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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the recommended allocation of the 2026–27 Event Funding budget and summarises the outcomes of the annual funding round.

Queenstown Lakes District Council supports events across the district through:

- **Delivery of key community events** (New Year celebrations across Wānaka (4 nights) and Queenstown (3 nights). We also support key community events including Matariki and Waitangi Day.
- Administration of the **annual events funding round**

- Support for community-led events through **Local Community Support**
- **Facilitation and coordination** across Council to enable safe event delivery

The draft events budget for 2026–27 is **\$1,050,000**, including \$250,000 allocated to the contestable Events Fund.

The funding round was highly competitive, with **25 applications** requesting **\$645,686**. Recommendations include support for **15 events** through the **Events Fund**, with a further 8 applications referred to the Local Community Support programme and 2 deemed ineligible.

Overall, recommendations prioritise events that demonstrate strong alignment with [QLDC's Events Policy \(2025\)](#) and community wellbeing outcomes.

| DRAFT EVENTS BUDGET 2026-2027 | |
|---|------------------|
| \$1,050,000 | |
| <i>This excludes Locals Community Support</i> | |
| New Year events - Wānaka (4 days) and Queenstown (3 days) | \$550,000 |
| Christmas events & street decorations | \$160,000 |
| Waitangi Day and Matariki events | \$40,000 |
| Sustainability initiatives (equipment, workshops, training for event organisers, etc.) | \$30,000 |
| Contingency | \$20,000 |
| Available contestable fund | \$250,000 |

EVENT FUNDING ALLOCATION

The recommended budget allocation for Council-delivered and supported events reflects increased infrastructure, contractor and delivery costs across all major events. Adjustments have been made to maintain safe, high-quality delivery while responding to inflationary pressures and demand.

| EVENT | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | Change | Key Drivers |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|--|
| New Year (QT & Wānaka) | \$500,000 | \$550,000 | +\$50,000 | Higher security staffing, accommodation, and crowd safety requirements |

| EVENT | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | Change | Key Drivers |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|--|
| Christmas Events & Street Decorations | \$150,000 | \$160,000 | +\$10,000 | Increased production, staging, and installation costs. |
| Waitangi & Matariki | \$25,000 | \$40,000 | +\$15,000 | Ongoing support for community-led delivery. |
| Sustainability Initiatives | \$10,000 | \$30,000 | +\$20,000 | Continue supporting initiatives to support multiple groups simultaneously. Additional resources. |
| Contingency | \$12,000 | \$20,000 | +\$8,000 | In case we don't receive grant funding. |
| Contestable Fund | \$287,000 | \$250,000 | -\$37,000 | Reduced budget. |

While the contestable fund has reduced by \$37,000, rising delivery and operational costs across the sector mean the effective reduction in available support to events is greater in real terms.

FUNDING ROUND SUMMARY

The 2026–27 funding round was highly competitive, with 25 applications requesting \$645,686 against a contestable fund of \$250,000.

| Category | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Applications Received | 25 |
| Total Funding Requested | \$645,686 |
| Eligible Funding Requested | \$411,805 |
| Recommended \geq \$30,000 | 2 |
| Recommended $<$ \$30,000 | 13 |
| Referred to Local Community Support | 8 |
| Ineligible | 2 |

Total funding requested reflects all costs submitted by applicants. Eligible funding requested excludes items that do not meet Events Fund criteria (e.g. staffing, health & safety, and other operational costs), and represents the amount assessed against funding priorities.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

