

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee
3 March 2022

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata mot e Rāraki take 4

Department: Corporate Services

Title | Taitara QLDC Organisational Health Safety and Wellbeing Performance

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee with a regular update on the Health & Safety performance of the organisation.

RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report.

Prepared by:



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14/02/2022

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Meghan Pagey
People & Capability Director

14/02/2022

CONTEXT | HORPOAKI

- 1 Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) has duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent regulations to ensure the safety of employees, and all other persons, at, or in, the vicinity of work or subsequently affected by the work. This duty is upheld through QLDC's safety management system, which is guided by good practice and designed to address operational risks and workforce behaviour.

ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

2 Reporting period

As health, safety and wellbeing information is captured at the end of each calendar month, the statistics captured in this report cover the period 1 September 2021 through 31 January 2022.

3 Key Risks

Key organisational health and safety risk themes that require continuous or improved management, are outlined below:

a. Contractor Activities

Refers to contract workers and work, engaged by or on behalf of QLDC

b. Fleet Operations

Refers to all QLDC work related vehicle and mobile plant use

c. Public Interaction

Refers to all direct engagement with the public for work purposes

d. Fitness for Work

Refers to workers physical & mental capacity to perform work safely

e. Isolated Workers

Refers to workers operating alone or from remote locations

f. Volunteer Activities

Refers to volunteer workers and work, engaged by or on behalf of QLDC

4 Health & Safety Committee Chair: Quarterly Summary

For this reporting period (1 September 2021 to 31 January 2022), COVID-19 has been the key area of focus, especially as the new variants 'Delta' and 'Omicron' arrived in New Zealand. QLDC has continued to support central government's vaccination drive, and it was pleasing to see the Queenstown Lakes District achieve 95.9% first-dose vaccinations by 1 December 2021.

The Business Continuity Planning (BCP) team continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss the impacts and on-going changes of COVID-19. The team have been particularly proactive to ensure processes are in place to ensure continuity of service to our customers and communities. This team also provides clear and regular communication to staff.

The mental health and wellbeing of staff remains a focus for the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Committee. We acknowledge that these are challenging times for many in the community, but we are concerned at the increase in incidents of aggressive behaviour and abuse toward staff. As an organisation we are supporting staff and providing training tools to help deal with these situations, as well as offering services such as [Good Yarn](#) (an in house forum) and EAP services.

QLDC continues to promote the monthly wellbeing calendar and participation in these events remains high. The Mental Health Awareness Week and Gratitude Month have been particularly well received.

5 Health and Safety Manager

COVID-19

This reporting period saw the country transition from the Alert Level system to the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF) on 2 December 2021 with the South Island at the Orange setting. The Queenstown Lakes District, along with the rest of the country moved to the Red setting on 23 January 2022 due to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 being detected in communities.

The CPF requires businesses such as gyms and indoor sporting facilities to use vaccine passes to allow entry. As part of the risk assessment required for staff roles in these areas, and to minimise the risks to the public using them, a decision was made to require vaccine passes for all staff and visitors to public facilities such as gyms, stadiums, pools, venues and libraries.

QLDC has subsequently conducted a consultation with staff, proposing that all roles (in addition to public facilities already requiring vaccine passes for entry) be required to be vaccinated. Consultation commenced on 20 January 2022. After consideration of the feedback received, on 10 February 2022 the Executive Leadership Team made the decision that from 26 February 2022 all QLDC employees are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to enter QLDC facilities. A commitment has also been made to make all efforts to preserve the employment relationship through alternate methods for

unvaccinated staff who are impacted by this decision. New job applicants are required to be vaccinated in order to be considered for employment.

COVID-19 boosters and vaccinations continue to be offered to staff through programmes offered by an existing medical supplier, and the Southern District Health Board (SDHB). This is being run concurrently with a community vaccination programme from QLDC sites in Queenstown and Wanaka and continues to be well attended by staff and the community. These vaccinations clinics will be extended to children over five in the coming weeks.

