

Community & Services Committee

27 June 2023

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [2]

Department: Community Services

Title | Taitara : Request to remove Council Trees from the Queenstown Golf Club.

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to consider a request to remove 50 trees from the Queenstown Golf Club on the Kelvin Peninsula in Queenstown.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That Community & Services Committee:

- **Note** the contents of this report;
- **Note** that the following request was considered per the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Tree Policy 2022, including replacing any removed tree with two trees; and
- **Approve** the request by the Queenstown Golf Club to remove approximately 50 Douglas Fir trees within their lease area on the Queenstown Golf Course Recreation Reserve, on the Kelvin Peninsula.

Prepared by:



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1 June 2023

**Reviewed and authorised
by:**



Name: Kenneth Bailey
Title: Community Services
General Manager
6 June 2023

Context | Horopaki

1. The Golf Course at Kelvin Heights was opened on 20 April 1975. The Queenstown Golf Club (QGC) has a lease with QLDC for the site. The current lease is for a tenure of 33 years till 2038, with one right of renewal to 2071. The land is vested in QLDC as Recreation Reserve.
2. In May 2023 the QGC removed 427 trees from within their lease area. Most of the trees removed were wilding conifers, the removals were approved by the QLDC Community & Services Committee in 2022.
3. The QGC engaged a Golf Course Architect to assess their tree removal plan. The expert has recommended the removal of an additional number of trees near the 8th tee. The QGC has submitted a new request to remove a further 50 large Douglas fir trees (ATTACHMENT A).
4. The QGC has planted many natives and deciduous trees such as red oaks, liquidambar, maple and elm around the course over the past five years. The QGC is committed to replanting the site and have recently updated their restoration plan (ATTACHMENT B). Approximately 1,000 natives and non-wilding exotics trees (many deciduous) are to be planted at the site.
5. The QGC will begin planting this spring and have noted that the restoration plan may take three to five- years to complete, depending on plant stock availability.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

6. The applications have been processed in accordance with the QLDC Tree Policy 2022. The application has been assessed against the policy by the Council's Parks Officer Arborist and reviewed by the Parks Manager.
7. The application does not include Protected Trees under QLDC's District Plan, trees listed for potential protection in the Proposed District Plan, or Notable Trees from the NZ Tree Register.
8. The following relevant tree removal policy guidelines were considered when assessing the applications:

4.1. Trees in a state of irreversible decline, dead and/or structurally unsound, as determined by a Council or technician arborist, may be removed as part of routine maintenance and renewal programmes, or sooner, if urgent action is required for public safety or to avoid damage to property.

4.10. Healthy and structurally sound trees may be removed to manage or prevent the spread of pests and diseases. This includes the removal of pest trees where they are deemed a threat to indigenous flora and fauna and non-pest species.

4.11. *Wilding exotic noxious or pest trees may be strategically removed where they are determined to be a threat as a pest species or cause a nuisance in a particular location, to manage or prevent the spread of pests and diseases. This includes the removal or poisoning of pest trees. Requirement for replacement planting will be determined by any amenity values the trees provided.*

4.13. *QLDC will not remove trees for the following reasons:*

- *To minimise obstruction of views*
- *To minimise obstruction of commercial or advertising signage*
- *To reduce leaf or fruit litter and other debris*
- *To reduce shading*
- *For contributing to allergenic or irritant responses*
- *When the risk posed by the tree meets the requirements of the Tree Risk Management.*

4.18. *Other - Requests for removal of tree(s) due to other issues will only be approved under exceptional circumstances and will be required to meet all the criteria below:*

- *The issue caused by the tree has a significant effect on the applicant's day to day living*
- *The tree is the sole cause of the issue*
- *The issue is not able to be mitigated through general maintenance by the applicant (e.g., clearing gutters of leaves)*
- *The issue caused by the tree cannot be mitigated by pruning*
- *No reasonable engineering solution can mitigate the issue caused by the tree.*

9. Replacement planting will be two for one in accordance with the 2022 QLDC Tree Policy:

1.13 A minimum of two new trees will be planted for every tree removed, with the projected canopy cover replacing what is lost within 20 years. This means more than two trees may be required.

10. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.

11. **Option 1** Approve the application

Advantages:

- Douglas fir trees are classified as noxious wilding conifers. Wilding conifers will be removed and replaced with more appropriate species, removing an invasive pest, and improving biodiversity.
- Mature Douglas fir trees have large shallow roots and consume excessive water, which damages golf course greens and affects turf quality.

