

# Travel to a thriving future

*Haereka whakamu ki to ao taurikura*

## A Regenerative Tourism Plan

*Te Mahere Whakahaumanu Tāpoi*





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# Welcome

*Nau mai, Haere mai*

## **Welcome to the Queenstown Lakes – our home, our passion, our place.**

This land has a rich history of welcoming and providing for people, of forging deep connections to whenua and the environment. From the time of Waitaha arrival in 850 AD, through to the start of the 20th century, Kāi Tahu Whānui lived off the land, from the land, with the land and across the land.

It is a place steeped in whakapapa, from the Kāi Tahu Whānui settlements through to the early European settlers, the prospectors drawn by the allure of gold, and then the tourism entrepreneurs who turned their passion into enterprise. Behind this history sits a host of characters and an abundance of stories. This past informs the present and the future of this place and its people.

This region is rich in natural beauty, culture, heritage and diversity. The soaring peaks of Glenorchy, the beech forests of Makarora, the historic township of Arrowtown, the gateway of Kingston, and the vibrant centres of Queenstown and Wānaka are only a few of the elements that shape this place's unique identity.

Queenstown Lakes inspires dreams and challenges people to fulfil their true potential. Visitors soak in the community spirit and feel a sense of awe within nature. The wairua (spirit) created by the landscape shapes the experiences that connect everyone who visits with the land and with local communities. The region's magnetism will continue to beckon people to visit, work and live here, bringing welcome diversity. Many locals nurture a deep love for this unique place and have a strong desire to contribute to its future.

Now, Queenstown Lakes is gaining momentum to meet the great challenge and opportunity of our time: to achieve a regenerative visitor economy and, critically, for it to reach carbon zero by 2030. Reaching carbon zero is the north star that orients the region's next phase of prosperity. Progress toward this vision will be made when local residents, communities, organisations, and businesses collaborate on the strategic pillars and projects outlined in this plan. These actions will ensure that Queenstown Lakes remains a special place for our children's children – one we can continue to be proud to share with visitors for years to come.

**– Queenstown Lakes Destination Management Steering Group**  
**Destination Queenstown**  
**Lake Wānaka Tourism**  
**Queenstown Lakes District Council**

# Keystone Project: Carbon zero by 2030

*Kaupapa matua: Ka kore waro hei te tau 2030*

**There is a lot of work to do in order to become a regenerative tourism destination by 2030. The most effective, transformative plans provide clear and concise direction to galvanise support. To provide clear focus and catalyse rapid action, we have elevated one highly ambitious project to the forefront.**

*The visitor economy of Queenstown Lakes reaches carbon zero by 2030.*

Choosing decarbonisation as the first peak to climb is intentionally ambitious. It is the first step on the path to prosperity and healing for nature, communities, and the economy. It fuels imagination toward changes that are greatly needed. This project is arguably the most difficult part of the plan, especially for a visitor economy that is currently dependent on high-carbon-intensity travellers. Decarbonising the district is a prerequisite for regenerative tourism, and Queenstown Lakes cannot afford to wait.

As the world wakes up to the urgency of climate destabilisation, the tourism system in Queenstown Lakes can begin its journey to regeneration by accelerating this district's decarbonisation.

Achieving this ambitious objective will require action on day one. The level of clear focus will force collaboration. It will require difficult choices. But it will set the community on a path to long-term success while making other aspects of regeneration flow more easily.

Rapid decarbonisation of the economy is possible when we join forces across the tourism industry, with other sectors related to the visitor economy, and with regions across Aotearoa New Zealand. Solutions unlock all the exciting opportunities of regenerative tourism for the people, businesses, and communities of Queenstown Lakes. Decarbonisation will prepare us for the coming years. And it will regenerate the environment that is our lifeline.

## WHAT IS DECARBONISATION?

To decarbonise means to eliminate the use of fossil fuels and rapidly cut greenhouse gas emissions, which are a major cause of the climate emergency. For the most persistent emissions, we will remove carbon as close to the source as possible in time and distance.

## RELATED READING:

**Appendix 1:** Defining key terms (page 47)



This keystone project is a particularly significant commitment because:

- › **Selecting 2030 as the goal does not allow for delay.** In contrast to many emissions reductions pledges, the timeframe ensures immediate attention.
- › **The framing of the goal recognises that systemic changes are needed.** By focusing on eliminating emissions from the visitor economy wherever possible, the goal sets in place a mindset of system-wide eradication rather than putting the onus on individuals and businesses alone. Achieving carbon zero will require both individual and system-wide efforts to reduce emissions, including energy and infrastructure investments and adoption of technologies that have yet to be implemented.
- › **The commitment takes responsibility for Scope 3 emissions.** This includes all emissions from air travel and ground transportation.
- › **The first priority is to rapidly cut emissions.** The path to success in reaching carbon zero is to vastly reduce how much carbon the visitor economy emits, and to do so without delay. The most persistent emissions may be removed from the atmosphere through technological means, but the global capacity for this method is currently very low. It is not responsible for the visitor economy to maintain its trajectory by purchasing carbon neutrality through offsets. It is critical to immediately cut emissions.

#### WHAT IS CARBON ZERO?

When the visitor economy as a whole reaches carbon zero, it will no longer be contributing to the greenhouse effect. It is not the same as carbon neutral. Reaching carbon zero by 2030 will require a relentless pursuit to cut as many carbon emissions as possible and remove the rest.

#### RELATED READING:

**Appendix 1:** Defining key terms (page 47)

**Appendix 2:** Carbon emissions in Queenstown Lakes (page 52)

#### CAN CARBON ZERO BE ACHIEVED?

There are lots of questions that need to be answered in order to decarbonise, some of which will become clear as the project is scoped in detail. Based on what we know today, this will be challenging, but this is a fast-changing world. New macro-economic trends, legislation, investments and technologies will emerge to accelerate decarbonisation. This is a bold ambition, but the collaborative, relentless pursuit of emissions reduction has the potential to drive massive change.

The term 'Carbon Zero' is intended to leave behind the negative association with carbon neutrality and criticism of offsets programs that do not follow best practices. While 'net zero' may be a more appropriate term; the intention is that the hardest to abate emissions are removed from the atmosphere as quickly and locally as possible.

There are four strategies for reaching carbon zero.

- › **Mitigate emissions** by deploying existing clean-energy solutions, fostering more rapid innovation, accelerating the adoption of existing technology, and making significant conservation efforts.
- › Understand **optimal visitation** levels and focus on value by increasing length of stay and/or yield per visitor and total revenue.
- › **Evolve marketing plans** and influence partner organisations to change the business mix, attracting market segments with a lower carbon-intensity & higher value.
- › **Invest in carbon removal solutions** on the path towards decarbonisation for difficult to abate emissions, in line with Oxford Principles<sup>1</sup>.

**Important note:** This document is not intended to outline all the actions that need to be taken, though it suggests several. The actions across all projects, including this keystone project, will be determined and implemented by project groups, which will have community and organisational oversight. You will find more details about this project and implementation in Project 9 (Keystone) on page 29, Foundational projects on page 39, and Section 4: Governance, management, and implementation on page 42. Understanding current emissions levels and outlining an iterative plan to reach this goal will be one of the highest priorities. This plan will evolve, and your feedback is welcome at any time for consideration at the next periodic review point.

We recognise the excellent work on sustainability that is already underway across the region, and we believe this keystone project will be a catalyst to even more effective and widespread climate action that leads to regeneration across Queenstown Lakes.

# Reaching carbon zero is our north star. Please join us on the journey.

– Queenstown Lakes Destination Management Group



<sup>1</sup> Look to best practices to guide carbon removals gathered from developing UN standards, IEU certification standards on high-quality carbon removal, or Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting: <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Oxford-Offsetting-Principles-2020.pdf>. Use Science Based Targets. Calculations must include Scope 3 emissions. Decarbonization must focus on all greenhouse emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e). Carbon removal cannot include offsets that mitigate other emissions, they must come from technological or ecological sequestration (not monoculture).

# Executive summary

## *Kōrero whakarāpopoto whakamutuka*

**Travel to a thriving future is Queenstown Lakes' roadmap to regenerative tourism by 2030. This is an exciting journey that brings opportunities for everyone in the region and greater wellbeing for people and the planet. Regenerative tourism goes beyond typical sustainability projects that minimise environmental harm. Instead, it contributes holistic value that benefits communities, the environment, and the economy.**

This Regenerative Tourism Plan is an output and a priority initiative of the *Grow Well | Whaiora Spatial Plan*. (See Appendix 4: Process.) A Destination Management Steering Group (DMSG) comprised of Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism, and Queenstown Lakes District Council developed this plan with input from the Department of Conservation and Kāi Tahu. The DMSG has led a thorough public engagement process and is grateful for many forms of input and feedback. The process has ensured that the values and vision of local communities, including iwi, are strongly represented in the resulting strategy.

**Section 1** outlines the current situation, including the significant opportunities and challenges in moving toward regeneration. This includes impacts on communities, the environment, and the economy.

**Section 2** outlines the vision, the purpose of the visitor economy, and Kāi Tahu values, as well as core values and guiding principles for the visitor economy.

The plan establishes a vision: travel to a thriving future. It guides Queenstown Lakes on a journey towards regenerative tourism by 2030.

**Section 3** outlines the four strategic priorities:

- › Enrich communities and enhance the visitor experience.
- › Restore the environment and decarbonise the visitor economy.
- › Build economic resilience, capability and productivity.
- › Foundations for success.

Projects are defined for each strategic pillar. The keystone project is decarbonisation: reaching carbon zero by 2030 (see page 29). Completing this project is both a prerequisite to creating a regenerative economy, and it is a key enabler of other projects.

**Section 4** defines the governance structure, the 7-30-90 model for implementation, and the year one projects, which include the foundational projects.

The appendices define key concepts such as destination management, the visitor economy, regenerative tourism, decarbonisation, and carbon zero.

Together, the Queenstown Lakes District has the opportunity to rethink how the visitor economy works and to imagine how it can deliver social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits through tourism that also provides exceptional visitor experiences.

**You are invited to collaborate toward a regenerative future in Queenstown Lakes.**



# Section 1

## Current state

*Wāhaka 1: Te tūnga ināianeī*

We learn from the past and look ahead to a regenerative, thriving world.

**The tourism industry of Queenstown Lakes has much to be proud of. The region is known for strong economic performance and has seen incredible change over the last century. There is no doubt that the combination of majestic natural landscapes and a world-class tourism system has underpinned this success.**

Prior to COVID-19, this region saw a tourism boom. Visitor expenditure grew rapidly from \$1.3B in the year ending October 2009 to \$3.1B in 2019 (MBIE monthly regional tourism estimates), and the region hosted an estimated 3 million visitors annually. At the same time, the Queenstown Lakes District experienced strong population growth, with 5.3% average annual population growth over the 10 years to June 2019 (Stats NZ subnational population estimates). Tourism remains a foundation of the local economy, accounting for 41% of GDP and 58% of all employment in 2019 (Infometrics).

Despite this success, the region's tourism industry faces significant, interrelated challenges driven by local, national and global factors. Communities, businesses, and organisations across the district have expressed their perspectives on how the visitor economy impacts local wellbeing, the environment and the economy in Queenstown Lakes. Research and analysis reveals that the following issues are the most critical:

## COMMUNITY

### HAPORI

**Public support for tourism is at risk:** Visitation has increased rapidly, and a growing number of residents have become concerned that the benefits of the visitor economy are beginning to be outweighed by disadvantages. Pressure on public infrastructure is evident, and some people observe disrespectful behaviour from visitors. Visitor and resident numbers are forecasted to continue growing. The district has focused on increasing top-line visitation levels but has not yet managed visitation in a way that makes the local quality of life a high priority. A warm and friendly visitor welcome had set the region apart during the tourism boom. Now that welcome is under threat.

## ENVIRONMENT

### TAIAO

**Environmental pressures:** There are several important issues at national and global levels. Climate change, concerns about water and air quality, waste management and biodiversity loss are all issues that will continue to impact local life and the tourism industry in particular.

**Decarbonisation:** The world is racing to decarbonise, but tourism inherently relies on travel by air and by road – two major sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The visitor economy is not yet aligned to emissions targets set by the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) Paris Agreement for either in-destination emissions or transportation emissions (Scope 3). Gross emissions for the Queenstown Lakes District are estimated at 600,895 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. On/off-road transportation represents 27% of district emissions and aviation represents 17%. There is a lack of data on the visitor economy's share of the district's emissions, because those emissions are created by a mix of visitors, business travellers, residents, friends and family.

## ECONOMY TAIŌHAKA

**Lack of economic diversification:** With tourism as its primary industry, the district is susceptible to shock. The COVID-19 travel restrictions of 2019-2022 hit Queenstown Lakes harder than most areas of New Zealand. Businesses that relied on visitors were tested over this period, illustrating the region's dependence on the visitor economy. This plan will work in tandem with the district's Economic Diversification Plan.

**Hidden costs and benefits of tourism:** High visitation levels place pressure on infrastructure systems that locals rely on. Residents pay the cost for maintaining and upgrading these systems, and this is not reflected in the prices visitors pay. Other negative externalities are not accounted for. Some positive impacts are also underestimated. Research shows that visitation boosts export sales as travellers return home and purchase more New Zealand products. Many visitors also show interest in studying, investing or migrating, yet there is little collaboration between tourism and other industries eager to build international connections.

**Lack of good data supporting destination management:** There is a lack of useful and consistent data that is essential for strategic planning and management. This leads the management of the visitor economy to be reactive instead of proactive. There is a gap in understanding of the extent of economic leakage. The costs of tourism and financial and non-financial benefits associated with hosting visitors across communities, the environment, and the economy are not factored into planning.

**Tourism workforce and housing challenges:** The Queenstown Lakes visitor economy has a shortage of workers. Issues related to affordability and a lack of housing make it a challenge for tourism businesses to attract and retain adequate staffing. Short-term rentals and second homes have contributed to the housing shortage and the rise in prices.

The future of tourism in Queenstown Lakes is bright, but these challenges must be addressed collectively. This plan supports the district's journey toward a renewed pride in tourism that improves local wellbeing and the environment while offering exceptional experiences.

### WHAT IS ECONOMIC LEAKAGE?

In tourism destinations, economic leakage occurs when revenue generated by tourism is lost to outside economies. When a higher proportion of revenue stays in the destination, there is less leakage and a greater benefit to local communities. This is usually something to be avoided, unless there is clear evidence to suggest that revenue taken outside of the district is being used to support good outcomes on the world stage e.g. funding internationally impactful emissions reduction work for the benefit of all.

