



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | MONDAY 23 MARCH 2026

NAME FOR COAST WATER ENTITY

The three West Coast district councils have agreed a name for the West Coast Water Services CCO – **Coast Waters Ltd.**

A joint council-controlled water services organisation (WSCCO) will manage water services on behalf of their communities.

This week, the draft Shareholders' Agreement and Constitution are being tabled; the Shareholders' Agreement explains how the councils jointly own and oversee the WSCCO. It sets out the key decisions councils must approve, how directors are appointed, and how councils work together to guide the organisation and resolve any issues.

The Constitution establishes the WSCCO as a legal entity, sets out the company's scope of activities and legislative requirements, and defines the powers, duties and limitations of the Board of Directors.

Together, the documents ensure that councils retain strategic control while enabling the WSCCO Board to manage day-to-day operations independently.

Also being tabled is approval for a sub-committee to appoint the initial Board of Directors, to streamline the appointment process. The sub-committee is made up of the mayors and iwi representatives. The initial Board will comprise three members, including the Chair.

The shareholders – each council – will operate a Shareholders' Representative Forum from late autumn. This will provide overarching governance of Coast Waters.

It will be made up of the three mayors, plus two other elected members from each council. There will also be a representative from Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio.

That brings the total to a maximum of 11 members, with no payment for the role. Each member will have an equal vote. Members could also choose to appoint an independent chair.

The Shareholders' Representative Forum will hold quarterly meetings, moving to biannual public meetings once Coast Waters Ltd is operative.

The shareholders (the councils) will also adopt a Statement of Expectations for Coast Waters, likely over winter.

There will be two types of shares. The first is for decision-making, with one share for each council.

The second type of shares will be based on asset value, in Coast Waters Ltd. This only matters if a dividend is paid out – which is highly unlikely, as any surplus would be reinvested back into the water company. The number of shares will be confirmed next year once the final value of assets is known. Based on current values, Buller would have 22 shares, Grey 54, and Westland 24.

Grey District Council chief executive Joanne Soderlund said: "This is a strong example of the West Coast councils working together for the long-term benefit of our communities. Coast Waters Ltd provides a regional approach to water services that strengthens capability, meets regulatory requirements, and keeps local voices at the centre of decision-making through shared ownership and governance."

Westland District Council chief executive Barbara Phillips said: "This is a practical step forward for the West Coast. By working together, we are strengthening how water services are delivered while ensuring councils retain a clear role in setting direction on behalf of their communities. Coast Waters Ltd enables us to meet increasing regulatory requirements, build capability at scale, and take a long-term, sustainable approach to water infrastructure across the region.

"This is about taking a co-ordinated approach to how we deliver water services on the West Coast. By working together, councils can share capability, meet regulatory requirements, and plan for the long term, while still retaining oversight on behalf of our communities."

Buller District Council chief executive Simon Pickford said: "Coast Waters Ltd will enable us to work jointly with other councils – we have to work on our three waters anyway, and by doing it together in this council-controlled organisation, we can ensure decisions that benefit our Buller and all West Coast ratepayers."

Councils are also expected to consider funding the transition equally.

The new company must meet detailed statutory reporting and accountability obligations, including preparing and publishing water services strategies, budgets and reports, and will be audited by the Auditor-General.

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