

13 May 2022

Via Email

To whom it may concern,

**SUBMISSION ON THE OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2022-2023**

Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) would like to thank the Otago Regional Council (ORC) for the opportunity to present its submission on its Annual Plan 2022-23. As one of the taonga of the district, the continued inclusion of the rehabilitation of Lake Hayes is very much appreciated. QLDC looks forward to a programme of improvement that will restore both the amenity and ecological value of this lake.

QLDC notes that there are few significant changes in the draft Annual Plan 2022-23. This submission includes comment on some key issues relevant to the district, including air quality in Arrowtown, adaptation pathways in Glenorchy, emergency management, public transport and climate change. A common theme across all of these is the desire to continue to build a collaborative partnership with the ORC to achieve good outcomes for the district's communities. QLDC will continue to partner with ORC including through the Grow Well Whaiora partnership, of which ORC is now a member.

QLDC welcomes a closer working relationship with ORC through the changing landscape of local and regional government due to central government reforms.

It should be noted that due to the timeline of the process, this submission will be ratified by full council retrospectively at the next council meeting.

QLDC would like to be heard on its submission.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Boulton  
**Mayor**



Mike Theelen  
**Chief Executive**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 QLDC appreciates the challenging environment but the areas we have identified remain an imperative for our communities and therefore QLDC is supportive of the proposed rates rise as agreed in the LTP. We respect that setting an increase in rates is challenging for local government the breadth of the nation, but we strongly urge the ORC to show leadership in ensuring these critical projects remain fully funded.
- 1.2 QLDC strongly supports the ORC's focus on climate change and extends an offer of support and collaboration in building a shared understanding of its implications for our communities. It is essential that our residents experience a unified sense of urgency, clarity around initiatives and easily accessible data. The Council acknowledges and supports the submission of the Queenstown Lakes District Council Climate Reference Group.
- 1.3 The community vision for the Queenstown Lakes District places a significant focus on the reduction of emissions and the protection of the environment<sup>1</sup>. It has never been more important for local and regional authorities to operate in partnership, as good environmental health is essential to the wellbeing of our communities.
- 1.4 QLDC welcomes ORC to the Grow Well Whaiora partnership and looks forward to working together on the Future Development Strategy for the district.

## **2.0 Continued inclusion of funding for the rehabilitation of Lake Hayes**

- 2.1 QLDC thanks the ORC for the continued inclusion of the rehabilitation of this body of water in its Annual Plan and looks forward to engaging with the ORC in relation to the methodologies and timelines proposed for flushing, de-stratification and capping.
- 2.2 It is noted that Lake Hayes is an important component of the lakes and waterways that characterise the district's unique landscapes. It's therefore important that the rehabilitation is undertaken at a scale that is commensurate with its importance to the district.

## **3.0 Environment and biodiversity**

- 3.1 QLDC has concerns over the delay of air quality programmes into Year 3 and urges ORC to consider progressing this programme in Year 2. Air quality remains a health concern and an important consideration in parts of our district, particularly Arrowtown (Air Zone One). Submissions to the QLDC Ten Year Plan demonstrated significant appetite in Arrowtown to continue progressing air quality programmes at pace. This is an active concern to residents and the community association in Arrowtown.
- 3.2 There will be important opportunities within the next two years for the continued advancement of the Air Quality Strategy, in which the ORC's leadership will be essential.
- 3.3 A shift in public awareness and central government mandates around the use of wood and coal fire heating will likely create momentum around the electrification of space heating. QLDC looks forward to partnering with the ORC and Public Health South to deliver good health outcomes for our communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Vision Beyond 2050 <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/your-council/our-vision-mission#:~:text=Vision%20Beyond%202050&text=This%20progressed%20to%20a%20group,and%20representation%20from%20Central%20Government.>

- 3.4 However, this issue is also increasingly complex in terms of energy resilience. In a highly seismic area with a very cool climate, neighbourhoods that solely rely on electric heating may lack resilience in the event of power disruption during winter.
- 3.5 Complete reliance on electricity in the context of an unreliable network and cold alpine climate presents a challenge to the welfare of the district's residents. Whilst QLDC is pursuing the challenges of the electricity network via other channels, QLDC encourages ORC to help lead the investigation into low emission fuel burning technologies. These will help to provide alternatives to electrification in the short term.
- 3.6 Both biodiversity and biosecurity are critical to environmental sustainability and improvement for the future. They play a crucial role in the sequestration of carbon to offset climate warming by preventing ingress of unwanted diseases and pests, and by promoting development of indigenous vegetation communities. QLDC recommends that ORC further invests in the biodiversity and biosecurity of the district and in particular, dedicate funding and resource to key actions in the QLDC Climate and Biodiversity Plan in this area.