### RELATED READING:

**Appendix 1:** Defining key terms (page 47)



# Section 2

## Community vision for tourism

*Wāhaka 2: Kā wawata o te hapori mō te tāpoi*

Through the engagement process, the people of Queenstown Lakes expressed their aspirations for what tourism can become. Kāi Tahu values provide an essential lens for focusing all destination management actions. The combined feedback of local communities led to the following vision, purpose for tourism, core values and guiding principles.



# Vision

*Matawhānui*

*“Travel to a thriving future”*

Residents see tourism’s potential to ensure a thriving future for Queenstown Lakes and positively influence the world. This vision recognises that the visitor economy has an important role in achieving value economically, socially, culturally and environmentally. The vision also aligns with Vision Beyond 2050, which is based upon the values that collectively define what is unique about the Queenstown Lakes district.



# Purpose of the visitor economy in Queenstown Lakes District

*Te aroka o te ōhaka manuhiri ki te rohe o kā roto o Tāhuna*

The purpose defined below was shaped by design forum workshops in the communities of Glenorchy, Arrowtown, Wānaka and Queenstown. These provided a wide range of perspectives, which were later complemented by wider community and business input.



*Improving local and visitor wellbeing and experience,  
Forging connections between people and places, and  
Enabling healthy ecosystems, so that  
The district becomes known as a leading example  
of how travel creates a thriving future.*



## RELATED READING

To learn more about how this plan was developed with Queenstown Lake communities, please see:

### Appendix 4:

Process (page 56)



# Kāi Tahu values in Queenstown Lakes District

*Kā uara o Kai Tahu ki te rohe o kā roto o Tāhuna*



**Travel to a thriving future flows directly from the Grow Well | Whaiora Spatial Plan, which proposes a vision and framework of how and where this district will grow until 2050. The Spatial Plan seeks to make Kāi Tahu more visible and reflect Kāi Tahu values. It does this by protecting and celebrating cultural values, including sites and areas of wāhi tupuna, and by restoring Kāi Tahu narratives, including within urban areas.**

Whakatipu-Wai-Māori, Wānaka and Hāwea are iconic lakes of cultural and statutory significance to Kāi Tahu. The lakes feature in the Waitaha iwi oral tradition and stories of that people's first occupation within Te Wai Pounamu. A number of pā (strongholds), kāika (settlements), nohoaka (camp sites), trails, and villages surrounded the lakes where more than one hundred generations lived. Tapu (sacred) waters have sustained many ecosystems important to Kāi Tahu.

All elements of the natural environment possess a mauri, a life force, and all forms of life are related. The mauri of whenua and wai taoka, lands and waterbodies, represent the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. Mauri is therefore a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Kāi Tahu Whānui with the whenua, waterbodies and resources of the region. Kāi Tahu understand climate change through this paradigm of connectedness and relationship with the environment.

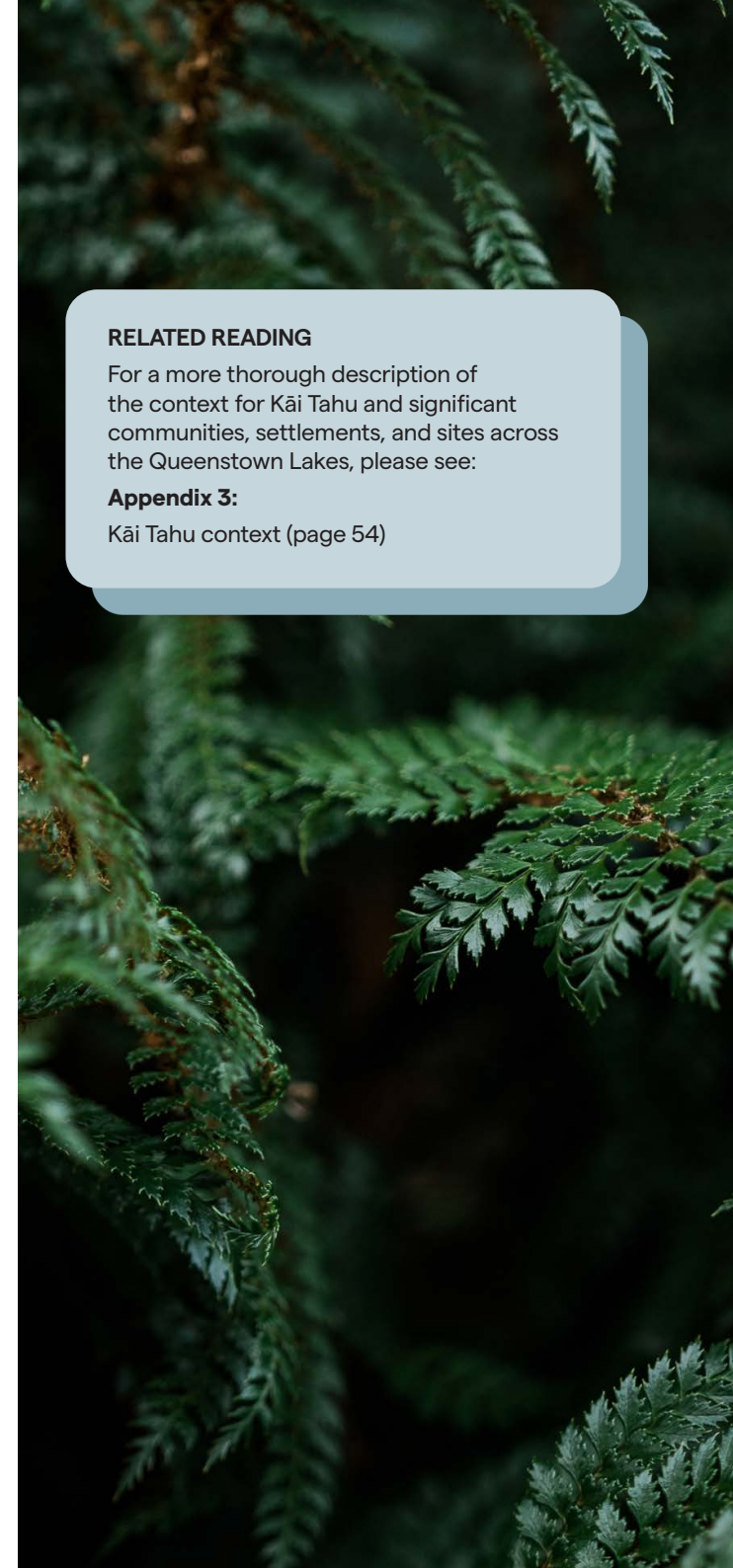
The tupuna (ancestors) had considerable knowledge of whakapapa, the traditional trails, tauraka waka, places for gathering kai and other taoka, and tīkaka for the proper and sustainable utilisation of resources of the area. All of these values remain important to Kāi Tahu today.

#### RELATED READING

For a more thorough description of the context for Kāi Tahu and significant communities, settlements, and sites across the Queenstown Lakes, please see:

#### Appendix 3:

Kāi Tahu context (page 54)



## KĀI TAHU VALUES FRAMEWORK

### TE POU TARĀWAHO O KĀ UARA O KAI TAHU

The Kāi Tahu values framework informs the decision-making of the Grow Well | Whaiora Partnership, the direction of the Spatial Plan and *Travel to a thriving future*. The values and how they are applied to the Regenerative Tourism Plan are outlined in the table right:

Value	Description	Application
<i>Whanaukataka</i>	<b>Family and community focused</b>	Ensuring consideration of the social implication of decisions to enable community and whanau connections and growth.
<i>Manaakitaka</i>	<b>Hospitality</b>	Demonstrating behaviour that acknowledges others, through the expression of archa, hospitality, generosity and mutual respect.
<i>Rakatirataka</i>	<b>Leadership</b>	Ensuring the treaty partnership is recognised to enable mana whenua leadership in decision making processes.
<i>Haere whakamua</i>	<b>Future focused</b>	Adopting a forward looking orientation with future generations in mind.
<i>Tikaka</i>	<b>Appropriate action</b>	Ensuring consideration of the appropriateness of decisions that will have a bearing on social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes.
<i>Kaitiakitaka</i>	<b>Stewardship</b>	Enabling the inherited responsibility of mana whenua to support and protect people, the environment, knowledge, culture, language and resources on behalf of future generations.
<i>Mauri</i>	<b>Life force</b>	Recognising the life force in all lands, waters and the natural environment that stems from time immemorial, requiring a high duty of care for kaitiaki ( and others) to maintain an intact and healthy mauri, ensuring that what is gifted from the Atua in not neglected.



### MĀNAWA KĀI TAHU

The contemporary presence of Kāi Tahu in the Queenstown Lakes centres on wise use, restoration and protection of the natural environment, incorporation of design elements into the physical environment that reflect mātauraka and Kāi Tahu associations, and an active role for Kāi Tahu in development opportunities. Outcomes (manawa or aspirations) sought by Kāi Tahu are shown right:

### KĀI TAHU OUTCOMES





# Core values and guiding principles for the tourism and visitor economies

*Kā uara me kā whanoka pono e ārahina i te tāpoi me te ōhaka manuhiri*

The core values and guiding principles are a set of agreed-upon behaviours and approaches that are embedded in the plan, its governance and implementation. The values and principles should guide all decision-making for the visitor economy to ensure a consistent and coherent approach. These values and principles were shaped by Kāi Tahu's values and by a design forum process, and so reflect the wisdom, views and values of the wider community.

## CORE VALUES

### MANAAKITAKA

#### HOSPITALITY

We give a warm welcome to visitors (manuhiri), building unity through authentic connections and the act of sharing so that those arriving as manuhiri leave as extended family (whānau whānui). We care for the health and wellbeing of everyone in our community because those who are least visible are an important indicator for the health of the whole.

### WHANAUKATAKA

#### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED

Reciprocal relationships which are valued, strong and enduring weave us together as whānau. These relationships nourish our community, as well as enabling a productive and thriving visitor economy.

We support and celebrate local whenever we can. Knowing what we wish to share with manuhiri, we invite them to share equally in the kinship of our communities through meaningful experiences and connections, rather than through transactions.

### TAUTIAKITAKA

#### GUARDIANSHIP

We experience kinship with the environment, rather than dominance over it, so that nature thrives for the benefit of all species, whilst providing for the wellbeing of our people and our place. Within the tourism industry this is often referred to as the kaupapa of tiaki.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Our communities are the living heart of the district. We understand, respect and treasure their unique essence, identity and values by giving them an authentic voice and opportunity to shape their futures.

### ENABLING REGENERATION

We consciously nurture those people, activities and organisations that are already lively forces of regeneration, so that others will follow their lead and create the conditions for a regenerative community.

### DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP

We collaborate to innovate partnerships with nature, communities and places which will enrich manuhiri, locals, workers and the environment.

### WORKING TOGETHER

We must work together, across the district and beyond, because no single organisation can achieve our vision alone. Organisations and agencies with a role to play openly share information and resources in the shared interests of achieving our goals.

### EMBRACING CHANGE

*Ka mua, ka muri*; we look backwards to learn from the past and plan with prudence to prepare for the future. We do not fear change but embrace it as an opportunity to improve and be of greater service to our communities.



# Section 3

## Regenerative tourism plan

*Wāhaka 3: Te mahere whakahaumanu tāpoi*



# Plan on a page *He mahere kei te whārangī*

## TRAVEL TO A THRIVING FUTURE

### Goal

Regenerative tourism by 2030

### Keystone project

The visitor economy of Queenstown Lakes reaches carbon zero by 2030

Strategic pillar	PILLAR 1: Enrich communities and enhance the visitor experience.	PILLAR 2: Restore the environment and decarbonise the visitor economy.	PILLAR 3: Build economic resilience, capability and productivity.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align actions with the core values and guiding principles.</li> <li>Positive community sentiment.</li> <li>Strong visitor satisfaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reach carbon zero by 2030.</li> <li>Zero waste and pollution.</li> <li>Biodiversity health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the total value of the visitor economy, net of all costs and economic leakage.</li> <li>Ensure workforce availability and improve workforce retention.</li> <li>Maintain tourism business satisfaction.</li> </ul>
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project 1: Community engagement.</li> <li>Project 2: Tiaki Promise: Lead by example.</li> <li>Project 3: Preserve and celebrate Kāi Tahu and mātauraka.</li> <li>Project 4: Place-based destination planning.</li> <li>Project 5: Welcome programme.</li> <li>Project 6: Arts, culture &amp; heritage development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project 7: Measure environmental footprint.</li> <li>Project 8: Measure greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>Project 9 (Keystone): Carbon zero by 2030.</li> <li>Project 10: Zero environmental footprint.</li> <li>Project 11: Restoring ecosystems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project 12: Economic leakage assessment and cost-benefit analysis.</li> <li>Project 13: Direct funding for infrastructure.</li> <li>Project 14: Love Wānaka / Love Queenstown.</li> <li>Project 15: Product evolution programme.</li> <li>Project 16: Tourism business excellence programme.</li> <li>Project 17: Thriving workforce programme.</li> <li>Project 18: Environmental preparedness.</li> <li>Project 19: Innovation and economic development.</li> </ul>

### Foundations for success

#### Objectives

- Develop a robust governance model that includes a reporting and review cadence.
- Establish an implementation plan and communications structure.
- Establish data collection and reporting systems.
- Align brand and marketing activities with regenerative tourism goals.

#### Projects

- Foundational project 1: Framework for governance and review.
- Foundational project 2: Operationalise projects.
- Foundational project 3: Data and measurement framework.
- Foundational project 4: Update Queenstown Lakes brand and marketing strategies.



# Strategic pillars toward a regenerative visitor economy

*Kā Pou Rautaki mō te taiōhaka manuhiri whakahaumanu Tāpoi*

*Travel to a thriving future* leads Queenstown Lakes toward regenerative tourism by 2030.

The following strategic pillars and objectives guide the actions toward the goal of regenerative tourism.

