

# Item 1: Six-month Economic Diversification Plan implementation update

**SESSION TYPE:** Briefing

**PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:**

Workshop to provide an update on the implementation of the Economic Diversification Plan, including progress on Year 1 action plan projects, and updates from film, Startup Support, Cluster Development, and Technology Queenstown. It is a resolution of Council that a six-monthly update is provided and full opportunity for discussion and feedback will be provided.


**DATE/START TIME:**

Tuesday, 13 May 2025 at 10:00am

**TIME BREAKDOWN:**

Presentation: 30 minutes  
Questions or Debate/Discussion: 30 minutes

**Prepared by:**



**Name:** Peter Harris  
**Title:** Economic Futures Manager

30 April 2025

**Reviewed and Authorised by:**



**Name:** Michelle Morss  
**Title:** GM - Strategy & Policy

1 May 2025

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A	Economic Diversification Plan: Six monthly implementation update
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# Economic Diversification Plan 6 monthly implementation update



# Agenda



ECONOMIC  
FUTURES



QUEENSTOWN  
LAKES DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

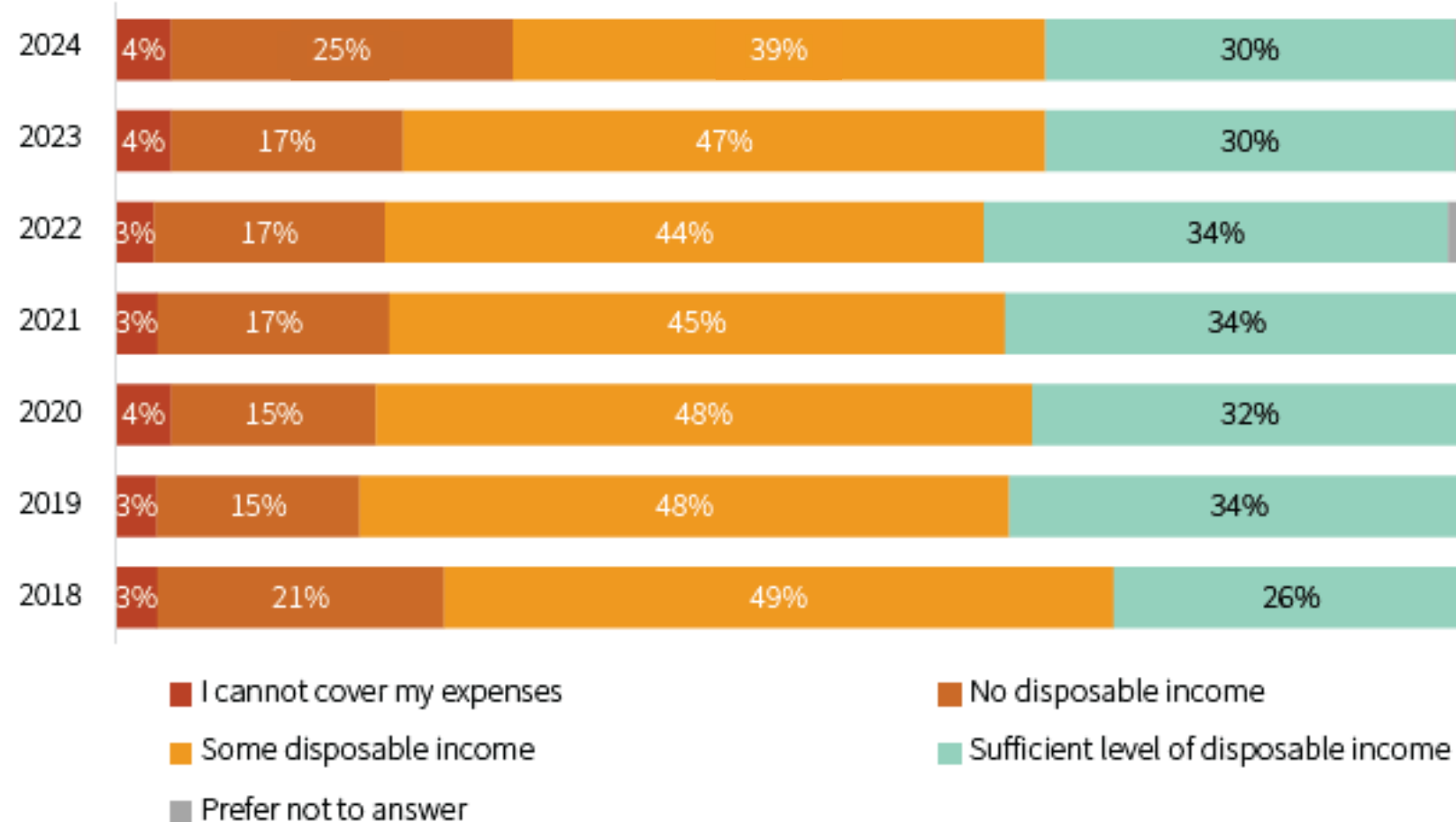
- Introductions
- Insights from the Quality of Life survey
- Update on year 1 action plan projects
- Updates from Film, Startup support, Cluster support and Technology Queenstown



