resources. This benefits not only visitors to the area, but also helps to consolidate the local identity of communities residing in them to enrich the experience of all parties involved.

One of the critical implications of rural tourism is the pressures on the environment. Duffy (2014) claims that nature-based tourism, as a key driver of neoliberalism, conceals the contradictions between economic growth and unsustainable pressures on the environment. In the Westland community of Franz Josef, the glacier and the glacier valley provide many opportunities for hiking, guided walks, nature appreciation and adventure activities that are currently well established. However, natural attractions are under-utilised in townships like Hokitika. For example, while the Hokitika Gorge was identified as a well-known attraction, other resources like the beach and close access to lakes and rivers were poorly utilised. Key Informants noted this resulted in several main 'tourist hotspots' across the district that resulted in a high concentration of people in a few areas. This raised numerous concerns such as road congestion from a lack of adequate roads and car parking, and environmental damage from a lack of facilities such as toilet and kitchen facilities. This indicates that, while there may be positive attributes associated with increased visitor numbers, the current environment and infrastructure in Westland is not established to accommodate for this and has had a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment which supports the claims made by Duffy (2014). Thus, although there is an abundance of natural resources and attractions throughout the Westland District, the development and marketing of these resources has been unevenly developed across the Westland District.

6.3.2 Heritage resources

Heritage resources provide a useful tool employed for rural tourism but also has benefits and constraints to economic development. Svensson (2009) identifies cases where the development of heritage tourism is undertaken by a local community and suggests this helps provide an array of benefits to rural communities such as empowerment, community co-operation, community pride and an appreciation of their heritage and culture. This was exhibited in the development of the Chinese memorial gardens in Kumāra that has been undertaken by the Kumāra Residents Association (Key Informant 4). This heritage project is similar to the experiences that Matanle (2017) found in the rural township of Arrowtown in Central Otago. A former gold mining town, Arrowtown had declined to less than 200 people in the 1960s before reviving itself through a carefully managed programme of preserving and renovating historic buildings and using its

mining heritage to attract visitors to the area. The main part of that success is attributed to attracting Chinese tourists to visit the Chinese settlement there, to see how the original Chinese gold prospectors had lived and worked. Thus, Kumāra residents believe that the development of a Chinese memorial garden has helped to attract Chinese tourists to the area and help to foster this identity and historical narrative of the original Chinese New Zealand settlers. The effort was made by the local community to ensure this narrative through the Chinese Memorial Gardens is not inauthentic misrepresentation which was noted to be an issue in some townships that employed heritage resources for tourism purposes. This use of heritage as a resource has helped benefit the rural community of Kumāra as it was implemented to show the community's pride in its heritage in gold mining and recognize the groups of people who migrated to New Zealand to help establish the area.

However, a key constraint associated with using heritage for tourism purposes in rural communities that were the ownership model of heritage sites across Westland. There is a mixture of both privately-owned and publicly-owned heritage buildings and sites in the district. A key finding was that key informants felt they had a responsibility to protect historic buildings regardless of whether they fell into private or public ownership. This was seen in the privately-owned Sewell Building in Hokitika that was noted by several key informants to have fallen into disrepair due to the lack of funds the owners had to redevelop the building. The comments made by these key informants suggested that the general public have an attachment to the building and the narrative it tells should be protected despite not being in public-ownership. The findings supported the claims made by Hampton (2005) that even privately-owned heritage buildings may be perceived by the public as the responsibility of the local community. The public often tends to value these heritage buildings more than the building owners because of the historical, cultural and architectural heritage attached to the structure (Goded *et al.*, 2017). This suggests that rural communities like Westland not only see these buildings as an essential resource for tourism but also perceive them as a fundamental aspect of the identity of these rural communities.

Since the study carried out by Balcar and Pearce (1996), a more significant proportion of heritage sites in Westland have since fallen out of public ownership and into private ownership. This has raised various issues, especially since the introduction of the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 which requires heritage buildings with public access to be strengthened to withstand an earthquake. Funding to conduct these activities for privately owned buildings falls on the cost of the owner and is entirely dependent upon them having the

adequate resources and finances available to carry out the work (Key Informant 2). Goded *et al.* (2017) note that many building owners of heritage sites across New Zealand are facing problems associated with ownership of these earthquake-prone buildings and lack the funding to upgrade them. This results in underutilised resources that could be used to help diversify the tourism landscape for Westland and impedes on the identity of the district. Nel and Stevenson (2014) note the requirement from the central government to have publicly accessible buildings earthquake assessed is an unrealistic uneconomic policy to meet in rural areas and small towns. The pressures this places on private owners has meant they may not desire to use their buildings and sites for tourism purposes merely because they cannot carry out the work. This supports the claims from Chang (1997) that private owners of these buildings may not have the same objectives as the surrounding community, despite them thinking otherwise. Goded *et al.* (2017) believe that this affects both community and heritage buildings, resulting in the likely abandonment or demolition of some buildings. Therefore, this suggests that the policies implemented at the national level fail to adequately consider the capacity and capability of rural communities to address concerns around heritage buildings that may be earthquake-prone.

However, locating the funding for these resources has several challenges. Despite the literature noting that communities attach ownership to these structures regardless of whether they are owned privately or publicly, the findings from this research indicate this is not so straightforward. Key Informant 2 noted there was tension within the community when faced with saving the Carnegie Building in Hokitika from demolition. Many community members wanted to see the building demolished and replaced with a car park. This attitude in a rural settlement like Westland contrasts with the perspective on heritage buildings in urban environments in New Zealand. Goded *et al.* (2017) found through a survey of people in Wellington; the public would be willing to contribute financially to retrofit heritage buildings in Wellington via their rates and have it managed by local authorities. While the Carnegie Building was saved from demolition by being purchased by a trust, it suggests that there may be some contradiction in the literature and practice. Thus, deciding whether to allocate funding to restore these buildings for heritage tourism purposes must be carefully considered as the perspectives of those in urban environments like Wellington may differ to those in rural communities.

6.3.3 Cultural resources

The use of Māori culture for tourism purposes in Westland was another aspect of the research that produced both benefits and constraints for local Māori and the wider Westland community.

