

QLDC Council
3 February 2021

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take : 3

Department: Corporate Services

Title | Taitara: Recovery Summary 2020/21

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

The purpose of this report is to provide a high level summary of the recovery work undertaken in response to COVID-19 during 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That Council

1. **Notes** the contents of the report.

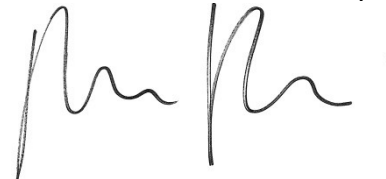
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20/01/2022

Reviewed and Authorised by



Meaghan Miller
GM Corporate Services

20/01/2022

CONTEXT | HOROPAKI

- 1 In late 2019, cases of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were reported in Wuhan China, which rapidly spread to other countries during January and February of 2020. New Zealand experienced its first case on 28 February, with the World Health Organisation declaring a pandemic on the 11 March 2020.
- 2 QLDC activated its Recovery Team concurrently with the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in March 2020, preparing an initial Recovery Plan on the 17 March. QLDC was the only Council within the Otago Group to strategically dedicate critical resource to the recovery space from the outset of the response with express support from Mayor Jim Boulton, Chief Executive Mike Theelen and General Manager Corporate Services (Local Emergency Management Controller) Meaghan Miller. In particular two key staff were appointed to lead the recovery response, Corporate Services Strategy and Development Manager Michelle Morss and Strategy and Asset Planning Manager Stephen Batstone (seconded from Infrastructure). The focus of the Recovery Team was on the short, medium and long-term implications of COVID-19 that did not relate to healthcare treatment of the disease.
- 3 Recovery is a term with specific meaning in the civil defence structure. Recovery is “the co-ordinated efforts and processes to bring about the immediate, medium and long term holistic regeneration and enhancement of a community following an emergency (CDEM Act 2002). Recovery should:
 - support cultural and physical well-being of individuals and communities
 - Minimise the escalation of the consequences of the disaster
 - Reduce future exposure to hazards and their associated risks – i.e. build resilience
 - Take opportunities to regenerate and enhance communities in ways that will meet future needs (across the social, economic, natural and built environments).
- 4 As noted by Council on 20 April 2020, the role of the QLDC Recovery Team has been to:
 - Plan for the social and economic recovery of the district in pursuit of Vision Beyond 2050.
 - Implement key initiatives via a network of key partners, groups and leaders.
 - Support a network of collaboration between government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), funders, businesses, community groups and the public.
 - Ensure the flow of reliable information and data.
 - Build a strong relationship with the EOC to ensure consistency of approach.
 - Manage key stakeholders and key risks.
 - Ensure the flow of funding and resources to deliver initiatives.
 - Embed Recovery activity in the day-to-day work of QLDC as appropriate.
 - Monitor, evaluate and report on progress.
- 5 As a tourism-dominated economy, the negative impacts of COVID-19 have been well documented. There are few parts of the community that have been immune to the social and economic implications of the pandemic, with business owners, investors, employees,

migrants, carers, retirees, children and young people experiencing a broad range of financial and wellbeing challenges.

- 6 The district is also home to a high number of migrants, who have not always been able to access government financial support and the support of their families and friends. Community connection and resilience have never been more important to the wellbeing of our communities.
- 7 The work of the Recovery Team covered a broad range of initiatives and built a large network of partners. Key areas of focus included economic development, community partnerships and infrastructure stimulus (through Crown Infrastructure Partner funding for the Arterial Roads and Streetscapes projects).