Strategic pillars	Objectives
<b>PILLAR 1: Enrich communities and enhance the visitor experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align actions with the core values and guiding principles.</li> <li>Positive community sentiment (e.g., Quality of Life survey, Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) Mood of the Nation survey, Kāi Tahu satisfaction survey).</li> <li>Strong visitor satisfaction (Visitor Insights Programme).</li> </ul>
<b>PILLAR 2: Restore the environment and decarbonise the visitor economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reach carbon zero by 2030.</li> <li>Zero waste and pollution.</li> <li>Biodiversity health.</li> </ul>
<b>PILLAR 3: Build economic resilience, capability and productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the total value of the visitor economy, net of all costs and economic leakage.</li> <li>Ensure workforce availability and improve workforce retention.</li> <li>Maintain tourism business satisfaction.</li> </ul>
<b>Foundations for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a robust governance model that includes a reporting and review cadence.</li> <li>Establish an implementation plan and communications structure.</li> <li>Establish data collection and reporting systems.</li> <li>Align brand and marketing activities with regenerative tourism goals.</li> </ul>

The following pages describe each pillar in more detail, as well as the projects to fulfil each one. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be selected at the project level by project teams. Those project teams will take one of three roles relative to existing efforts: lead, support, or advocate.



## PILLAR 1

### ***Enrich communities and enhance the visitor experience***

*Whakahaumako i kā hāpori kia pai kā wheako ō kā manuhiri*

**Embrace the unique identities of local communities, empowering them to share their values and connection to place.**

This pillar supports regenerative tourism by aligning community wellbeing and values with visitor experiences. Queenstown Lakes communities are key to the visitor experience, and they are an important reason that people travel here. The district will attract visitors who respect local values and are interested in local cultures. Community amenities, facilities, and infrastructure should be developed with residents' needs in mind.

A regenerative approach to tourism will bring the cultural history and stories of Queenstown Lakes to life. Tourism businesses play a valuable role in protecting and enhancing culture and heritage by infusing them into visitor experiences. Opportunities to volunteer can also become sought-after experiences. Providing richer visitor experiences, along with consistent communication, will help visitors to develop a strong sense of connection to local communities, culture and places.

The bottom line is that the visitor economy needs to have a positive impact on the lives of all residents.

#### **OBJECTIVES FOR REGENERATION**

- › Align visitor experiences with the core values and guiding principles.
- › Positive community sentiment (e.g., Quality of Life survey, Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) Mood of the Nation survey, Kāi Tahu satisfaction survey).
- › Strong visitor satisfaction (Visitor Insights Programme).

#### **PILLAR 1 PROJECTS:**

- › **Project 1:** Community engagement
- › **Project 2:** Tiaki Promise: Lead by example
- › **Project 3:** Preserve and celebrate Kāi Tahu and mātauraka
- › **Project 4:** Place-based destination planning
- › **Project 5:** Welcome programme
- › **Project 6:** Arts, culture & heritage development



## PILLAR 1: ENRICH COMMUNITIES AND ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### PROJECT 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### **OBJECTIVE: POSITIVE COMMUNITY SENTIMENT AND A TOURISM SYSTEM THAT LISTENS AND RESPONDS.**

**Description:** Ensure that continual input from residents provides a better understanding of how tourism can support community plans, values and cultural heritage. Community identity and values of place are understood and supported by the community, tourism businesses and visitors. Related plans include: existing local community plans (e.g., Glenorchy and Arrowtown).

#### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Co-create a schedule of regular opportunities to listen to and engage proactively with communities across the district.
2. Use existing community plans to bring local values to life, and work with council and community organisations to support the development of plans for communities that do not yet have them.
3. Build a solid understanding of mātauraka Māori and cultural heritage stories that are accurate and told by the appropriate storytellers. Work closely with Kāi Tahu to honour stories and share the right ones in the right way to avoid cultural appropriation.
4. Continue to raise awareness about the mana of tikaka, taoka and matauraka Māori (Māori knowledge, values and protocols) at the local level. Advocate for integrating these into community plans to enhance the visibility and connection of Māori cultural heritage.
5. Identify opportunities to support local events, activities, facilities and initiatives which help reinforce community identity, values and a unique sense of place.
6. Ensure that the Business excellence programme (Project 16) includes a toolkit and training that makes it easy for tourism businesses to integrate and support the values of the communities where they operate, enabling communities to support progress of those businesses where appropriate.
7. Work with Tourism New Zealand and third-party travel trade organisations to raise awareness of and support for our community values-based approach.

### PROJECT 2: TIAKI PROMISE: LEAD BY EXAMPLE

#### **OBJECTIVE: ALIGN VISITOR EXPERIENCES WITH THE CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.**

**Description:** Using the kaupapa of the Tiaki Promise as a starting point, set standards for residents and visitors to treat the region with respect through their actions.

#### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Amplify and reinforce the kaupapa (intention and principles) of the Tiaki Promise throughout the district in a consistent way so that the values of Tiaki become a commonly used benchmark of behaviours.
2. Encourage local agencies, communities and tourism businesses to champion the Tiaki Promise so that all visitors are aware of it and understand it.
3. Identify and acknowledge examples of behaviour and practices that align with the Tiaki Promise so that there are a growing number of leading examples to inspire others.
4. Work with local environmental organisations to identify opportunities to better celebrate and share environmental actions and experiences with visitors and locals.

## PILLAR 1: ENRICH COMMUNITIES AND ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### PROJECT 3: PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE KĀI TAHUTAKA AND MĀTAURAKA

#### **OBJECTIVE: ALIGN VISITOR EXPERIENCES WITH THE CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.**

**Description:** Honour our role as Takata Tiriti (People of the Treaty) and in support of Te Ao Māori. In partnership with Kāi Tahu, recognise, value and celebrate Kāi Tahutaka and mātauraka, including Kāi Tahu stories of place. The cultural heritage and stories of Kāi Tahu and settlers relating to place are to be accurately understood, acknowledged and valued.

#### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Establish an effective and strong working partnership with authorised Kāi Tahu, Rūnaka and mana whenua representatives to enable their active involvement in destination planning.
2. Work with takata whenua and mana whenua to develop a clear and shared understanding of the district's cultural taonga as a cultural values map.
3. Enable and support broad community understanding and appreciation of Te Ao Māori, The Treaty of Waitangi and mātauraka Māori (Māori knowledge). This includes raising awareness of the Kāi Tahu legends and stories of place, which are authorised by Kāi Tahu to be shared.

### PROJECT 4: PLACE-BASED DESTINATION PLANNING

#### **OBJECTIVE: STRONG VISITOR SATISFACTION.**

**Description:** Develop local, place-based plans to define market segments that align to this Regenerative Tourism Plan and aligned promotional and tourism investments. Ensure alignment to Vision Beyond 2050.

#### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Research capacity and optimal ranges of visitation in relation to desired outcomes for the community from visitation.
2. Determine optimal ranges of visitation (considering seasonality) and set objectives based on those levels.
3. Define strategies that consider yield, value per visitor, length of stay and total income/value of the visitor economy to achieve the objectives of this plan.
4. Use outcomes from the regular community forums (Project 1), community plans, and partnership with takata whenua and mana whenua to create a place-based planning approach.
5. Ensure place-based plans bring the Vision Beyond 2050 goals to life by using it as a framework for initiatives, programmes and communications.
6. Align regional tourism organisation marketing and communication campaigns with community values, the place-based plans and a regenerative mindset.

## PILLAR 1: ENRICH COMMUNITIES AND ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### PROJECT 5: WELCOME PROGRAMME

#### OBJECTIVE: STRONG VISITOR SATISFACTION.

**Description:** Develop a migrant and visitor welcome programme that empowers communities to be welcoming hosts. Use this as an opportunity to educate visitors on values. Leverage tourism as the gateway for economic development.

#### Input and thought-starters:

1. Identify arrival touchpoints where visitors and migrants can receive a welcome, assistance, and education from the destination. Determine how existing visitor servicing can support the experience at these locations and times.
2. Develop the substance for visitor education related to local values and cultures.
3. Set a goal for number of visitors intercepted and connections made by email or other methods, and identify resources that can be used to reach the goal.
4. Determine if there is potential to connect with visitors (e.g., through email or more sophisticated technology) for repeat visitation and economic development. Align this effort with the forthcoming economic diversification plan and with the Welcoming Communities Programme (QLDC in partnership with Immigration NZ).

### PROJECT 6: ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

#### OBJECTIVE: STRONG VISITOR SATISFACTION.

**Description:** Enable Māori and non-Māori to tell the stories of their heritage and connections to this place in a way that impacts visitors. Align with DoC's Heritage and Visitor Strategy, Tohu Whenua and The Tiaki Promise.

#### Input and thought-starters:

1. Work in partnership with Kāi Tahu as mana whenua to explore opportunities to increase cultural heritage experiences and emphasise the real Māori stories connected with this place.
2. Research and understand the level of visitor interest for existing or new cultural, arts and heritage experiences, and use the research to support investment in local arts, culture, heritage initiatives and infrastructure that will also appeal to visitors.
3. Work with the district's creative communities and its local arts and cultural organisations to identify opportunities to celebrate and share arts and cultural experiences better with our visitors.
4. Contribute to the ongoing development of arts, culture and heritage planning within the district to ensure that any future plans recognise the potential for visitor interest in this area (e.g., through a culture trail).



## PILLAR 2

### Restore the environment and decarbonise the visitor economy

*Whāngai i te taiao, whakakoretia te hauhā i te taiōhaka manuhiri*

**The path to regeneration begins with the keystone project: Carbon zero by 2030**

This pillar contains Queenstown Lakes' keystone project and its critical call to action: to decarbonise the visitor economy by 2030. This ambitious goal requires immediate and sustained action following scientific best practices. Both in-destination emissions and the emissions associated with transportation (including Scope 3) must be accounted for. See the keystone project on page 29 to learn about the strategies toward decarbonising the visitor economy.

The visitor economy will also take action to address all significant aspects of its environmental footprint. Many tourism businesses are already showing leadership in sustainability. The next step is for the entire destination to go beyond *reducing* environmental impacts and begin to *restore, repair and regenerate* natural systems. This exciting aspect of *Travel to a thriving future* is an essential commitment toward making the visitor economy sustainable and globally competitive over the long term. It begins with decarbonisation.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR REGENERATION

- › Reach carbon zero by 2030.
- › Zero waste and pollution.
- › Biodiversity health (Specific KPIs to be set by Project 7, Project 10 and Project 11).

#### PILLAR 2 PROJECTS:

- › **Project 7:** Measure environmental footprint
- › **Project 8:** Measure greenhouse gas emissions
- › **Project 9:** (Keystone): Carbon zero by 2030
- › **Project 10:** Zero environmental footprint
- › **Project 11:** Restoring ecosystems

## PILLAR 2: RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT AND DECARBONISE THE VISITOR ECONOMY

### PROJECT 7: MEASURE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

#### OBJECTIVE: BIODIVERSITY HEALTH & ZERO WASTE AND POLLUTION.

**Description:** Establish a baseline for measuring the visitor economy's environmental footprint. Define a process for regular re-assessment. Align with Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan, Lighting Strategy, Waste Minimisation and Management Plan.

#### Input and thought-starters:

1. Understand tourism's contribution to landfill waste, if necessary in light of existing plans.
2. Develop a suite of SMART measurements to understand the state of biodiversity health, including;
  - Amount of native reforestation.
  - Waste and materials diversion (QLDC data).
  - Health of streams and lakes (ORC data).
  - etc.
3. Define all types of pollution as a result of the visitor economy and establish a baseline measurement. Consider a framework like the Biosphere Plan, which takes the 17 UN SDGs and tailors them to the tourism industry context. <https://www.biospheresustainable.com/en/catalogue/sdg>
4. Assess ecosystem degradation as a result of tourism.
5. Conduct assessment of existing environmental protection and restoration projects (and any contribution from the tourism industry).
6. Determine an ongoing process for measurement of negative and positive impacts on environment as a result of tourism.

Note: Broad environmental impact considered in this project has been intentionally separated from carbon footprint as a distinct project.

### PROJECT 8: MEASURE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

#### OBJECTIVE: REACH CARBON ZERO BY 2030.

**Description:** Understand the current visitor economy's carbon footprint, including Scope 3 emissions from transportation. Establish a framework and process for ongoing periodic measurement.

#### Input and thought-starters:

1. Engage a recognised expert to conduct a detailed assessment of total emissions and emissions per visitor dollar.
2. Consider a top level estimate of in-destination vs Scope 3 (transportation emissions) to guide marketing plan (Foundational project 4).
3. Ensures tourism businesses are analysing their own emissions.

## PILLAR 2: RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT AND DECARBONISE THE VISITOR ECONOMY

### PROJECT 9 (KEYSTONE): CARBON ZERO BY 2030

#### OBJECTIVE: REACH CARBON ZERO BY 2030.

**Description:** This keystone project is the effort to decarbonise the visitor economy of Queenstown Lakes by 2030. Partners and tourism businesses will collaborate in planning and implementing pathways to reaching carbon zero. This project needs to align with and supercharge the Spatial Plan, the Climate and Biodiversity plan and QLDC transport plan, and it needs to support the district's growing capacity for renewable energy. It is ambitious.

To be successful, a systems approach is needed, supported by several types of funding, including private capital, non-dilutive funding (public finance, grants and philanthropy) and access to debt or equity finance. Many cost savings and other benefits are anticipated. The community is not expected to do this without support. The many sub-projects under Project 9 must be visible and collaborative, building momentum and regularly communicating the benefits.

A variety of expertise will be required to plan and implement the approach to decarbonise by 2030. This is a complex project that will require careful planning. Many of the solutions are unproven, so systematic experimentation and validation will be more appropriate, employing four strategies:

1. Mitigate emissions by deploying existing clean-energy solutions, fostering more rapid innovation, and accelerating the adoption of existing technology.
2. Understand optimal visitation levels and focus on value by increasing length of stay and/or yield per visitor and total revenue.
3. Evolve marketing plan and influence partner organisations to change the business mix, attracting market segments with a lower carbon intensity and a higher value.
4. Invest in carbon removal on the path towards decarbonisation for difficult to abate emissions in line with Oxford Principles.