The experiences of Māori mirror that of other Indigenous cultures that have utilised their culture for tourism purposes and can also be viewed as a “double-edged” sword (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016; 1082). The development of the Pounamu Research Centre in Hokitika was found to exhibit this perspective clearly. The development of this facility would allow local Māori to preserve, safeguard and promote their culture through this facility. Furthermore, as the facility is being carried out as a partnership between Ngāi Tahu Tourism and other agencies, local Māori and iwi Ngāi Tahu will benefit economically from the development as well. Key informants noted that the development of this facility is a somewhat tokenistic gesture that needs to ensure it does more than merely commodify Māori culture to sell onto domestic and international visitors to the area. A previous study investigated Māori tourism in Westland noted the inappropriate use of Māori culture for Pākehā gain (Zygaldo *et al.*, 2001). The study found that tourism in Westland diluted, misused, exploited, threatened and depreciated taonga Māori and called for an immediate response to ensure the authenticity of Māori culture in the area. Recent activities, including the growth of Ngāi Tahu’s economic base, has seen Māori have a stronger voice in ensuring the activities protect the authenticity of the culture.

The creation of the Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy exhibits the changes that have occurred in the use of Māori culture for tourism purposes since the study carried out by Zygaldo *et al.* (2001). The strategy depicts the collaboration between local rūnanga, iwi and other relevant stakeholders which have been carried out to ensure the authenticity of the culture. This is a step taken to ensure that similar mistakes that have occurred in the past which misrepresented Māori are not made again. However, it should be noted that the strategy fails to mention how local Māori will benefit from this use of culture for tourism purposes. Instead, the strategy solely focuses on potential new businesses being established that will employ local Māori and enhance the presence of Māori culture. Furthermore, the development of this strategy does not redress the legacies of colonial history and misguided governments that have impacted Māori in Westland in any meaningful way besides stimulating local economic development for the wider district.

Furthermore, culture has also been used in the form of events as a mechanism for economic development in rural areas. The district of Westland has capitalised on the success events can have on rural settlements. For example, Hokitika is host to several well-known events such as Wild Foods Festival, Driftwood and Sand Sculpture Festival and Feral Fashions (Key Informant 1; Key Informant 3). An exciting and unanticipated finding from this aspect of the research was to do with the downscaling of the Wild Foods event over time so that it now costs

more money to operate that can be made which threatened the future of the festival (Mussen, 2014; O'Connor, 2015). Before undertaking the research, the literature noted that goal of the operators of the festival is to provide an opportunity to generate profit and flow on effects for the township but has since changed in recent years because of council forcibly controlling numbers. The research findings note that a balance between community and local government involvement in the development and administrative processes surrounding festivals and events needs to be met to ensure that the perception and branding are not tarnished by the media. In Hokitika, the heightened level of local authority involvement in the organisation of the festival has been perceived negatively by some residents as a “council takeover” (Key Informant 5). Local authorities have an essential role to play as they are in an excellent position to mobilise broad sets of resources and provide specialist guidance to communities. Key Informant 3 noted that the Westland District Council could provide the coordination of resources such as police and volunteers to ensure the success and safety of the Wild Foods Festival. In this process, this suggests that local authorities need to ensure they support, not supersede local efforts to ensure such events contribute positively to the economic and social development in rural areas.

Second, this study has revealed that as places and communities change, elements of place identity represented through festivals and events may take on new meanings. Despite the changes that occurred once local authorities capped ticket numbers to Wild Foods Festival, the operation of an event like Wild Foods is still vital to the local pride of the people in Hokitika because the event has become an identifying feature for the township and Westland District. Fountain and Mackay (2016) attribute this to the fact that festivals, while always having a financial imperative, also speak to and for the local community at several levels. Therefore, the use of festivals is an essential resource for rural areas as it helps to affirm the identity of these places to allow them to be marketed for tourism purposes in the first place. In the face of change, rural areas need to ensure they maintain a strong sense of identity to ensure the surge of tourist visitors does not erode it.

6.3.4 Synthesis

This section has illustrated the development of tourism in rural and small-town New Zealand has been primarily market-driven and focused on implementing neoliberal strategies to achieve positive economic outcomes. The adoption of this approach to stimulate economic has had several implications for rural areas. By focusing on the resources such as nature, heritage and culture that is available for tourism consumption, it means that development is likely to be concentrated in areas that can readily capitalise on this. Therefore, it is likely that uneven

development of these rural areas will continue into the foreseeable future, particularly if rural tourism continues to outpace other key economic drivers.

Objective 2: Investigate the issues, opportunities and implications that have arisen from using tourism as a key economic driver for individuals, communities, indigenous groups, organisations and visitors to rural and small towns in New Zealand.

6.4 Infrastructure and services pressures

An interesting finding was related to increased pressures on infrastructure because of the shift away from traditional extractive industries to rural tourism. The existing infrastructure across Westland is not currently equipped to handle the current number of visitors the district has experienced. Key Informant 1 noted that much of the existing infrastructure like the roads throughout Westland were initially constructed for low usage and not designed to accommodate a tourism industry. This indicates that rural areas undergoing these shifts away from the extractive industries are facing complications associated with inadequate infrastructure. This issue is further exacerbated by the seasonality of tourism in the Westland District which means carrying out adequate planning to accommodate the changes that have occurred in key economic drivers has faced various challenges. The adoption of the West Coast Economic Development Action Plan has sought to address these critical concerns around infrastructure and services throughout Westland and the West Coast. However, key elements of infrastructure such as roads have been given significant lower priority compared to developing other tourist attractions. This is due to the population of the West Coast region being less than 1% of the national population which means acquiring funding for these road projects is difficult. Therefore, this suggests that rural areas that have faced significant growth in new industries may struggle to adapt infrastructure that was initially constructed for a different purpose.

Another critical finding was associated with the growth of rural tourism in Westland was freedom camping issues. This was perceived as an issue because it is believed that it costs more for the community to host tourists than the return it brings, especially when considering environmental and social costs. The vital part for rural tourism is to ensure that tourists are leaving an overall positive impact on the community and that capital is reinvested into the community. Thus, rural areas that may not have adequate accommodation facilities in the settlement may continue to benefit from rural tourism activities if they chose to stay overnight in the area which leads to further flow-on effects.

