

LET'S TALK KÖRERO MAI

THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER // DECEMBER 2025 / JANUARY 2026 // ISSUE 170



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
MERI KIRIHIMETE!**

It's time to wave goodbye to 2025 and say hello to 2026. Summer is all about sharing good times with friends and whānau, and welcoming others to our beautiful corner of the world. Whatever you have planned, you'll find all the essential info you need for a super and safe summer inside.

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Your Council

Ever wondered how to contact your elected representatives for a chat about what's happening in your community? We've listed your Councillors and the areas they represent, along with their email addresses so you can get in touch.



QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT MAYOR JOHN GLOVER
John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

ARROWTOWN-KAWARAU WARD

Arrowtown, Gibbston, Shotover Country, Lake Hayes Estate, Dalefield and Arthurs Point.



Councillor Heath Copland
Heath.Copland@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Melissa White
Melissa.White@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Samuel "Q" Belk
Samuel.Belk@qldc.govt.nz

QUEENSTOWN-WHAKATIPU WARD

Jacks Point, Hanley's Farm, Kingston, Frankton, Quail Rise, Kelvin Peninsula, Glenorchy, central Queenstown and Fernhill.



Councillor Matt Wong
Matt.Wong@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Gavin Bartlett
Gavin.Bartlett@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Stephen Brent
Stephen.Brent@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Jon Mitchell
Jon.Mitchell@qldc.govt.nz

WĀNAKA-UPPER CLUTHA WARD

From the top of the Crown Range and all of the Upper Clutha area including Lake Hāwea up to just beyond Makarora and including part of the Matukituki Valley in Mt Aspiring National Park.



Deputy Mayor Quentin Smith
Quentin.Smith@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Nicola King
Nicola.King@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Niki Gladding
Niki.Gladding@qldc.govt.nz



Councillor Cody Tucker
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WĀNAKA-UPPER CLUTHA COMMUNITY BOARD



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John Wellington
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Chris Hadfield
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Councillor King

Councillor Gladding

Councillor Tucker



As we head towards the Christmas holidays, it's apparent we will receive some 'challenging' Christmas presents from central government. These will be in the form of imposed rates caps that significantly constrain our spending, major reforms to land use planning that will essentially require a new Regional District Plan to be created, and by the time you read this we will have likely heard the details of new standards that will apply to the discharge of wastewater that comes out of our treatment plants.

So, spending, planning and wastewater discharge. Three of the areas of local government that we know are extremely important to our residents are changing in terms of process with more direction coming from central government.

All of the above impact our plans, and as we start to engage with you next year around our new Long Term Plan, the importance of the direction you give us as to what our spending priorities should be cannot be overstated. How do we cut our cloth and what are your expectations around what are 'must do's' and 'nice to have's'?

Equally important to what we do, is how we do it. And just like our Councillors, as Mayor, I am often

contacted by individuals who wish to share their thoughts or raise issues around how Council has interacted with them.

With the above in mind, we've set up a new email address **feedback@qldc.govt.nz** and we'd love to hear from you about what we do well, what we do that's really important to you, and what we do that isn't meeting your expectations. Imagine we're sitting across the table, with a cup of tea, having a good chat and there's something you'd like us to know.

I'll be following what comes in, sharing it with Councillors, and staff will also be listening to what you say.

But for now I'd like to hope you all manage to have some down time, fun and hopefully sunshine over what is one of our district's busiest times of year.

Finally, we'd like to acknowledge the thousands of people locally who work in our visitor facing and service sectors without whom none of this is possible, and also those who work unseen in the background keeping everything running on a day-to-day basis over the holidays. A big thank you from me on behalf of our Council.

Queenstown Lakes District Mayor John Glover

Help shape our next Long Term Plan

Take a moment to consider these questions:

WHAT ARE THE TOP PRIORITIES YOU THINK QLDC SHOULD FOCUS SPENDING MONEY ON?

IF YOU WANT QLDC TO REDUCE SPENDING, WHAT DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD SPEND LESS MONEY ON?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE DISTRICT'S MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE DISTRICT'S MAIN OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS?

We've started early community engagement on our next Long Term Plan (LTP) that will cover 2027-2037. Your ideas and feedback at this stage will help shape the draft document that we'll publish for full consultation in autumn 2027 once it's been reviewed by Councillors.

But first, what does QLDC do?

