

QLDC Council
30 June 2022

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take : 5

Department: Corporate Services

Title | Taitara 2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Plan for the Queenstown Lakes District

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the final 2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan and to recommend its adoption.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | WHAKARĀPOPOTANGA MATUA

- 2 The three-year 2019-2022 Climate Action Plan has come to the end of its lifecycle and a new plan for the 2022-25 period is now required.
- 3 A new 2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Plan has been developed over a 14-month programme of engagement with community stakeholders, partner agencies, climate and biodiversity experts, Council staff and the Climate Reference Group (CRG).
- 4 A draft version of this new plan was shared with Council on 17 March 2022 and was subsequently approved for public engagement and feedback. The feedback period closed on 25 April, with 54 individuals and organisations providing feedback. This feedback was helpful in shaping the final version of the plan that is presented today for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That Council:

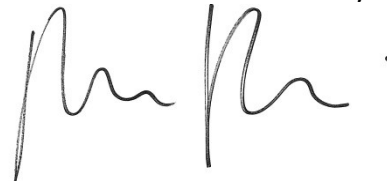
1. **Note** the contents of this report; and
2. **Adopt** the 2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan.

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CONTEXT | HOROPAKI

- 5 On 27 June 2019 QLDC declared a climate and ecological emergency and released a draft version of its first Climate Action Plan. Following public engagement and feedback the 2019-2022 Climate Action Plan was adopted by Council on 12 March 2020. This plan has guided Council’s response to the climate emergency over the past three years.
- 6 A keystone action of the plan was to establish an independent, multidisciplinary Climate Reference Group (CRG) who could support Council to identify key challenges, evaluate best practices, and agree priority action areas at each review of the Climate Action Plan. This group was successfully established in August 2020 and has been instrumental in supporting the delivery of key actions (e.g. District Emissions Reduction Roadmap, GHG Inventory reporting), collaborating on Council submissions for central government consultation (e.g. Climate Change Commission Advice, draft Emissions Reduction Plan, draft National Adaptation Plan) as well as co-designing the new 2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Plan.
- 7 The development of this plan has occurred over a 14-month programme of engagement with iwi, community stakeholders, partner agencies, climate and biodiversity experts and Council staff. Kāi Tahu input has been provided through CRG representation and through a quarterly Council hui. The CRG has provided direction to the plan development and shared its expert guidance on which areas should be prioritised. This input has resulted in the rescoping of the plan to include a greater emphasis on biodiversity restoration, which is a fitting response to Council’s declaration of both a climate *and an ecological* emergency in 2019.

2022-2025 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- 8 The following table provides a timeline of the development programme for the 2022-25 Climate & Biodiversity plan:

TIMELINE	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	SUMMARY
April 2021	Long Term Plan Submissions	Of the 504 submissions on Long Term Plan, 240 provided feedback and recommendations on climate action, showing an appetite for Council to take more action.
	Review process kicked off	The Climate Reference Group provided recommendations on the outcomes and structure of the plan. A key recommendation was to create a sixth outcome for biodiversity.
June 2021	QLDC internal climate action hui	Staff shared ideas for accelerating climate action both within the organisation and across the district.

TIMELINE	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	SUMMARY
July 2021	Workshop with QLDC Councillors and Wanaka Community Board	Elected members shared their passion to see more climate action in the district. A topic of particular interest was the development of communities that allowed for live, work and play within neighbourhoods.
	Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group	Suggestions included a focus on collaboration and cooperation between organisations, community groups and QLDC, and to look at a 100-year horizon. The group also presented their final report in July ¹ , following a year of work in support of the district’s recovery programme. Report recommendations were fed into climate action planning.
August 2021	Community stakeholder Hui	Climate Action Team assisted the Climate Reference Group in organising a stakeholder hui for local advocates and experts to provide input and ideas. The most popular topics were around transport mode shift and biodiversity.
	QLDC staff suggestions	Numerous staff provided detailed input into the plan. Feedback was varied, ranging from technical recommendations to embedding climate action into culture and decision making.
	Whakatipu Conservation Collective	Discussion focused on exploring actions in the new biodiversity outcome could look like.
October 2021	WAO Summit	WAO Summit attendees voted on their priorities for the Climate Action Plan. ‘Regenerating our natural environment’ and ‘designing neighbourhoods where we can live, work, learn and play without getting in the car’ came out on top.
	Enviroschools Climate 101s	The Climate Action Team collaborated with Enviroschools to provide Climate 101 sessions and feed tamariki ideas into the Climate Action Plan. The feedback focused on transport, food, energy, and waste. Transport was a particular interest, with the students keen to see more active travel options for them.
November – December 2021	Suggestions refined and prioritised	<p>All community and stakeholder input was collated into a list of 600 suggestions. Suggestions were prioritised, combined, cut and refined to a list of 134 actions.</p> <p>The Climate Reference Group identified 68 of these actions as priority actions and provided recommendations on the plan outcomes. A key recommendation was for the plan to be renamed the Climate <i>and Biodiversity</i> Plan.</p> <p>The Climate Action Team then further developed and refined the prioritised actions with action owners and partners.</p>