Issues regarding freedom camping have become an increasing problem in New Zealand, especially in rural settlements that traditionally use to experience freedom campers in small numbers (Schott 2018). Development of various regulations by local government and enforcing these was noted to be the primary approach utilised to control and manage the issues associated with this activity. The implementation of a freedom camping bylaw has been an opportunity for local authorities and the Westland community to address the various issues associated with freedom camping to ensure the positive development of the area. Key Informant 3 noted that the council previously implemented a Freedom Camping Bylaw that enforced strict rules around where people could and could not go. This has since been repealed and replaced with a more lenient policy that adequately reflects the growing recognition of the economic and social benefits freedom campers bring to the Westland District. The experience was found to be similar in other rural areas in New Zealand where it was noted that freedom camping bylaws had also been implemented by other local authorities (Collins *et al.*, 2018). This suggests that there has been accepted from provincial authorities that they need to take a facilitative approach to control this activity to maintain a balance between community perceptions and allowing visitors to capitalise on the experiences rural areas have to offer.

6.5 Establishing point of difference

A key finding in the research was that rural settlements and communities struggle to identify a point of difference to attract visitors and get them to stop, spend money and stay longer in these places. In the Westland context, some rural settlements such as Franz Josef and Fox Glacier had a clear and distinctive point of difference compared to other townships such as Whataroa. This has resulted in many visitors to the area driving through the township without stopping since there is virtually nothing that would entice these people into these settlements. However, these various rural settlements were able to identify the elements that would help them realise their economic potential, but they lacked adequate funding or leadership to properly develop these 'icons' effectively to ensure visitors to the area stopped. This contrasted the findings from Nel and Stevenson (2014) who note that some small towns lack the energy or ability to identify and develop their economic potential altogether. This suggests that rural areas understand what makes them unique but may not have the appropriate resources or desire to market these for tourism purposes.

However, the market-led approach to economic development that has been undertaken from rural tourism practices has forced towns to identify and market their point of difference. The

current marketing strategy adopted by Tourism West Coast outlines that rural settlements, particularly those situated along the state highway, each need to have a distinctive selling point to increase revenue. A study of Slovenia's rural tourism found that "local communities are not necessarily homogeneous regarding their resources, interests, needs, and views on rural tourism development, and neither do they benefit equally from the development of tourism" (Verbole, 2000; 488). This suggests that planning for economic development in rural areas needs to consider the differences each rural settlement has and question whether developing the resources a township may have is entirely appropriate. For example, the key economic driver in Whataroa is dairy farming. However, key informants perceived that the township had untapped potential from underutilised resources such as the White Heron which could be exploited for tourism purposes. This suggests that organisations and individuals believe that townships have to compete against each other in order to thrive and stay alive. Brabyn (2017) found that many of these rural settlements were making themselves more 'attractive', however, this is disguised as the consequence of neoliberal policies that have pitted rural towns against each other in order to attract capital.

6.6 Development of cycle trails as an opportunity to plan for growth

Cycle trails have provided an outstanding opportunity for rural areas to stimulate economic development. The establishment of the West Coast Wilderness Trail, a cycle trail developed in 2010, was identified as a favourable opportunity for Westland. The most significant benefits were the revitalisation of towns previously experiencing significant decline and establishment of several new businesses because of the trail. For example, the revitalisation of the Theatre Royale Hotel in Kumāra for accommodation has led to the development of new businesses and diversity of existing ones such as the growth of home-stays on farms, shuttle services and cycle hire facilities in Westland. These benefits are echoed in the findings of other studies carried out. It suggests that business revenue also increased for those businesses located within proximity of cycle trails or in townships designated as an overnight stop-over point (Cosslett *et al.*, 2004; Ryan *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, this has increased the average amount each visitor contributed economically to these settlements which were a similar experience found in a study carried out in Victoria, Australia (Beeton, 2009).

However, an unexpected finding associated with the cycle trail development was not one that was anticipated. The literature identified the key issue with cycle trails is related to tensions between the community and cycle users (Cosslett *et al.*, 2004). Instead, those interviewed did

not speak negatively about having the share the trail and only spoke positively about the impact. The key consequence that was identified was associated with the uneven development the cycle trail caused among rural settlements throughout Westland. As the cycle trail was predominately situated at the northern end of the Westland District, the towns located near and along the cycle trail were the only towns to have any direct economic benefit from the development. Townships that are not connected to the cycle trail have not experienced similar benefits from the cycle trail. Garnham (1998) notes that this type of uneven development that arises from this type of economic development activity is heightened by the increased concentration of activity locations that benefit directly from it. Uneven development between townships and settlements that are not able to actively participate in the activity is exacerbated further as a result and makes survival of these places even more difficult.

Objective 3: Understand the roles that various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions have played in the development of tourism as a key economic driver and their response to the issues that have arisen and explore the implications of their role for rural areas.

6.7 Relationships between various institutions

One of the key findings in the research was that various organisations and institutions working towards economic development through various projects were found to be ad-hoc in some cases. The ad-hoc relationship between organisations and agencies was an unexpected finding because it was expected that rural communities would be close-knit due to their size and share similar development goals. In contrast to this, the organisations and agencies operating in the economic development sphere in Westland were perceived to have different goals and objectives and did not share a cohesive vision for the area. This finding supports the claims from scholars such as Petrics (2008) who explore that there is a fallacy that rural communities are homogenous and therefore more cooperative. This finding reiterates other recent studies carried out in the West Coast. Connelly and Nel (2016) found there is a high degree of local autonomy in the different territorial authorities on the West Coast which has reduced the overall capacity for collaborative action. They note that it was only in 2013 when work on a regional development plan began. As many of these agencies have taken a regional approach to planning for the West Coast as a wider region as opposed to explicitly focusing on the district level, the lack of collaborative action has limited development. However, the relationship has improved since the development of the West Coast Economic Action Plan 2017 which has seen a

collaborative approach from various districts. This shows that rural communities are recognising the need for greater collaboration to effectively develop shortly.

The various organization's agencies and individuals clearly understood the economic potential of various resources within the district that would enable successful economic development but were found to operate in an ad-hoc and inconsistent manner. This was seen in the example of a private consultant having to push through their ideas after they were turned down for being “fluffy”, as other organisations and institutions did not understand the value or significance of a project (Key Informant 8). This exhibits that conflict can arise between the formal and informal rural tourism governance structures when one group has a stronger influence on the decision-making that occurs, particularly regarding infrastructure and service provisions (i.e. local government) (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Jamal & Watts, 2011). While these ideas were eventually successful in obtaining support from other organizations, it illustrates that conflict arises in rural communities where a few charismatic leaders may clash over who has the final say. Nonetheless, the acceptance of these projects shows that these organizations and agencies do have a degree of tolerance for each other, which Fleming *et al.* (2003) and Florida (2005) identified as essential to achieving growth in rural areas.