QLDC holds responsibility and accountability for the direction and control of the district's activities. This means we're responsible for a lot, but not everything.

Our role is to provide things like local infrastructure and services, and to make local regulations. Much of what we do is determined by Parliament in Wellington, or by Otago Regional Council in Dunedin.

This means our ability to spend money on local issues is limited, and we need to carefully consider

where that money comes from and prioritise how it is spent.

Revenue and where it goes

We receive revenue from several sources – a lot of it from rates. As our latest annual report shows, expenditure largely goes towards community services and facilities (19%), drinking water / wastewater / stormwater (27% combined), roading infrastructure (18%), and waste management (9%).

Making every dollar count

We need to spend most of our budget on essentials like infrastructure, which leaves the rest to spend on 'nice-to-haves'. And with a combination of reforms, growth and a potential rates cap putting more pressure than ever on budgets and capacity, making

the best use of that remaining budget on your behalf requires making trade-offs. We can't deliver every single thing, which is why it's important we understand our community's priorities.

Help inform future decisions

To get involved now head to letstalk.qldc.govt.nz/ltp27

Feedback closes on Sunday 8 February.

Ambassadors champion responsible camping behaviour

1 December not only marked QLDC's new Freedom Camping Bylaw coming into effect but also our team of Summer Ambassadors starting their role to help visitors adhere to the new rules. They'll be busy visiting freedom camping spots across the district this summer to share information on what's changed and how to camp sustainably. They'll also be promoting serviced holiday parks and DOC campsites, and encouraging campers to make the Tiaki promise to care for Aotearoa New Zealand.

HERE'S A SUMMARY OF THE NEW MEASURES TO MANAGE FREEDOM CAMPING:

URBAN ROADS

No freedom camping is permitted in residential or urban areas. That means no camping in on-road parking spaces like parallel or angle parks.

RESTRICTED AREAS

Freedom camping in certified self-contained vehicles is allowed in 15 designated car parks across the district (containing 141 spaces) – but only if you follow the conditions for each site. Look out for new signage at these locations with handy QR codes that allow campers to check-in.

RURAL ROADS

Camping in certified self-contained vehicles is permitted on rural roads if you meet the bylaw conditions – including how close you can park to the road in off-road laybys.

RESERVES

The Reserves Act prohibits camping in most council reserves. The Luggate Red Bridge Reserve will continue to be the only QLDC reserve which allows it, subject to conditions.

FIND OUT WHERE AND HOW THE RULES APPLY

See where and how the bylaw applies and learn more about camping in the district at qldc.govt.nz/responsible-camping. Here you can view our online interactive map showing dedicated freedom camping sites, prohibited areas, and public facilities. There's also a check-in dashboard that shows site availability allowing campers to plan ahead.

NEED TO REPORT POOR BEHAVIOUR?

Urgent issues can be phoned in 24/7 (even on public holidays) on **03 441 0499** (Queenstown) or **03 443 0024** (Wānaka). Less urgent issues can be reported to services@qldc.govt.nz or via the Snap Send Solve app.

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Long-term options for Shotover treatment plant

Planning for Shotover Wastewater Treatment Plant's (WWTP) future disposal strategy continues, after a broad range of potential options were carefully assessed and narrowed down to a shortlist.

This work started in October last year in response to challenges with the facility's dose and drain disposal field, where treated wastewater was previously discharged, before emergency works saw the site revert to discharge into the Shotover River in March 2025.

These shortlisted options provide the best balance of environmental protection, technical feasibility, and regulatory compliance within Queenstown's geographic constraints. They offer a mix of proven reliability and future capacity, while minimising ecological impact and meeting stringent consent standards.

OPTION A:	OPTION B:	OPTION C:	OPTION D:
Land flow path and rock outfall to Kawarau River	Subsurface wetlands and land flow path to Kawarau River	Hybrid of bore injection at Frankton combined with Option B	Hybrid of soak holes at Frankton combined with Option B
Treated wastewater would run through a pipe or channel to be discharged at a rock outfall structure at the Shotover Delta and into the Kawarau River.	Treated wastewater would enter a constructed underground wetland system, before running through a pipe or channel to be discharged at a rock outfall structure at the Shotover Delta and into the Kawarau River.	Highly treated wastewater would be injected into deep bores located near Frankton, discharging into confined aquifers well below groundwater sources used for drinking. Some discharge at the Shotover Delta and into the Kawarau River would still be required, due to physical and environmental constraints in the district.	Highly treated wastewater would be discharged into the ground through multiple soak holes near Frankton, allowing it to filter into underlying soils and aquifers. Some discharge at the Shotover Delta and into the Kawarau River would still be required, due to physical and environmental constraints in the district.