Business Continuity Planning

QLDC's business continuity response continues including regular updates to staff on COVID-19 developments, in addition to reminders of ongoing safety and hygiene protocols.

Procedures for minimising exposure and continuity of service continue to be updated in line with Government and Ministry of Health guidelines.

Offices (Ardmore Street and Gorge Road) and facilities remain open with our offices currently operating at 50% maximum staff capacity, and immunocompromised staff working remotely where required. Staff are generally split into two team which rotate in terms of presence in the office and working from home.

General Safety

In October 2021 QLDC's Executive Leadership Team identified a trend in reports of strikes to underground services at contractor sites and requested an investigation into potential mitigations. At the October 2021 Audit, Finance & Risk Committee meeting, Officers committed to report back the findings of that investigation at the next Committee meeting. A summary of those findings follows.

The underground service strikes that occurred over the period all related to QLDC contractor incidents, and included:

- A strike to a wastewater pipe which, although not in service, is considered a critical asset as part of QLDC's network. The pipe was struck by an auger when preparing a hole for a retaining wall pile.
- Three gas pipe strikes which resulted in no injury but did disrupt the local supply and were notifiable events to WorkSafe. One of these strikes involved three separate strikes to the same pipe when placing survey pegs, in this case for kerb alignment. The others were due to excavators striking the service.

It should be noted that the contractors involved in these incidents activated their response plans immediately to effectively minimise the event. They have also engaged constructively with QLDC's investigation of this trend in a clear and collaborative effort to eliminate, as far as reasonably practicable, the risk going forward.

Key findings were:

- In all the incidents, contractors had systems in place to locate underground services but at a certain point, a further step that could have been taken was either absent or not employed resulting in the service being struck.
- In each incident the service had not been fully located, resulting in the strike.
- Although QLDC does not provide specific guidelines or requirements of contractors on location of underground services, there are guidelines for working around services provided by WorkSafe, and 'good practice' guides within the industry.
- Contractors were operating mechanical means of uncovering services within two metres of the service. Best practice as identified through the [New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group](#), (NZUAG) states that within that two metres, hand digging, or alternative methods (non-destructive) should be applied.
- An increase in volume of related works being undertaken across the district, increases the risk of these types of events occurring.

In each of the strikes more could have been done to appropriately locate the services before works commenced.

Accepted good practice to locate services involves obtaining service plans, using location services, safe digging or 'ground penetration' practice. These can include:

- Operating a permit to work system.
- Potholing.
- Using hand tools or non-destructive means, such as hydroexcavators to fully uncover services.
- In some cases, the operator or owner of the service providing standover i.e., an owner representative physically present at the site to observe and provide advice when excavating close to important service assets, where the services have not been fully located and all other attempts to locate the service have been unsuccessful.

There are also common issues that must be noted when locating services, for example:

- Services can often be found to intertwine or cross each other, wander side to side and change depth. Previous excavations or work may alter services due to them not being reinstated correctly, and accuracy of drawings can be questionable if the information is not passed on.
- Using location services such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and Cable Avoidance Tool scans (CAT) are accurate, providing the conditions are right. They can struggle to definitively locate services if there are tree roots, rocks, certain soil types and unsuitable materials used in backfilling above the service.
- Graphical Information System (GIS) map updates can be outdated. For example, services installed several years ago may be obscured on GIS maps due to tree canopy cover or other surface items. This hinders location by using ground features that may no longer be displayed. Other data that may have been

inaccurately entered can also not be relied upon to provide accurate measurements.

- Services may not have been included on maps, they may be assets that have been installed decades ago or have not been otherwise recorded.