Another critical finding regarding the relationships between organisations was the shared focus on increasing economic gain instead of prioritising the social and sustainable development of rural communities. In Westland and throughout the broader West Coast, it was noted that a number of these organisations are more concerned with providing for visitors and increasing visitor numbers than providing for the needs of their communities. This was seen in the findings relating to Tourism West Coast pushing for greater visitor numbers despite communities already being at maximum capacity and prioritising the provision of infrastructures such as toilet blocks and car parks to accommodate visitors rather than residents. For example, the township of Arahura was found to currently have inadequate water supply due to salination of a bore during a tropical cyclone in February 2018 that has no plans to be remediated soon. As business opportunities, employment and community facilities are created in the region, local authorities and organisations must also protect residents' lifestyles through the provision of adequate roads, waste disposal, sewerage and other community facilities. A balanced approach between implementing appropriate tourism planning policies and establishing more transparent communication between community members is vital in this regard. If these steps are not taken, the most positive perceptions of tourism currently held by community members may well be

replaced with increased community conflict and an overall disillusionment with tourism development in Westland.

6.8 Māori representation in local government

An unexpected finding from this research was regarding the relationship and representation of Māori in local government in rural New Zealand. This was exhibited in the finding that there is a very tokenistic relationship between local rūnanga and Westland District Council. While it was noted in the literature review that Indigenous groups around the world faced issues with self-determination, the situation unfolding in Westland appears to be inconsistent (OECD, 2018). Two representatives, one from Ngāti Waewae and one from Makaawhio, had been invited to sit on the boards in local government and share their perspectives and views at council meetings on issues that may be of relevance to local Māori. However, the two representatives did not obtain legitimate voting rights in the decision-making process. This lack of willingness to ensure there is an adequate representation of Māori is reflected in other local governments within the New Zealand context. Simmonds *et al.* (2016) note there is a lack of willingness from local authorities across New Zealand to promote forms of Māori representation internally on boards and other decision-making forums. For example, the lack of meaningful representation has been publicised at the New Plymouth District Council where the mayor recently resigned after being subjected to racist attacks because of his support for increased Māori representation on the council (Simmonds *et al.*, 2016).

While the Westland District Council has made attempts to be more inclusive of local Māori in decision-making at the local government level, the relationship must continue to develop further to ensure a meaningful partnership is obtained between the authorities and groups. Webster and Cheyne (2017) found that active inclusion of Pākehā and Māori in governance arrangements at the local level is a significant requirement as part of the fundamental principles in the Treaty of Waitangi. However, Key Informant 7 noted that principles such as meaningful participation were not being upheld with the lack of voting rights in the decision-making occurring in the Westland District. They note in the absence of fair and effective representation; attention needs to be given to how local authorities carry out their statutory responsibilities to foster Māori contribution to decision-making. In several places across New Zealand, councils are now ensuring a place for Māori in local government, but efforts remain patchy and ad-hoc as exhibited in the Westland District case study. As Webster (2009) and Bargh (2013) demonstrate, Māori have strong aspirations for shared governance and alongside this engage

in politics in a wide variety of ways such as standing for office, contributing to joint governance committees, participating in consultation, providing environmental and cultural advice and services. However, this ability for Māori to assert their self-determination in rural areas is suppressed under tokenistic gestures entrenched in colonial practices.

6.9 Involvement of the public sector in local economic development

An interesting finding from this research was the amount of influence the public sector has in economic development in Westland. Both local government and central government played a significant role in providing funding for various projects to stimulate economic development. The extent of their involvement was unusual because of the restructuring that occurred throughout rural areas of New Zealand that impacted the West Coast and saw the decreased involvement of the state and local government. However, the findings note that the way these agencies have involved themselves in Westland is through increased prioritisation for economic development initiatives and has little regard to social considerations for rural communities. Nel (2015) found that at both the national and local levels, economic policies now tend to downplay social and community considerations in favour of market-led and business-focused support. This suggests that both local and central government have adopted a market-driven approach to development and have helped to facilitate this through loosely veiled attempted that strategically determine where economic development is successful.

This more centralised and market-driven focused involvement of the public sector has raised various implications for rural areas. Many key informants in the research noted that central government needed to have a more significant role in rural areas that have an uneven ratepayer to visitor ratio to ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided to ensure that economic growth from the tourism industry can continue successfully. Nel (2015) notes that in the current context for regional development, there is a growing centralisation of control in economic development. These calls have been met by the central government to play a more significant role in rural areas. This was exhibited in the new schemes for regional economic development adopted with the introduction of the Provincial Growth Fund announced in 2017. This is funding that will help to provide investment in rural areas experiencing significant growth. The establishment of the Provincial Growth Fund is essentially a state-led approach to regional development based on principles of foreign direct investment. The policies taken by the central government for regional economic development are critiqued as being an extreme form of neoliberalism (Peet, 2012). Therefore, the increased involvement of central government may

appear to help rural and regional areas of New Zealand, but the actions are superficial and are likely to exacerbate problems associated with neoliberalism further such as uneven development and social inequality of marginalised groups in rural areas.

The role of local government in economic development, and the growth of rural tourism was another finding. It was noted in the previous chapter that local government focus on addressing the social and economic concerns had been replaced with the need to focus on just providing infrastructure and facilities (Nel, 2015). However, the findings suggest that in a rural area like Westland, the ratepayer base ratio to visitors to the area is high so the ability for local government to provide necessary infrastructure and services is limited and at a critical state. Nel (2015) notes that smaller local authorities often do not have the capacity of any significance in economic development and often only provide limited economic support, such as the encouragement of tourism-based activities and occasional small business support. This confirms the argument in the literature that local authorities place greater emphasis on pro-market strategies with limited consideration of broader social and community-based economic development (Peet, 2012). This has significant implications for the well-being of rural communities because there is limited aid provided to those settlements that may not have a competitive market advantage. Furthermore, there is no longer a moral obligation for local authorities to support those rural communities that may be facing social challenges. Thus, these settlements may not benefit from economic growth and exacerbate decline further as a result.