#### This ambitious undertaking will require:

- Accurate data (Begin with Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) data/ Otago Regional Council (ORC) data.)
- Business strategies that focus on yield over volume
- Local, regional and national political support
- Regulatory and legislative change
- Innovation; rapidly adopting existing technology
- Build the district's reputation as first adopter
- Investment and funding
- Partner alignment
- Resilient, clean energy supply and storage
- Behavioural change from visitors, staff, residents and businesses
- Faster development of clean aviation technology and transport
- Available supply of carbon removal (natural and/or technological)

**Possible KPIs:** Total emissions, emissions per visitor dollar, number of vehicles



## PILLAR 2: RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT AND DECARBONISE THE VISITOR ECONOMY

### Known actions:

1. Take responsibility for addressing the transportation emissions (Scope 3) that bring visitors and supplies to Queenstown Lakes.
2. Decarbonise the built environment (hotels, restaurants, airport, meeting spaces, etc.) including improving energy efficiency.
3. Decarbonise emissions associated with visitor experiences, hospitality and attractions.
4. Identify system-wide initiatives that will increase the length of visitor stays, while reducing their emissions profile.
5. Reduce polluting emissions from road vehicles and relieve traffic congestion by improving infrastructure and changing traveller behaviour.
  - a. Support the development of infrastructure to enable lower and zero-carbon mobility in the short-term, such as EV charging stations.
  - b. Encourage visitors to use alternative transport options like public transport, cycling and walking.
  - c. Work with partners within and beyond the district to support the development and promotion of EV and e-bike touring routes.
  - d. Identify and support further opportunities to develop walking and cycling transport networks that serve local communities, as well as visitors, to make cycling and walking a convenient way to get around.
  - e. Leverage the district's reputation as a premier biking destination, and identify opportunities for improving biking amenities that will benefit both the community and visitors.
- f. Support collaboration between tourism businesses to reduce the total number of vehicle trips (and emissions) relating to visitor movements, making sure that vehicles are low- or zero-emission and are as full as possible (for example, providing a regular EV or hybrid shuttle to and from the airport).
- g. Advocate for improved public transport services and trials of non-fossil fuel vehicles for public transport in the district. This might include exploring the options and benefits for trialling an electric public transport system.
6. Ensure support for businesses to make the transition, similar to the New Zealand Farm Assurance Programme Plus (NZFAP Plus).
7. Consider incorporating a price on carbon or advocating for national carbon pricing to reduce complexity and increase adoption and or other high-leverage points.
8. Secure funding to implement all of the above activities and any others that move the district toward decarbonisation. This plan is ambitious, and to be successful it will take all types of funding; private, public, access to debt finance, non-dilutive public capital, and philanthropy.

## PILLAR 2: RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT AND DECARBONISE THE VISITOR ECONOMY

### PROJECT 10: ZERO ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

#### OBJECTIVE: ZERO WASTE AND POLLUTION.

**Description:** Nature (Te Taiao) and its health is very important to our community, with many people choosing to live here specifically because of our unique and special environment. A plan should be developed to ensure the environmental footprint (measured in Project 7) is mitigated. Key issues include: water quality, waste, conservation programmes, light pollution, raising environmental awareness, ecological restoration programmes, environmental regeneration, predator trapping and relevant science programmes. It is vital for local communities to be proactive, as factors contributing to environmental degradation are complex and often hard to see until it is too late.

#### Input and thought-starters:

1. Disincentivise landfill use or otherwise align to existing waste management plan. Refer to QLDC's data to waste and materials diversion.
2. Support businesses to reduce and eliminate adverse impacts on the district's biodiversity.
3. Develop and support existing education and outreach initiatives to change visitor behaviour regarding local environmental issues.
4. By 2025, all visitor economy businesses have practical environmental, waste minimisation, light pollution and sustainability improvement plans in place.
5. Pollution of waterways from visitor economy activities is eliminated. Refer to ORC data on the health of streams and lakes.
6. Ensure there are strong and effective local and regional supply chains for food and materials.
7. Reduce waste in the design, construction, operation and end-of life of facilities and infrastructure associated with the visitor economy.
8. Support the visitor economy in improving the health and quality of local water systems, as well as reforestation.

### PROJECT 11: RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS

#### OBJECTIVE: BIODIVERSITY HEALTH.

**Description:** Tourism should lead to environmental restoration, directly and through supporting existing initiatives. There are already a wide range of local initiatives and programmes to protect and restore the beautiful forests, rivers, lakes, and the unique flora and fauna that make up this region's diverse and delicate ecosystems. The tourism and visitor economy can be a powerful ally to these efforts, and it can provide unique experiences for visitors who want to be involved in nature conservation work.

#### Input and thought-starters:

1. Select or create one pilot/hero project in year 1 based on the following criteria:
  - a. Potential for measurable greenhouse gas sequestration to support decarbonisation
  - b. Importance to Queenstown Lakes' identity
  - c. Clear or existing project owner
  - d. Ecosystem importance
  - e. Tourism asset and/or potential for visitation
  - f. Resident quality of life
  - g. Scalability (of this project, or of learning to other projects)
2. Promote existing initiatives with practical opportunities for tourism businesses and visitors to give time and/or money toward improving biodiversity outcomes.
3. Investigate and support accreditation options for tourism businesses that partner with local environmental groups to deliver measurable, enduring outcomes for Te Taiao.
4. Support initiatives that enable businesses to offset carbon emissions through native forest planting projects that are local and permanent (aligned to Oxford Principles).
5. Support relevant research to understand the health and economic value of deep alpine lakes: Whakatipu, Wānaka and Hāwea.
6. Visitors and tourism businesses support and participate in local pest eradication and biodiversity restoration projects with firm targets.

## PILLAR 3

### **Build economic resilience, capability and productivity**

*Me whakaahu i kā pakihi manawaroa, kia pai ake te āheitaka me te māpua*

**Ensure resilience in the visitor economy to provide a prosperous future for business owners and staff in a way that is good for local communities and the planet.**

This pillar focuses on developing a thriving economy for the future.

Regenerative businesses are commercially successful and have enormous positive impact on people, environment and society. Success comes from reciprocal relationships that create win-win outcomes for customers, employees, suppliers, the environment, communities and their investors. A prosperous and resilient economy is a system of interrelated businesses working in this way. It delivers wellbeing for all citizens, without overly concentrated wealth. Tourism destinations and businesses following this path are also prepared for a changing environment.

Instead of presuming that more visitors will result in increased benefits, there must be careful focus on the overall value that communities and the environment receive.

Yield and the holistic value of tourism will be prioritised over an increase in visitor numbers. Similarly to a business maturing from top line growth to focus on their bottom line, the destination must consider all costs and benefits, for example:

- › Value per visitor - This can include spend while in the district, purchase of New Zealand products when they return home, and long-term-value potential (e.g., introducing visitors to the potential to study, invest, migrate).

- › The economic value that remains in the community.
- › Negative externalities, including greenhouse gas emissions, local environmental impact and social costs.
- › Accounting for the non-financial positive impacts of tourism.

The world is decarbonising, and the advantages will go to the first movers. While extractive tourism is losing its social license, significant economic development opportunities are opening. Taking responsibility is economically beneficial and derisks the future. Leaders in regeneration will command higher yield per visitor and attract the brightest talent and best business investments. This leads to a higher reputation for the district and a stronger workforce with lower turnover. The investment in a systems approach to regenerative tourism will be repaid in the creation of a resilient visitor economy that has more positive impacts on communities, the environment, and the economy. It is exciting to see the progress of those businesses leading the way.



### OBJECTIVES FOR REGENERATION

- › Increase the total value of the visitor economy, net of all costs and economic leakage.
- › Ensure workforce availability and improve workforce retention.
- › Maintain tourism business satisfaction.

### PILLAR 3 PROJECTS:

- › **Project 12:** Economic leakage assessment and cost-benefit analysis
- › **Project 13:** Direct funding for infrastructure
- › **Project 14:** Love Wānaka / Love Queenstown
- › **Project 15:** Product evolution programme
- › **Project 16:** Tourism business excellence programme
- › **Project 17:** Thriving workforce programme
- › **Project 18:** Environmental preparedness
- › **Project 19:** Innovation and economic development



### PILLAR 3: BUILD ECONOMIC RESILIENCE, CAPABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

#### PROJECT 12: ECONOMIC LEAKAGE ASSESSMENT AND COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

**OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND ECONOMIC LEAKAGE.**

**Description:** Gain a detailed understanding of the benefits of tourism that stay in the community, and the costs associated with the visitor economy. A portion of visitor spending does not stay in the local economy; it leaves the district to offshore companies that own, promote or sell experiences here. This is called economic leakage. In a free-trade environment and global marketplace, some leakage is unavoidable, but there are benefits to ensuring that as much revenue as possible stays and re-circulates in the local economy. The outcome should result in a more holistic understanding of the broader net value of the visitor economy, which includes economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. The data from this project should inform projects to develop the Decarbonisation Plan and Marketing Plan.

##### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Quantify the income from the visitor economy that stays in the community, (i.e., net of leakage) including direct and indirect contributions to tax base.
2. Assess the hidden costs associated with infrastructure, environmental degradation and community quality of life.
3. Quantify the non-financial benefits of tourism to the community, including reputation, the workforce, and economic development.
4. Research initiatives and opportunities for minimising economic leakage and maximising the portion of visitor spending and tourism business profits that are reinvested within the local economy.

#### PROJECT 13: DIRECT FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

**OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND ECONOMIC LEAKAGE.**

**Description:** Supporting visitor levy projects, such as the one proposed by QLDC, will ensure that residents and communities do not pay for costs that should be covered by visitors or the visitor economy. One outcome will be that local infrastructure is sufficient to meet the needs of local communities and visitors.

##### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Support existing work to establish an effective local visitor levy. Advocate for the levy to be aligned with the guiding principles of this plan, where the funds are protected to ensure that infrastructure and resources for visitors do not impose unfair costs on communities.

### PILLAR 3: BUILD ECONOMIC RESILIENCE, CAPABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

#### PROJECT 14: LOVE WĀNAKA / LOVE QUEENSTOWN

**OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND LEAKAGE.**

**Description:** This project completes the work already begun to create local community funds that will provide opportunities to receive and hold funds that support environmental and community goals. It may also support projects that visitors can get involved with and provide an option for visitors to give back financially.

##### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Establish a community fund that targets visitor give-back and financial contributions to support social and environmental outcomes.
2. Develop platforms that enable visitor give-back programmes.

#### PROJECT 15: PRODUCT EVOLUTION PROGRAMME

**OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND LEAKAGE.**

**Description:** Develop and evolve the tourism product in line with the vision of this strategy to build the destination brand. Shape demand for products aligned with Travel to a thriving future.

##### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Measure the quality of the destination experience according to visitor sentiment.
2. Develop destination-wide experience(s).
3. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and provide education to ensure that Queenstown Lakes and its tourism experiences welcome people of all kinds. This includes communities which are marginalised, vulnerable, oppressed or underrepresented along lines of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sexual and gender orientations (LGBTQIA+), or disability.
4. Improve accessibility throughout the district's visitor experiences, including its tourism facilities, products and services, to accommodate visitors and residents of varying abilities.
5. Aid businesses to make their experiences more competitive (and subsequently higher-yield).



### PILLAR 3: BUILD ECONOMIC RESILIENCE, CAPABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

#### PROJECT 16: TOURISM BUSINESS EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

##### **OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND LEAKAGE.**

**Description:** With thoughtful design, businesses can simultaneously increase yield, reduce pressure on the environment and residents, and improve the visitor experience. To that end, this project will improve capability and resilience in regenerative tourism practices by working alongside existing initiatives in business learning and development. The outcome of the program should be improved productivity, resulting in higher economic margin per visitor and environmental, social and community benefits.

##### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Ensure a common understanding of what Travel to a Thriving Future means among visitor economy stakeholders.
2. Work with local organisations to provide mentoring, training, information, resources and other useful ongoing support for tourism business owners, managers and employees.
3. Support tourism businesses, their guides and staff to build their knowledge and understanding of local cultural heritage.
4. Support existing and new local Māori tourism businesses.
5. Establish an effective business collaboration and peer-learning forum to explore and address issues that can improve business productivity and resilience, increasing profitability per FTE.
6. Help owners design business models that increase yield and where a higher volume of visitors and experiences is not necessary to be successful. Enable them to compete on quality and unique, rich experiences rather than on price. Two known methods to do this are through adoption of new technology and providing cultural layers within experiences.
7. Share learning and case studies of businesses that are leading the way towards a regenerative future to provide practical examples for others to follow.
8. Encourage and support successful, sustainable local tourism businesses to enter relevant national and international business awards that recognise excellence in regenerative business practices (e.g., Sustainable Business Network, Qualmark, TIA, GreenTec, Skål International Sustainable Tourism, Regenerative Travel Impact awards, etc.).
9. Support existing local business awards programmes to create new award categories celebrating excellence in sustainable and regenerative business practices.
10. Support and recognise certification.
11. Collaborate with the Innovation and economic development project team to support a tourism technology cluster and other diversification opportunities that are adjacent to tourism.

## PILLAR 3: BUILD ECONOMIC RESILIENCE, CAPABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

### PROJECT 17: THRIVING WORKFORCE PROGRAMME

#### **OBJECTIVE: ENSURE WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY AND IMPROVE WORKFORCE RETENTION.**

**Description:** Finding and retaining skilled employees is an ongoing challenge for visitor and tourism businesses. Attracting talented people and investing in their capabilities and careers will support a regenerative visitor economy while also creating more opportunities for locals within tourism and hospitality. Affordable housing and living wages will be needed to retain talent.

#### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Support tourism business owners to attract and retain experienced and appropriately skilled staff.
2. Work with existing local initiatives and organisations to develop a range of programmes that build the capabilities of the tourism workforce.
3. Work with relevant partners to understand how to support improved career opportunities in tourism, and support local initiatives that promote tourism as an attractive career path.
4. Establish a mechanism for understanding the cost of living in the district, average wage levels in different segments of the visitor economy, and the implications of establishing a recommended local living wage.
5. Support and strengthen local housing initiatives and organisations, advocating for affordable housing and making more of the housing supply available to tourism workers.
6. Determine the levers of change to manage the number and distribution of short-term accommodations. These may include advocating for regulation.

### PROJECT 18: EMERGENCY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION PREPAREDNESS

#### **OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND LEAKAGE.**

**Description:** Ensure the tourism system is prepared for potential economic shocks brought on by emergencies and a changing environment.

#### **Input and thought-starters:**

1. Develop plans to build local businesses resilience in order to adapt to climate change and more frequent extreme weather events.
2. Ensure tourism operators are prepared and understand their responsibilities so that they can keep visitors safe during emergencies.
3. Ensure that visitor support is integral to all aspects of the district's emergency management planning and that businesses understand existing Emergency Management Plans.
4. Ensure that a recovery approach is in place that fully understands the needs of the visitor economy after an emergency.

## PROJECT 19: INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### OBJECTIVE: INCREASE THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY, NET OF ALL COSTS AND LEAKAGE.

**Description:** Adopting technological innovations will allow the district to diversify the economy while decarbonising tourism. The likelihood of achieving the goals of this plan will be improved by innovation, which in turn presents an opportunity for economic development. Aligning economic development and tourism planning around the regenerative values of the community presents an exciting opportunity for focused place branding.