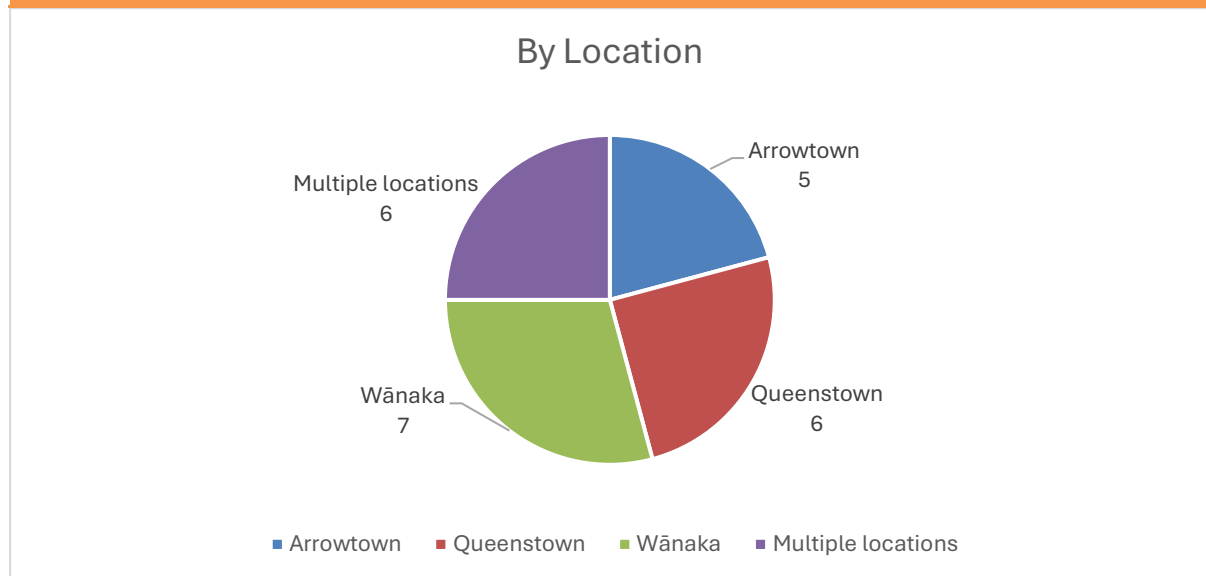
Each event application is assessed against a range of criteria, which are scored and weighted. The event funding criteria are:

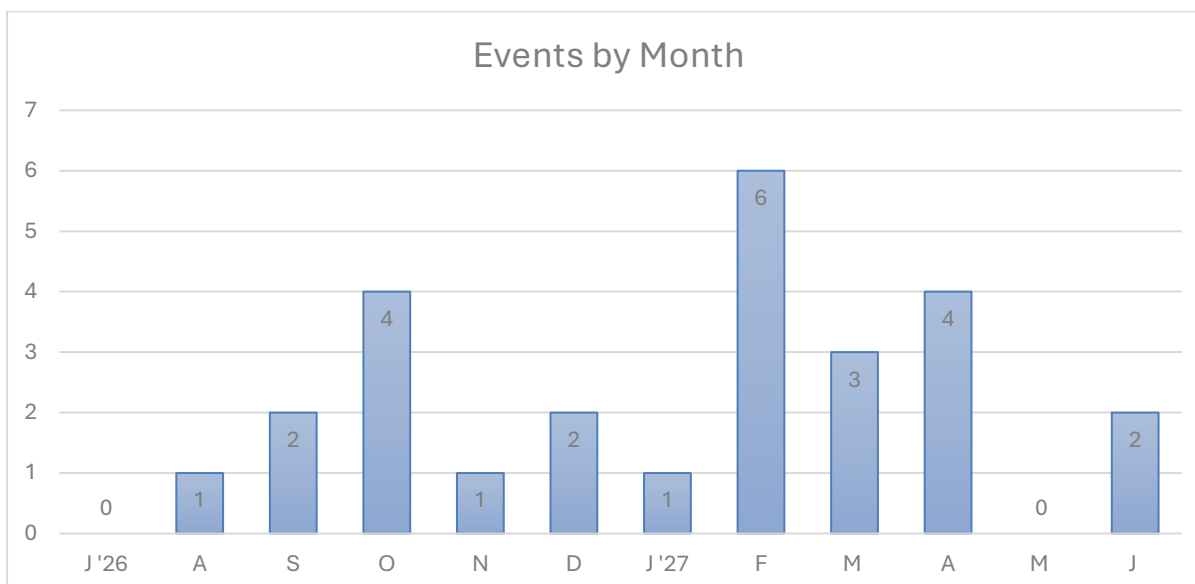
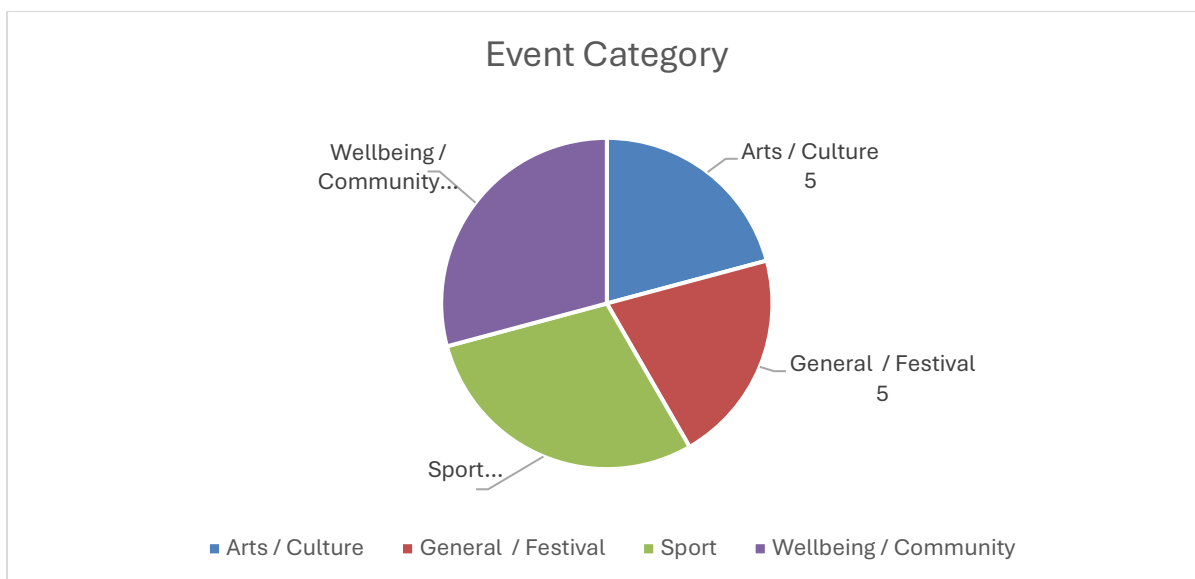
| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Environmental sustainability* | 40% |
| Economic impact | 15% |
| Community benefit | 15% |
| Event diversity | 15% |
| Financial sustainability | 15% |

*ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

All applicants were required to provide both an Event Waste Reduction Plan and a Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction plan to demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability in our district. These plans were reviewed and assessed by the Waste Minimisation & Sustainability Advisor and the Senior Resilience and Climate Action Advisor.

APPLICATION MIX





LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT (LCS)

The Local Community Support (LCS) fund sits within the Community Partnerships budget and operates separately from the Event Funding Round.

While this report focuses on the allocation of contestable event funding, it is important to note that several applications are better aligned to LCS due to their scale and/or funding eligibility. These events may still receive support, typically for venue hire and waste reduction initiatives. As of May 2026, 138 events have been supported through this programme in 2025/26.

The following applications are recommended to be supported through LCS:

| EVENT | Reason for LCS Referral |
|----------------------|---|
| Diwali Mela | Did not provide with key financial information. |
| Arrowtown Long Lunch | Commercial model with strong profitability. |

| EVENT | Reason for LCS Referral |
|----------------------|---|
| Wānaka Beer Festival | Limited strategic alignment; suitable for targeted support. |
| Ayrburn Classic | High profitability; not reliant on public funding. |
| Gin Festival | Commercial model; better suited to LCS. |
| SnowMachine | Limited community benefit relative to other applications. |
| Natural Selection | More appropriate for support via LCS. |
| The Uninvited | Funding request does not align with criteria. |

FUNDING CONDITIONS & PAYMENT PROCESS

Payment of approved funding is subject to the satisfactory completion and submission of post-event reporting requirements. Event organisers must provide:

- **Post-event report**, including:
 - Actual attendance
 - Final financial outcomes (income and expenditure)
 - Demonstrated community and economic benefits
 - Key challenges and learnings
- **Post-Event Waste Report**, including:
 - Total waste volumes
 - Diversion rates
 - Waste minimisation initiatives undertaken
- **Post-Event Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Report**, including:
 - Estimated emissions
 - Measurement methodology
 - Progress against emissions reduction targets

Funding will only be released following receipt of relevant invoices and approval of all required reporting. This approach ensures accountability, transparency, and alignment with QLDC's Events Policy outcomes.

EVENTS FUND APPLICATIONS 2026-27

WĀNAKA A&P SHOW

12/03/2027 - 13/03/2027 // Event Owner: Upper Clutha A&P Society // This event has been run previously in the Queenstown Lakes District //

The Wānaka Agricultural and Pastoral (A&P) Show is one of New Zealand's premier rural events, held annually the second weekend of March, on the shores of Lake Wānaka at the Wānaka Showgrounds. In 2027, we will be celebrating 90 years of rural heritage - bringing together urban and rural communities for a two-day event featuring livestock, equestrian competitions, and trade stalls. We expect around 44-46,000 attendees over the 2 days and continue to contribute close to \$20million per annum in Economic value to the local district as a direct result of the event. Our Mission is to be New Zealand's leading Agricultural and Pastoral Show, celebrating excellence in farming, rural life, and community spirit, while inspiring future generations.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| OVERALL WEIGHTED SCORE | 20/25 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| EVENT FUND CRITERIA | |
|----------------------------|--|

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY | 3/5 |
| ECONOMIC IMPACT | 5/5 |
| COMMUNITY BENEFIT | 5/5 |
| EVENT DIVERSITY | 4/5 |
| FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY | 4/5 |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| FINANCIAL INFORMATION | |
|------------------------------|--|

