

# Spotlight on waste audit and education programme for Queenstown Lakes businesses

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For the past few editions of Scuttlebutt we've been showcasing the awesome work of our Waste Minimisation Community Fund recipients for 2020.

This time we're putting the spotlight on the Queenstown Chamber of Commerce and chatting to Fiona Reeve about its initiative to help local businesses improve their waste and recycling practices.

*Q. It is heartening to hear that local businesses want to incorporate environmental sustainability into their everyday business practices. Talk us through how the Chamber's waste minimisation initiative helps facilitate this?*

Queenstown is a fast-growing community and to ensure we can continue to enjoy this beautiful region for generations to come, ethical business practices and growing a sustainable economy are key, particularly as we move into a post-COVID environment and rebuild our economy.

Sustainability is a key interest area for the Queenstown Chamber, partly due to the commercial sector's large contribution to landfill waste. We identified an opportunity to engage with the Queenstown business community via our membership base to help them navigate their waste reduction journey.

*Q. From what we understand you're bundling a waste audit programme with an education element. What a great idea. Can you tell me more about this?*

We find that many businesses understand the importance of reducing their environmental impact but often people don't know where to start. We ran an introductory workshop in March for businesses providing them with guidelines and practical knowledge to help implement and maintain waste reduction initiatives.

The session featured a facilitated panel discussion from three leading sustainability advocates followed by a Q&A. Gina Dempster from Wastebusters spoke about waste reduction and how to introduce a sustainability plan and Kath Buttar from QLDC provided some context around recycling in our district. We also had Russ Mackintosh from Cardrona who provided valuable working examples of how staff engagement helped to successfully eliminate single-use items from their mountain cafes and saved them money.

The workshop was a great chance for businesses to get together, share experiences and collaborate with others moving towards a zero-waste goal. It also provided an opportunity to offer an expression of interest to businesses keen to take part in the waste audits.

*Q. What have been the benefits of working with Wastebusters and Council to get your project off the ground?*

It's been incredibly valuable working with Wastebusters and the Council on this project. Wastebusters brings a wealth of experience as a community enterprise leading the way in waste reduction. Sharing their knowledge via our workshop and carrying out hands-on audits that analyse waste streams for local businesses has been key to the success of this project. The funding we've received from the Council has meant we can offer these audits and the workshop free of charge to the business community, helping local businesses improve their waste and recycling practices.

*Q. Awesome to hear that free waste audit programmes will be underway with four local businesses. Who are you working with and what's involved?*

We are working with a cross section of industries for these audits, with Warren and Mahoney Architects, construction firm Wilson Contractors, five-star hotel Millbrook Resort and Kinross Boutique Vineyard Hotel, Cellar Door and Bistro all on board.

The business goes through a process of a hands-on waste audit to help them understand the volume and type of waste generated from their operations and then provides them with recommendations on how to effectively reduce, reuse and recycle. We are looking to support these businesses as they implement change, working with Wastebusters to identify opportunities for zero waste education for staff and providing advice relevant to their waste streams.

**Q.** Does the Chamber have a plan to share the findings from these audit programmes?

We are looking forward to seeing the results of the waste audits and are keen to share some of the findings as case studies at the end of the year once these businesses have been able to implement some of the recommendations and review the outcomes in terms of waste reduction.

**Q.** What is the longer term vision for this project?

The hope is that we can use these case studies as a way to inspire other businesses to start their own waste reduction strategy.

The 2021 Waste Minimisation Community Fund recipients were set to be announced as Scuttlebutt went to print. Check out [www.qldc.govt.nz](http://www.qldc.govt.nz) or our Facebook page for more.

*Top image: Russ Mackintosh from Cardrona Alpine Resort.*

*Middle image: Seth Moir from Windy Ridge Farm delivering milk to Kinross Vineyard.*

*Bottom image: Gina Dempster from Wastebusters.*