The range of innovation opportunities includes enhancing visitor experiences, measuring the impact of tourism, changing visitor behaviour, and supporting tourism and visitor businesses to be more financially productive. Many of these simply require enabling businesses to adopt existing technology. However, innovation is required to support clean aviation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, carbon removal, regenerative agriculture, mineralisation, ecosystem restoration – which will also be necessary to decarbonise the district.

This project team will support QLDC and related economic development activities. By aligning tourism and wider economic development, Queenstown Lakes can become known as a leader for regenerative tourism, green transportation innovation, and environmental solutions. The district can develop a reputation as first-customer, and the place to see regenerative tourism in action. This combination can serve as inspiration and have a positive influence on other communities around the world.

### Input and thought-starters:

1. To improve business capabilities, support a tourism technology cluster to explore and develop ideas that can leverage technology and celebrate business achievement that will:
  - a. Support the efficiency and productivity of tourism businesses.
  - b. Change visitor behaviour and give them a greater understanding of and connection with place (such as by using augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology).
  - c. Deliver on the objectives of this plan (e.g., by using mobile technology to access information about place, culture and heritage, allowing tourism businesses to reduce their reliance on short-term labour).
  - d. Help businesses understand the range of options for using technology (e.g., blockchain or digital tokens) to enhance visitor experiences, participation and give-back initiatives.
2. Collaborate throughout the district to test and encourage adoption of new technologies.
3. To support economic diversification:
  - a. Leverage the decarbonisation plan to create economic development opportunities.
  - b. Apply technology to reduce emissions and other negative impacts on the environment.
  - c. Identify technology that can change visitor behaviour, improve the profitability of the tourism sector, reduce economic leakage, positively benefit the environment, support decarbonisation, and aid measurement of positive and negative impacts.
4. Build a reputation as an innovative, early adopter in areas aligned with green tourism innovation, clean transportation, etc.
5. Use leadership in the area of regenerative tourism to attract aligned businesses to Queenstown Lakes.
6. Collaborate with local research and innovation organisations to explore, develop and promote new, cost-effective solutions that radically improve environmental performance.



## FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

### *Kā tūāpapa ākitūtaka*

#### Set the systems in place to realise the vision of “travel to a thriving future”.

This pillar addresses foundational work to enable the other three strategic pillars. While it is important to recognise that developing a regenerative visitor economy will be a journey of learning aligned to core values and guiding principles, the success of this plan will be enabled by ensuring the district has the necessary:

- Data to inform future projects.
- Clarity of assignment of responsibilities.
- Financial resources and ability to secure additional funding.
- Capabilities and organisational change management process.
- Connection to other relevant plans and bodies of work.
- Alignment and coordination with local, regional and national planning and strategies for tourism and the visitor economy.
- Partnerships between the rtos, qldc, kāi tahu and department of conservation, along with other key stakeholders including tourism businesses.
- Governance structure.
- Awareness and participation from among tourism stakeholders, communities, and relevant agencies.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR REGENERATION

- › Develop a robust governance model that includes a reporting and review cadence.
- › Establish an implementation plan and communications structure.
- › Establish data collection and reporting systems.
- › Align brand and marketing activities with regenerative tourism goals.

#### FOUNDATIONAL PROJECTS:

- › **Foundational project 1:** Framework for governance and review
- › **Foundational project 2:** Operationalise projects
- › **Foundational project 3:** Data and measurement framework
- › **Foundational project 4:** Update Queenstown Lakes brand and marketing strategies

## FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

## FOUNDATIONAL PROJECT 1: FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

### OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP A ROBUST GOVERNANCE MODEL THAT INCLUDES A REPORTING AND REVIEW CADENCE.

**Description:** Ensure there is effective, accountable leadership that can guide stakeholders across sectors and communities to deliver the plan and its various projects.

#### Known actions to consider:

1. Develop a formal partnership for the delivery and future development of this plan which includes the RTOs, QLDC, Department of Conservation and Kāi Tahu as the initial core partners.
2. Establish an independent governance group to oversee progress at a district-wide level. This will ensure a whole-system approach together with an appropriate balance of independence, accountability and expertise.
3. Confirm reporting and review cadence. Regularly assess performance and progress, and identify opportunities for improvement.
4. Establish inter-regional and international collaboration structures and ensure strategic alignment:
  - a. Within the regional tourism organisations (RTOs), align processes and business plans with this Regenerative Tourism Plan. Embed the visions, values and guiding principles into all work.
  - b. Within QLDC, ensure that there is broad understanding of the visions, values and guiding principles of this plan. Ensure that the work of the Spatial Plan takes the DMP into account.
  - c. Develop an inter-regional destination management planning network to support the plan's objectives in collaboration with other regions and their own destination management plans.

## FOUNDATIONAL PROJECT 2: OPERATIONALISE PROJECTS

### OBJECTIVE: ESTABLISH AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE.

**Description:** Assign ownership of year 1 projects and allocate resources (both financial and taskforce members).

#### Known actions to consider:

1. Develop an implementation plan to guide, in phases, the set of actions ahead for all projects. This needs to make the most of the connections between different areas of work. This will create a programme plan that spans all projects.
2. Identify funding for each project.
3. Assign a taskforce for projects in phase 1.
4. Ensure that communication structure exists:
  - a. Between the DMG and project leaders (for approvals and reporting) to ensure the consistent coordination needed to deliver each project and achieve the plan's objectives.
  - b. Between DMG/project task forces and tourism industry / wider community (stakeholders must include residents, tourism sector leaders, tourism businesses, Kāi Tahu and all relevant agencies).
5. Identify the capabilities (skills and expertise) and capacity (labour) required to successfully implement the plan. Develop appropriate programmes to address any issues or gaps.
6. Build capability and capacity of the regional tourism organisations (RTOs), Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) and other relevant agencies to support implementation.
7. Research, identify, and secure appropriate funding from the public and private sectors to support projects that require financial support.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

## FOUNDATIONAL PROJECT 3: DATA AND MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

### OBJECTIVE: ESTABLISH DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING SYSTEMS.

**Description:** Systematise data gathering and measurement and make it publicly accessible so that all can make informed decisions about regenerative tourism.

#### Known actions to consider:

1. Initiate an expert-led project to build an optimum data and evidence-based methodology for monitoring and evaluating the transition to regenerative tourism. This could include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Study the visitor capacity (including workforce) in various parts of the district by season.
  - b. Study visitor behaviour and travel patterns.
  - c. Identify new indicators that will inform a science-based programme for a regenerative visitor economy.
  - d. Systematise the collection and reporting of data, including inter-regional and national data.
  - e. Provide public access to tourism data.
2. Support the development of a performance measurement and improvement system for tourism businesses, based on proven models from other sectors, that aligns with and accelerates progress towards a regenerative visitor economy (e.g., the New Zealand Farm Assurance Programme Plus (NZFAP Plus).
3. Encourage and support visitor economy-related research projects in the district (e.g., PhD studies), including identifying potential research customers.

## FOUNDATION PROJECT 4: UPDATE QUEENSTOWN LAKES BRAND AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

### OBJECTIVE: ALIGN BRAND AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES WITH REGENERATIVE TOURISM GOALS.

**Description:** Travel to a Thriving Future should cause the regions to adapt and update brand strategy and marketing plans to align with the intention and outcomes of this regenerative tourism strategy and reflect place-based values.

#### Known actions to consider:

1. Effective use of data and analytics to improve knowledge about visitor motivators and behaviours.
2. An informed understanding of visitor interests, behaviours and values to inform marketing activity.
3. Align brand strategy to regenerative tourism and economic diversification.
4. Align marketing plans (including business goals, market segments and promotional/experience activities) to regenerative tourism and decarbonisation.
5. Align to place-based marketing plans in future.



# Section 4

## Governance, management and implementation

*Wāhaka 4: Kāwanataka, whakahaere, whakatinana*

# GOVERNANCE

## Kāwanataka

The regenerative tourism plan has been developed as an output of the Spatial Plan developed by Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) with the support of Government in 2021. The governance structure for the Spatial Plan includes representatives from QLDC, the Crown, Kāi Tahu, and Otago Regional Council.

The diagram on the following page illustrates the governance structure for the oversight and implementation of *Travel to a thriving future*. The components of that governance structure are as follows.

**Partners:** An independent governance group and the destination management group (DMG) enable this plan's implementation. The governance group consists of executives from partnership organisations and independent thinkers. Their role is to provide oversight to ensure alignment between *Travel to a thriving future* and the Spatial Plan. The independent governance group will be responsible for establishing priorities, securing funding and ensuring strong performance against approved plans.

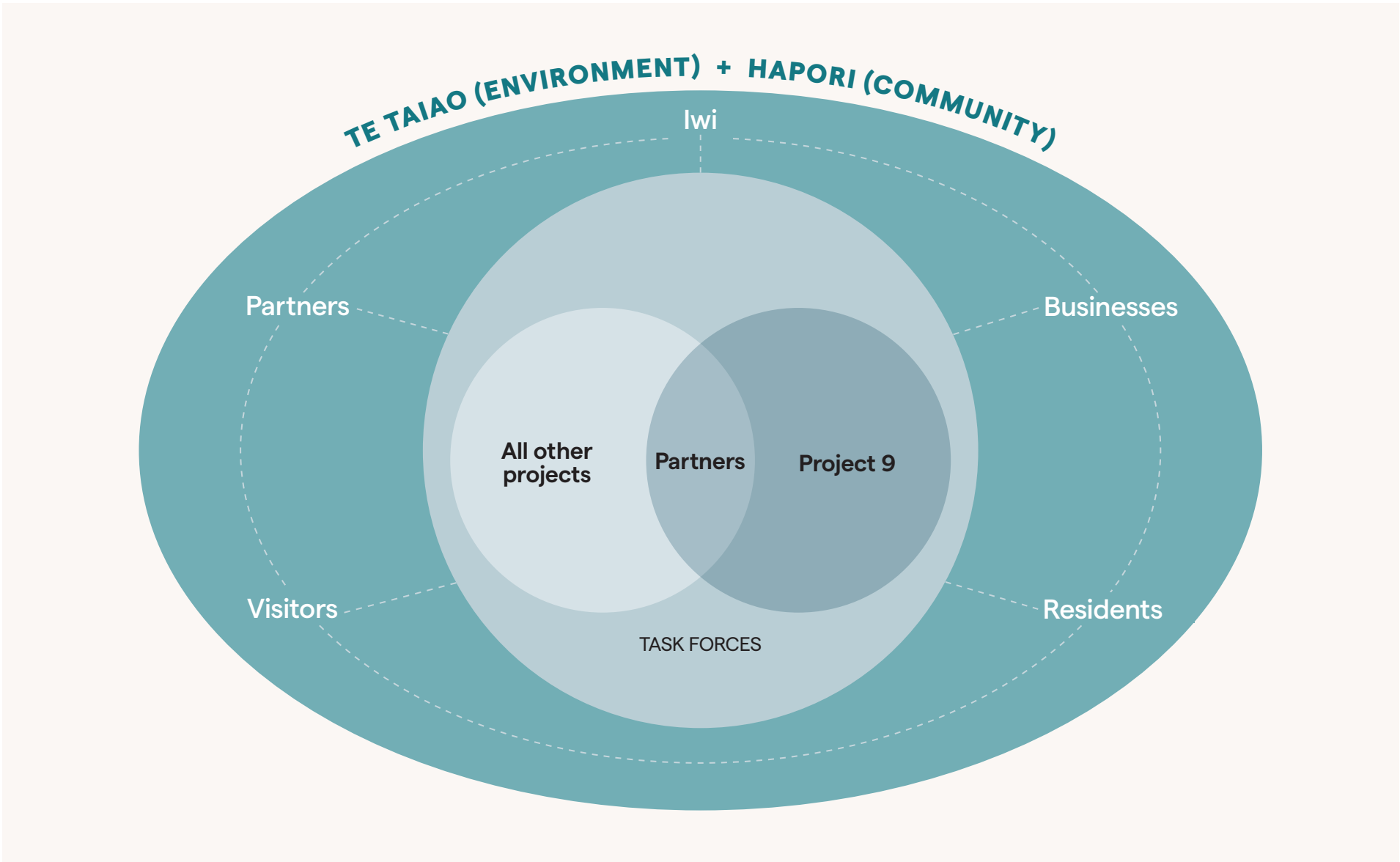
The DMG is a collaboration of partner organisations: Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism, and QLDC, as well as Kāi Tahu and the Department of Conservation, who will fully join this partnership during implementation. This partnership will assign project responsibilities to task forces, oversee progress, and engage with the community to fulfill the projects and achieve the plan's objectives. Project 9: Carbon zero by 2030 is the keystone project and a high priority to begin in year one.

**Task forces:** The DMG will assign a task force to implement each project. During the project's first 90 days, the task force will present its implementation plan to the DMG, including its recommended actions, KPIs and SMART targets (See Management and implementation on page 45).

This governance structure will be finalised in year one as the objectives of the plan are further prioritised, implementation begins and funding is sought.

**Residents, visitors, businesses and partners:** There are opportunities throughout the plan for community members and visitors to provide input. The partners and task forces will consult with these stakeholders to ensure environmental and community priorities remain at the forefront.

**Te Taiao (Environment) and Hapori (Community):** Regenerative tourism requires a community mindset. All the activities stemming from *Travel to a thriving future* respect the boundaries and needs of the natural world and local residents.





# MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

## *Whakahaere, whakatinana*

**The destination management group (DMG) will begin the implementation of each project by following this 7-30-90 model.**

- First 7 days: The DMG assigns a project leader.
- First 30 days: Allocate resources, including members of the project task force.
- First 90 days: Present plan to the DMG, including KPIs and targets that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based. Determine the role of the project team toward achieving those goals: lead, support, or advocate.
- After 12 months: Report the results against the plan, iterate for the next 12-month cycle until project completion.

### ESSENTIAL YEAR ONE PROJECTS

- › **Foundation 1:** Framework for governance and review
- › **Foundation 2:** Operationalise projects
- › **Foundation 3:** Data and measurement framework
- › **Foundation 4:** Update Queenstown Lakes brand and marketing strategies
- › **Project 9 (Keystone):** Carbon zero by 2030
- › **Project 12:** Economic leakage assessment & cost-benefit analysis
- › **Project 14:** Love Wānaka / Love Queenstown
- › **Project 8:** Measure greenhouse gas emissions
- › **Project 2:** Tiaki Promise: Lead by example

### STAY UP TO DATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAN

The website at [www.regenerativetourism.co.nz](http://www.regenerativetourism.co.nz) will be kept up to date with information and initiatives. This will support ongoing engagement with communities and businesses. The Destination Management Group also wants to share the amazing work that is already happening across the district, help connect others who are keen to get involved, and collaborate to run campaigns and innovative education initiatives that show best practice and behaviour-change principles in action.