Planning Process

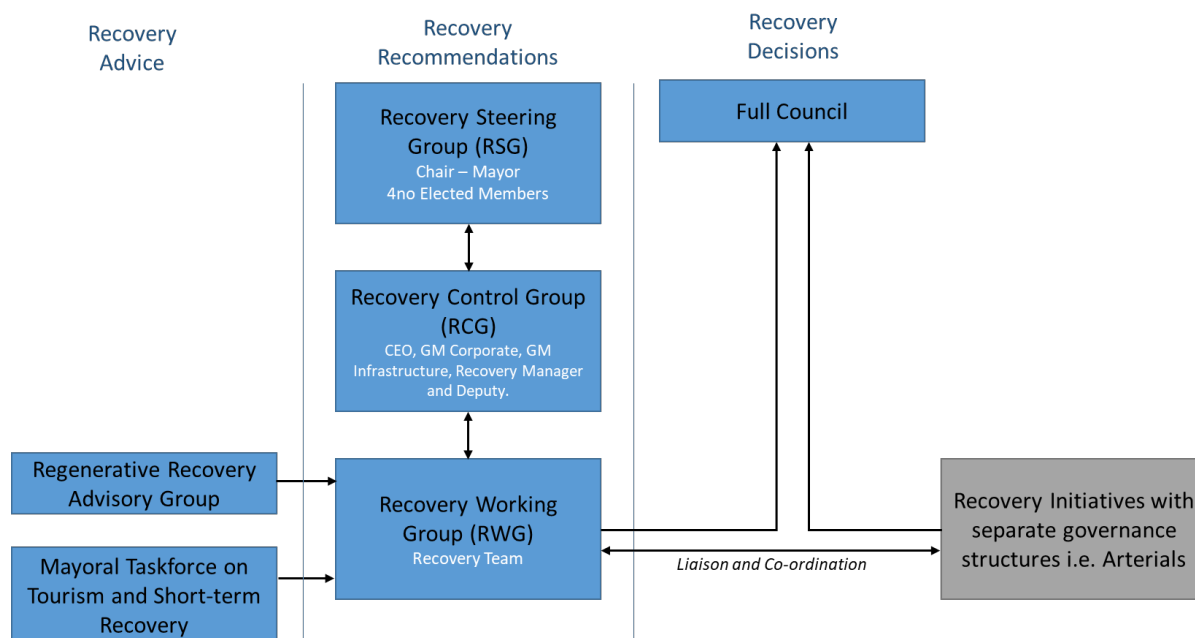
- 8 Vision Beyond 2050 provided strong, clear direction for the Recovery Team. This enabled Recovery work to complement and align with existing plans and strategies, most notably the Climate Action Plan and the Spatial Plan. The three principles of Whaiora (Grow Well) underpinned the work of the Recovery Team – resilience, sustainability and wellbeing.
- 9 A three-stage approach was taken to the prioritisation of projects, ideas and interventions. This was outlined in the Re:programme, a process that provided a structured approach to programming during volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous times.
- 10 Re:programme established three horizons for planning – repair (three to six months), rebuild (next eighteen months) and reinvigorate (three to five years). It also identified a set of goals designed to enable progress over this timeline (as shown in the diagram below), against which each potential initiative was tested.



11 The Recovery Team required significant, timely, district-level data in order to make sound assessment of the situation. A range of new data sources and services were trialled and utilised, resulting in the provision of a regular Recovery Report. QLDC commissioned two district-specific Infometrics reports to help understand the challenges ahead and also helped MBIE develop a study on the impact of the pandemic on the visitor economy. The Quality of Life surveys in 2020 and 2021 were designed to gather further data to help inform the work of the Recovery Team too.

Governance

12 In accordance with the resolution of Council on 23 July 2020, a governance structure was established to oversee the range of initiatives and advice being provided, as per the diagram below. The members of the Recovery Steering Group with Mayor Boulton, Deputy Mayor MacLeod, Councillor Copland, Councillor MacDonald and Councillor Shaw. Kāi Tahu requested an open invitation and seat available for attendance also. This group met for the final time in June 2021.



