

9 January 2025

██████████  
Sent via email to ██████████

**RE: LG25-0003 Pigeon Island - Robinson Douglas Hut**

Dear ████████,

**REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION – RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 29 December 2024 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

**We are wanting information about the Robinson/Douglas Hut located on Pigeon Island now it has been returned to QLDC control after the last remaining owner died.**

- 1. Please confirm who has overall responsibility for the management/booking of the hut.**
- 2. Please confirm if the hut is or has been used by the:**
  - public
  - Council staff/contractors
  - friends of pigeon Island (conservation group)
  - members of the deceased family.
  - any other person/group. Since the remaining owner/s have died.

**If the hut has been used by any of the above, please provide the correspondence between the Council/manager and the users.**

- 3. Please provide all (internal or external) correspondence between the Council and/or a Council appointed manager regarding the use/management of the hut since it has been returned to Council control.**

**QLDC RESPONSE**

**Release of information**

To address your request, we consulted the QLDC Property and Infrastructure Team.

- 1. Please confirm who has overall responsibility for the management/booking of the hut.**

The QLDC Facilities team is responsible for the maintenance of the hut. However, the Robinson Hut is not yet available for booking, as it is currently undergoing upgrades to meet safety and facility standards.

**2. Please confirm if the hut is or has been used by the:**

- **public**
- **Council staff/contractors**
- **friends of pigeon Island (conservation group)**
- **members of the deceased family.**
- **any other person/group. Since the remaining owner/s have died.**

None of the individuals listed above have used the Robinson Hut, as it has been closed since QLDC assumed ownership from the previous owners and is not yet ready for use.

**3. Please provide all (internal or external) correspondence between the Council and/or a Council appointed manager regarding the use/management of the hut since it has been returned to Council control.**

In response to this portion of your request, we conducted a search of our email archives using the subject line "Robinson Hut." This search returned no emails relevant to the scope of your request. I also consulted with my colleague to ascertain whether any emails within the scope of your request might exist, and if so, to gather details about those emails. Following this consultation, we identified [one email](#), which has been released with minor redactions. The rationale for withholding the redacted information is outlined below. Although the primary subject of the email pertains to the Pigeon Island Jetty, we have included this information as it relates to the broader context of the use and management of Robinson Hut.

Please note, the enclosed link will expire on 8 February 2025, 3:57 PM.

**Decision to withhold information**

We have good reason under section 7(2)(a) and section 7(2)(f)(i) of the LGOIMA for withholding the redacted information. We consider it is necessary to withhold this information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.
- Section 7(2)(f) - the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through—
  - (i) the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members or officers or employees of any local authority in the course of their duty.

Section 7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA is designed to protect the privacy of individuals by allowing for the withholding of information that could infringe on personal privacy, or in a way that could cause harm or distress. The purpose of this provision is to balance the need for transparency with the importance of safeguarding individual privacy, respecting the privacy of individuals and preventing potential misuse of personal information.

In this case, the withheld information is the personal information of a natural persons. The Privacy Act 2020 protects an individual's right to privacy of personal information and ensures that natural persons know when their personal information is being collected and how their personal information is being used and shared. If the redacted information were released, it may intrude to an unreasonable extent upon the personal affairs of the individuals concerned.

In this case, protecting the privacy of natural persons outweighs the public interest in the information being made available. Therefore, withholding the requested information is not outweighed by the public interest in favour of its release.

Section 7(2)(f)(i) of the LGOIMA is intended to uphold the effective conduct of public affairs by ensuring that members, officers, and employees of local authorities can express their opinions freely and frankly in the course of their duties. This provision recognises that open communication is essential for informed decision-making and effective governance.

In this case, the withheld information consists of candid exchanges among officials regarding a business matter. Releasing such information could inhibit honest discussions and lead to self-censorship, ultimately undermining the quality of advice and deliberations within the local authority.

The need to maintain an environment where officials can express their views without fear of public scrutiny is paramount. Thus, the rationale for withholding the requested information is to protect the integrity of the decision-making process and ensure that public affairs are conducted effectively.

### **Public interest considerations**

We consider the interests of the public when making decisions to withhold requested information, including considerations in favour of release, whether the disclosure of the information would promote those considerations, and whether those considerations outweighed the need to withhold the information.

Promoting the accountability and transparency of local authority members and officials is in the public interest, as is the public interest in “good government”. Where possible, we have favoured the release of information. However, in this case we consider that withholding the personal information of natural persons and ensuring Council staff are free to discuss and provide advice on business matters, are considerations not outweighed by the public interest in favour of its release.

We conclude that the important section 7 withholding interests identified - to protect the privacy of a natural person; and to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between employees of any local authority in the course of their duty - which relate to the information within the scope of your request, are considerations not outweighed by a countervailing public interest requiring release.

### **Right to review the above decision**

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact [Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz) (Stakeholder and Democracy Services Manager).

We trust the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,

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Democracy Services team  
**Queenstown Lakes District Council**  
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**E: [information.request@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:information.request@qldc.govt.nz)**