6.10 Role of champions in stimulating growth

The role of individuals was also found to have a significant impact on economic development in the Westland District. A benefit from adopting neoliberal approaches to development is the ability for capital to move around quickly in rural communities and remedy the effects of places in decline. For example, in the township of Kumāra, a private business individual came in, purchased the Theatre Royal Hotel because they saw an opportunity arise with the development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail. The town was previously in a severe state of decline. They purchased several other buildings surrounding the Hotel to develop more accommodation facilities. Benevolent entrepreneurs, like the individual who purchased the Theatre Royale Hotel, play an important role in small towns and help to make a difference to the rural and small towns in various ways (Nel and Stevenson, 2014). Generally, their actions have helped to regenerate the township that was in significant decline. These individuals provide support for other businesses and potential new businesses in the small town, encouraging investors and

are active in town promotion and even in supporting the endeavours to retain and expand community facilities. This is evidenced in the findings with the establishment of several new businesses in the Westland area. Many cited the regeneration that occurred in Kumāra as paving the way for businesses to establish and set up, particularly those involved in the cycle trail.

This success experienced from champions in small settlements is contrasted to those that lack these individuals in rural settlements in the Westland District. Many settlements throughout the Westland District were also noted to be in decline and did not have the same ‘entrepreneurial sparkle’ as Kumāra. For example, it was noted that the township of Whataroa has various resources that can be utilised for tourism such as White Heron tours, but the community lacks a leader or champion with a clear vision and investment capabilities to drive forward the idea to grow the town successfully. This reiterates other findings around the role of leaders and notes the importance of leadership as economic growth becomes less dependent upon natural resources or important advantages, and more of the function of the effective decisions made by a select few of entrepreneurs to capitalise on these opportunities (Beer, 2014). Therefore, it suggests that leaders in rural communities need to champion and drive capital to ensure positive change occurs in rural communities.

Objective 4: Investigate the key lessons learnt through the development and management of tourism as a key economic driver in rural and small towns in New Zealand and what this means for achieving societal and economic outcomes that are sustainable for rural areas

6.11 Managing growth and decline effectively

One of the key lessons associated with the rise of tourism in Westland is that small rural towns still face an inevitable decline. The neoliberal nature of the market-driven approach associated with rural tourism means that some rural settlements will still inevitably face decline, while others experience growth. In New Zealand, there is general concern over the future of many towns that are consistently in decline from population loss and has raised calls for policy around ‘managed decline’ (McMillian, 2016; Wood, 2017). By planning for this decline effectively, the societal outcomes for these rural communities are able to be more just and are less likely to face marginalisation as a result. This combined experience Westland has undergone in growth and decline supports arguments that help to clarify the degree to which globalisation does not create homogenization of rural areas, but instead in a situation in which regional and local economic advantages and disadvantages persist and can, in turn, be reinforced. As this research has shown, themes of the “uneven development of neoliberalism” have profound effects on the

ground and local communities and needs to be managed appropriately (Peck *et al.* 2009; 107; Büscher and Arsel 2012). Therefore, by understanding that these towns in rural areas will either grow or decline depending on where capital is invested then planners, and local authorities can make informed decisions that are less likely to impact these communities negatively.

6.12 Increased collaboration between organisations

Another key lesson found was that the organisations and agencies operating in rural areas must improve their operations and economic development initiatives by working collaboratively together towards a common goal to ensure positive economic outcomes. Development of robust and cohesive leadership among the key organisations and institutions in rural communities is key to successful development (Beer and Clower, 2014). In the context of the Westland development, this means that there needs to be more coherent and overlapping vision between the various groups that each play a role towards a united and stronger economic future for the area. McGehee *et al.* (2015) provides an insight into the governance surrounding rural tourism development and believe there is a strong need to advocate beyond a business-focused approach toward a more inclusive governance framework to ensure successful rural development. By taking this approach, it is more likely that just societal outcomes for rural communities can be attained.

These organisations in rural areas can learn from other groups in regional areas of New Zealand. For example, Connelly and Nel (2016) discuss how Southland has responded to local government amalgamation and the devolution of higher powers to local authorities. They found that the organisations recognised the value of joint action so established Venture Southland, a regional economic development agency that has helped to achieve good outcomes for both visitors and community members in the Southland region through this collaboration. Thus, there are significant benefits that can be learnt by looking into other regional development organisations operating in rural areas in New Zealand and abroad.

The findings of the research note that a valuable lesson is a need for more meaningful partnership between local Māori and agencies such as local government. Bargh (2016) explored recent arguments by Māori for representation and involvement in local government decision-making based on being *mana whenua* (*having territorial authority and power associated with the possession and occupation of tribal land*). *Mana whenua* concepts can help build resilient, sustainable regional development pathways that are also inclusive. To illustrate the potential of these pathways, Webster and Cheyne (2017) presented two case studies that address

different aspects of mana Maori that exemplify the challenges and opportunities for mana whenua regarding building inclusive communities, active protection of significant places and collaborative engagement. They illustrate that a meaningful partnership arrangement between local Māori and local governments is a possible outcome in New Zealand and should be sought across rural areas to ensure Indigenous groups are not marginalised in these remote locations.

However, there are still numerous implications to overcome before this can be adequately achieved. While there have been steps taken to improve Māori representation in local government through the provision in the Local Electoral Act 2001 for the establishment of Māori, there has been minimal use of this provision (Bargh, 2016; Webster and Cheyne, 2017). Key Informant 6 noted that Māori groups treated more as a stakeholder than any real partnership which needs to change if any meaningful actions are to be taken. For this partnership to be meaningful, Māori needs to be engaged with as an equal partner to local government agencies like Westland District Council. Webster and Cheyne (2017) outline possible ways forward to improve this to ensure Māori can effectively participate in decision-making at the local level. This would require Māori representatives on the council board to have voting rights and not just the ability to provide insight into matters where it is required. Instead, Māori needs to actively engage on all matters that impact the community if this partnership is to live up to the principles under the Treaty of Waitangi if positive societal outcomes for rural communities is to be attained.

6.13 Ethical considerations

An unexpected finding conducting this research was the difficulties faced in engaging with local Māori in Westland. While appropriate protocol was carried out as described in the methodology chapter, the reality of engaging with Māori as a Pākehā researcher was challenging. One of the critical issues found was trying to engage meaningfully with local rūnanga in Westland within a short time frame. Time pressure and being considered an ‘outsider’ meant discussing issues and establishing a meaningful relationship with local Māori who agreed to participate in the research was more difficult than anticipated. Despite reading widely around indigenous issues, inadequate attention was given to literature surrounding engagement and research with Māori beyond the research topic. This is exhibited in the literature review chapter which highlights these issues at a broader scale were disregarded in order to understand the ‘cultural’ elements affecting tourism development in rural settlements in Westland. Furness *et al.* (2016) note that, while the amount of readily available

literature to guide Pākehā researchers is growing, the amount of literature that discusses the actual ethical issues around being a Pākehā researcher in social sciences is limited. The ethicality associated with being a non-Māori researcher engaging in research with local Māori which found that many researchers rely solely on the endorsement provided from their institutional ethics committee. This endorsement alone does not provide the researcher with an adequate understanding of the context local Māori may be under. In hindsight, this research project needed to provide further attention to critically reflecting on the questions to be raised with Māori groups and devise a path that would establish an ongoing relationship that was more meaningful to work toward a better future.

