Mount Iron Community Governance

Wānaka Upper Clutha Community Board

20 May 2025

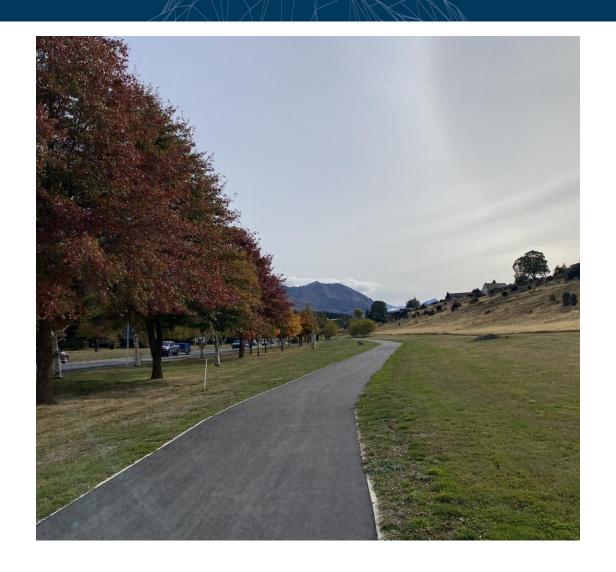QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

Purpose

- To seek direction from the Community Board on progression of a community governance model

What are we trying to achieve?

- Greater community ownership of Mount Iron

- Opportunities to leverage alternative funding (i.e. Beyond Council funding)

What we heard – RMP engagement

- Support for communities active participation in the reserve and the importance of this (including from groups already undertaking work on the reserve).

- Limited feedback on specific provision of a group.

- Some comments:
  - 'Council should actively facilitate community activity to care for the reserve.'
  - 'Support community's active participation in planning, maintaining and enhancing the Reserve including the formation of a community guardianship group for the reserve.'
  - 'QLDC staff should be the sole administrators to avoid political decision making.'

Final Reserve Management Plan

- Objective 5.7: To empower the community to participate in protection, preservation, and guardianship, to protect and enhance the Reserve.

- Objective 5.8: To facilitate mana whenua participation to ensure Kāi Tahu whanui values are embedded in decision making in relation to the management of the reserve.

- Policy 6.2.3: Support establishment of a community guardianship group for the Reserve.

What we've heard since RMP adoption

- Interest from existing reserve groups in setting up a 'working group' for Mount Iron made up of existing groups

- Haven't heard interest in forming a new and separate Mount Iron entity e.g. charitable trust

Community models to achieve outcomes

- 'Status Quo Plus'
  - Council set up a 'working group' of reserve users (existing groups)
  - Brings reserve users together to share information and provide advice
  - Managed by Council. Directed by a Terms of Reference.
  - Council remains decision maker
  - Reserve user groups can access third party funding e.g. Community Grants

- Different community governance models e.g. set up a new 'Mount Iron Group' that is an incorporated society or charitable trust.
  - Split responsbility between Council and Group for Mount Iron management.

Advantages/disadvantages of models beyond 'Status Quo Plus'

Advantages:

- More community ownership of Mount Iron
- Potential to raise funds external of Council for reserve management (also possible in status quo)
- Reserve Management Plan guides decision making

Disadvantages:

- Need to set up a new 'group' and need for it be administered and funded
- Requires significant new community committment
- Can be difficult for groups to access operational funding
- Potential for unclear responsibilities between Council and group. Council is required to retain statuatory responsibilities.
- Potential for group to be captured by individual interests rather than focusing on outcomes for the reserve and needs of all reserve users.

Questions for discussion

- Is there a need to progress a community governance model beyond the 'status quo plus' and what are the intended benefits?

- If there is:
  - What should be the timing of this?
  - What should Council/Community Board's role be in this?