All options feature the following upgrades at Shotover WWTP:

Calamity pond	Tertiary filtration
<p>Already being constructed as part of Stage 3 upgrades (repurposing an existing oxidation pond). Used to store raw wastewater if the facility becomes inoperative, before it's returned to the start of the treatment process.</p> <p>A second pond will be built to store treated wastewater if it's not meeting discharge requirements, or if any issues are encountered at the end of the treatment process (for example, at the UV disinfection stage).</p>	<p>Installed before the UV disinfection step in the treatment process, working to reduce total suspended solids (TSS) and nutrients from discharge. This helps to improve UV disinfection efficiency, improving the quality of final treated wastewater discharged from the facility.</p>

Fast facts:

Shotover WWTP first began operating back in 1974 and the facility initially consisted of three oxidation ponds to treat wastewater.

Up until 2019, treated wastewater was discharged directly into the Shotover River.

Significant upgrades have been made to the facility over the years, most recently three stages of work taking place between 2017 and 2025, helping to improve how wastewater is treated by the plant.

In August 2025, the most recent stage of upgrades saw a second Modified Ludzack-Ettinger (MLE) reactor and clarifier come into operation. This means the old oxidation ponds at the site no longer receive wastewater flows, and all wastewater is treated by the existing and new MLEs and clarifiers.

The facility currently processes an average of 12.5 million litres of wastewater every day, the equivalent of around five Olympic-sized swimming pools. That same amount of water flows through the Kawarau River every few minutes.

Recent upgrades mean the facility can provide capacity to meet estimated population growth and waste projects through to 2060.

What happens next?

Council will be asked to determine which option they wish to proceed with at a Full Council meeting in early 2026.

Want to learn more?



Scan here for detailed information on all the different options, how they were assessed, and how each would work.



This photo was taken by a drone in late-September. The nearest rectangular and circular tanks have been built as part of recent 'Stage 2' upgrades, essentially doubling capacity by duplicating the original 'Stage 1' tanks behind them.

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How you use water matters

Another summer's arrived so it's time to slip into the shade, slop on some sunscreen, slap on a hat, and try to put a wrap on how much that sprinkler's running on your lawn in the middle of the day.

As temperatures soar and rain puts its feet up for the holidays, demand for water skyrockets. This puts our network under strain at a time when we're facing the heightened risk of potential wildfires.

We should always treat water as a precious resource, but over summer it's especially important to consider the ways we're using it. We're asking everyone to please try some of the tips below to ensure we have the same access to water in the future that we do today.

SHOWERS

A shower's a great place to cool off, not just scrub up, but that daily ritual can use up to 20 litres of water a minute. That's an eye-watering 200 litres of water if you're in there for ten minutes, and already half the water the average New Zealander uses in an entire day!

Trimming the time you spend in the shower might not seem like much, but if everyone spent a minute or two less in there, our reservoirs would be a whole lot happier.

SPRINKLERS

The common garden sprinkler pumps through water at an alarming rate and can use up to 1,000 litres if left running for an hour.

Shortening how long you use a sprinkler at home and only using it early in the morning or late at night to avoid evaporation could save a significant amount of water over a long, hot summer.

LEAKS

Water might not be gushing from a cracked pipe or a dripping tap, but a small leak can waste over 1,000 litres of water each day. If you've got a leak on your property or you suspect one, please call a plumber to get it fixed before summer really starts to cook.

And if you spot a leak on a road or public property, report it to us immediately by calling 03 441 0499 so we can get someone out there to fix it as soon as possible.

Help save water this summer – find out how you can play your part at

[📌 qldc.govt.nz/save-water](https://qldc.govt.nz/save-water)

HOW WATER RESTRICTIONS WORK

We continuously monitor water production versus reservoir levels and how much water is being used throughout the district.

If we see demand rising faster than we can refill our reservoirs, we'll introduce the appropriate restrictions. It's vital we have enough water in our network to respond to an emergency like a wildfire.

