

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee

8 July 2025

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [5]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Climate and Biodiversity Plan Update

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to provide a final summary for the progress of the Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP) to June 2025.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohu

That Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report and attached draft closeout report.

Prepared by:



Name: Bill Nicoll
Title: Resilience &
Climate Action
Manager
Date: 13 June 2025

Prepared by:



Name: Kirsty Pope
Title: Resilience &
Climate Action Advisor
Date: 13 June 2025

**Reviewed and
Authorised by:**



Name: Michelle Morss
Title: GM Strategy and
Policy
Date: 20 June 2025

Context | Horopaki

1. On 27 June 2019 Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) declared a climate and ecological emergency. In response to this declaration Council approved the development and adoption of a [Climate Action Plan](#) for the period 2019-2022.
2. On 30 June 2022, Council adopted its second [Climate and Biodiversity Plan \(CBP\)](#) for the period 2022-25. This plan sets out how QLDC plans to respond to biodiversity loss and climate change in Queenstown Lakes District, with three goals, six outcomes and over 80 individual actions (see Figure 1). (see Figure 1).

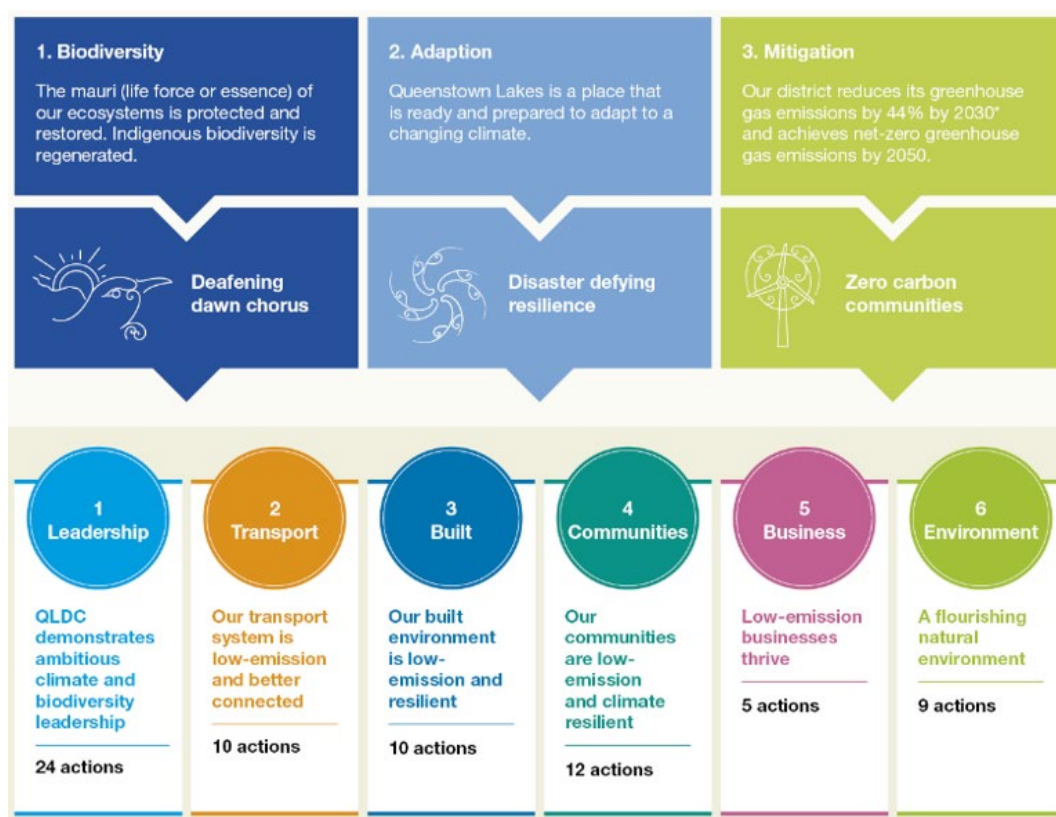


Table 1: Climate & Biodiversity Plan Structure

3. Council has identified the following climate risks within its Organisation Risk Register. The current Climate & Biodiversity Plan can be considered as treatment plans for these Tier 1 risks.
 - **RISK10012 - Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency**
 - **RISK10059 - Ineffective planning and action to support climate change adaption**

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

CBP 2022-2025 Programme Status

4. This report marks the conclusion of the three-year CBP 2022–2025 period. Of the 81 committed actions, 95% have been initiated and progressed. Of these, 23% have been completed as standalone projects, while 72% remain in progress or have been integrated into business-as-usual operations.