6.14 Synthesis

This chapter has explored each of the four research objectives by comparing and analysing the findings against the existing literature. First, the context around the development of tourism in Westland was explored and found several implications associated with the adoption of this post-productivist activity. The main implication of rural tourism was that the market-led approach of the activity unintentionally promotes the uneven development of rural communities. This is an inevitable outcome due to the neoliberal attributes of tourism which both directs and concentrates capital and profits that grows specific communities, while simultaneously marginalising others.

Several issues and opportunities have arisen from using tourism as a key economic driver for individuals, communities, indigenous groups, organisations and visitors to Westland. The significant growth of the tourism industry has placed pressure on dated infrastructure and services that had been established primarily for the use of traditional extractive activities and low population usage. Despite this, tourism has provided individuals, communities and Indigenous groups with a plethora of opportunities to benefit economically from the growth of the industry. The development of cycle trails has enabled individuals to have to utilise entrepreneurial practices to establish businesses that saw rural communities revitalise and attract visitors. Māori in Westland can assert and share their traditional knowledge, practices and culture through tourism to help reaffirm their self-determination in the district. Thus, tourism has introduced several issues to the district but also provided opportunities for those residing there that would not have been possible from other key economic drivers.

Various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions have played an essential role in the development of tourism for Westland. The involvement of the public sector has

played a critical role in the development of these rural communities through the provision of funding to carry out economic development projects. They have also been fundamental for establishing relationships between various groups like rūnanga and local government. However, the lack of coherent development goal for Westland between organisations and agencies in rural areas means they operate in an ad-hoc and tokenistic manner as they seek to carry out their individualistic development objectives.

Finally, to make the findings from this research applicable to other rural contexts across New Zealand and internationally, several lessons that could be learnt from understanding the situation unfolding from the Westland case study were identified. A key lesson identified is the need for better management of growth and decline of small rural settlements to ensure that adequate infrastructure and services are provided for these groups. Furthermore, another major lesson that can be learnt from this case study is the need for a more cohesive and equitable collaboration between organisations, agencies and Indigenous groups undertaking economic development. Increased collaboration is important for rural areas to carry out so that finite resources in local government and knowledge from consultants and local rūnanga is used efficiently to achieve positive economic outcomes quickly.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter seeks to reflect on the overall implications this research has for planning for changes within the rural context. It will bring this thesis to a close by evaluating the research findings against the five research questions proposed in Chapter One. The Westland District case study indicates that the changes in key economic drivers and the uptake of market-driven approaches to economic development have resulted in various implications for the district. It found that the development of rural communities is not homogenous, and each is in various stages of growth and decline. Also, organisations and agencies in rural areas have played a critical role in the impact these changes have had on rural areas. These approaches have provided unique opportunities that have stimulated growth in these regional areas, as well as several issues. This chapter will also investigate future research opportunities and reflect on the research process overall to assess the implications of this research for planning practice in rural contexts.

7.2 Evaluation of research findings

The research has addressed five key research questions to explore the relationships between change in key economic drivers and the roles of various organisations and institutions within the Westland District context.

The first research question was:

1. What are the key demographic and economic trends occurring within rural areas and the implications of these trends?

This question was answered across Chapter Two and Chapter Four. The literature review helped to contextualise the key demographic and economic trends that rural areas and small towns have experienced on the national and international scale. It established that various economic and political factors such as globalisation, political restructuring and the adoption of neoliberal policies dramatically changed rural settings that resulted in an era of decline. Demographic wise, many rural areas across the world have also lost populations to urban areas due to a decline in primary industries. However, post-productivist activities like tourism have resulted in positive economic development for rural areas through the marketing of various

resources such as nature, heritage and culture to enable it to be consumed by domestic and international visitor markets.

Chapter four explores these demographic and economic trends specifically within the rural district of Westland, New Zealand. It found that rural settlements throughout the district are experiencing a mix of decline and growth in population. This is unevenly distributed throughout Westland, with a majority of the population concentrated in main settlements such as Hokitika. This was found to result in various implications in considering where growth and decline would occur. Economically, the adoption of neoliberal policies found that tourism has become a key economic driver for the district. It was noted that the economic benefits from this industry only impacted the settlements that have successfully employed and marketed various resources for visitor consumption, whereas those settlements like Whataroa struggled to find growth and prosperity from this growing industry. A fundamental limitation of this research is that only a single key economic driver (i.e. tourism) was considered when investigating the changes that rural areas have experienced. The findings in chapter four noted that dairying and dairy manufacturing also plays a significant role in the economy of Westland that was not explored due to restraints around timing.

The second research question was:

2. What are the key issues and opportunities that are currently influencing economic growth in rural areas on individuals, communities and visitors to the area and what are their implications?

This question was answered across Chapter Five and Chapter Six. The research found that the key issues are influencing economic development for Westland related to encouraging visitors to stay longer, infrastructure and service pressures, and attracting appropriate funding. The employment of various resources was also found to have issues that restricted economic development for Westland. Heritage resources faced issues around earthquake strengthening bylaws imposed by central government, the lack of funding available to portray historical narratives, and contrasting community perspectives on the need for heritage in general. Cultural resources faced restraints around lack of narratives and tokenistic gestures that seek economic outcomes instead of promoting improved social well-being for local Māori.

Several opportunities were also identified from the adoption of tourism that has influenced economic growth in the Westland District. This includes the development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail and place-branding to alter the perception of the district which has allowed

the district to establish new businesses and reaffirm their identity in the face of change. The growth of tourism has also seen the promotion and visibility of Māori culture in the community which has allowed them to assert their self-determination increasingly.

The third research question was:

3. What role do local and regional economic, political and community organisations, institutions, indigenous groups and agencies play in facilitating economic development in the Westland District?

