

28 January 2026

[REDACTED]
C/- [REDACTED]
Sent via email to [REDACTED]

Request for Official Information

LG26-0010 – Delegated Authority for Freedom Camping Enforcement on Conservation Land

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 12 January 2026 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

In May 2023, you advised QLDC had formal delegated authority from the Department of Conservation (DOC) to issue infringement notices under the Freedom Camping Act 2011 on conservation land for breaches of DOC restrictions or prohibitions, and that QLDC intended to continue exercising this authority. Last week, we were informed the Council no longer exercises this delegated authority (although it remains in place). To help us update our members accurately (many of whom are QLDC residents and responsible campers) could you please provide:

- 1. The date QLDC ceased exercising DOC's [Department of Conservation] delegated authority.**
- 2. Information supporting the decision, including any correspondence between DOC and QLDC officials.**
- 3. A dated copy of the last infringement notice issued by QLDC on public conservation land (with personal details redacted if necessary).**
- 4. The date QLDC last undertook monitoring or enforcement action on freedom camping on conservation land.**
- 5. Any correspondence or related information between QLDC and DOC regarding the delegated authority, dated from 1 May 2023 onward.**

On 16 January 2026, QLDC emailed you with a partial release of information relating to your request. For clarity, the response is summarised as follows:

Information released:

- Items 1, 3 and 4**

Information requiring substantial collation or research:

- Items 2 and 5**

Council advised that the volume and complexity of these records meant the request, in its current form, would place significant strain on Council operations. You were advised that if the request was not amended, Council may need to refuse these items under section 17(f) of the LGOIMA (substantial collation or research).

You were asked to confirm by return email, no later than 23 January 2026, whether you wished to amend or clarify your request, and in what manner. Council advised that because consultation was issued within seven working days of receiving your request, any refinement or amendment you choose to make will be treated as a new request under section 13(7) of the LGOIMA. Therefore, a new 20-working-day response timeframe will apply from the date your amended request is received.

On 26 November 2025, you emailed Council acknowledging receipt of the information provided and advising that you wish to amend the request, as follows:

- **Now that we know QLDC ceased exercising its delegated authority on 3 December 2024, would it be simpler to narrow the search parameters to correspondence that specifically discusses the delegated authority itself, and the decision-making process or discussions relating to QLDC's plans to cease exercising that authority?**

QLDC RESPONSE

Consultation with requester

QLDC carried out a search of its email archives for relevant correspondence dated between 1 May 2023 and 31 December 2024. Two separate searches were undertaken:

1. Emails containing the term 'freedom camp', sent to or received from email addresses with the domain 'doc.govt.nz'. The search initially identified 180 emails which, after removal of duplicates, will require review of the content to determine whether they fall within the scope of your request.
2. Emails containing the term 'delegated authority', sent to or received from email addresses with the domain 'doc.govt.nz'. The search initially identified 221 emails which, after removal of duplicates, will require review of the content to determine whether they fall within the scope of your request.

Your request as currently framed will be very difficult to meet without substantial collation or research. It involves a considerable amount of information, and responding in its present form would place a considerable strain on our operations. We have considered whether charging a fee or extending the response timeframe, as required under section 17(f) of the LGOIMA, would assist in meeting your request.

However, we have determined that neither charging nor extending the timeframe would help in this situation. Extending the timeframe would not alleviate the operational challenges we face, and charging would not address the underlying issue of resource constraints in processing such a large volume of information. Therefore, neither charging nor an extension would effectively resolve the issue.

Unless your request is amended, we will have to refuse it under section 17(f) of the LGOIMA, which applies where the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Please inform us before **2 February 2026** by return email whether you are prepared to amend or clarify your request and, if so, how. You may consider:

- Date range: Further limiting the information to materials created or received between [insert specific start date] and [insert end date].
- Staff: Limiting correspondence to those involving [insert relevant staff names or roles, e.g., Customer Services Manager, or Regulatory Support Manager, etc.
- Focus areas: Further identifying areas of particular interest, key points, documentation or analysis essential to the needs of the information requested e.g., parking restrictions, signage, customer complaints, etc.

If the above considerations are acceptable to you, it may enable us to deliver a meaningful and accurate response within a reasonable timeframe.

Partial release of information

- **Now that we know QLDC ceased exercising its delegated authority on 3 December 2024, would it be simpler to narrow the search parameters to correspondence that specifically discusses the delegated authority itself, and the decision-making process or discussions relating to QLDC's plans to cease exercising that authority?**

In response to your request, we consulted with the QLDC Regulatory Team, who located an [email thread](#) dated between 8 December 2018 and 3 December 2019, sent by the then DOC Operations Manager to the then QLDC Regulatory Support Manager. The emails discussed the process of further restricting the Kawarau Bridge (AJ Hackett) site for freedom camping. Minor redactions have been applied, and the reasons for these redactions are outlined below.