There are many in our  
district struggling to  
make ends meet, and to  
see a future for  
themselves here

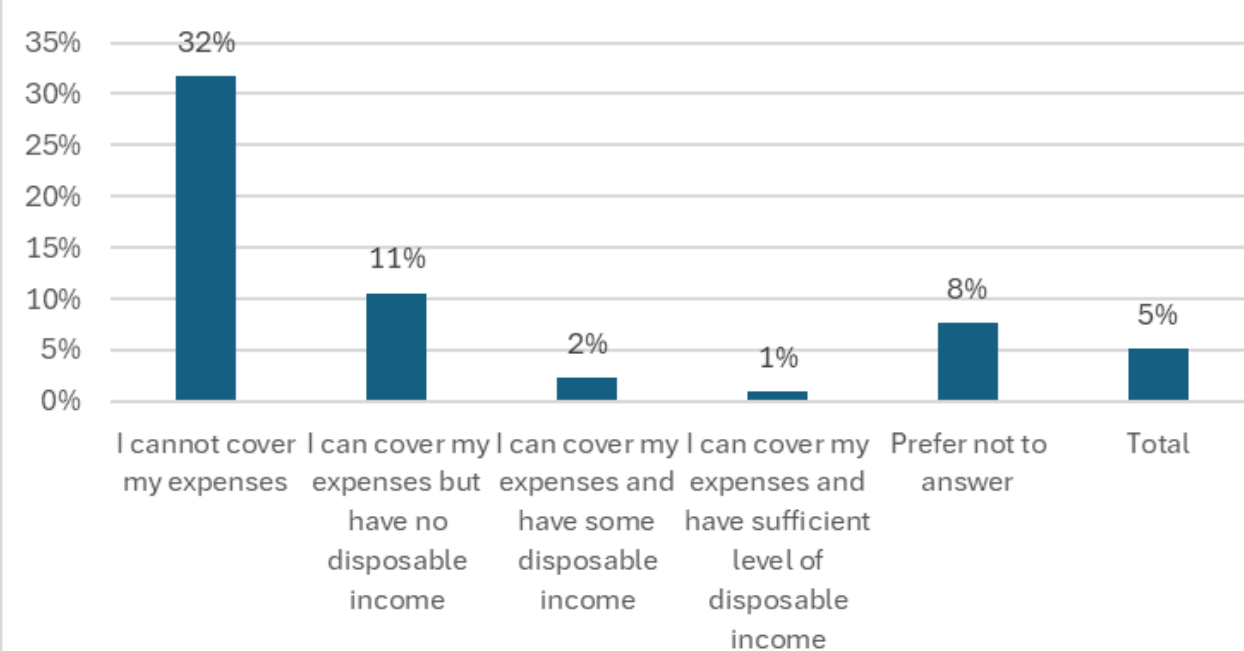
# Almost 1 in 3 residents have no spare cash