Funding and Stimulus

- 13 The Recovery Team made significant efforts to secure funding from a range of agencies and bodies, via numerous channels. Whilst not all came to fruition, the team was successful in securing sufficient funding to manage a strong programme of initiatives. The team was funded through a combination of redeployed resources, additional funding in the 2020/21 Annual Plan and funding from MBIE.
- 14 QLDC was the first Territorial Authority to be awarded ‘shovel-ready’ funding by Crown Infrastructure Partners. In total, \$85M was allocated to fund the Queenstown Arterial Roads Project (\$50M and 190 jobs) and the Queenstown Town Centre Streetscapes Project (\$35M and 130 jobs). This work has been subsequently progressed within the Property and Infrastructure Team. Unfortunately, applications for the Shotover Delta, Cardrona Wastewater, Wanaka Lakefront Development Plan and QEC Masterplan were not successful.
- 15 The Recovery Team also worked closely with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to secure \$1.4M funding for workforce redeployment and associated economic development opportunities. This funding has enabled a broad range of initiatives and interventions to be undertaken, as outlined in the next section.
- 16 QLDC also secured funding to support community wellbeing initiatives in the district:
 - Central Lakes Trust awarded \$50k for community welfare support
 - Community Trust South awarded \$50k for community welfare support
 - Otago Community Trust awarded \$25k for community welfare support
 - Department of Internal Affairs Lottery COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund awarded \$35k for the Clued Up Kids resilience skills/confidence building event for Year 6 students, and activities trailer/coordinator for the Summerdaze community events programme 2020/21.

- 17 In addition to the funding received through QLDC, a number of tourism businesses in the district received grants or loans through the MBIE Strategic Tourism Assets Protection Programme (STAPP). Destination Queenstown and Lake Wanaka Tourism (Regional Tourism Organisations - RTOs) also received two tranches of funding through this process (\$1M and \$700K respectively). This funding has helped to support the development of the Destination Management Plan, in which QLDC is a partner. In total, the Government has committed \$36M in support of tourism businesses through a variety of channels.
- 18 Furthermore, the district benefitted from \$8.5M that was awarded to the Southern Lakes International Marketing Association (IMA) of which the district's RTOs are members. This was awarded from the Regional Events Fund to stimulate domestic tourism in lieu of international visitors. The Mayor helped to shape the development of this fund through his continued advocacy in this space.
- 19 The Government has committed \$18M to the district for the diversification of the economy. The Recovery Team has worked with MBIE to influence the approach undertaken and this assessment process is still underway.
- 20 Overall, the Recovery Team has worked with its partners, government and other parts of QLDC to secure over \$150M of funding and stimulus for the district.

Return to Regular Structures

- 21 On 1 July 2021, members of the Recovery Team officially transitioned back to their regular roles and structures, with ongoing Recovery initiatives forming part of the work programme of the Strategy and Development Team, Corporate Services.

ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

- 22 The Recovery Team held a broad and innovative portfolio of activity, developed through collaboration and networked governance across different parts of the community. This work afforded the opportunity to redefine relationships and test new ways of working, which has continued into the current work programme.
- 23 The Recovery Team's initiatives have typically been undertaken with a range of partners. It is important to acknowledge the work and invaluable support of all of the groups that have worked together to achieve good outcomes for the community under difficult circumstances. There have been a number of milestones and forums in which these thanks have been expressed, but the work of these partners cannot be underestimated.
- 24 Depending on other partners, the role of the Recovery Team has been different for each initiative. Sometimes the team has taken a leadership role, but often it has helped to co-ordinate different groups, facilitate conversations, advocate on behalf of the community and generally support community-led development to thrive. The team has focussed upon building effective relationships and creating the soft infrastructure, or ecosystem that is required to seek change in a complex environment.
- 25 The Recovery Team committed significant time to the development of the Tourism Workforce Alliance, which was a pilot scheme for DoC's subsequent 'Jobs in Nature'

programme. With funding from QLDC and the Otago Regional Council, a programme was established to redeploy tourism workers to conservation projects. This was undertaken with considerable support from major tourism operators, co-ordinated by AJ Hackett Bungy and enabled a relatively fast-paced solution to be put in place to retain tourism staff in the district.