# Appendices

*Kā āpitihaka*

# APPENDIX 1: DEFINING KEY TERMS

## *Kia tautuhi mō kā kuputaka matua*

This section defines the following terms that are important to understanding how the plan works:

- › **Carbon zero**
- › **Decarbonisation**
- › **Destination management**
- › **Economic leakage**
- › **Regenerative tourism**
- › **Visitor economy**

### **CARBON ZERO**

When the visitor economy as a whole reaches carbon zero, it will no longer be contributing to the greenhouse effect. It is not the same as carbon neutral. Reaching carbon zero by 2030 will require a relentless pursuit to cut as many carbon emissions as possible and remove the rest.

### **DECARBONISATION**

To decarbonise means to eliminate the use of fossil fuels and rapidly cut greenhouse gas emissions, which are a major cause of the climate emergency. For the most persistent emissions, we will remove carbon as close to the source as possible in time and distance.



## DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

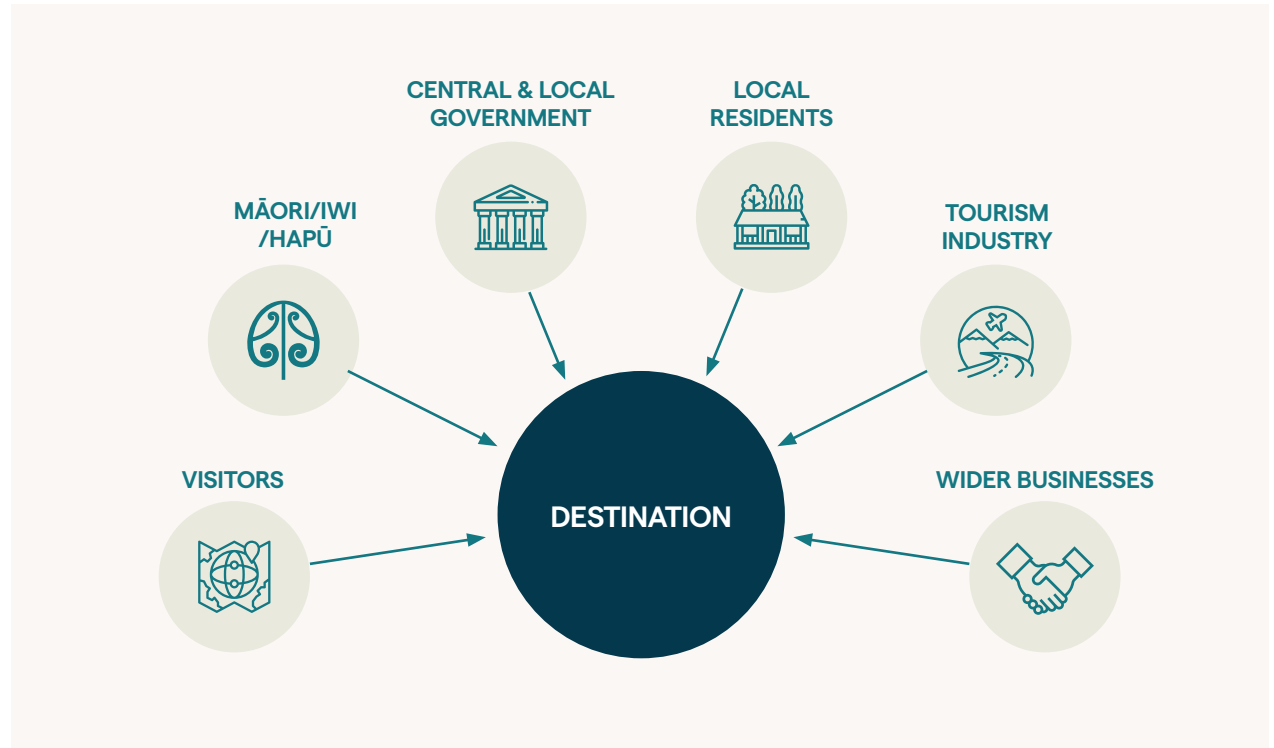
Destination management brings together different stakeholders to achieve the common goal of developing a well-managed, sustainable visitor destination. It is an ongoing process that requires destinations to plan for the future and considers the social, economic, cultural and environmental risks and opportunities. (Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment)

In 2020, MBIE published Destination Management Guidelines for Destination Management in Aotearoa New Zealand. The guidelines are intended to support the New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy launched in May 2019, which sets objectives aligned with the shift from sustainable to regenerative tourism.

Generally, destination management functions are carried out by a DMO (destination management organisation). DMOs have the role of coordinating across a range of issues from marketing, community engagement, events, environmental concerns, tourism business support services, transportation and other aspects that can enrich visitor experience, while ensuring the effects of tourism remain positive for the local community.

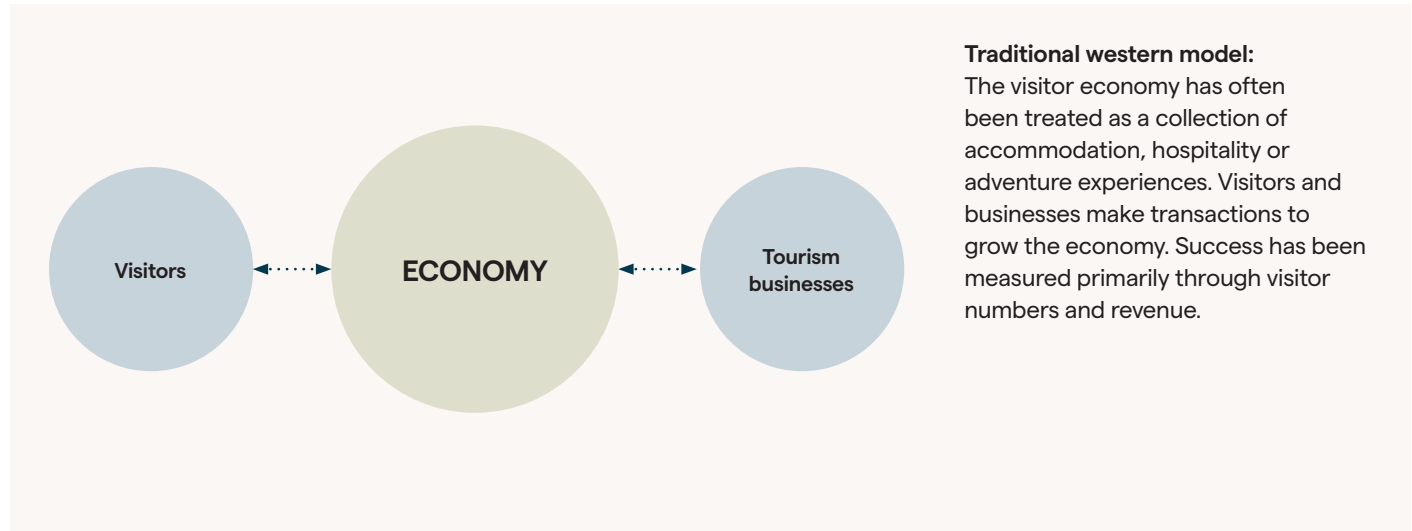
## ECONOMIC LEAKAGE

In tourism destinations, economic leakage occurs when revenue generated by tourism is lost to outside economies. When a higher proportion of revenue stays in the destination, there is less leakage and a greater benefit to local communities.

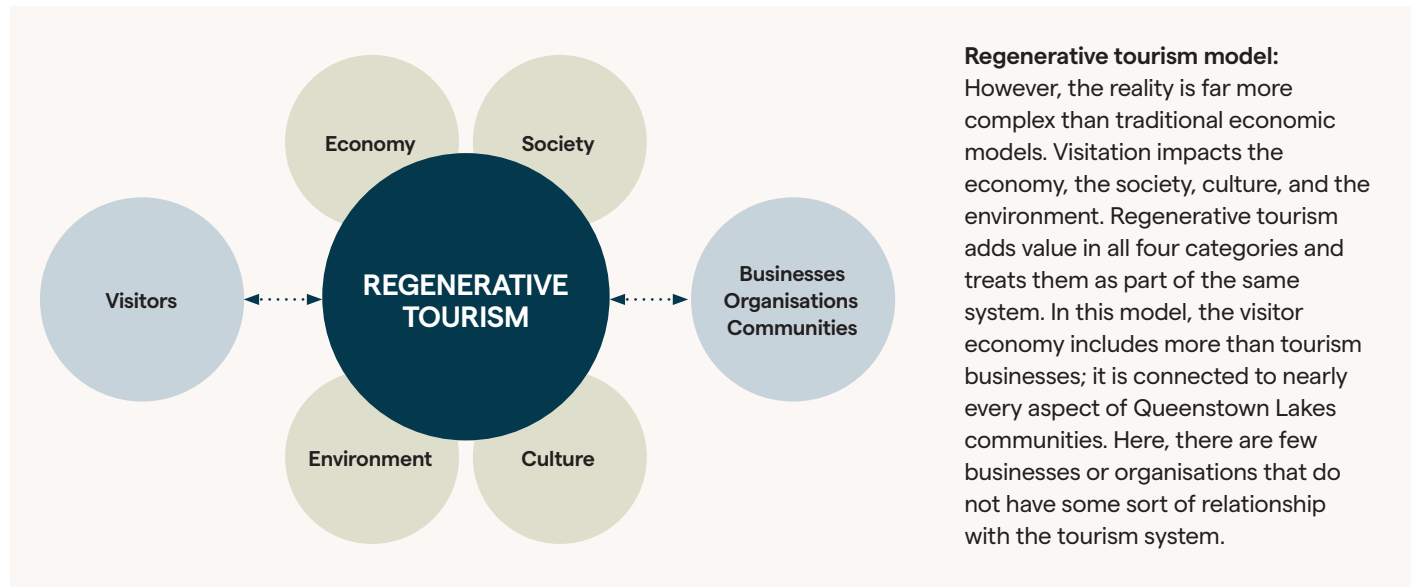


**REGENERATIVE TOURISM**

Regenerative tourism has a net-positive impact on the environment, society, culture and the economy, aiming to create a more just, vibrant, and sustainable world. While sustainable tourism seeks to reduce travel’s potential harms, regenerative tourism takes a wider view, avoiding extractive economic models. It recognises that the visitor economy is part of an interconnected system. Simply put, regenerative tourism gives back more than it takes. It improves wellbeing and is the best path towards a tourism industry the Queenstown Lakes District can be proud of.

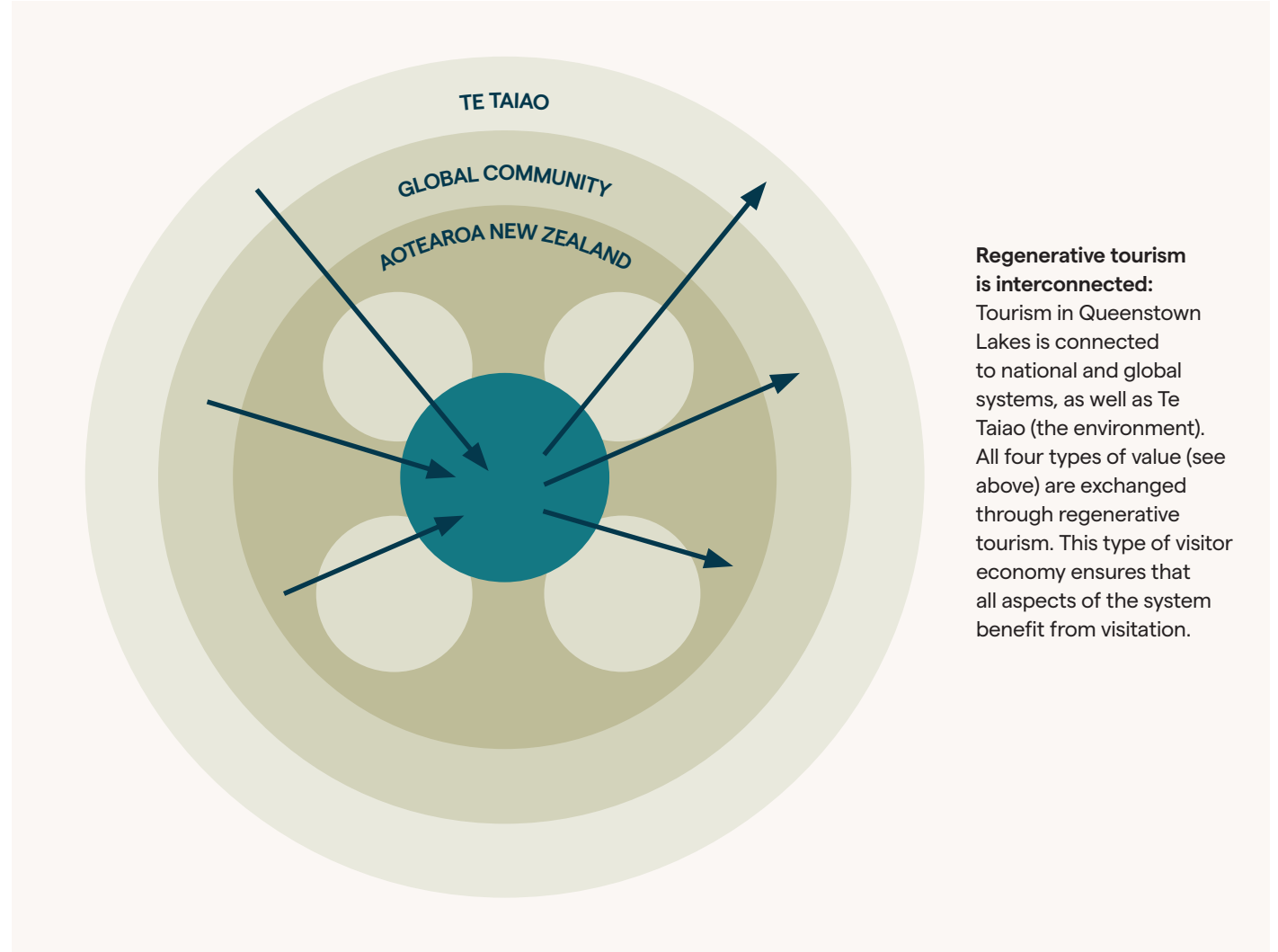


**Traditional western model:**  
The visitor economy has often been treated as a collection of accommodation, hospitality or adventure experiences. Visitors and businesses make transactions to grow the economy. Success has been measured primarily through visitor numbers and revenue.



