

Ad-hoc/One-off Appraisal Report

Westport Harbour Board – Administrative Records

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Agency	Ministry of Transport (Nominated Controlling Public Office)
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Purpose
<p>The purpose of this appraisal report is to seek authorisation from the Chief Archivist for the disposal of a set of estray public records created by the Westport Harbour Board. These records were brought to the attention of Archives New Zealand Christchurch Regional Office as part of a backlog project, the provenance post creation is unknown.</p> <p>An initial assessment of these records, their known provenance and their Public Records Act 2005, status concluded,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The records were created by the Westport Harbour Board [1884-1921], administration of the Westport Harbour was subsequently controlled by: Marine Department [1921-1972] Ministry of Transport [1972-1988] Buller Port Services contracted by Buller District Council [1988-2010] Westport Harbour Limited under agreement with Buller District Council [2010 – current]2. The Westport Harbour Board is a public office for the purposes of the Public Records Act 2005.3. That there is no indication that the records were disposed of (i.e. left the control of the Government) either under the provisions of the PRA after it was enacted in 2005 or under any other enactment.4. There is no current Disposal Authority, and an authorisation for their appropriate disposal is required.

Scope

There is one classification covered by this ad-hoc authority:

Administrative files including external and internal correspondence and reports, demonstrating decision making at the Port.

Format

All formats.

The records are in good condition and do not require any special preservation or storage.

Function/Activity Information/Collection

The records are created by the Westport Harbour Board. The exact nature of how they left Government Control and most of their subsequent provenance is unknown.

Westport Harbour Board was constituted under the Westport Harbour Board Act 1884, to administer the new harbour improvements.

The Westport Harbour Board was abolished by the provisions of the Westport Harbour Act 1920 and control was taken up by the Marine Department in 1921.

On the 1st of September 1972, the Marine Department was abolished, by an amendment to the Ministry of Transport Amendment Act 1972, and the Marine Division of the Ministry of Transport assumed control of Westport Harbour.

In early 1988 the Government expressed a desire to remove itself from operating the Westport Harbour and held discussions with local councils (the then Westport Borough, and Buller District Council) offering the port and assets to them. Following discussions, the councils agreed to the offer and the government gifted the assets of the Westport Harbour along with a sum of money to cover deferred maintenance to the local authorities.

The assets of the harbour included the dredger "Kawatiri", pilot vessel/tug "James O'Brien", all wharves, jetties and navigation aids, harbour office and assorted buildings, and an engineering workshop complete with an extensive range of engineering plant and equipment.

On 1 July 1988 Buller Port Services entered a contract for the management of the port and harbour on behalf of the Buller District Council. Buller Port Services was a subsidiary of major port customer Holcim NZ Ltd. The Westport Harbour is currently managed by Buller District Council.

Methodology

This is an ad hoc appraisal designed to deal with the backlog records from the Westport Harbour Board.

As the Westport Harbour Board and its successor central government agencies no longer administer the Westport Harbour, no current Disposal Authority was applicable.

Similar records held in Christchurch and other regional offices were reviewed. There have been several accessions of Westport Harbour Board material transferred by the various successor agencies over the years, some of which contain similar administrative records as the records in this appraisal, but the previous disposal authorities were not applicable due to the fact they had expired.

The Public Sector Archival Selection Statement principles were used in appraising these records. Also research was conducted into the history of the Westport Harbour Board to establish their relationship with the Crown. These records cover the period of central government port administration under the Harbour Board and cover most aspects of the harbours administration, governance and operations.

Two appraisal principles from the public sector archival selection statement are most relevant to the records under appraisal:

Principle 1: New Zealand public sector authority, functions, and activities

These records document the Crown's stewardship, kaitiakitanga, of New Zealand's environment and natural resources, including impacts and changes which have occurred over time, such as flood maps, hydrographic charts and meteorological data (in this case port management and mining).

Principle 3: Individual and community knowledge, identity and memory

These records document the history of land use and occupation, such as landfill sites, town planning and the establishment of national parks and reserves (in this case mining)

Consultation

Internal consultation with:

[Names removed], Senior Archivists, who both assisted in the confirmation of these records being public records, and referral to previous accessions and Disposal Authorities for reference such as DA578.

Class or class grouping – Class 1 - Administrative records

Description

Records documenting the management of land endowments for the financial benefit of the Harbour Board. The file covers coal sites and on the coastal belt from Waimangaroa to Addison's and details geological information gathered on expected returns from drilling. It includes reports, correspondence and administrative records that were filed together and were created or received by the harbour board while under Government control (i.e. up to 1988).

Value Statement

These administrative records provide evidence of the functions and activities of the Westport Harbour board (as part of the New Zealand public sector) during the early 20th Century, and further document the coal exploration and mining around Westport, and history of the region.

Records in this class meet the Appraisal Statement criteria for Principles 1 and 3.

It is recommended these records be retained as public archives due to Westport Harbour being a significant river port in New Zealand's history and social development, and they complement existing archival holdings.

Retention and disposal recommendation

Transfer to Archives New Zealand as a Public Archive

Access Recommendations

[Details removed]