¹ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/rosjz4s5/regenerative-recovery-advisory-group-final-report.pdf>

TIMELINE	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	SUMMARY
December 2021 – January 2022	Stakeholder feedback received and plan updated	The draft action list was circulated with key stakeholders and feedback sought. 30 stakeholders responded with comments. Comments were constructive, with many good suggestions and the inclusion of biodiversity being very well received. Some stakeholders felt that more ambition and urgency was needed, with a focus of comments on aviation, transport and growth. All comments were thoroughly considered, and the plan was updated.
February 2022	Benchmarking exercise	A benchmarking exercise was conducted against other local government bodies internationally, based upon climate emergency UK's checklist ² .
	Draft plan finalised	The plan was improved and finalised based on recommendations from the Climate Reference Group, Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team.
March 2022	Draft plan approved for public engagement and feedback	The draft plan was shared with Council on 17th March 2022 and approved for public engagement and feedback.
April 2022	Public feedback analysed	Public engagement and feedback closed on 25th April. The public feedback was collated, reviewed, evaluated for inclusion in final version of the plan.

2022-2025 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN PUBLIC FEEDBACK

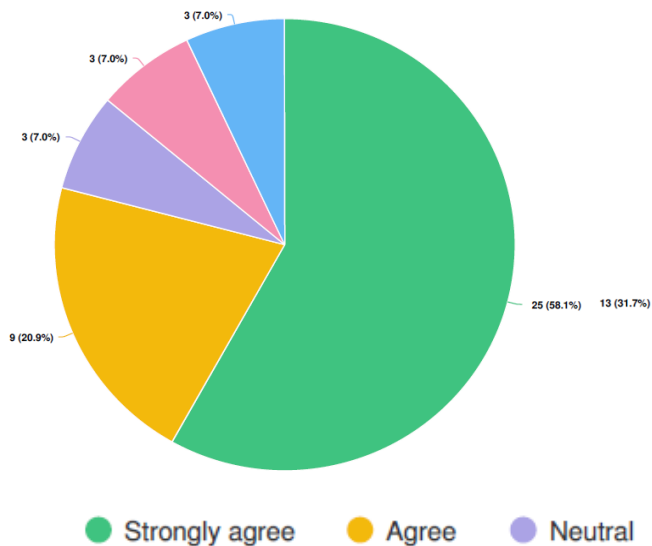
- 9 The public engagement and feedback period for the draft plan closed on 25th April with 54 individuals and organisations providing feedback. Feedback was from a combination of individuals and representatives from local organisations such as community associations, conservation trusts, sustainability advocacy organisations, social service organisations and private sector organisations.
- 10 Public feedback was captured through a Let's Talk survey and emailed submission documents. This feedback provided a broad overview of community sentiment and prioritisation of climate action, along with detailed feedback on the action programme that has been recommended for the next three-year period.
- 11 Key feedback themes included:
- Appreciation of the development process and how leadership in this space has progressed since the declaration of the climate and ecological emergency in 2019.
 - Requests for biodiversity to be uplifted in terms of strategic priority.

² <https://www.climateemergency.uk/local-authority-checklist>

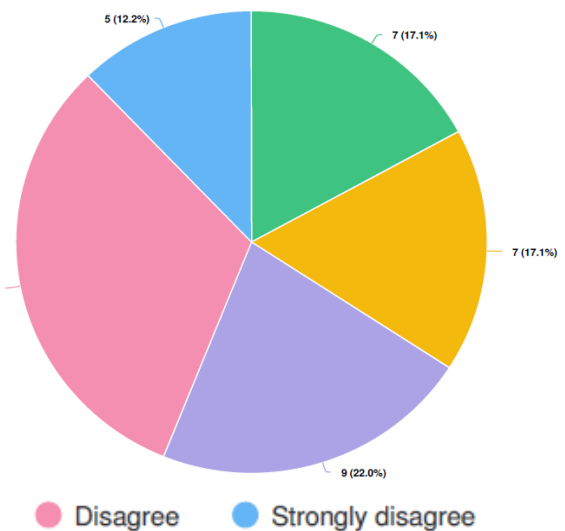
- Requests for a higher level of urgency, additional resourcing and faster action in high profile areas, such as organics collection and development of the public transport network.
- A small number of submitters argued that QLDC should not be investing resources in climate action or should not follow particular policies, such as encouraging high density housing.
- Requests for more detail on actions, removal of “management speak” and commitment to “tangible actions” such as mandating solar panels and water tanks for all new consents.
- Requests for more robust measurement and target setting.
- Requests to partner with, promote and financially support the community groups who are already doing the mahi.