ACTION STATUS	Count	%
Complete	19	23%
In progress	58	72%
Not started	2	2%
On hold	2	2%
	81	100%

Actions completed or in progress	77	95%
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5. The following actions were paused or not started:

- *Action 1.9 Assess potential obstacles to low impact living in QLDC's District Plan, Housing Strategy and policy framework.* Work on this action was initiated, but it has been placed on hold due to the significant resourcing required to collect the evidence for the evaluation report needed to support any changes to the District Plan. Progress was further complicated by the uncertainty surrounding ongoing RMA reforms and national policy statement developments, which could affect the relevance of any current assessments. Given these challenges and limited staff capacity, the action has been deferred until greater clarity of RMA reforms and resources are available.
- *Action 1.11 Develop and implement a standard method of assessment of climate and biodiversity impacts and opportunities in the review of policies and bylaws.* This action is on hold awaiting completion of a review of how climate and biodiversity considerations will be factored into Council reporting and document templates. The intention is that this will be progressed within the next plan cycle.
- *Action 2.10 Partner with the Government to deliver a light vehicle usage reduction programme in Queenstown.* This action was not started due to a change in central Government policy.
- *Action 4.2 Undertake a study of the socio-economic and community wellbeing implications of climate change for the district.* Whilst background research by the Public

Health Agency was undertaken, no further funding was available for a local study in collaboration with health partners.

6. The attached draft CBP 2022-2025 Close-out Report provides a summary of what was achieved over the three-year period. This draft report will undergo a design update prior to its public release on the <https://climateaction.qldc.govt.nz/> website. This report will act as a communication tool to help inform the community and partners of the achievements and progress of the current plan.
7. The following updates reflect the most recent work activity that has occurred in the last quarter of the plan (April-June 2025). Much of this work will feed into new actions that are within the new draft CBP 2025-2028 that is currently out for public feedback:
 - Greenhouse gas accounting training session provided for event organisers, delivered by Environmental Accounting Services (**action 5.5**).
 - Planting of the first 80,000 native plants for Project Tohu, the site of Coronet Forest (**action 6.6a**).
 - Weed clearance and planting along Horne Creek adjacent to Warren Park (**action 6.3**).
 - Development of the Eely Point Tree Succession Plan to remove wilding species and replant with a diverse range of native and suitable exotic plants, over the next 60 years (**action 6.3**).
 - Partnering with Fire Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) on a National Wildfire Exercise that was based on a wildfire scenario starting at Moke Lake and then spreading towards Queenstown. This involved EOC staff working with local, region and national FENZ staff to exercise the planning and operational delivery of fire suppression, aviation asset coordination and evacuation and welfare support of Sunshine Bay and Fernhill residents under a declared state of emergency (**action 4.6a**).
 - Participation at the Electrify Queenstown Event hosted by Destination Queenstown, Queenstown Business Chamber of Commerce and principal sponsor Aurora Energy (**action 5.4**). This included a QLDC led presentation on the challenge of Community Energy resilience after a major earthquake.
 - Planning for the annual greenhouse gas inventory preparation and verification audit for FY 2024-2025 (**action 1.1b**).
 - Submission on the Otago Regional Council Annual Plan to advocate for restoring funding for an Upper Clutha public transport case (**action 2.1a**), based on earlier shuttle trials funded by QLDC (**action 2.1e**).

- Finalisation of the Waiwhakaata|Lake Hayes Strategy by the Waiwhakaata Strategy Group, comprising Otago Regional Council (ORC), Kāi Tahu representatives, Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Department of Conservation, and Friends of Lake Hayes. This strategy was presented to the ORC Environmental Delivery Committee for endorsement on 5th June (<https://www.orc.govt.nz/media/l20ghtuu/20250605-ed-agenda.pdf>) (action 6.2)
- Resilience & Climate Action staff have continued their participation in the ORC led Upper Lakes Integrated Catchment Management Group <https://upper-lakes-orcnz.hub.arcgis.com/>. The group is making strong progress in bringing together iwi, community, and agency partners to develop a catchment management plan for the district. Recent workshops have focused on evaluating catchment values and pressures and the co-development of strategies and impact assessments to guide local action plans (action 6.2).
- Involvement in, and support for the Local Government sector climate scenarios workshops with KPMG. The outcomes of these workshops will help local government authorities plan for the impacts of climate change using the relevant regional climate change risk assessments (action 3.8).