Please note that the enclose links will expire on 27 February 2026, 1:56 PM (UTC+12:00) Auckland, Wellington.

Decision to withhold information

We have good reason under section 7(2)(f)(ii) of the LGOIMA for withholding part of the information requested. We consider it is necessary to withhold this information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 7(2)(f) - maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through—
 - ii. the protection of such members, officers, employees, and persons from improper pressure or harassment.

Section 7(2)(f)(ii) of the LGOIMA protects individuals—such as members, officers, and employees—from improper pressure or harassment, ensuring the effective conduct of public affairs. This provision safeguards public officials from undue influence or intimidation, enabling them to perform their duties impartially and effectively.

In this case, we have withheld the names, emails and direct lines of Council officers, to avoid the risk of harassment. The protection of these individuals from improper pressure or harassment takes precedence over the public interest in disclosing specific information. Releasing the names and contact details could potentially lead to undue pressure or intimidation, which could undermine the effective conduct of public affairs and harm the safety and well-being of those involved.

After careful consideration, the Council has concluded that preserving both individual rights and the integrity of public offices outweighs any public interest considerations that might otherwise support disclosure.

Public interest considerations

In assessing whether to withhold information, QLDC carefully evaluates the public interest—particularly whether disclosure would enhance transparency, accountability, or informed public engagement. This assessment includes weighing those benefits against the potential harm that could result from releasing the information.

QLDC recognises the public interest in promoting transparency and accountability of local authority members and officials, as well as the broader interest in good governance. We are committed to releasing information wherever possible. However, in this instance, QLDC considers that the need to protect the identities of Council officers, to avoid the risk of harassment outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Release of the information could potentially lead to undue pressure or intimidation, which could undermine the effective conduct of public affairs and harm the safety and well-being of those involved.

Therefore, QLDC has determined that section 7(2)(f)(ii) of the LGOIMA applies. This provision allows for the withholding of information to protect individuals from improper pressure or harassment. In this case, no overriding public interest has been identified that would justify its release.

Right to review the above decision

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

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact Rebecca.Pitts@qldc.govt.nz (Engagement and Communications Manager).

We trust that the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,

██████

Democracy Services Team
Corporate Services | Queenstown Lakes District Council
P: +64 3 441 0499
E: informationrequest@qldc.govt.nz

From: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tue, 3 Dec 2024 16:14:13 +1300
To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>
Cc: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: QLDC delegation

Thanks [REDACTED]

Really appreciate the heads up.

With no MBIE funding and not much income from the bylaw being revoked, this area hasn't made it to our regularly patrolled route this year. However if things get messy out there please don't be afraid to reach out and we will reassess and see if there is anything we can do to assist you.

Regards
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Manager Regulatory Support, Animal Control and
Parking | Finance, Assurance and Risk
Queenstown Lakes District Council
DD: [REDACTED] | P: +64 3 441 0499
E: [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 3:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: QLDC delegation

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Confirming this has now been gazetted and in force. Was published in the classified section of the Mountain Scene on the 21st of November and our own website will be updated shortly.

Regards



[REDACTED]
Pou Matarautaki Operations Manager – Whakatipu-wai-Māori
Te Papa Atawhai Department of Conservation
Whakatipu-wai-Māori Office
1 Arthurs Point Road | PO Box 811 | Queenstown 9348
M: [REDACTED] | E: [REDACTED] | W: doc.govt.nz

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, 11 November 2024 4:16 pm
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: QLDC delegation

Thanks [REDACTED]
Really appreciate the heads up.

We are still working out our enforcement approach this summer, but if we can incorporate this area we will.
Given we no longer have MBIE funding we may not be able to, but this location is likely on route to others so there is a chance we may be able to still assist this summer in this spot.

If you could fire us through the Gazette once finalised would be very much appreciated.

Cheers
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 8, 2024 10:21 AM
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: QLDC delegation

Kia ora [REDACTED] hope you're well.

As a heads up, we are currently going through the process of further restricting the Kawerau Bridge (AJ Hackett) site for freedom camping. It is likely to be gazetted later this month, and we have engaged with a range of stakeholders on this matter (Bungy, NZMCA, Iwi, Conservation Board etc).

The gazette will leave 10 sites available for freedom camping on a first in, first served basis and these will be clearly marked in the gazette and at the site. The other restrictions (timing etc) will still remain. As the delegation gives authority to carry out compliance in line with the DOC website (noting the DOC website will be updated once the decision is made), QLDC will be able to carry out compliance at this site in line with the restrictions as you wish.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Regards.



[REDACTED]
Pou Matarautaki Operations Manager – Whakatipu-wai-Māori
Te Papa Atawhai Department of Conservation

Whakatipu-wai-Māori Office
1 Arthurs Point Road | PO Box 811 | Queenstown 9348
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