

28 May 2025

[REDACTED]
Sent via email to [REDACTED]

LG25-0119 - Discharge of treated wastewater into the Shotover River

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION – PARTIAL RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DECISION TO REFUSE INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 1 May 2025 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

I am writing on behalf of the [REDACTED] to express our concern regarding the discharge of treated wastewater into the Shotover River by the Queenstown Lakes District Council.

To better understand the situation, we respectfully request the following information:

1. A copy of any test results relating to the treated wastewater discharge.
2. Details of the resting methods used.
3. A comprehensive report outlining the findings and any environmental assessments conducted.

QLDC RESPONSE

Partial release of information

In response to your request, we consulted with the QLDC Property and Infrastructure Team.

1. A copy of any test results relating to the treated wastewater discharge.

Testing results for the week commencing 31 March 2025 through until 14 May 2025 are publicly available on the [QLDC Shotover Wastewater Treatment Plant](#) webpage. This website will continue to be updated as additional results become available.

2. Details of the resting methods used.

For the purpose of this response, we have assumed that your request was intended to say 'testing' rather than 'resting'.

The methods and cadence of water sampling/testing is divided into four categories: operational monitoring (via onsite lab), operational monitoring (via external lab), consent compliance monitoring, and environmental monitoring. These monitoring categories are discussed in further detail below.

Sampling/ Testing	
<p>i. Operational Monitoring (on-site lab)</p>	<p>The plant operators collect samples from a number of locations at various stages of the treatment process (influent, MLE clarifier effluent (pre-UV), pond effluent (pre-UV), final effluent (post-UV). Parameters tested for include Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Ammonia Nitrogen (NH₃-N), Nitrate-Nitrogen (NO₃-N), and Total Nitrogen (TN). These samples are collected and tested five days a week.</p> <p>The samples are taken from a number of autosamplers at each process step. The autosamplers automatically collect samples across the day to provide a composite sample representative of the preceding 24-hour period. The results from the on-site lab are available almost immediately, and as such are important to inform operational monitoring decision making.</p> <p>The onsite lab does not undertake tests for E. coli levels.</p>
<p>ii. Operational Monitoring (external lab)</p>	<p>To assist with validating the results from the on-site lab, samples are also sent to an external and accredited lab on a weekly basis. These samples are taken from the same locations and tested for an expanded list of parameters compared to the daily tests described above. The weekly tests include E. coli.</p> <p>Please note that testing by the independent laboratory Eurofins may take up to 10 days to complete, and the final certificate of testing will be issued afterward. This timeline is determined by the specific parameters being tested.</p>
<p>iii. Consent Compliance Monitoring</p>	<p>Consent compliance monitoring water samples from the treatment plant are collected monthly. The majority of the parameters tested are collected from a sample from the autosampler located downstream of the UV disinfection plant, immediately prior to the discharge point</p>

	from the plant (providing a sample representative of the plant's performance over the previous 24 hours). The exception is the sample tested for E. coli which is collected as a 'grab' sample.
iv. Environmental Monitoring	<p>The environmental monitoring regime for river water sampling was established when the Council reverted to a direct discharge to the Shotover River under emergency works.</p> <p>Sampling is now being conducted weekly at multiple locations along the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers—both upstream and downstream of the discharge point.</p> <p>Please note that a reduced scope of environmental monitoring in the Shotover and Kawarau rivers was also being conducted before March 2025, on a monthly basis.</p>

Decision to refuse information

3. A comprehensive report outlining the findings and any environmental assessments conducted.

We have good reason under section 17(e) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) for refusing the information requested. We consider it is necessary to refuse the requested information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 17(e) – that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Section 17(e) of the LGOIMA clarifies that a local authority is not required to provide information that does not exist or cannot be found despite reasonable efforts. This ensures that the absence of information is not due to negligence but reflects its genuine non-existence.

In response to your request, we consulted the QLDC Property and Infrastructure Team. They advised that no comprehensive report currently exists outlining the findings or any environmental assessments conducted. Therefore, the documentation you requested is not available and cannot be provided.

As a local authority, we are committed to fulfilling our obligation to provide access to information that we hold. However, pursuant to Section 17(e) of the LGOIMA, we are unable to release information that either does not exist or cannot be found despite our reasonable efforts.

Right to review the above decision

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz (Stakeholder and Democracy Services Manager).

We trust the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,



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