**Regenerative tourism model:**  
However, the reality is far more complex than traditional economic models. Visitation impacts the economy, the society, culture, and the environment. Regenerative tourism adds value in all four categories and treats them as part of the same system. In this model, the visitor economy includes more than tourism businesses; it is connected to nearly every aspect of Queenstown Lakes communities. Here, there are few businesses or organisations that do not have some sort of relationship with the tourism system.

## REGENERATIVE TOURISM



*Regenerative tourism  
gives back more  
than it takes.*





### VISITOR ECONOMY

The visitor economy is a system that includes far more than tourism-related businesses; it consists of many sectors and businesses that impact travellers. All this is inter-linked with communities and the environment. The visitor economy includes the places people stay, the transport that connects them, and the infrastructure that enables it. It includes activities of all kinds, the ecosystems where those activities happen, the culture and heritage people experience, and the industries behind them – the whole web of interdependent relationships and interactions that are part of the visitor experience.



## APPENDIX 2: CARBON EMISSIONS IN QUEENSTOWN LAKES

### *Ko kā tukuka ki te rohe o kā roto o Tāhuna*

#### How will we reduce the district's carbon emissions given that tourism is so dependent on travel?

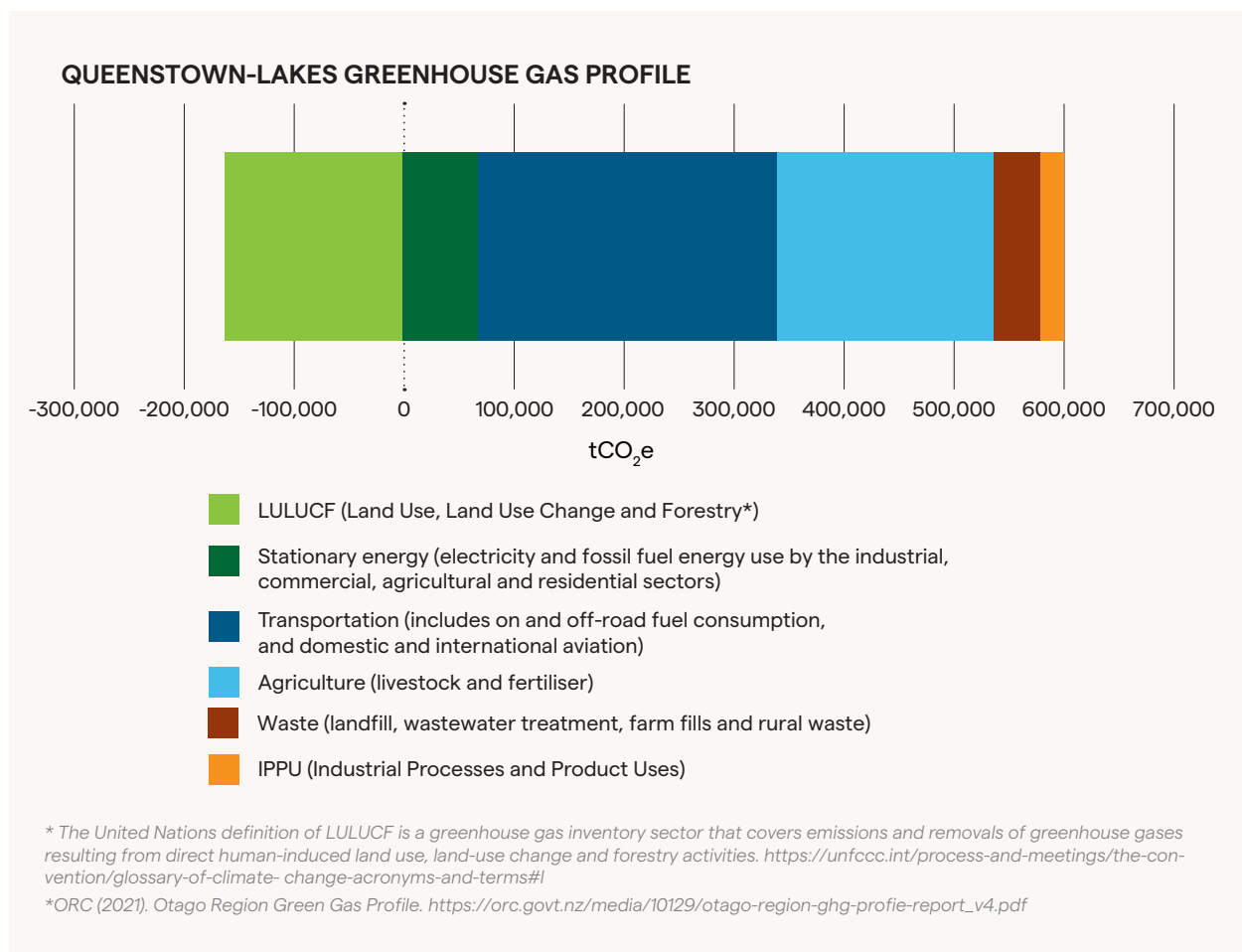
It is impossible to think about regenerative tourism without considering the means by which people arrive in the district and then move around it. Transport has huge implications for the district's emissions profile – for both visitors and residents.

The emissions profile for the district was summarised in the 2021 report *Otago Region Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Profile*:

In financial year 2018-2019 it was estimated that:

- › Gross emissions for the Queenstown Lakes District were 600,895 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- › Net emissions (once forestry is taken into account) were 438,591 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

*Please note that the data above does not account for Scope 3 emissions resulting from travel to the Queenstown Lake district. This is an area that requires more study by project groups, but Scope 3 emissions are accounted for in the objective of reaching carbon zero by 2030.*





## ROAD

Road transport represents 20% of emissions within the district's emissions profile and it's something that nearly every household and every business has the power to change. Tourism businesses also have a particular role to play in reducing the number of group transport vehicles on the road and encouraging visitors to use public transport.

The Otago Regional Council (ORC) is responsible for public transport and there is work underway to improve public transport services. Getting around by public transport helps reduce congestion on our roads, reduces the emissions from private cars and provides opportunities to interact with others. QLDC is partnering with the ORC to improve the bus service network for our residents and visitors, as well as advocating to decarbonise the bus fleet. Community bus trials are underway to understand the opportunities for public transport in the Upper Clutha.

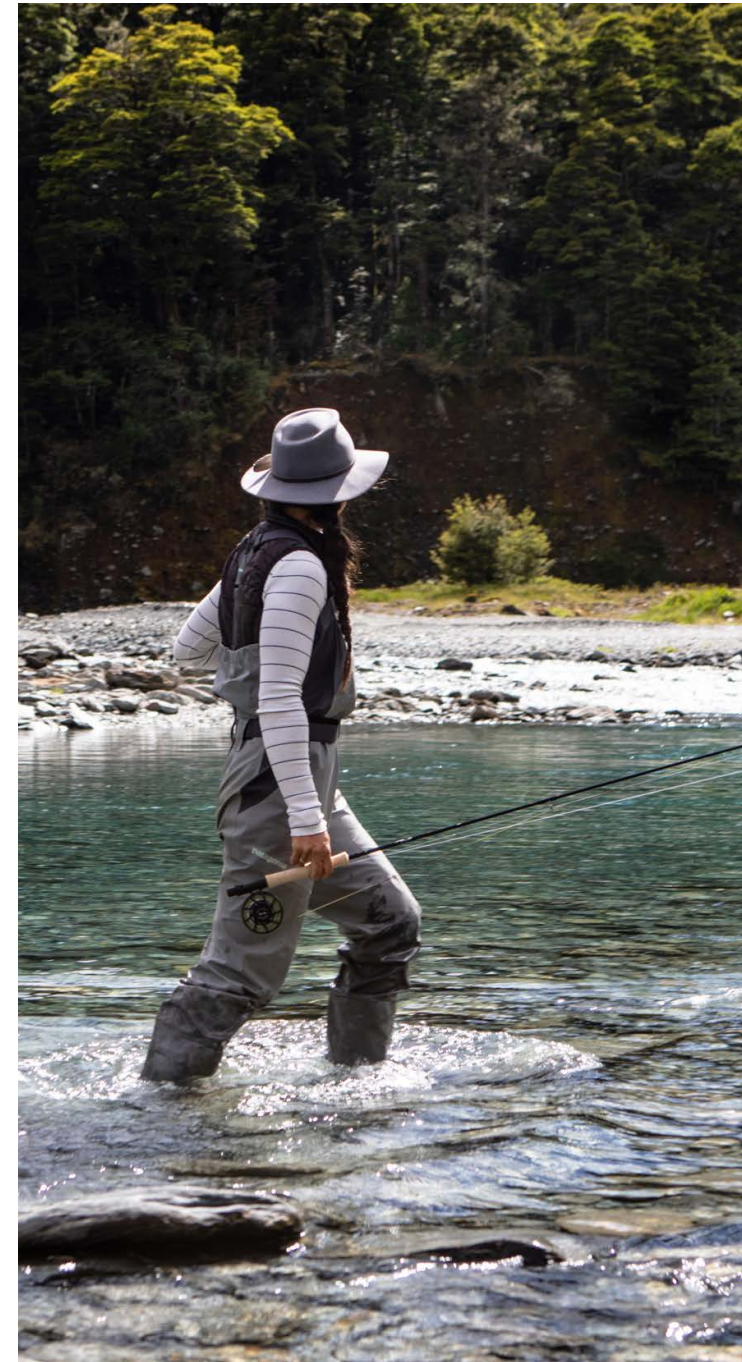
## AIR

Queenstown Airport Corporation (QAC, a Council-Controlled Trading Organisation) is the fourth-busiest airport for passenger numbers in the country and is an important link to Central Otago and the Southern Lakes regions. This makes Queenstown Airport an important economic driver of the region's visitor economy and the wider local economy. For many businesses and residents, the airport provides important and convenient connections to markets, families and friends elsewhere in the country as well as the wider world. By many, it is considered to be a positive benefit arising from the district's successful visitor economy.

However, as in most places, community conversations about airports can also be divisive. People impacted by noise boundaries and those concerned about carbon emissions frequently express concerns with airport services and strategies. The proposal for a new airport to be built at Tarras means that this conversation will continue for some time.

Aviation accounts for 17.34% of total emissions in the district and the council has clearly signalled that sustainability and the reduction of QAC's carbon footprint are issues for QAC to focus on. This includes a commitment to work with, and influence, airline stakeholders in the pursuit of carbon reduction objectives and technologies.

The district's economic reliance on aviation, including the visitor economy, and the contribution of the aviation industry to emissions will continue to be a focus for the council, and this community. Evolving technology such as electric, hydrogen, or other alternatively powered aircraft will play a part in addressing this challenge, but it is still some years away from commercial viability. Choices matter at all levels. Our district has the opportunity to be a lead advocate of the aviation decarbonisation actions described in the National Emissions Reduction Plan (10.3.3).<sup>1</sup> Businesses and communities can send economic demand signals to the airlines and the airport through travel choices. The district can also choose to focus marketing efforts on visitors from countries that are close by, whose carbon footprint to get here is smaller.



## APPENDIX 3: KĀI TAHU CONTEXT

### *Te horopaki o Kāi Tahu*

**Whakatipu-Wai-Māori, Wānaka and Hāwea are iconic lakes of cultural and statutory significance to Kāi Tahu.**

The lakes feature in the Waitaha iwi oral tradition of “Kā Puna Wai Karikari o Rākaihautū”, which tells how the great lakes of Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island) were dug by the tupuna (ancestor) Rākaihautū with his famous kō (Polynesian digging tool). Rākaihautū was the captain of the waka (ocean canoe), Uruao, which brought the Waitaha people to New Zealand on an early discovery expedition. It is Rākaihautū and the Waitaha people who lit the first fires of occupation within Te Wai Pounamu.

Around Lake Wānaka were a number of pā (strongholds), kāika (settlements) and nohoaka (camp sites). The biggest known settlement in the area was a Kāi Tahu pā known as Take Kārara which was located in present day Roys Bay<sup>1</sup>. Other local settlements included Ōrau which was on the banks of the Cardrona River, Toka Karoro towards Beacon Point and Okai Tū situated where the Clutha and Hāwea Rivers meet. A highly significant site for spiritual and traditional reasons was Manuhaea, located below The Neck, the narrow isthmus between lakes Wānaka and Hāwea. The name “Wānaka” is a South Island variant<sup>2</sup> of the word “wānanga” which refers to ancient schools of learning. In these schools Kāi Tahu tohuka (men of learning) would be taught whakapapa (genealogies) which stretched back to over a hundred generations and karakia (incantations) for innumerable situations. All of this learning they would be required to commit to memory<sup>3</sup>.

Trails (ara tawhito) in the area included: the Clutha/Mata-au, used to transport pounamu and mahika kai (natural and cultural resources) back to the coast<sup>4</sup>; the Waitaki River, Ōmakō/ Lindis Pass which connected the Waitaki with lakes Wānaka and Hāwea; the Matāura River, noted for its indigenous fishery; and Haast Pass/Tiori Patea. The Mātakitaki River provided an alternative route to the treasured pounamu resources of Te Tai Poutini/the West Coast. The Ōrau (Cardrona River) and the Kawarau were also part of this interconnected network of trails.

At Whakatipu-wai-Māori (Lake Whakatipu) a network of villages lay along the routes to access pounamu at Te Koroka, located beyond the head of the lake. Countless generations transported it back to coastal settlements in Otago and Southland on waka and mōkihi for fashioning into tools, ornaments and weapons. Settlements included the kāika Tāhuna (meaning sandy shore) near present-day Queenstown, Te Kirikiri Pā at present day Frankton; a Kāti Mamoe kāika near the Kawarau Falls called Ōterotu; Tititea Pā and another called Takerehaka at Kingston. Tititea was located on the south side of the Kawarau River, near Ōterotu.

Whakatipu-Wai-Māori is an important source of freshwater, the lake being fed by hukawai (melt waters). These are waters with the highest level of purity and were accorded traditional classifications by Kāi Tahu that recognised this value. These Tapu (sacred) waters sustain many ecosystems important to Kāi Tahu.

