

13 April 2026

Labour selects Rory Paterson for West Coast-Tasman

The Labour Party has selected teacher Rory Paterson as its candidate for the West Coast- Tasman electorate for 2026.

“There is no doubt in my mind that communities in all parts of our electorate are ready for change. I feel humbled to have such strong support, and I am excited to build on that and return West Coast-Tasman to Labour,” Paterson said.

“My mother’s family have been at Ikamatua since the 1860s, and my father moved to Reefton in the 1980s and has made his home there ever since. As neighbours, the Grey, Westland, Buller and Tasman districts have always had a special and unique relationship, and in the past few years I have been building connections to all parts of the electorate.

“Each community has its own way of doing things and their unique issues, but when you strip it all back, people are at the heart, whether you are in Haast or Farewell Spit.

“I have spent weeks talking to people across the electorate, and there are clear common themes.

“People want equitable access to healthcare, education and other government services, and that’s what I will fight for. We have incredible industries within this part of New Zealand, but no part of the electorate has escaped job losses in the past few years; there is no question about that as one of the most pressing priorities.

“Good jobs are at the heart of social justice, and Labour has always led the way in understanding how good jobs change lives. At the heart of that is healthy industries.”

“I am focused solely on winning and putting people back at the heart of government decisions.

“We are not an electorate where one size fits all. I’m firm on listening first, and advocating across all communities to ensure that policy affecting us takes that into account.

Rory was born at Greymouth on the West Coast and previously worked in the port town as deputy principal at St Patrick’s School. More recently, he and his family have been based in Christchurch, where he works at the Catholic Education Office. But he is ready to return and serve the communities that raised him.

Rory and wife, Suzanne, have four children. He is a keen cricket player, administrator and fan, although he admits that cricket will be taking a backseat, at least until next summer.

A huge turnout of local party members put high fuel prices aside and drove from all parts of the electorate - one of the largest in the country by land area – to vote in the first contested Labour selection process in West Coast-Tasman in decades.

Paterson was selected as the candidate for West Coast-Tasman about 6pm at St Paul’s Anglican Church in Murchison, where dozens of party supporters, from Golden Bay, Motueka, Upper Moutere, Reefton, Greymouth, Buller and Westland waited outside for the final vote.

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