This question was explored in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The research has shown that local and central government, local rūnanga, and agencies such as Development West Coast and Tourism West Coast play an essential role in facilitating economic development. The primary role these groups play was associated with the provision of funding to conduct successful activities that would stimulate economic development. These policies and provisions for fruitful economic development were prioritised over the sustainable social development of these rural communities. While the involvement of the public sector in economic development has decreased significantly since the political and economic restructuring period, it was found that the state still plays the role of the puppeteer in orchestrating exactly where economic development will occur through their funding provisions. Furthermore, it was also found that individuals or champions also play an important role in capitalising on the funding and opportunities these agencies provide to facilitate positive change in rural areas effectively.

The fourth research question was:

4. How have various agencies, organisations, indigenous groups and institutions responded to the issues that have arisen and what are the key implications of their approaches for rural communities?

This question was answered in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. The agencies, organisations and indigenous groups in the Westland District responded to the issues the area faced by primarily focusing on neoliberal strategies to improve their current situation. The development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail was found to be a successful approach that has addressed issues like getting visitors to stay longer, attracting new businesses and revitalising rural settlements. However, the benefits from this approach have been concentrated to the proximity to the cycle trail and the northern end of the district. The economic benefits were not evenly distributed

throughout the district. However, it was found that the organisations and agencies operated in an ad-hoc fashion that was driven primarily by a few key organisations. This finding was ironic as all the organisations and agencies that were investigated in this research from the public sector and development agencies like Development West Coast and Tourism West Coast were primarily connected with the same goal to encourage and promote tourism for the district.

Furthermore, the relationships between local government and rūnanga operated in a tokenistic manner which failed to provide Māori with adequate voting rights in decision-making for the

Finally, the fifth research question was:

5. What are the key lessons learnt from the Westland District case study regarding the management of economic development to assess what this means for achieving societal and economic outcomes that are sustainable for rural areas?

The final question was explored in Chapter Six. Three key lessons can be learnt from understanding the Westland District case study to ensure that more sustainable societal and economic outcomes are achieved for rural areas.

The first lesson is that rural areas experiencing a mixture of growth and decline need to plan for this accordingly. Under the neoliberal and market-driven policies and strategies that have been implemented, the nature of these activities means that uneven development in rural areas is inevitable. Thus, some rural settlements will grow because of this economic development whereas others will face inevitable decline. Planning for how and when this will ensure that equitable societal and economic outcomes can be achieved for these areas.

Organisations and agencies operating in rural areas must improve their operations and economic development initiatives by working collaboratively together towards a common goal to ensure positive economic outcomes was another critical lesson. For example, while the researchers found that increased collaboration had started with the development of the West Coast Economic Action Plan 2017, a more cohesive and consistent approach must be adopted so that the social and economic needs of the rural communities in Westland is prioritised over growing visitor numbers. Furthermore, these groups need to consider the social impacts on the rural communities that have to endure their visions for continued growth.

Another key lesson found was that a meaningful partnership between local authorities and local Māori must be carried out to achieve just societal outcomes, particularly for those groups that are marginalised within rural contexts. It is imperative that these relationships continuously

seek to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Māori needs to be engaged with as an equal partner in the future economic development of the Westland District and not merely another stakeholder. This relationship unfolding in Westland is echoed in other rural areas within rural areas across New Zealand. Until a meaningful partnership occurs between local Māori and local government, it is likely to be constrained in how they assert their rangatiratanga (*sovereignty*) over the district.

7.3 Future research opportunities and recommendations

This research has contributed to both a national and international body of literature surrounding the changes that are unfolding across rural areas and small towns. The case study of Westland offers context-specific literature that helps to characterise the change that has occurred in regional areas around New Zealand. This has been achieved by exploring how various resources have been utilised for tourism purposes and the role that organisations and agencies have played in responding to change.

Regarding future research, there are three critical areas of research that may be pursued considering the findings this research has uncovered.

1. In the Westland District specifically, this could be followed up by exploring the potential successes, failures and implications that the Provincial Growth Fund will have on the district over the following decade. It would be worthwhile also investigating the distribution of this funding across the Westland District and the wider West Coast region to understand the implications of this for future growth and decline of rural settlements in the area. Furthermore, an investigation into whether this funding has been able to provide positive societal outcomes for rural communities or merely helped a few organisations profit off increased visitor numbers would be beneficial.
2. Other key economic drivers such as dairying and dairy manufacturing should also be investigated and compared with the implications of other key sectors like tourism. This would provide an opportunity to build on this research by exploring how other key economic drivers interact with each other to help comprehensively understand how change has occurred in rural areas.
3. There is also an opportunity to explore further the impact these changes have had on marginalised groups within rural areas such as women and Māori in more depth. An investigation into the power dynamics and relationships between local Māori and local government to comprehensively understand how this operates within the rural context

would be worthwhile. This research only briefly uncovered that this relationship within the Westland District is rather tokenistic and that other rural districts have also experienced a similar scenario. Thus, an investigation into developing a more meaningful partnership between Māori and local government in rural areas could be worth pursuing.

To conclude, the following key policy and practice recommendations are proposed considering the research findings. However, this research stresses that the change rural areas will experience will ultimately be dependent on various contextual factors as rural areas are not homogenous. Therefore, the policy applied must take the specific context into account. Nonetheless, planners operating in rural contexts would benefit from the following general recommendations for planning practice.

Firstly, organisations and agencies that are involved in economic development in rural areas need to work collaboratively together to ensure that equitable societal and economic outcomes are achieved efficiently. Working together towards a collective goal for their district will ensure that the increase in visitor numbers will overrun the rural communities that have to support them.

Secondly, the perception of Māori groups in rural areas as stakeholders rather than equal partners need to change. Both the Crown and Māori groups must uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi to achieve just social outcomes. Doing this requires local governments to share power and authority equally with local Māori and actively engaging between the two groups when issues arise and consider solutions together to benefit the wider community and visitors to the district.

Finally, the adoption of neoliberal and market-driven strategies means that some rural settlements will experience significant growth and revitalisation, while some will experience an inevitable decline. Those that are experiencing growth from the increased number of visitors to these settlements need to be managed and monitored effectively to ensure adequate infrastructure and services can be provided for people residing in these rural settlements and the visitors that travel through them. By understanding that this co-occurs, planners can help create sustainable and equitable social outcomes for rural communities across New Zealand.

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Appendix 1: Information Sheet and Consent Form



Local Economic Development Approaches to Reversing Rural Decline in Westland District **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you, and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This research investigates the various approaches and strategies that have been implemented by local government and community groups to reverse small town decline. It aims to identify how the community's aspirations for economic development and cultural expression around the Hokitika and West Coast area have been impacted by the changes in the local economy such as tourism, a decline of primary industries and strategies implemented from the local government level.