## Ability to cover basic needs

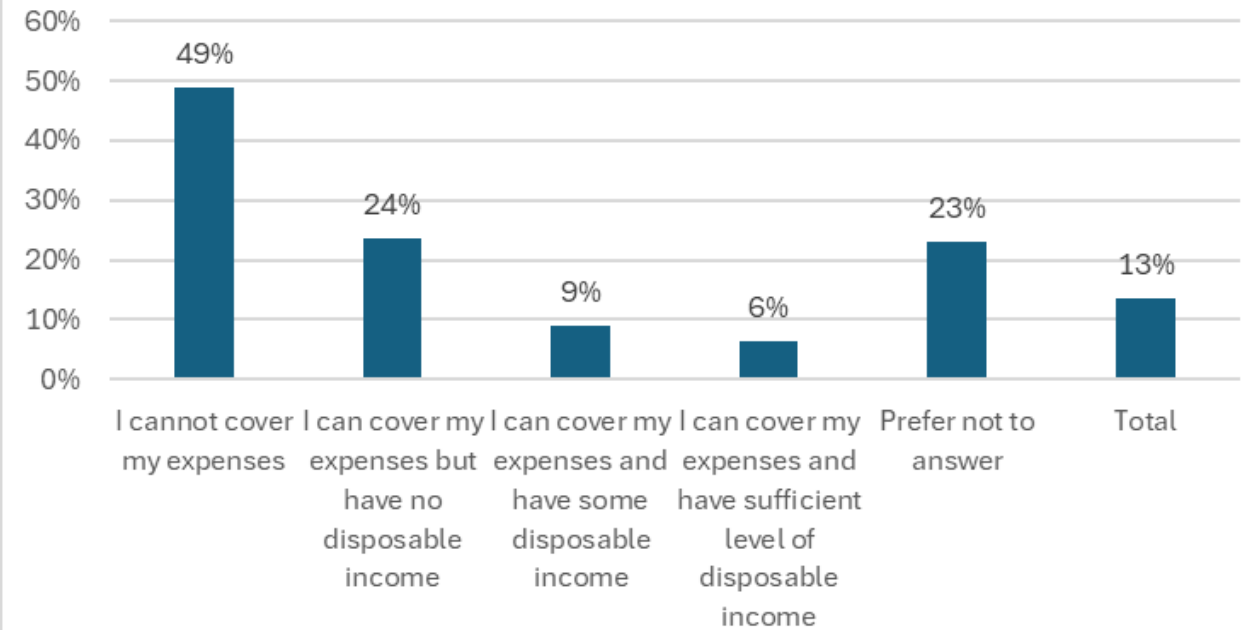


# Financial hardship contributes to other stresses

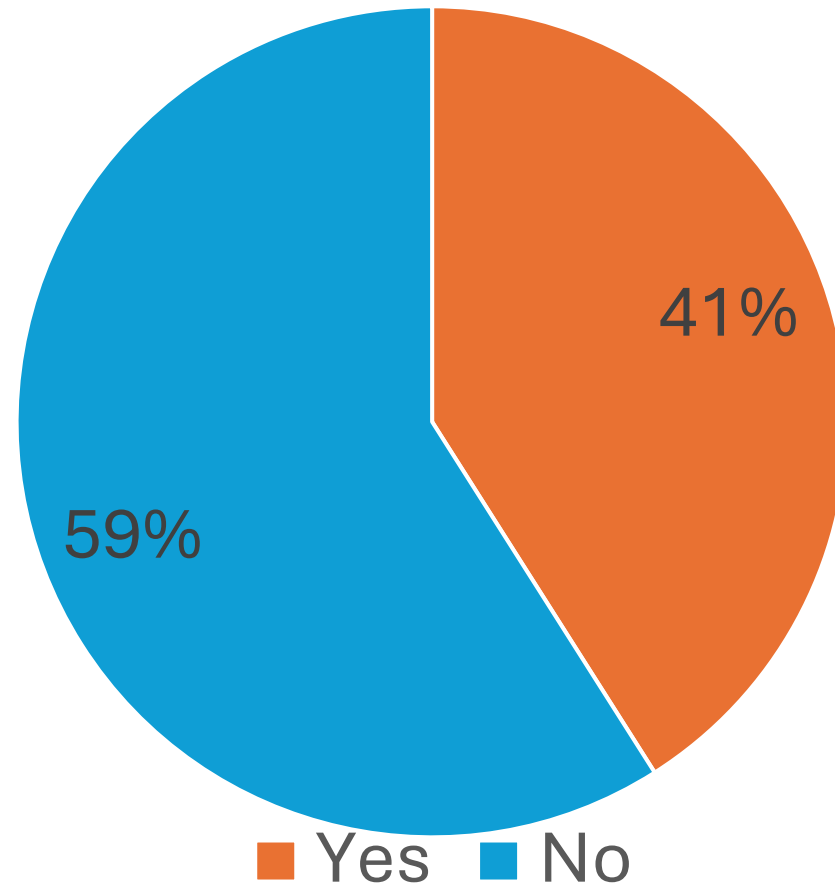
Poor quality of life



Bad mental health



And less than ½ see a future career path here



# This impacts locals in a variety of ways

*‘My 3 children had to move from the district to develop their careers’*

*‘I work remotely and hoped to transition to working for local clients but struggled to find relevant  
freelance or contract work’*

*‘The local Wānaka economy lacks diversity’*

*‘You need to leave the district to learn and develop’*

*‘Opportunities to further my career are unable to be achieved here unfortunately’*

*‘The region needs to continue focusing on diversifying’*

*‘After 3 generations my family are unlikely to be able to remain in the district.’*



# Diversification is a 'team game'

## Economic Development Plan partners and supporters

*Kā hoa me kā kaitautoko o te Mahere Whanaketaka Ohaoha*



Destination  
Southern Lakes



Research  
and Innovation  
Queenstown



TE ATAMIRA



# Year one projects completed/on track

EDP project	Project	Outcome
1.2: Build Diverse Skills	Develop professional development plan	Endorsed professional development supplier available to employers
1.3: Innovate and Grow	Startup incubator redesign	Two in-person Booster programmes run
	Key account management	Key diversification businesses identified and CRM system in place
2.3: Film and Creative Industries	Outdoor and adventure filmmaking hub	Film niche supported