To minimise these types of incidents QLDC has:

- Adopted the [New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group -Think Safe, Work Safe, Home Safe](#) guideline as a standard operating procedure. The guide promotes good practice, has been developed by operators and corridor managers and forms part of the reference material from [BeforeUDig](#), making it readily available to contractors.
- Provided a 'standover' service for critical service assets where a contractor has followed the NZUAG guidelines but has not been able to locate the service. A standover would only be required where the contractor is struggling to locate a service and has exhausted all other procedures to find the service.
- Required contractors, as far as reasonably practicable, to have in place a standover for any non QLDC assets where they have been unable to locate the service.

It is of note that service strikes have decreased since the trend was identified and mitigations put in place. Although there has been one strike in this reporting period, the contractors involved followed all required procedures and made all efforts to locate the services. The incident was not reportable to WorkSafe, resulted in no injuries, and was dealt with promptly. This is also noted at section 11 of this report.

6 Performance indicators – Reporting Period September 2021 to January 2022

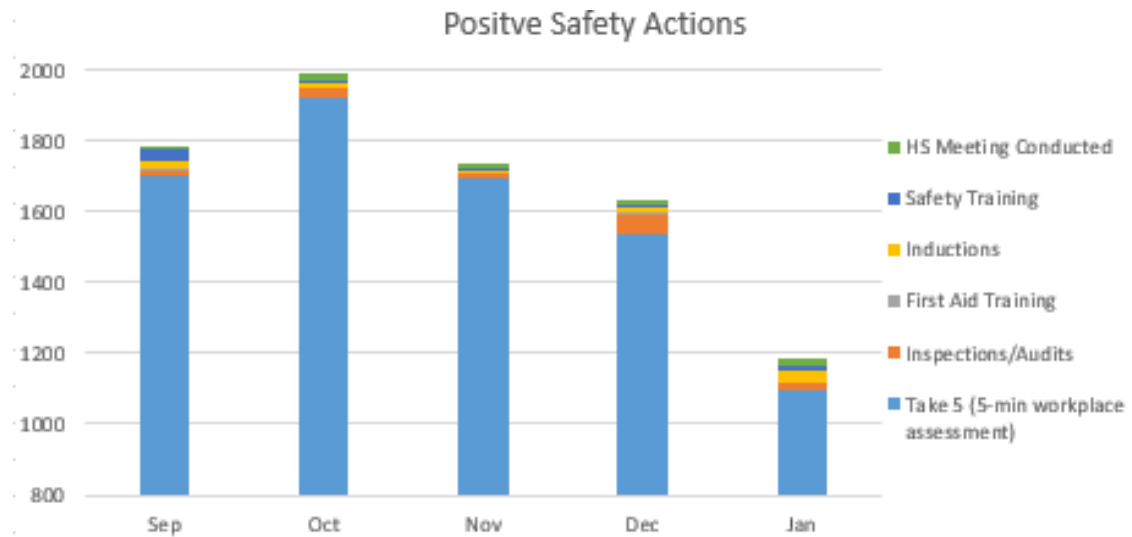
Note that results that follow from this point relate specifically to the reporting period 1 September 2021 to 31 January 2022. This addresses detailed safety performance results since the last Audit, Finance and Risk Committee meeting.