- The QGC will be able to provide a better quality golf course through improved turf and a replanting plan that complements the site.

Disadvantages:

- The tree canopy will be further reduced on Kelvin Peninsula until such time as mature trees can reestablish.

12. **Option 2** Decline the tree removal application

Advantages:

- The retention of mature trees provides canopy cover on the site.
- There will be no immediate reduction in the carbon sink associated with established trees.

Disadvantages:

- Wilding conifers may continue to have a negative impact on the ecosystem and be a continued seed source.
- Native and exotic non-spreading replanting may not be at the same scale as that if removals were approved.
- Missed opportunity to improve local biodiversity by planting suitable replacement trees.

13. This report recommends Option 1 for addressing the matter because Council will be acting in accordance with the Tree Policy 2022 and wilding conifers will be removed, reducing the seed source of pest species on the Kelvin Peninsula.

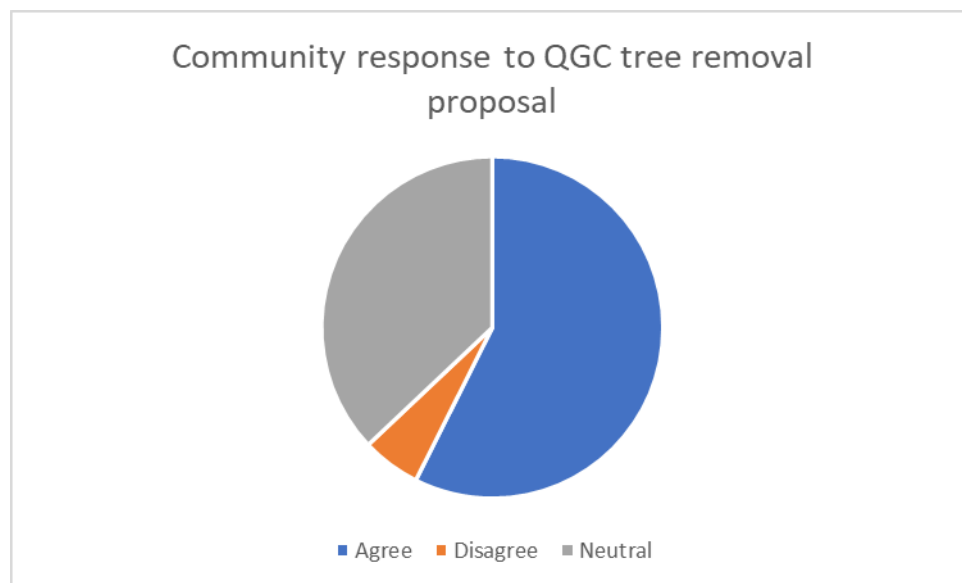
Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

14. This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because it involves a high level of community interest.
15. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter the residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes District community, and visitors to, and users of the QGC and the Kelvin Peninsula.
16. QLDC's Let's Talk page invited feedback from the public on the first QGC removals from 7 July to 26 July 2022. The page was shared on QLDC social media and via the Kelvin Peninsula Community Association media.

17. Council officers held a drop-in session at the nursery on the 21 July from 4.30pm till 6.00pm. Seventeen members of the public attended.

18. Council received 27 submissions on the tree removals. The community were asked to comment on the removals and the responses are summarised as follows:



Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

19. This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK00009 within the [QLDC Risk Register](#). Current and future development needs of the community (including environmental protection), as documented in the Council's risk register. This risk has been assessed as having a low inherent risk rating.

20. The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing us to retain the risk at its current level.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

21. There will be no financial impact to the Annual or Long-Term Plans. The removals, clean up and revegetation is to be funded by the QGC. Any saleable or commercial value in the wood is to offset against the cost removing the trees.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

22. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- ‘Deafening Dawn Chorus’ Vision Beyond 2050: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
- QLDC Tree Policy 2022
- QLDC Climate & Biodiversity Action Plan 2022
- Otago Regional Council Pest Management Plan 2019
- Parks and Open Space Strategy 2021
- Otago Regional Council Pest Management Plan 2019
- Wildlife Act 1953

Refer to online documents here: <http://www.qldc.govt.nz/policies>

23. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named Tree Policy 2022.

24. This matter is not included in the Ten Year Plan/Annual Plan and there is no expenditure required.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

25. The recommended option:

- Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act;
- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten-Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Queenstown Golf Course Tree Removal – 50 Douglas fir (marked in yellow rectangle)
B	DRAFT Queenstown Golf Course Restoration plan