3.1: Technology	Technology Queenstown active	CEO in place
	Host-tech event held + support plan in place	30+ exhibitors registered, cost neutral to Council
3.2: Outdoor Products	Outdoor product support plan developed	Wild-tech cluster launched, monthly events
Key enabler: World of Connections	World of Connections pilot underway	Events planning calendar, monthly co-working and contact list developed
F.1: Collaboration and Oversight	Diversification Snapshots 2024 and workshop	Successful event including Technology Queenstown workshop
F.2: Support Māori Economic Diversification	Support local best-fit Māori businesses	Support to understand procurement requirements

# Year one plan projects delayed

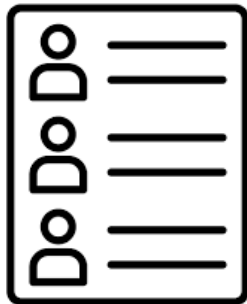
EDP project	Planned project	Comment
1.1: Future-Focussed Infrastructure	Future focussed infrastructure	Working with Strategic Growth and Technology Queenstown to refine questions and participants
2.3: Film and Creative Industries	Virtual production studio launched	Target3D focusing on existing locations
F.1: Collaboration and Oversight	Reference group formed	Governance and steering groups for individual initiatives prioritised
	3 year collaborative action plan	To be developed in consultation with stakeholders by Dec 2025
F.4: Resources and Capacity	Resources and capacity stocktake	Replacement diversification advisor started 28 April
F.3: Update Brand and Marketing Strategies	Update brand and marketing strategies	Place branding being led by DQ – Iwi involved. Diversification communications review underway.

