



Westport 2100

Hazard Planning for Future Generations

27 August 2019

Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
The Terrace
Wellington

By email: info@productivity.govt.nz

Submission on the Draft Report into Local Government Funding and Financing

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Report into Local Government Funding and Financing. This submission has been written on behalf of the Westport 2100 Group which was formed to consider how to manage natural hazards facing Westport and its surrounding areas.

Our comments are as follows:

Adapting to climate change

Natural hazards, include the threats posed by climate change, in particular sea level rise and the increasing number of extreme weather events. These will affect Westport and its surrounding areas in the future. The Westport 2100 Group will be making recommendations to both the Buller District Council and the West Coast Regional Council around adaptive pathways to protect and create resilience in the town for future generations.

The risk is that a small district with a small rating base will not have the financial capability to address many of the longer-term initiatives and projects that may need to be implemented. Central Government support will be needed to help address issues that require major infrastructure protection or relocation.

A climate change resilience agency with financial capability could help with a long-term approach to climate change. It was identified after the last two cyclones that Westport and the Buller District as a whole has communities that are susceptible to extreme weather events. A climate resilience agency could help with funding protective measures in the short term and with moving infrastructure if required in the long term. Central government also need to provide regulatory framework around climate change.

Extending the role of NZTA, to provide assistance to councils facing significant threats to the viability of roads and bridges would greatly benefit our District. The Westport 2100 Group believe NZTA are an integral partner in creating resilience and in protecting lives when mitigating the effects of climate change.

The accumulation of responsibilities placed on local government by central government

The growing number of tasks being pushed down by central government place both financial and staff resourcing pressures on local government, particularly in small councils with limited resources. The 'Partners in Regulation protocol' would be beneficial if it was a true collaboration between local

and central government and if it provided funding to alleviate pressure of the tasks pushed down from central government.

Future funding options

To address these concerns, we encourage and seek central government support to establish a resilience agency funding source which could be accessed by application. This would enable local government to request and obtain financial assistance to assist in meeting the ever increasing costs of responding to the cost effects of climate change where those costs are unable to be met locally.

We thank you for the consideration of our submission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Coll', written in a cursive style.

Chris Coll
Chair
Westport 2100 Group