26 As part of the Recovery Team's programme of work, a number of collaborative forums were developed to help advise and inform both strategic outlook and intervention design. These groups included:

- Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group – advising Council on how to build back better and to diversify the economy
- Mayoral Taskforce for Tourism and Short Term Recovery – focussing on short to medium term tourism-specific interventions
- Business Recovery Group – ensured consistent approach, flow of information and communications in working with the business community
- Community social services interagency groups (Queenstown and Wānaka) and sub-group - supporting the community emergency welfare response
- Te Hau Toka Southern Lakes Wellbeing, led by Southern DHB – focussing on wellbeing initiatives and programmes

27 The Terms of Reference for these various groups enabled and encouraged diverse thinking and insight development. Some of these groups also provided formal reports for the consideration of Council. Input from these reports, groups and ideas from across the wider network of relationships has significantly influenced and shaped the following strategic pieces of work that are currently in development:

- Economic Diversification Plan
- Wellbeing Framework
- Community Partnership Plan and the Welcoming Communities Programme
- Destination Management Plan

28 In the sphere of economic diversification, creating an environment for private sector actors to operate effectively has been a priority. Several key projects are developing well, based on firm commercial propositions, but these have taken time to develop. Whilst the team can provide an enabling environment to a degree, many economic diversification projects will rely upon market opportunities within the business community.

29 The Recovery Team has also supported advocacy initiatives to central government across a range of issues. Key areas of focus have included tourism vitality, immigration, social welfare, healthcare (in particular mental wellbeing) and changes to the accommodation supplement. The context of recovery has shaped the advocacy narrative of all other submissions and advocacy programmes.

30 It's important to note the significant role that the mayor and councillors have played in advocating for the wellbeing of the community. Significant progress was made in relation to initiatives to support the district's migrant population, businesses, seasonal workers and tourism sector at various points. This contributed to the launch of new initiatives,

establishment of new funding streams, increased visibility of key concerns and changes to immigration settings.

31 Specific recovery initiatives and interventions include:

Initiative	Summary	Partners
Tourism business grants	Access to advice and expertise for business improvement, supported by funding for action.	MBIE, QLDC Finance team, Regional Business Partners delivered via Otago Chamber of Commerce
Central Lakes Job Expo	Job fair	Central Otago District Council and Clutha District Council
Te Kakau	Talent Retention Programme	Mana Tahuna, Ignite Wanaka, Queenstown Chamber of Commerce, Queenstown Lakes Womens network, HR leaders cohort, NGOs & social agencies, Delivered by Leadership Lab
Collaboration Skills Workshop	Building collaboration skills across organisations and community groups	Delivered by Leadership Lab
Torokiki	An online ideas portal for the community	Hunchbuzz
Tourism Workforce Alliance	Tourism workforce redeployment into conservation projects (pilot scheme in advance of Jobs for Nature)	DoC, Otago Regional Council, Tourism operators represented by AJ Hackett Bungy
Conservation Standards Training	Collaborative training session for district-wide conservation groups	Southern Lakes Sanctuary
Home for Healthier Business	Attraction of ‘team builders’ to diversify the local economy	Otago University Alumni, KEA (Kiwi Expats Abroad).

Initiative	Summary	Partners
Mahi QL	Workforce and immigration collaboration	RSLG members, Chambers of Commerce, HR Professionals
Lifetime Value of the Visitor	Research into broader economic value of visitation	Destination Queenstown, Central Otago Tourism, Enterprise Dunedin, Auckland Unlimited
Kia Kaha Queenstown Lakes Hub (Phase 1 and 2)	Advice and options for visa holders and job seekers	MBIE, Immigration NZ, MSD, Salvation Army Queenstown, Citizens Advice Bureau, local education providers
Take Stock	Counselling sessions for business owners	Benestar
Clued up Kids	Emergency resilience events for Year 6 students	FENZ, Otago CDEM, St John NZ, Queenstown Lakes Harbourmaster, Coastguard Wānaka, Wakatipu Search and Rescue (SARS), Kahu Youth Trust, Wakatipu Youth Trust, Police, QLDC Animal Control, Sport Otago, Primary Schools
Summerdaze	Summer events programme for building community connection	Department of Internal Affairs (Community Lottery Fund)
Economic Diversification	Development and delivery of initiatives in advance of full plan development e.g. cluster workshops, research, diversification snapshots event	MBIE, NZTE, Startup Queenstown Lakes, Film Otago Southland, Hangarau Whakatipu (a group of technology entrepreneurs)
GoodYarn	Launch of the GoodYarn programme within QLDC and designing a community-facing model	Good Programmes Trust (GoodYarn programme owner), Southern Wellbeing Trust,