# Key enabler: World of Connections

**Approach:** A "powered by" model that adds value to existing events, tools, and networks.



Business event planning calendar



Stakeholder contact list



Monthly shared workspace opportunities



**Supporting a healthy local screen industry  
that contributes positively to the district's  
economy and community**

**2.3 Film and  
Creative Industries**

**Economic Futures  
investment 24/25**

**FTE + \$64k**



# Current projects

- Film-friendliness and facilitation level of service
- A centre of excellence for outdoor/adventure filmmaking
- Supporting the creation of more homegrown content



# Impact examples



## **90+ film permits smoothly facilitated through FilmApp**

*"Thanks to the local crew and support of Queenstown's council, we really are in good hands when it comes to delivering high-quality drama and action for our film."*

Jared Conon, producer - FORGIVE US ALL

## **13 workshops and training & development grants awarded to upskill the local industry**

*"Thank you for putting funding towards opportunities like this as I think it gives creatives in the region a confidence boost in their decision to stay here!"*

Zyanya Jackson, travel grant recipient - DocEdge Festival

## **Business investment in local industry**

- Remarkable Studios launched by Screentime New Zealand – first dedicated screen facility in district
- LUMA x Screentime New Zealand interactive storytelling collaboration announced for winter 2025
- GFS launch SetConnect, the first dedicated health & safety software for film industry
- Queenstown Camera Company ongoing investment in film equipment and technologies



Empowering outdoor brands to grow



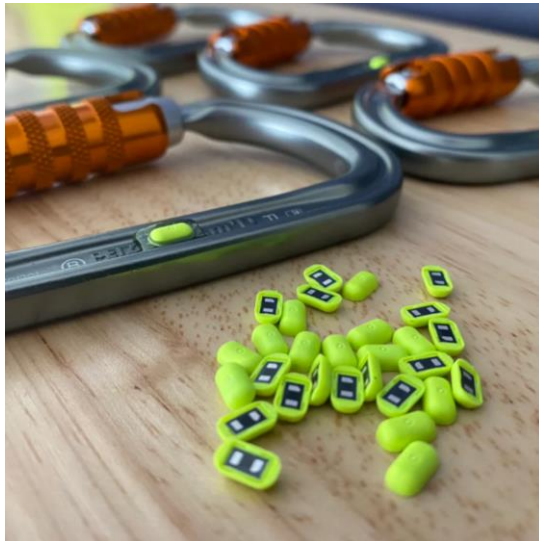
**3.2 Outdoor  
Economy**

Economic Futures  
investment 24/25  
**\$80,000**



# Current projects

- Monthly *OddHours* events connecting people in the outdoor products sector **~25 people/month**
- 1:1 interviews identifying shared opportunities for collaboration - **20+ companies**
- Regional showcase of local outdoor product innovation – **June 12th**
- Exploring opportunities for trade delegations and national/international exposure
  - WildNZ Expo (NZ) - SeaOtter (AUS) – Outdoor Retailer (USA) – ISPO (Germany)



# Impact examples

- *The events have inspired me to keep developing world-first MTB innovations right here in Queenstown. It's reassuring to know there are other like-minded people around, and now there's a network I can tap into.* - Mikkel Johanssen, Owner, foxfolk
- *The PR workshop run through Wild Tech was hugely valuable, it gave us clear, practical tools to tell our story better and get noticed. It's great to have support like this that's actually tailored to outdoor product businesses.* - Shannon Grainger, Co-Founder, AWOL