7 Lead Indicators

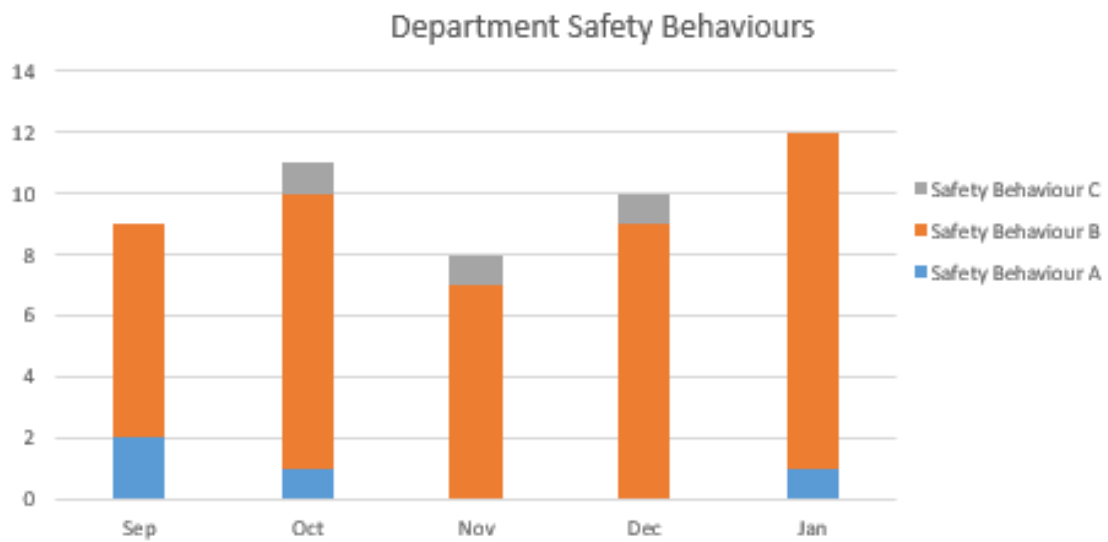
Positive Safety Actions

- a. Health and Safety Meetings conducted within departments or with contractors. (Total 68)
- b. Safety Training-Education: Any sessions conducted with employees that provide skills and knowledge to perform work safely. (Total 68)
- c. Inductions. The first step in engaging our employees in working safely at QLDC. (Total 95)
- d. First Aid Training. (Total 12)
- e. Inspections/Audits. Opportunities for improvement and to ensure that our workplace or our contractor's workplaces are compliant. (Total 131)

- f. Take 5. Any assessments that identify the risks and control measures associated with a work process or situation. (Total 7953)



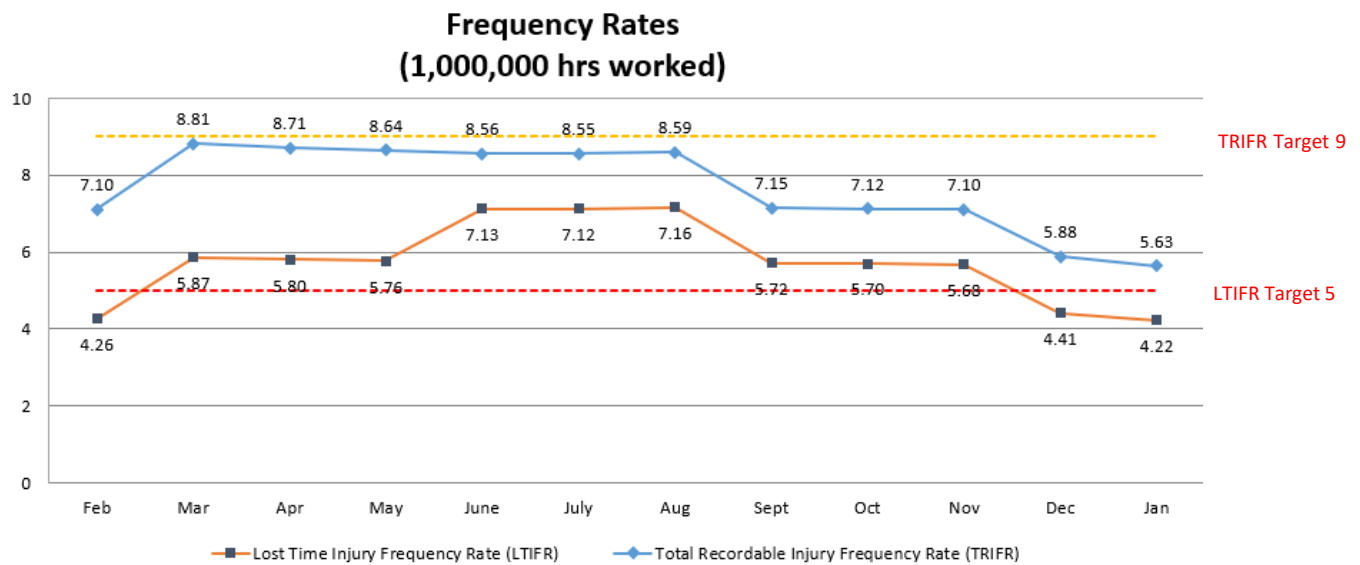
- g. **Department Safety Behaviours** Council departments are required to rate their monthly safety performance based on a simple question; Have they improved safety (A score), or has it been business as usual (B score)? A department is usually expected to rate themselves a C in response to a significant accident or incident or where they consider their performance needs improvement.