Initiative	Summary	Partners
Public health messaging	Maximising health communications to the public e.g. vaccinations	Public Health South, Well South, Southern DHB, Mental Health Foundation, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Ethnic Communities

Key Learnings

- 32 The work of the Recovery Team was often fast-paced, urgent and complex. The challenges being faced were typically the result of underlying long-term problems being exacerbated by COVID-19 e.g. the need for economic diversification.
- 33 Beyond the initial welfare response, the broader community and economic impact was lower and slower than predicted. The community demonstrated some resilience, but the length of the pandemic has been longer than anticipated, with border closures far exceeding early expectations. The length of this timeframe and the associated uncertainty has created significant social and economic issues within the district.
- 34 As was seen across the community, there were significant wellbeing pressures on the Recovery Team during its 18-month period of operation. A key learning from the experience was to treat Recovery as a longer-term role, a marathon as opposed to a sprint and to focus more closely on maintaining individual wellbeing.
- 35 Throughout the 18-month period of the team’s operation, it has become adept at navigating complexity and uncertainty. The team now utilises tools to manage programmes that can respond to opportunities adeptly, as opposed to working within rigid plans. Furthermore, the team uses scenario planning, prototyping and a portfolio approach to consider a range of potential futures and levers. Effective futures thinking will be an essential skill in a changing and changeable world.
- 36 The Recovery Team also recognised the centrality of strong relationships when working in a volatile environment. Community connection and networked governance create stability where there are few other certainties. Creating those networks and ecosystems will remain a core focus of the Strategy and Development team ongoing.
- 37 The Recovery programme also provided the opportunity to develop a number of advisory groups. This proved to be highly valuable but did require management to ensure the groups remained informed about existing programmes and maintained momentum. Key learnings have been taken from this experience for working with advisory groups in key policy areas ongoing.
- 38 The way of working within the Recovery Team has had a profound and lasting impact on members of the Strategy and Development team. Several significant relationships have been unlocked and positively improved, to the significant benefit of the work programme and the community. The team has also continued to build the partnership with Kāi Tahu,

both through the formal governance structure, but also in relation to specific initiatives delivered by local Māori organisations such as Mana Tāhuna.

- 39 An overview of the Recovery Team's work and reports prepared can be found at: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/recovery>
- 40 The experience of COVID -19 has provided the opportunity to develop a sound structure and model for recovery in the district. The value of learning from research relating to other emergencies and recovery programmes has been clearly understood. In future CDEM exercises and when responding to future events, an established model and team is ready to be deployed. Five key roles are identified and in place – the Recovery Manager and Deputy, Infrastructure Recovery lead, Community Recovery lead and Economic Recovery lead.
- 41 **This report is provided for noting.** The provision of options is not considered relevant in this instance.

CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

> SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

- 42 This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because of the significance of the decision to be made. This update is not inconsistent with existing policy and Strategy. It aligns to the Vision Beyond 2050 statements and the 10-Year Plan insofar as is possible.
- 43 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes District community, visitors to the district who have been affected by COVID-19, businesses, community organisations, other local and central government agencies, environmental groups, schools, Council staff, and households.
- 44 Public consultation has not been undertaken on the matter.

> MĀORI CONSULTATION | IWI RŪNANGA

- 45 Consultation with Māori has not been undertaken in relation to this specific report, but significant engagement in relation to governance and specific initiatives was undertaken throughout this period

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

- 46 The recommended option:
- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
 - 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.