The research is being undertaken by postgraduate student Callum Riddle, who is completing the Master of Planning degree at Otago.

What Types of Participants are being sought?

Approximately 15 participants are being sought to participate in up to three workshops (lasting approximately half a day) and/or semi-structured interviews (taking approximately 1 hour). Participants will be selected on the basis of their connection with the Hokitika region and their knowledge with the current processes that are unfolding on the West Coast. Recruitment will take place by way of face to face invitations and emails as appropriate. The research process is committed to co-creating research and knowledge. Feedback on the continuing research will be sought from research participants throughout the project so that there is a co-creation of a future agenda as the final endpoint of the project.

What will Participants be asked to do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to engage in discussion about how local economic development strategies have improved the local economy and the impact this has had on the surrounding community. The discussion will cover topics such as the impact of tourism, issues facing Hokitika in both the present day and foreseeable future, along with the impact these changes have had on local Māori in the region. Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself.

What Data or Information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

The data that will be collected will focus on how local authorities and organizations have successfully coped with growth related to tourism and the perspectives from the community within the region as well. The data will take the form of notes taken during the workshops and interviews and audio recordings if permitted by informants. The information gathered will be used in writing professional reports, academic articles and a Master of Planning Thesis. The results of the research will be published, and the thesis will be available at the University of Otago Library, Dunedin, New Zealand. Every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the named researchers be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 5 years in secure storage. Any personal information held on the participants, such as contact details and audio recordings, may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely. Reasonable precautions will be taken to protect and destroy data gathered by email. The security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed. Caution is advised in the electronic transmission of sensitive material.

This project involves an open-questioning technique. The precise nature of the questions that will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the workshops and interviews develop. Consequently, although the Department of Geography is aware of the general areas to be explored, it has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable, you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s).

Can Participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Callum Riddle
Department of Geography
University Phone No.:- 03 479 4218
Email: ridca768@student.otago.ac.nz

and

Michelle Thompson-Fawcett
Department of Geography
University Phone No.:- 03 479 8762
Email: mtf@geography.otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the Department of Geography. However, if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph 03 479 8256). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.



Local Economic Development Approaches to Reversing Small Town Decline in Westland
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information in notes and audio-recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project, but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning addresses how Treaty settlements are catalysing new relationships and new points of conflict between tangata whenua and local authority planners in urban development projects. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the workshops and interviews develop. In the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable, I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. The results of the project will be published, and the Thesis will be available at the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand), but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed Name)

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

Topics and key questions to guide interview:

Introduction

- Outline background and positionality
- Provide information sheet, outline key objectives and purpose of the interview and research project
- Ask key informant role in XXX, how long they have lived in Westland/West Coast for

Background into general issues

Growth/decline/change of small-towns

- What do you think are the three main issues for Westland at the moment?
- How have various demographic trends such as the trend towards an ageing population impact Westland?
- How was Westland affected by the restructuring period enforced by the central government? What was the community's perspective on this?
- What are the main changes you have noticed in Westland in terms of the growth and decline of the region? Are small-towns throughout the district in decline?
- In terms of the values, the community has, how have they changed over time?
- In terms of the community groups that have been set up in recent years, have they been able to have their voice heard over the influx of tourism?
- What is the sort of demographics of these small communities in Westland? Are the facilities being adapted to cope for the ageing population in Westland?
- Do you think communities in Westland are very resilient?
- Has there been a lot of new development coming through to accommodate this growth from tourism?

Tourism

- What do you think are the main issues associated with the growth of tourism has on the Westland District?
- How is the district working towards attracting people to stay longer to spend more money?

- How have small towns and communities marketed their point of difference to visitors?
- How has tourism on the West Coast benefitted the local community to achieve their aspirations?
- In what ways has the boom in tourism on the West Coast strengthened communities?
- What was the Westland District like before tourism industry grew to its current extent?
- Do you think the smaller communities need to brand themselves to create a point of difference compared to other areas? What are the implications of this?
- Do you think that historical narratives of the West Coast should also be prioritised and have that history of the West Coast reflected for tourism?
- In terms of employment within the townships, how has that changed for people who would traditionally take winter months off?
- How have ratepayers responded to their rate money is going towards setting up tourist facilities rather than other facilities for community development and needs? What are their general concerns?
- How has the district responded to issues around freedom camping?

Role of organizations and agencies

Local government

- What role has the district council played in helping to facilitate growth across the Westland District?
- In terms of the community's involvement with the planning documents such as the 10 Year Plan and the public participation side of things, is the community quite active in that regard?

Local rūnanga

- How facilitating have local authorities been to nurture and develop Māori aspirations?
- Is this relationship beneficial to see the economic prosperity of Māori on the West Coast in the foreseeable future?
- Do the local authorities understand Māori aspirations and worldview from your perspective? Are there any activities or workshops being carried out to upskill staff in these understandings?
- Do you think that narrative from Ngāi Tahu and the two runangas has become stronger in the Westland District?

- Does the community have much involvement with the marae and local runanga

Heritage groups

- What are the main issues for developing heritage resources for tourism purposes in Westland?
- What role does heritage play for tourism throughout Westland?
- In terms of earthquake strengthening and the costs associated with that, where does the funding for all that come from?

Individuals

- Who is the type of people that are coming into the West Coast to facilitate growth and development like the revitalization of communities like Kumāra?

Relationships between organizations

- In terms of all the organizations that have been set up such as Development West Coast, Tourism West Coast etc., how well do you think these organizations and agencies are coordinating with each other to work towards a goal or vision for the West Coast? Is everyone doing it cohesively or working more ad-hoc?
- Are different groups trying to push their visions and aspirations for where they want the money to go?

Responses to various issues and opportunities

- How has the development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail promoted growth and revitalized rural communities?
- Do any of the cycle trails have the sort of interpretation panels set up already to tell the narrative and stories of gold mining like the Rail Trail in Central Otago?
- In terms of the branding that has come through for the West Coast as the “Untamed Natural Wilderness”, how has the community perceived that sort of branding?
- What is your perspective on the use of natural resources being used and marketed for tourism purposes?
- Do you think the events that Hokitika hosts now like the Wildfoods Festival etc. have helped to change Westland as more of a destination to respond to issues around decline?