<sup>1</sup> Anderson, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> In the south, the ‘ng’ in Māori words is substituted for a ‘k’

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998



All elements of the natural environment possess a mauri, a life force, and all forms of life are related. The mauri of whenua and wai taoka, lands and waterbodies, represent the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. Mauri is therefore a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Kāi Tahu Whānui with the whenua, waterbodies and resources of the region. Kāi Tahu understand climate change through this paradigm of connectedness and relationship with the environment.

The tupuna (ancestors) had considerable knowledge of whakapapa, the traditional trails, tauraka waka, places for gathering kai and other taoka, and tīkaka for the proper and sustainable utilisation of resources of the area. All of these values remain important to Kāi Tahu today.

### PAPATIPU RŪNANGA

Papatipu Rūnanga are the home of Kāi Tahu identity and the seat of Kāi Tahu traditions. Located predominantly in traditional settlements, Papatipu Rūnanga are coastal and often rural. The vitality of marae communities is often reliant on there being sufficient opportunities and infrastructure for whānau to be able to live close to the marae.

Please refer to page 28 of the Spatial Plan for a map of the Rūnanga whose takiwā extend into Queenstown Lakes. These included Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, Te Rūnanga o Hokonui, Te Rūnaka o Waihōpai, Te Rūnanga o Awarua and Te Rūnanga o Ōraka Aparima.

### WĀHI TŪPUNA

Kāi Tahu has mapped 45 wāhi tūpuna in the proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan (refer to page 30 of the Spatial Plan for map). Wāhi tūpuna are landscapes and sites that embody the ancestral, spiritual and religious traditions of generations prior to European settlement. They include kāika (settlement sites), mahika kai, ara tawhito (trails), awa (rivers), nohoaka (camp sites) and wāhi tapu (sacred sites) and the major lakes.

The sites and landscapes are highly significant to mana whenua and may be adversely affected by activities such as earthworks, activities that alter landforms, subdivision and urban development, or the introduction of culturally sensitive activities such as cemeteries, crematoriums and landfills.

For Kāi Tahu, the natural environment, and how they engage with it, is a critical component of their identity as a people and in maintaining their culture. The ability to keep alive traditional practices passed down by ancestors, in places traditionally used or occupied by descendants, provides a sense of belonging and continuity.

Restoring, maintaining and enhancing the relationship between Kāi Tahu and their ancestral lands, water and taoka requires the protection of these resources, and the ability of mana whenua to be actively involved in decision-making processes to achieve environmental outcomes that recognise this relationship.

Wāhi tūpuna may have a high degree of naturalness or they may be highly modified sites with strong historical connections – ancestral places which continue to have contemporary significance. It is a matter of national importance under the Resource Management Act to recognise and provide for sites of significance to mana whenua. Identification of wāhi tūpuna sites, and the threats to them, allows areas of interest for Kāi Tahu to be identified, and allows Kāi Tahu to exercise their kaitiaki role in places of importance to them, when development is planned.

The urban areas of Queenstown, Frankton, Wānaka and Hāwea are wāhi tūpuna and despite the fact they are modified, remain of high significance for Kāi Tahu.



## APPENDIX 4: PROCESS

### *Hātepe*

This plan was created with  
and for the local communities.

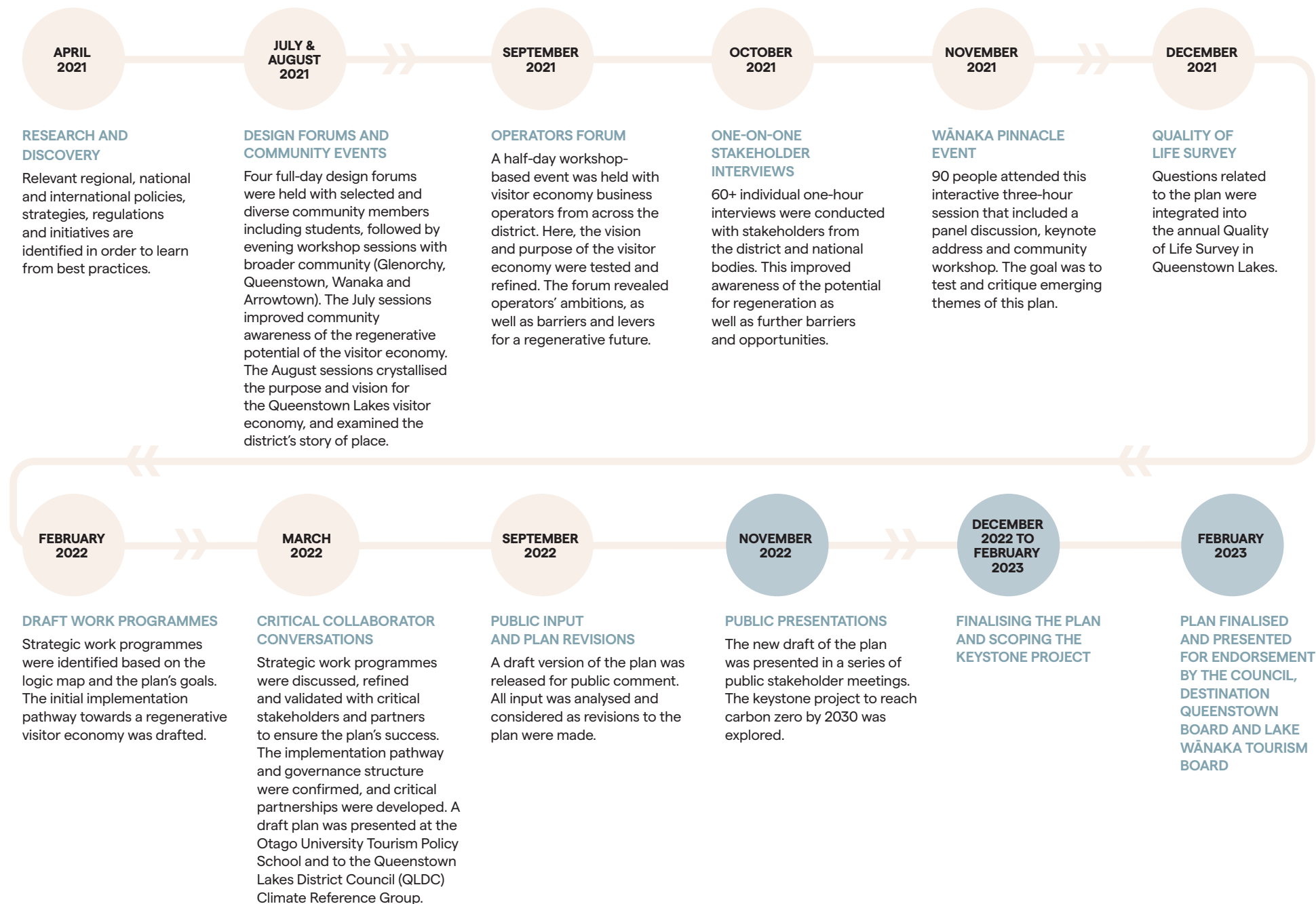
**Tourism takes place in and cannot be separated from the community. It is crucial to understand what the people of Queenstown Lakes want from the visitor economy. That is why the destination planning process was designed to be community-driven from the start.**

The process included Māori and iwi engagement. As this work is an output of the district's Spatial Plan, Kāi Tahu is represented within the governance structure at the highest level. Throughout the process, the partners have proactively engaged with Kāi Tahu to ensure their involvement in developing the plan. This is part of ongoing work to develop an enduring partnership with mana whenua relating specifically to tourism and the visitor economy. At this stage, input has been provided through the partnership within the Spatial Plan but rūnaka representatives have not been in a position to provide detailed input. As this plan is implemented and future plans are developed, the nature of this partnership will deepen.





## KEY MILESTONES



### WHO HAS LED THE PROCESS?

The development of this plan has been guided by a Steering Group made up of executive and senior representatives from Lake Wānaka Tourism, Destination Queenstown and QLDC in conjunction with domestic and international experts. Destination Think has been a partner to the Steering Group throughout the development process and lead partner in the development of the final plan. The process has also been peer reviewed and guided by a Business Advisory Group comprising five experienced business leaders who have a range of relationships with the visitor economy which provide different perspectives. Between 2020-22, the Steering Group also engaged Thinkplace (NZ) at the prototyping phase, and with Proxima Consulting (NZ) and Anna Pollock (UK) during community engagement and first draft development.

### HOW THE PROCESS WILL CONTINUE

To match local government planning processes, this plan will be reviewed and updated every three years. That enables the Destination Management Group to learn, revise the plan and improve moving forward. The timing also allows reviews of this plan to be aligned with both the district and regional government's long-term planning and budgeting processes.

The positive vision for what tourism can become in Queenstown Lakes, and the strategies to get there, rely on the consistent support of passionate residents and stakeholders who make this place what it is.





## APPENDIX 5: HOW DOES THIS PLAN FIT WITH OTHER PLANS?

### *Ka pēhea tēnei mahere e hono ki ētahi atu mahere?*

**This plan is connected to several national and regional strategies, which have helped set the context for destination management planning.**

#### **PLANS OR STRATEGIES THAT DIRECT OR ENABLE THIS PLAN**

**Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan:** A vision and framework for how Upper Clutha and Whakatipu communities can grow and prosper. The Spatial Plan requires destination management plans to align decision-making and sustainable development of the visitor economy. Both seek to improve coordination and collaboration across the visitor economy, ensure equitable funding for effective infrastructure, and achieve a low-carbon way of living.

**Queenstown Lakes District Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-25:** A plan to deliver significant reductions in emissions and improved environmental outcomes through biodiversity, mitigation, and adaptation actions.

**Queenstown Lakes District Plan:** Guides land use and development, defining which activities can be done immediately and which require consent. This is the local regulatory planning framework which the Regenerative Tourism Plan must seek to influence during its review cycle.

**Otago Regional Land Transport Plan:** Prepared by the Otago Regional Council, the RLTP defines strategies and implementation for land transport networks in Queenstown Lakes.

#### **REPORTS OR RESEARCH THAT INFLUENCE OR GUIDE THIS PLAN**

**National Adaptation Plan:** The government's plan to help Aotearoa New Zealand residents adapt to a world with a more damaging climate.

**National Emissions Reduction Plan:** This plan sets targets and actions for reducing emissions over 15 years.

**New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy 2019:** The government's vision for the visitor economy, outlining the work programmes and initiatives to support it. It seeks to enrich communities, businesses, visitors and the environment through tourism by taking a collaborative, restorative and coordinated approach.

**Not 100% – but four steps closer to sustainable tourism:** A report from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. It makes four policy proposals that seek to address some of the major environmental pressures of tourism. It acknowledges that funding for the visitor economy should clearly reflect the views of a destination's local community, mana whenua and environment.

**Tourism Futures Taskforce Interim**

**Report 2020:** A public-private initiative with recommendations supporting the NZ-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy.

**Vision Beyond 2050:** Articulates the district's future, including values, ambitions and defined outcomes.

**PLANS OR STRATEGIES THAT THIS PLAN ALIGNS WITH OR SUPPORTS****Climate Action Plan Te Mahere Āhurangi O Ngā Tau**

**2019-2022:** Sets out QLDC's work programme to achieve net zero-carbon emissions and climate resilience across the district.

**Community Partnerships Plan (in development):**

QLDC's approach to community voice and partnership development.

**Heritage and Visitor Strategy:** The Department of Conservation's uses this to guide management decisions related to heritage and visitors.

**Joint Housing Action Plan (in development - also an output of the Spatial Plan):** A long-term plan to improve housing provisions and affordability in the district, in partnership with central government.

**Ngāi Tahu 2025:** Describes the iwi's aspirations to 2025 and beyond, including the natural environment, culture and identity, and organisational development.

**Queenstown Lakes Economic Diversification Plan (in development - also an output of the Spatial Plan):**

A long-term plan to diversify the economy, establishing the district as a thriving place to live, work and build a future.

**Three Lakes Cultural Trust Master Plan for Arts &**

**Culture:** Along with the associated Cultural Masterplan, this provides a vision for making cultural life a stronger driver of community wellbeing and economic benefit.

**HELPFUL TOOLS OR FRAMEWORKS THAT MAY BE USED TO ACHIEVE THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES**

**The Tiaki Promise:** A commitment for visitors enjoying Aotearoa. It is designed to be endorsed and promoted by entities within the visitor economy.

**Tourism Sustainability Commitments:** A programme managed by Tourism Industry Aotearoa that sets out 12 commitments individual businesses can achieve towards a vision of sustainable tourism.

## APPENDIX 6: WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

### *Ko wai i uru ai i te hautepe mahere?*

**The partners are incredibly grateful to those who generously gave their time to support the development of this plan during various stages. Participation included:**

- 66 people attended the Design Forums.
- 61 people providing one-on-one interviews (see list of organisations below).
- The many who attended community workshop events in Glenorchy, Arrowtown, Wānaka and Queenstown.
- 15 businesses attending the tourism operators' forum.
- All those attending the WAO Summit workshops over two years.
- The Industry Leaders Advisory Group.

In addition to the views of partners – RTO board and staff, QLDC councillors and officers, Kāi Tahu, and Department of Conservation – stakeholder perspective interviews included people from the following organisations and groups:

- Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
- QLDC Climate Reference Group
- Waka Kotahi
- Otago Conservation Board
- Otago Regional Council
- Queenstown Police
- Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust
- Queenstown Airport Corporation
- Findex
- The Lightfoot Initiative
- Conscious Wānaka
- Federal Diner
- Environmental Accounting Services (EAS)
- Highview Apartments
- Hilton Queenstown Resort & Spa
- Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA)
- Climatologist University of Canterbury
- Take Tuia, Leadership Lab
- Mana Tāhuna
- Aukaha
- Te Ao Marama
- WAI Wānaka
- Te Kākano
- Southern Lakes Sanctuary
- Regional Tourism New Zealand (RTNZ)
- Porter Group
- Queenstown Resort College (QRC)
- RealNZ
- Check In NZ
- Sustainable Queenstown
- Cardrona Alpine Resort
- The Kiwi Kit Community Trust
- Lake Hawea Station
- Skyline Enterprises
- Mons Royale
- Aspiring Law
- Novotel Queenstown Lakeside
- Tourism New Zealand (TNZ)
- Queenstown Chamber of Commerce
- Ignite Wanaka
- Tourism Holdings Ltd (thl)
- Queenstown Trails Trust
- Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group
- Lakes District Accommodation Sector
- North Ridge Partners, Webjet
- NZ Māori Tourism
- NZSki
- E Calibar Ltd
- Wanaka Stakeholders Group
- Silverlight Studios