Look out for our new signs showing what to expect at different alert levels:

WATER ALERT LEVEL 0	Please use water wisely at all times
WATER ALERT LEVEL 1	Sprinkler restrictions Use from midnight to 6.00am only
WATER ALERT LEVEL 2	Sprinkler ban Hand-held hosing only
WATER ALERT LEVEL 3	Total outdoor water ban at all times

Find out more at [📌 qldc.govt.nz/water-restrictions](https://qldc.govt.nz/water-restrictions)

Water safety made easy

Planning time out on our lakes and rivers? Make sure you're up to speed with the Navigation Safety Bylaw 2025 so you can enjoy the water safely and confidently.

We ran a full-page story in our last issue with full details of what's changed and how to stay within the rules. That, and all previous issues of this newsletter, are available on our website: [📌 qldc.govt.nz/lets-talk-korero-mai](https://qldc.govt.nz/lets-talk-korero-mai)

QLDC has also created two easy-to-use boating guides filled with key safety tips, local rules and clear maps. There's one for Lake Whakatipu and one for lakes Wānaka & Hāwea.

You can pick up a copy of both guides at our offices in Queenstown (Gorge Road) and Wānaka (Ardmore Street). And – along with full details about the updated bylaw – they're also available via our website at [📌 qldc.govt.nz/lakes-and-boating](https://qldc.govt.nz/lakes-and-boating)

YOUR HARBOURMASTER

The local harbourmaster and waterways patrol teams will be out and about over summer. Go say hi and learn about current conditions.

Report non-compliance of waterway rules:
Phone 03 441 0499 (Queenstown) / 03 443 0024 (Wānaka)
or email services@qldc.govt.nz

Please note that email address won't be monitored over our closure period so any urgent but non-emergency queries should be phoned in.

In an emergency on the water always call 111.

SAFE SWIMMING

We're asking all swimmers and anglers to please take extra precautions at rivers this summer. Follow all warning signage and do not assume that the absence of signage means you don't need to take precautions. Take extreme care when entering the water and ask locals about the presence of any strong undertows, unstable footing and steep drop offs in our lakes. Take extra precautions around river deltas where there's often soft, shifting sand and gravel. **AVOID THESE HIGH-RISK AREAS IF POSSIBLE.**

Check out Land, Air, Water Aotearoa's (LAWA) handy 'Can I Swim Here?' map [📌 lawa.org.nz/explore-data/swimming](https://lawa.org.nz/explore-data/swimming)

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Closures enable wastewater investment

FRANKTON TRACK

Crews will start mid-January on a new wastewater pipeline between Queenstown and Frankton. This will increase capacity, boost resilience, and reduce the risk of overflows in the area.

To complete this work safely, efficiently, and cost effectively, a large section of Frankton Track will need to be closed for most of the year.

We get it – Frankton Track is a hugely important travel connection and much-loved recreation space, and this closure will cause disruption. But this is a necessary step to improve local infrastructure and continue ensuring a clean and healthy environment for everyone.

The good news: we expect to complete construction six months faster than first anticipated, and all sections of Frankton Track will be reinstated with a compact gravel surface when the trail opens in early November. There'll be new seating in several places along the lakefront too.

Learn more at qldc.govt.nz/frankton-track-ww

ROBINS ROAD

Work's finishing up on a new watermain on Robins Road and, from early January, crews will begin installing a new wastewater pipeline from the Horne Creek bridge and down to Queenstown Recreation Ground.

Once in place, this will provide enough capacity for future housing in the area, improve the reliability of the network, and reduce the risk of severe weather causing wastewater overflows.

To install the new pipeline safely and efficiently, both lanes of Robins Road will be closed between the Boutique Hotel and Hamilton Road from Monday 12 January through to early April.

The road will then open to one lane of southbound traffic through to late May, with the northbound lane remaining closed between the Boutique Hotel and Hamilton Road while crews finish work in the area.

Learn more at qldc.govt.nz/robins-road-ww

Thank you to everyone for your patience while we complete these two major infrastructure projects.

Managing wildfire risk

Our reserves are wonderful places to visit and enjoy over summer, but there may be days where elevated fire danger could make them unsafe to access.

This may result in occasional closures to three reserves that pose the highest risk in our district: Ben Lomond, Queenstown Hill and Mount Iron. Although not a decision taken lightly, closing access means we can reduce the potential for a fire to happen and ensure people are out of harm's way if it does.