***“I didn't know there were other people like me here”***







## Helping Founders turn their business idea into reality

**1.3 Innovate and  
Grow**

**Economic Futures  
investment 24/25**

**\$175,000**

# Current projects



- Free online skill building workshops to validate ideas
- Intensive in person programme to help entrepreneurs launch (Booster)
- Supporting entrepreneurial curriculum for Liger Academy students
- 1 to 1 Coaching 15 high-growth founders, helping to raise capital and build connections.
- Events in Queenstown and Wanaka to share expertise and connect entrepreneurs



# Founder feedback



"Thanks to the SQL team for a great course. Learning to pitch my business effectively was a real eye-opener, and the sessions gave me clarity on structuring and articulating my ideas. I can definitely recommend Startup Booster to other entrepreneurs."

**- Luke**



Luke Hamington - Startup Booster Cohort 1



Startup Booster was incredible. It helped me refine my branding, marketing strategy, and customer validation process. My confidence grew and the team's support was excellent. I only wish the course was longer!"

**- Fiona**



Fiona Laryn, Founder - The Health Cabinet



***Jason Roberts***



The support from SQL has expanded our network and provided crucial feedback during our capital raise. The connections and insights have been key in preparing us for investors and advancing our vision for on-demand transport in Aotearoa.

Jason Roberts - Co-Founder - Ryd

# HOST-TECH

**A technology cluster focused on the tourism and hospitality industries.**

**3.1 Technology**

Economic Futures  
investment 24/25

**\$80,000**



# Current projects

- Host-tech 2025 National Event: pay to play, sold out spaces & sponsors validate the existence of the event
- Establish Host-tech cluster advisory group to design ongoing program of work
- Bringing the world to QL: connecting local businesses to global ecosystem





# Impact examples



Host-tech 2024 event - funded via the Economic Futures budget, 2025 will be self funding via exhibitor fees and sponsorship

*“We just wanted to say a massive thank you for all the coordination and organisation of the Tech Famil today. It was absolutely mind blowing - the diversity of the speakers and the extent of the tech discussion was really inspiring for the students (and us!!). It was fabulous to connect with such innovation locally.”*

*Wakatipu High School*

*“Quick note of thanks for the intros. He's been incredibly helpful so far and helping me with some UK introductions for my customer research while I'm over here. I owe you a beer when I'm back!”*

*Kieran, Venu*

*“Queenstown is the perfect place for tourism, technology and hospitality to come together”*

*Roger Sharp, Travel and Tech Sector Chair, Advisor and Investor*



# Building a \$1b technology sector in Queenstown Lakes

**Goal: grow tech sector from ~1.5% (\$100m) of local GDP to 15-20% by 2043**  
3,000 high-value tech jobs and an additional 5,400 indirect jobs