8 Safety Statistics

- a. **TRIFR** (Total Recordable Incident Frequency Rate, these include all Recordable incidents: MTC, Medical Treatment Case, RWC, Restricted Work Case, LTI, Lost Time Injury). Target for TRIFR is below 9.

LTIFR (Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate this only covers LTI, Lost Time Injury). Target for LTIFR is below 5. The number of recordable cases, multiplied by 1,000,000, then divided by the total number of exposure hours worked.



NB: Frequency rates have trended downwards over the reporting period and are below the targets (i.e. a positive trend)

- b. **Employee Significant Incidents** These are Recordable Incidents plus any Notifiable Events. Notifiable Events are notifiable to WorkSafe New Zealand.

NB: There were no Notifiable employee events during the reporting period.

c. Employee Incidents



NB: Staff have experienced challenging situations from members of the public around the transition to the CPF. Please see section 11 of the report.

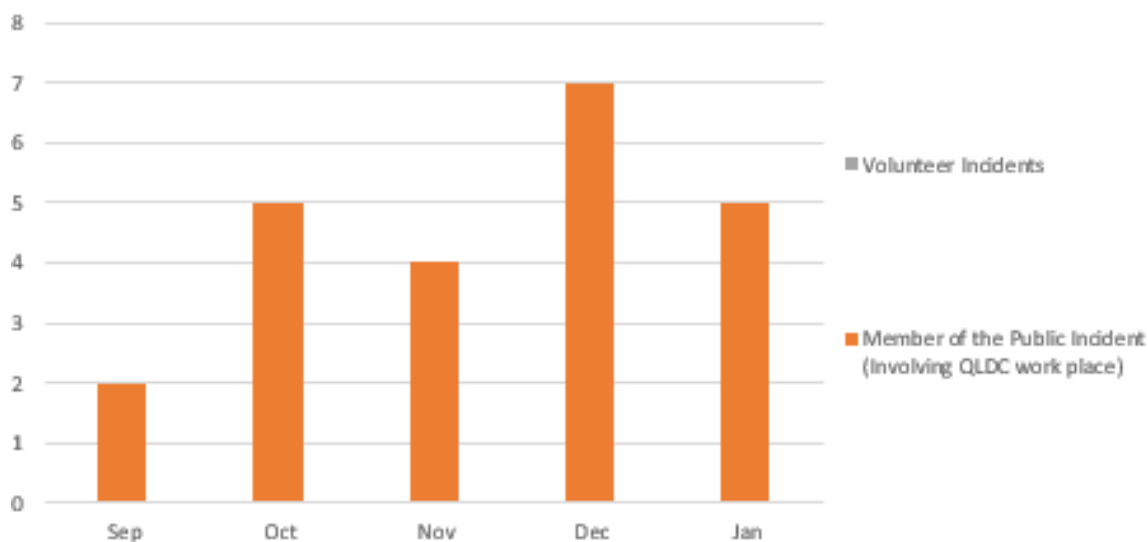
d. Contractor Incidents



NB: Incident reporting remains at a good level. A decrease was expected to be seen approaching and through the holiday period.

e. **Public and Volunteer Incidents** These are incidents involving a QLDC workplace as defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Public and Volunteer Workplace Incidents



NB: All the incidents above are of a minor nature.

