WEST COAST COUNCIL:
Smart decisions
Strong partnerships
Stronger communities

WEST COAST STATISTICS

AREA 9,575 SQ KM
POPULATION 4,527
COUNCIL ASSETS $107,110,000
COUNCIL STAFF 65

Clr Phil Vickers
West Coast Council Mayor
An extensive mining sector, world heritage landscapes, a burgeoning arts culture, convict heritage and a drive for innovation are brilliantly juxtaposed to create the unique region that can only be the West Coast of Tasmania.

The coastal populations of Strahan, Granville Harbour and Trial Harbour, the inland communities of Queenstown, Zeehan, Tullah and Rosebery, and the small, historic townships of Gormanston and Linda are all within a short distance from magnificent lakes, rivers, rainforests, dunes and historic sites.

Renowned for its mining industry, the region has set itself a challenge to diversify its economy and develop industries such as tourism, aquaculture and renewable energy.

“Mining has been the lifeblood of the West Coast, employing the vast majority of the population for over a century,” Mayor Phil Vickers said.

“It is really only a recent realisation within the community that the West Coast is a region with economic potential outside of mining – there is a strong willingness to innovate and position ourselves as the premier destination for those looking to move to a smaller community, as well as for visitors to Tasmania,” he said.

And the West Coast Council is taking a lead role in driving this change.

With Council’s existing Strategic Plan due to expire, Council embraced the opportunity to reach out to its community for direction in creating a new Community Plan – one which will not only drive Council business over the next decade but also provide a solid framework for other stakeholders such as investors, State Government and business.

An extensive community engagement process incorporating information stands, key industry summits, school-based activities, surveys and community workshops was facilitated by the Council in 2015.

The community embraced the opportunity to become involved with planning for the future, with a 22% survey return rate and 40% of the West Coast population participating in the process.

The West Coast Community Plan 2025 is a true reflection of what the West Coast needs and with many of the opportunities identified not in the control of Council to deliver, the Council will advocate for the region and strive to influence government and private sector organisations and individuals.

The 2025 vision holds the key for economic development in the region, providing crucial details and actions to assist investors in their business planning and implementation. The appointment of an Economic Development, Tourism and Events Coordinator in January 2016 and a new Council-driven economic development advisory group, to be established this year, is testament to Council’s commitment to the 2025 Plan.

“2025 identified a need to be proactive and creative in diversifying our industry base,” Mayor Vickers said. “The West Coast is ready for investors to see the potential that we do in the region.”

Mayor Vickers says the Community Plan should be embraced by the community, Council, government, non-government organisations and the private sector to build partnerships and direct business planning for activities in the region.

“Having a shared vision has allowed Council to develop a partnership with a local social enterprise organisation, to work with local industry leaders to secure a better mix of NBN technologies for the region and to work more closely with agencies,” Mayor Vickers said.

A whole of community plan about what can be achieved through working together - the West Coast Community Plan 2025, is a conversation starter and a road map for the next ten years.
Innovation and Diversity: here and now

The West Coast is open and ready for business.

Mining, a main-stay of the economy, will no longer be a stand-alone industry – the ore bodies and exploration will exist alongside interpretative tourism reflecting upon, and showcasing its history. The rainforests, lakes and mountains will stand pristine amongst heritage railway experiences and adventure tourism, incorporating mountain bike trails and river rafting.

Substantial growth in the aquaculture industry, a small but significant agriculture industry looking to grow, and a renewable energy project in the form of a wind farm proposal at Granville Harbour, signifies the region is serious about chasing innovation through diversification and embracing change.

With a Gross Regional Product approaching $400 million, the West Coast is punching above its weight but there is more to be done to ensure sustainability. To grow the economy, the potential for a true regional airport will be investigated by Council and other stakeholders, seeking partnerships with the government and private sector such as tourism operators and the aquaculture industry.

Mayor Vickers said, “We have the assets, the landscapes, the experiences and the lifestyle. The clear message from the West Coast Community Plan 2025 was the need to brand the West Coast to reflect what we have, who we are and what we can become. Council will take a leadership role in working with key stakeholders to ensure this occurs. Promotion and marketing will reflect this new brand, ensuring the West Coast identity prevails.”

The West Coast people are the strength of the region. Like the landscape they live amongst, West Coasters stand strong. Sometimes scarred by events of the past, but resilient and positive about the future. Their compelling stories continue to be told at our heritage museums, with chats on the street and at festivals such as The Unconformity. Council continues to support West Coast events and sees the growth in this area as adding to the diversity of the West Coast.

“Our youth, through the Next-Gen program, have identified business ideas that will make use of existing assets to embrace adventure tourism and education opportunities in the future.” Mayor Vickers said

Despite recent bushfires burning in remote sections of the West Coast Municipal Area, the West Coast community and tourist destinations have remained relatively unaffected.

Where will your West Coast experience take you?
WE MINE FOR PROGRESS

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