

From: [BDC Lgoima](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Official information request for Annual Plan Submissions Information Ref: OIA 062/23
Date: Thursday, 15 June 2023 8:34:00 am
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[AP Feedback Federated Farmers Redacted.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

We refer to your official information request dated 9 June 2023 for information regarding the Annual Plan submission for Federated Farmers.

The information you have requested is attached.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact the Buller District Council by return email to lgoima@bdc.govt.nz.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly at <https://bullerdc.govt.nz/district-council/your-council/request-for-official-information/responses-to-lgoima-requests/> with your personal information removed.

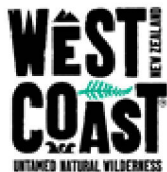
Kind regards

Krissy Trigg | Group Manager Community Services
DDI 037889679 | Mobile 0272133022 | Email krissy.trigg@bdc.govt.nz

Buller District Council | Phone 0800 807 239 | bullerdc.govt.nz
PO Box 21 | Westport 7866

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Federated Farmers of New Zealand

Feedback on the Buller District Council Annual Plan 2023/2024

28 May 2023



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.ORG.NZ

FEEDBACK TO BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL ON ANNUAL PLAN 2023/2024

To: Buller District Council
Via email: annualplan@bdc.govt.nz

Submission on: **Proposed Annual Plan 2023/24**

Date: 28 May 2023

Submission by: West Coast Federated Farmers of New Zealand

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Federated Farmers of New Zealand

E [REDACTED]

Address for service: [REDACTED]

GRADUATE POLICY ADVISOR REGIONAL

Federated Farmers of New Zealand

M [REDACTED]

E [REDACTED]

We do not wish to be heard in support of our submission.

ABOUT FEDERATED FARMERS

Federated Farmers of New Zealand is a membership organisation, which is mandated by its members to advocate on their behalf and ensure representation of their views. Federated Farmers does not collect a compulsory levy under the commodities levy act and is funded from voluntary membership.

Federated Farmers represents rural and farming businesses throughout New Zealand. We have a long and proud history of representing the needs and interests of New Zealand's farmers.

Federated Farmers aims to empower farmers to excel in farming. Our key strategic outcomes include provision for an economic and social environment within which:

- Our members may operate their business in a fair and flexible commercial environment;
- Our members' families and their staff have access to services essential to the needs of a vibrant rural community; and
- Our members adopt responsible management and sustainable food production practices.

1. FEEDBACK

- 1.1 Federated Farmers welcomes the opportunity to present feedback to the Proposed Annual Plan. We understand there has had to have been an average rate increase of 6.8%, contributed by a 10.7% increase in General Rates. Although we would have liked to have submitted in the formal process, we are understanding that Council would like to focus on spending the time usually spend on Annual Plan consultations working on the Long-Term Plan. West Coast Federated Farmers are also understanding of Council's need to raise rates because of the extreme flooding events that have impacted the district over the past 18 months. We hope to engage with Council more in depth during the Long-Term Plan process.
- 1.2 We acknowledge that the rate increases in this annual plan will be significantly lower than movements in the 2023-24 Annual Plan. We are impressed Council has been able to keep this lower than the 2022-23 rating increases considering harder economic conditions in the 2023-24 rating year for all ratepayers.
- 1.3 West Coast Federated Farmers also acknowledged the recent flood events the district has been through. We feel that the increase in rates is justifiable. The Council has shown through the Draft Annual Plan that they committed to creating more resilient infrastructure network that will be capable of withstanding the more frequent flooding events. This is huge for our farmers and growers as they depend on resilient infrastructure to ensure that they can continue to operate immediately after storm events.
- 1.4 Council is proposing an operating surplus of \$16.7 million. We hope that that surplus can be targeted towards flood protection and mitigation for infrastructure to ensure that the communities in the Buller District are supported. It is expected that significant weather events are to increase along the coast into the future and Federated Farmers supports Councils proactive approach to mitigate the communities from future events. Ensuring that existing structures such as bridges and roads are strengthened enables structures to withstand these events.
- 1.5 We are extremely impressed with the active approach taken by the Council to lobby Central Government to secure capital to mitigate the effects of these events and into the future.
- 1.6 We do note that Council is proposing to use the cash reverse to cover the shortfall rather than setting a targeted rate. Federated Farmers is supportive of this but does see the benefit in a future targeted rate charges for a natural emergency fund to be used to fund mitigation, and community resilience to natural events.
- 1.7 We are sympathetic to Council with the rising costs for Three Waters reform. It is uncertain with the direction these reforms are going. Furthermore, if there is a change in government later this year could see significantly further changes to the reform. These reforms put Territorial Authorities in a difficult holding pattern. West Coast Federated Farmers is supportive of the Council's proposal to keep the targeted rate at the same level of the 2022-23 level until further clarity is given around these reforms. This is a sensible pragmatic approach.
- 1.8 We continue to support Councils approach to covering the costs for the Three Waters reform through targeted rating. From your consultation document you have outlined that there will be a \$1.2 million shortfall in funding because of keeping targeted rates at the current level. We are supportive of the Council covering this shortfall from cash reserves and replenish those reserves through sustainable rates increase over future years. Council has done an exceptional job to keep the net effect on rates for the 2023-24 year to 0.1%.

- 1.9 We are also supportive of Council continuing to increase capital investment in the three waters services by \$6.7m. This will ensure that water services for urban ratepayers continue to be serviced in such an uncertain period of water infrastructure not only for the district but also the country.
- 1.10 West Coast Federated Farmers is extremely supportive of the Road to Zero funding. We are particularly in support of the reduction of speed limits around our schools that would enable better road protection and safety for our children. We are impressed to see that Council has managed to secure 72% of the funding from Waka Kotahi. This is something beneficial that our members and their families.
- 1.11 We note that Council has in further initiatives in the coming year that there will be some focus on completing a rates review. This review has been noted as a chance to consider a different rating system and preferred method for rates calculation. We see this as a significant opportunity for West Coast Federated Farmers to feed in member concerns and work with our policy team to help assist in crafting a rating system that is future proofed and equitable for all ratepayers. We acknowledge that this could feed into the Long-Term Plan which we are also very open to working with Council to achieve the best outcomes possible for our communities.
- 1.12 We continue to support the Council's approach taken to rationalise property. This enables financial opportunities for our communities through the sale of land and buildings which can be developed creating investment opportunities for the district. This avoids any burden on the Council books from ageing buildings.
- 1.13 The capital work programs with half funded through external sources is a significant achievement by Council to get investments and funding into the district. For many Councils around the country, they struggle to get one external funded project, for the Council to secure seven is a vote of confidence from Central Government that under the current leadership the Council is moving in the right direction.
- 1.14 The Council will be engaging in the Long-Term Planning process shortly, we would like to work with Council earlier outside the legislative framework to ensure that our members and ratepayers are better represented in the draft Long-Term Plan through a meaningful transparent engagement.

ENDS