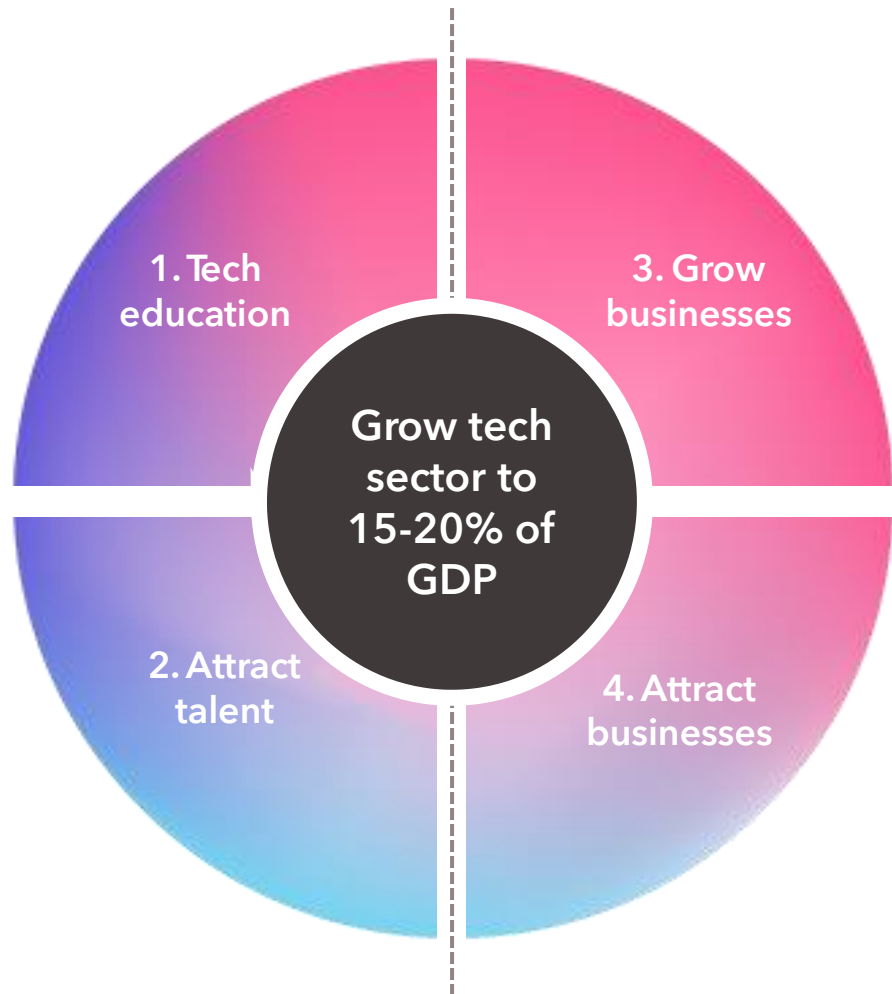
## 3.1 Technology

Economic Futures  
investment 24/25

**\$0**

*Previous QLDC funding: \$75k  
towards initial research + \$25k  
towards the set up*

# Our Strategy



# Current focus

## 1. Educate future tech workforce

Work with the University of Otago and QRC on developing tech education.

## 2. Attract tech talent

TQ will launch its website, build register of local tech workers, create a tech community through local events and start promoting the local tech.

## 3. Support priority cluster businesses to grow

We've identified an initial set of priority clusters and will take an active role to accelerate their growth.

## 4. Attract tech businesses

Opportunistic support only at this stage.

Plus secure additional corporate funding

# Impact and progress to date



Technology Queenstown launched with Accenture white paper outlining the \$1b vision



University of Otago announces intent to build a Queenstown campus focused on technology



TQ & NZ Open hosted senior group of tech leaders and ministers to discuss how to accelerate the tech sector in the District.



Feb 2024 - Launch



Oct 2024 - Uni campus announced



Feb 2025 - Business & Government engagement

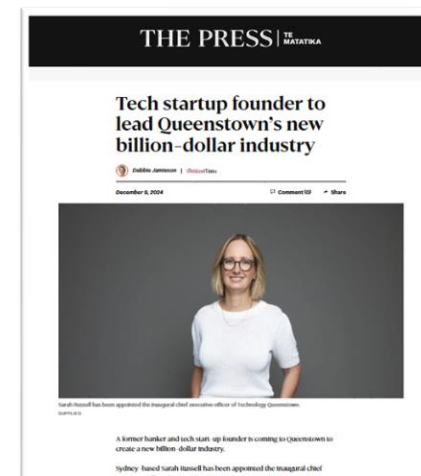


2024 - Funding

Corporate sponsors signed with 5yr funding commitment joining other supporters



Jan 2025 - CEO starts



April 2025 - Trustees appointed

Trustee appointments made, bringing together a proven governance team with a practical and commercial lens on the tech sector to drive growth.