12 Included within the survey were questions relating to whether the respondents supported the strategic goals that have been proposed (58% strongly agree) and whether they felt the action programme was sufficient to achieve the goals of the plan (17% strongly agree). These results indicate that there is strong support from the community for the goals and overall direction of the plan, however further work was required to build confidence in the action programme that would deliver the goals.

Question 7: Do you think the Mitigation, Adaptation and Biodiversity goals reflect where we need to be as a district?



Question 9: Do you think that the actions proposed in the plan will enable us to achieve our goals and outcomes at the pace we need to?



13 All feedback that was received from the community was evaluated to assess whether it could improve the final version of the 2022-25 Climate & Biodiversity Plan. A summary of key changes is provided in section 19.

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- 14 During the development of the 2022-25 Climate & Biodiversity Plan, Council officers have been closely tracking the [central government climate action work programme](#) which is being led by the Ministry for the Environment. Three major plans/policies have been recently released which are highly consequential to our district level Climate & Biodiversity Plan. These are:
- [Draft National Adaptation Plan](#)- released on 6th May 2022.
 - [National Emissions Reduction Plan](#)- released on 16th May 2022.
 - [Exposure Draft on the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity](#)- released 9th June 2022.
- 15 All three of these documents provide vital strategic context for our district level plan as they describe the goals, targets and work programmes that will be implemented at a central government level to support emissions mitigation, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration. Unfortunately, all three national plans have experienced significant delays due to the complexity of their content, and this has only provided a very small window of opportunity (weeks rather than months) to verify that our district level Climate and Biodiversity Plan is aligned with these national level plans. Despite the short timeframe the reviews have been completed and these have confirmed a strong level of strategic alignment as well as opportunities for leveraging the national work programmes. This is a fast-moving and developing policy space and it's anticipated that the organisation will need to remain nimble to maintain pace and alignment with central and regional initiatives.
- 16 The draft National Adaptation Plan (NAP) sets out the broad, all-of-government work programme that will help Aotearoa New Zealand adapt to and live with the future impacts of climate change. The draft plan seeks to embed a focus on climate resilience across all government strategies and policies as well as sectors and institutions, including local government. A detailed submission has been submitted by Council and the CRG on this draft plan as there are a considerable number of learnings associated with the climate adaptation projects, natural hazard work programmes, destination management planning and economic diversification strategies that are being deployed within the district. Of note is the fact that two local climate adaptation projects are included as case studies within the draft national plan: Glenorchy Head of the Lake Natural Hazards and Mt Iron Wildfire Risk. The support of these projects is embedded as a key action (4.6) within the 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan along with a number of actions that will support the climate resilience of the district.
- 17 The Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) contains strategies, policies and actions for meeting the first emissions budget and contributing to global efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The plan includes a broad range of actions for the decarbonisation of key sectors (e.g. transport, energy, industry etc) as well as a focus on ensuring there is an equitable transition, approaches for empowering Māori, and a commitment to utilising and prioritising nature-based solutions. Relevant local government actions from the national plan have been identified and are now clearly referenced in the 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan.

18 The Exposure Draft on the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) was only released on 9 June. A review has concluded that the proposed 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan is consistent with the Objective of the Draft NPSIB and reflects the interconnectedness of people to the natural world and the importance of protecting, maintaining and restoring indigenous biodiversity. Actions 1.13 and 6.2 of the 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan aligns with Te Mana o Te Taiao - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and these actions will be implemented in a manner which is consistent with the NPSIB once finalised. This will require Council to work with tangata whenua to develop a local approach to giving effect to Te Rito o te Harakeke, a fundamental concept of the Draft NPSIB which recognises the intrinsic value and mauri of indigenous biodiversity and people's connection with it.