9 **Significant Incidents** (September 2021 - January 2022)

Incident	Findings and Action taken
<p><u>Challenging situations for QLDC staff</u></p> <p>As the country transitioned to the Covid Protection Framework there have been six reports of challenging interactions with customers. These have ranged from complaints over the requirements for entry due to the CPF, to an instance of threats of physical violence and damage to QLDC property.</p> <p>Note: January has had no further incidents of this nature reported.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are encouraged to report all incidents and where appropriate inform the police or request our security provider to assist. • The incident of threats of violence and damage was reported to the police who issued a trespass notice. • To further support the health, safety and wellbeing of QLDC staff extra training opportunities have been offered these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience Training • Front counter safety • Tactical communications


Service Strike

While pre-drilling with a six millimetre drill bit to fix boxing, a gas lateral was struck. Area evacuated and made safe, GasCo notified.


- All procedures followed to locate services.
- The gas lateral had been cast into the building foundation and should not have been located there.
- There was no nearby evidence that gas was located in the foundation.
- The decision to drill the small fixing into the foundation was made to avoid hammering stakes into the open trench below that contained a concentrated number of services.

NB: As outlined at 10b above that there have been no Recordable or Notifiable events for the reporting period.

10 WorkSafe Notification Unsafe events/tasks that required notification to regulator.

		
Notifiable Event Type	#	Description
Notifiable Incident	0	No Notifiable Events in the reporting period

11 Communications: Critical safety warnings or information that is broadcast across the organisation.

 Safety Alerts	
Covid 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to QLDC procedures provided on YODA (internal intranet) • Update emails from the BCP team to all staff on relevant developments and Government media releases
Underground service strikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors have been informed by their contract managers that the New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group -Think Safe, Work Safe, Home Safe good practice guideline has been adopted by QLDC as a standard operating procedure

12 **Training:** Courses that have been prepared to ensure employees perform work safely.

Month	Type
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health awareness week workshops • ELT and Senior managers Health and Safety legal update • Wellness workshop. Rewiring your brain in times of stress
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience Training
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid booster shots drop in sessions started • Resilience training • GoodYarn workshops
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoodYarn workshops • Front counter safety • Personal safety (tactical communications)
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoodYarn refresher • Resilience training • Front counter safety • Personal safety (tactical communications)

13 **Wellbeing:** Steps the organisation is taking to ensure the physical and mental health of the workforce.

Month	Initiative
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Awareness week
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude month. Staff can show their appreciation of their colleagues
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude month proved so popular that it was run over this month as well
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun Safety

CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

> SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

14 This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy because it is purely operational in matter and does not directly affect Council’s level of service to the community.

15 This matter is of low significance and therefore does not require community consultation.

16 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are: Employees, contractors, volunteers, and public persons engaged with council for the purposes of work or directly influenced by the councils work process

17 The Council has not consulted directly on this matter in the past.

> MĀORI CONSULTATION | IWI RŪNANGA

18 Community consultation is not required for this matter.

RISK AND MITIGATIONS | NGĀ RARU TŪPONO ME NGĀ WHAKAMAURUTANGA

19 This matter relates to the management and governance framework for all Health and Safety risks that are documented within the My Safety Register.

20 This Health and Safety framework helps to support the development of a more engaged and capable Health & Safety culture across the Council, leading to more effective hazard identification and mitigation outcomes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | NGĀ RITENGA Ā-PŪTEA

21 None

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES | KA TURE WHAIWHAKAARO, ME KĀ TAKOHA KA WAETURE

22 Queenstown Lakes District Council has legal duties owed under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and associated regulations, which must be considered in all Council health, safety, and wellbeing matters.

ATTACHMENTS | NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA

None