CBP 2025-2028 Development

8. In addition to delivery of actions in the current plan, the Resilience & Climate Action team has been working with partners and key stakeholders to finalise the draft of the next Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028. On 29 May 2025 Council approved the new draft plan for release for public feedback. The plan is available through Council's Let's Talk webpage.
9. The CBP 2025-2028 has a theme of "Accelerating Transformation through Partnerships" and was developed in partnership with Kāi Tahu, the Climate Reference Group, and local partner organisations. It places Te Taiao (the natural environment) at the core of action planning and also includes a new outcome area for the local energy system. This reflects the scale of the challenges and opportunities in transforming the district's power supply to be more resilient, renewable, and responsive to the shifting needs of our community.
10. During June 2025 the Resilience & Climate Action team has attended multiple partner meetings and events to promote the public feedback process for the draft CBP 2025-2028 and invite submissions. The public feedback period is open until 27 June 2025. It is expected that the final plan will be presented to Council for adoption in July 2025.

Climate Reference Group

11. The Climate Reference Group (CRG) is an independent, multidisciplinary group of community leaders and climate experts that advises Council on climate and biodiversity matters. The membership consists of an Independent Chairperson, two representatives from Aukaha and

Te Ao Marama Inc., one rakatahi (youth) representative, and seven to nine climate and biodiversity experts.

12. The group operates on a three-year cycle that aligns with the development of each new CBP. Existing members are invited to continue in their role if they wish, and vacant or additional roles are advertised before the end of the current plan.
13. On 9 June 2025, a call for expressions of interest was advertised for three roles within the CRG with applications open until 31 July 2025. Terms of Reference and a CRG Person Specification for the group are available through the [Climate Action website](#), and have been promoted through various media channels.
14. Following the application closing date, Council officers and the CRG Chairperson will coordinate the selection process. Recommendations for new members will be submitted to the Chief Executive and Mayor for final approval.

[Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki](#)

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi i kā Whakaaro Hiraka

15. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2024 because it is consistent with existing strategy and does not impact on the objectives set out in the Financial Strategy, Long Term Plan or Annual Plan. Although the Climate and Biodiversity plan is of high importance to the district and community, the matter is of low significance due to the fact that current progress is aligned with the goals and outcomes of the plan.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

16. The Council has partnered with rūnaka representatives in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-25 and undertakes regular engagement on its progress with representations from Aukaha and Te Ao Marama within CRG.
17. Opportunities for alignment and integration with Kāi Tahu's Climate Change Strategy Te tāhū o te whāriki are being discussed and explored.

[Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka](#)

18. This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK10012 Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.
19. The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing implementation of additional controls for this risk. This shall be achieved through the implementation of the actions with the Climate and Biodiversity Plan. These actions represent a broad risk control

response to the challenges associated with emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration.

20. The effectiveness of the implementation of these risk controls is supported through the advisory oversight of the Climate Reference Group and the governance of the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

21. There are no variances to operational budgets or resource implications to consider at this time.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

22. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- The Climate and Biodiversity Plan is aligned to the principles of the Vision Beyond 2050, particularly Zero Carbon Communities, Disaster-Defying Resilience and Deafening Dawn Chorus <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
- Related policies, strategies and bylaws (including Management plans) include:
 - Draft 2024-2034 Long Term Plan
 - Draft 2024-2054 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy
- The QLDC Disability Policy was considered in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan.
<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/FINAL-Disability-Policy-May-2018.pdf>
- Further reference to Council policies can be found here:
<http://www.qldc.govt.nz/policies>

23. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the above named policies.

24. This matter is included in the Long Term Plan.

- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive - pg. 5
- What's Changed?- pg. 19
- Taking Climate Action pg. 45
- Disaster Defying Resilience pg. 54
- Climate Action – pg. 166
- Risk, Resilience and Climate Action- pg. 167

25. This matter is also included in the Annual Plan.

- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive- pg. 4

Legal Considerations and Statutory Responsibilities | Ka Ture Whaiwhakaaro me kā Takohaka Waeture

26. There are no legal considerations to take into account at this time.

27. The Council has statutory responsibilities under the [Climate Change Response \(Zero Carbon\) Amendment Act 2019](#) as a reporting organisation.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

28. The recommended option:

- Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The Climate and Biodiversity Plan plays a central role in delivering upon this purpose through its focus on environmental stewardship, community resilience and intergenerational equity;
- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	DRAFT Queenstown Lakes Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 Close Out report
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