#### **4.0 Resilience, Natural Hazard Management and Emergency Management**

- 4.1 The QLDC supports the changes to increase the full-time equivalents in the emergency management team to maintain service levels. Community resilience remains an imperative in the district, given the revised scientific forecasts for an AF8 earthquake. This, combined with the very real risk that Climate Change brings to the potential for natural disasters, necessitates the ORC to continue its investment into the district's emergency preparedness
- 4.2 The QLDC has an active interest in the NEMA reform programme that is currently in progress to modernise the emergency management system. Given the potential consequences of this reform programme on the future of both group and local emergency response management, QLDC requests that ORC proactively engages with QLDC to develop aligned positioning, integrated planning and timely information sharing to support the successful implementation of any legislative and system changes.
- 4.3 QLDC would like to acknowledge the ORC Natural Hazard team and its leadership in driving forward key climate adaptation work programmes in the district. The Glenorchy 'Head of the Lake' project in particular is a major undertaking which has received national recognition within the recently released draft National Adaptation Plan. This project utilises an adaptive pathways approach to support community-led decision making around the hazards that border the township. The QLDC looks forward to continuing its partnership with ORC, iwi, DOC and community stakeholders in the delivery of this important project.
- 4.4 QLDC also requests that ORC continues to provide resourcing support and subject matter expertise for other natural hazard projects across the district. These projects include but are not limited to the Gorge Road Alluvial Fans project and new risk reduction projects associated with wildfire risk (e.g Mt Iron).

#### **5.0 Public Transport and Active Travel networks**

- 5.1 The provision of effective public transport in the district is of significant importance to the Queenstown Lakes District, with significant investment planned for the public transport interchange on Stanley Street in Queenstown.

- 5.2 Transport is the highest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the district, with transport accounting for 45% of gross emissions<sup>2</sup>. The ORC needs to recognise its role in the development of a strategic programme to counter this and help target net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as per the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act. In its draft Climate and Biodiversity Plan, QLDC has proposed a commitment to a 1.5°C Science Based Target pathway. This requires a 44% reduction in carbon emissions across the district by 2030 which cannot be achieved without transformative investment in public transport and active travel networks. QLDC will continue to work with ORC through the Grow Well Whaiora Partnership to complete and implement a mode shift plan for the district to encourage the use of public transport and active travel.
- 5.3 QLDC encourages ORC and Waka Kotahi to move beyond the paradigm of a demand-led public transport provision, into an approach that drives behaviour change through the provision of effective, customer centric public transport solutions that align with the needs of our communities. This will include routes that reflect travel pattern demands, provide faster travel than by private vehicle, significantly reduce emissions and provide affordable intercity and regional connections.
- 5.4 The Council is particularly concerned that the opportunity to plan towards the early introduction of public transport services new growth areas such as Ladies Mile cannot afford to be overlooked or simply left until demand grows. Public transport advocates clearly highlight the benefits of creating the mindset towards public transport, but this requires innovation and courage to make that early investment. The council continues to urge ORC to seize the opportunities presented by the master planning work that now guides and shapes future urban development across QLDC and to capitalise on that early planning.
- 5.5 During the QLDC Ten Year Plan, Climate and Biodiversity Plan development and recent Annual Plan process, the district's communities communicated a strong demand for enhanced public transport across the Wakatipu basin and for the provision of public transport in the Upper Clutha. In the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) there was a proposal to run a public transport trial in the Upper Clutha, but the funding for this was then removed in the Long Term Plan. We request that the ORC reconsider this and allocate funding to this in the 2022-2023 Annual Plan as a matter of urgency
- 5.6 However, the provision of more fossil-fuel powered public transport will not provide a low-emissions long term solution. QLDC encourages ORC to work with Waka Kotahi to take a more ambitious approach in building an innovative, low-emissions solution for the region. Hydrogen and electric models could offer a bold, progressive step towards emissions reduction and a clear signal of the ORC's commitment to climate action across the region. Similarly, the ORC should be open to accommodating innovative trials of alternative non-road based technologies such as ferries and gondolas.

## **6.0 Regional Leadership**

- 6.1 QLDC welcomes every opportunity to partner with the ORC in relation to climate change and to build on the work that is already underway. Efforts to collaborate in the development of a consistent approach to data and emissions measurement are already in progress.
- 6.2 QLDC encourages the ORC to ensure sufficient funding and resources are in place to continue to build this relationship and develop a consistent, authoritative data set.

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<sup>2</sup> [otago-region-ghg-profile-report v4.pdf \(orc.govt.nz\)](#)

- 6.3 QLDC would like to thank the ORC for its representation on the QLDC Climate Reference Group. The quality of the expertise and insights provided by this group has been notable and is helping the QLDC to determine its priorities in relation to climate action.
- 6.4 It should also be noted that QLDC has partnered with the Regional Tourism Organisations to begin the development of a Destination Management Plan for the district. In the near future, QLDC will work with ORC to understand its role in the process.