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| EVENT INCOME (estimate) | \$1,409,908 |
| EVENT EXPENSES (estimate) | \$862,250 |
| EVENT PROFIT/LOSS | \$547,658 |
| FUNDING AMOUNT REQUESTED | \$68,758 |
| FUNDING AMOUNT RECOMMENDED | \$35,000 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| RECOMMENDATION | |
|-----------------------|--|

Recommended \$35,000 towards bike parking and Park & Ride costs, contribution towards other waste reduction.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| REASONS | |
|----------------|--|

The key reasons Wānaka A&P Show has been recommended for this level of support are:

- Significant community and economic benefit, the Wānaka A&P Show is an iconic community event for Wānaka and the Queenstown Lakes District that has grown over the years into an event of national significance.

- This event connects rural and urban communities within Upper Clutha and contributes significantly economically to the area, with over 40,000+ people attending.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Worked with Wanaka Wastebusters for education, sorting and measurement of waste. Created a waste guide for food and beverage vendors to help support them in making choices and operating in ways that align with the events waste minimisation goals.
- Built own washing facility to support reusable serve ware systems, which is available for use by other events.
- Transport initiatives are in place; however, these are not currently supported by defined objectives or measurable targets.
- GHG measurement approach is still in development, with reliance on external consultancy likely required.

QUEENSTOWN LAKES WELLBEING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME IDENTIFIED

COMMUNITY: Connected communities, belonging & identity.

PEOPLE: Healthy and fulfilled people

IRONMAN NZ SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY QUEENSTOWN MARATHON

09/11/2026- 15/11/2026 // Event Owner: IRONMAN NZ Ltd. // This event has been run previously in the Queenstown Lakes District //

The Queenstown Marathon is a world-class mass-participation running festival designed to showcase the outstanding natural environment of the Queenstown Lakes District while delivering a memorable, inclusive event for runners of all abilities. The event aims to strengthen Queenstown's reputation as a premier destination for major sporting and tourism events, while encouraging healthy lifestyles and community participation. Held annually in mid-November, the timing provides favourable spring weather, long daylight hours, and safe running conditions for participants. It also supports regional economic activity by attracting visitors in the shoulder season prior to the summer tourism peak, complementing the wider event calendar without direct competition. The event enjoys strong community support, with involvement from local councils, land managers, volunteers,

and businesses. Local tourism operators, accommodation providers, and hospitality venues benefit from increased visitation, while community volunteers play a vital role in event delivery, contributing to a positive and welcoming atmosphere. Event success is measured through strong participation numbers, safe and smooth operations, positive athlete and community feedback, volunteer satisfaction, media exposure for the region, and the event's ability to deliver repeat participation and ongoing community endorsement year on year.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| OVERALL WEIGHTED SCORE | 18/25 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|

EVENT FUND CRITERIA

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY | 3/5 |
| ECONOMIC IMPACT | 5/5 |
| COMMUNITY BENEFIT | 3/5 |
| EVENT DIVERSITY | 3/5 |
| FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY | 5/5 |

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| EVENT INCOME (estimate) | \$2,608,533 |
| EVENT EXPENSES (estimate) | \$1,056,715 |
| EVENT PROFIT/LOSS | \$647,961 |
| FUNDING AMOUNT REQUESTED | \$42,572.50 |
| FUNDING AMOUNT RECOMMENDED | \$25,000 |

RECOMMENDATION

Recommended: \$25,000 towards a reduction in venue hire costs this would be an internal budget payment not paid out to the event organisers.

REASONS

- The Queenstown Marathon directly supports the wellbeing outcome of healthy and fulfilled people by encouraging physical activity, connection, and positive mental health through a large-scale, inclusive community event.
- Beyond participants, the event also supports wellbeing through community involvement. Volunteers, supporters, families, and local groups are actively engaged, fostering social connection, purpose, and pride in place.

- The inclusive nature of the event encourages families, groups, and diverse community members to engage and celebrate together.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Waste minimisation plan was missing some information and applied for funding from WMCF for using DISHrupt at race end point. The waste minimisation plan does not address waste generated by sponsors or post-event clothing volumes, which may present disposal challenges.
- Challenge them to consider going single use free on course and suggest they use DISHrupt for food vendors.
- For GHG targets are not measurable. They do have free shuttle service and prioritise low emission hire vehicles and offsetting flights.

QUEENSTOWN LAKES WELLBEING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME IDENTIFIED

COMMUNITY: Connected communities, belonging & identity.

PEOPLE: Healthy and fulfilled people