DEVELOPING THE FINAL PLAN

19 The final version of the 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan has been developed through the detailed evaluation of all public and stakeholder feedback and the alignment review of the new national plans. A number of key changes have been made to the final version, which include:

- Updates to the messages from the Mayor and Climate Reference Group.
- Providing more detail and clarity on the interconnectedness between the climate and biodiversity crises. Referencing biodiversity throughout the document and actions to demonstrate that this is a strategic priority and not an add-on.
- Inclusion of a one-page overview of the plan to assist with communicating how the plan is structured
- Inclusion of more data for Council's emissions profile and providing more clarity on the complexity of the district's emissions reduction roadmap and pledge to align with a 1.5°C pathway.
- Review of the action plan section to use plainer language and make it more accessible. This included numerous changes to actions in response to specific feedback around the need to improve their clarity, specificity, measurability and time frames.
- Addition of new actions to reference local government focus areas with the National Emissions Reduction Plan, National Adaptation Plan and Te Mana o Te Taiao - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020
- Improvements to the Indicators Framework to provide better clarity over how success will be measured

ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

20 Option 1 - Approve the 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan for adoption.

Advantages:

- 21 Council will demonstrate its commitment to the declared climate and ecological emergency and an effective response to climate change risks for the district.
- 22 Council's climate action programme will proceed according to plan with resources focussed on delivery of mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity actions.

Disadvantages:

- 23 There are no discernible disadvantages to this option.
- 24 Option 2 Do not approve the 2022-25 Climate and Biodiversity Plan for adoption.

Advantages:

- 25 Officers can re-visit the draft plan and amend to reflect Council's position.

Disadvantages:

- 26 A major strategic milestone for the Council climate change programme will be missed, risking progress for a wide range of mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity initiatives.
- 27 Council's response to its declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and the climate change risks for the district may be compromised.
- 28 This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing the matter because the plan has considered public feedback and had in-depth and genuine co-design with the Climate Reference Group, Kāi Tahu representatives, key stakeholders, experts, interest groups and staff.

CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

> SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

- 29 This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. However, it is acknowledged that the subject matter is of higher significance in terms of general community interest.
- 30 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are residents of the Queenstown Lakes district community, key organisations and partners, businesses, community groups, climate change experts and advocates.
- 31 The Council has engaged with community stakeholders and experts throughout the development of this plan and public feedback has been sought.

> MĀORI CONSULTATION | IWI RŪNANGA

- 32 The Council has engaged with mana whenua throughout the development of this plan, through hui, discussions with tangata whenua and through Kāi Tahu representation on the Climate Reference Group. Iwi views have been incorporated into the plan and Te Tāhū

o te Whāriki - He Rautaki Mō te Huringa o te Āhuarangi (Anchoring the Foundation – Ngāi Tahu Climate Change Strategy) has been a key input. Iwi feedback will be sought again during public engagement through Aukaha and Te Ao Marama.

RISK AND MITIGATIONS | NGĀ RARU TŪPONO ME NGĀ WHAKAMAURUTANGA

33 This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK00019 Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency and RISK00059 Ineffective planning to support Climate Change Adaptation within the QLDC Risk Register. These risks have been assessed as having a very high inherent risk rating.

34 The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing the organisation to implement additional controls for this risk. This shall be achieved by implementing a programme of work to address climate adaptation and mitigation, as well as enhancing biodiversity in the district.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | NGĀ RITENGA Ā-PŪTEA

35 Many projects across Council's ten year plan programme of work help deliver on or underpin Council's commitment to mitigating against or adapting to our changing climate and enhancing biodiversity. This is funded through the 2022/23 Annual Plan.

COUNCIL EFFECTS AND VIEWS | NGĀ WHAKAAWEAWE ME NGĀ TIROHANGA A TE KAUNIHERA

36 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- The Climate Action Plan is aligned to the principles of the Vision Beyond 2050, particularly Zero Carbon Communities, Disaster-Defying Resilience and Deafening Dawn Chorus.
- Related policies, strategies and bylaws (including Management plans) are:
 - Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan
 - 2021-31 Infrastructure Strategy
 - 2018 Waste Minimisation and Management Plan
 - 2021-31 Queenstown Lakes Homes Strategy
 - Draft Destination Management Plan
 - Tree Policy
- The QLDC Disability Policy was also considered

37 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies.

38 This matter is included in the Ten Year Plan/Annual Plan throughout.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002 PURPOSE PROVISIONS | TE WHAKATURETURE 2002 O TE KĀWANATAKA Ā-KĀIKA

39 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. Mitigating the climate and ecological crisis directly benefits the environment and is expected to also deliver social, economic and cultural benefits. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

40 The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan (subject to the outcome of the additional funding option presented in the Annual Plan consultation);
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly 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 | NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA

A	2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan
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