The fastest way to find out about a reserve closure is to sign up for our 'etxt' service. We'll message you when a reserve needs to close. Sign up at qldc.govt.nz/community-text-alert-sign-up

Please be aware that we won't be staffing entrance points to reserves during the closure periods. Warning signs will be in place but entering a reserve while it's closed will be at people's own risk.

To find out more and see the current status of each reserve head to qldc.govt.nz/managing-wildfire-risk

**RESERVE
CLOSED**



HIGH FIRE DANGER AREA

If you see smoke or fire dial 111

Scan to read more about reserve closures on high risk days.



QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

How to spot toxic algae

Known also as cyanobacteria, toxic algae occur naturally, often blooming in warm, summertime conditions in lakes and rivers.

HOTSPOTS IN OUR DISTRICT INCLUDE THE CARDRONA AND HĀWEA RIVERS.

- > In lakes it gives the water a murky green appearance like pea soup.
- > In rivers it looks like dark brown tar mats on the riverbed and banks that can have a strong musty smell which attracts dogs.

STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER:

- > Keep dogs away from anything that resembles toxic algae.
- > Don't swim in areas where toxic algae is present.
- > For more info and current warnings in your area visit orc.govt.nz/summersafety



Check, Clean, Dry

Freshwater pests can be spread by activities in and around waterways like boating and fishing. If you've been in a lake, river, stream or wetland and plan to move to another within 48 hours, you must: **CHECK:** Remove any plant matter from your gear and leave it behind, or put it in the rubbish. Don't wash plant material down any drain. **CLEAN:** Use 10% dishwashing detergent mixed with water and leave the item wet for 10 minutes. **DRY:** Ensure your gear is completely dry to touch, inside and out, then leave to dry for at least another 48 hours before you use it.

For more info visit orc.govt.nz/summersafety

HOLIDAY HOME MANAGEMENT
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Jingle bins, jingle bins, jingle all the way!

KERBSIDE COLLECTION HOLIDAY ALERT!



The silly season is nearly here, and while Santa's loading up the sleigh, here's what you need to know about your kerbside collection schedule.

It'll be a busy time at our transfer stations, so please be patient and allow extra time if you're popping in over the holidays.

HERE'S THE PLAN:

There will be no kerbside collections on Christmas Day or New Year's Day (both Thursdays this year).

If your usual collection day is Thursday, your bins will be emptied on Friday instead.

If your usual collection day is Friday, your bins will be emptied on Saturday instead.

Queenstown and Wānaka transfer stations, and the public recycling drop-off on Glenda Drive, will also be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

STAY IN THE KNOW

Got enough on your plate? Get weekly bin reminders and holiday alerts straight to your phone – sign up at reminders.saveourstuff.co.nz.

A HOT REMINDER ABOUT BATTERIES

Unwrapping new gadgets this Christmas? Never put batteries in your kerbside bins as they can cause fires in trucks, bins, and at our facilities.

Always check if a device contains a battery before disposing of it. Drop them off for safe recycling at Queenstown or Wānaka transfer stations.

RECYCLING 101

Blue bin

- Clean glass bottles and jars (that once contained food and drink only).
- Not accepted: lids, drinking glasses, ceramics, mirrors, heat-proof or window glass. Pop these in the red rubbish bin.



Yellow bin

- Clean plastics marked , and ; aluminium and steel cans; cardboard and paper but not foil-based wrapping paper or anything with glitter!



Let's all refuse, reuse & recycle with care this holiday season!

Hot dogs in cars are not cool

As temperatures climb, it's important to remember how fast a parked car can become dangerous for pets. On a 30°C day, the inside of a vehicle can hit 39°C in minutes and 49°C within half an hour, even in the shade!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Open windows won't keep your pet safe – cars heat up rapidly regardless of airflow.

Dogs are especially vulnerable – panting can't cool them down in extreme heat.

Watch for heat stress: excessive panting, drooling, restlessness or even collapse. Seek urgent vet care if you notice these signs.

If you see a dog in immediate distress, call the Police. You can also contact SPCA or QLDC Animal Control (03 441 0499) for advice.

Looking for safer summer adventures? Explore our district's dog-friendly paths using the interactive map at qldc.govt.nz/animal-control



SUMMERDAZE

TEDDY BEARS PICNIC

We're having a Teddy Bears Picnic and your family is invited! There's plenty of entertainment for kids of all ages, with everything from musicians and interactive games to face-painting and bouncy castles.

QUEENSTOWN EVENTS CENTRE

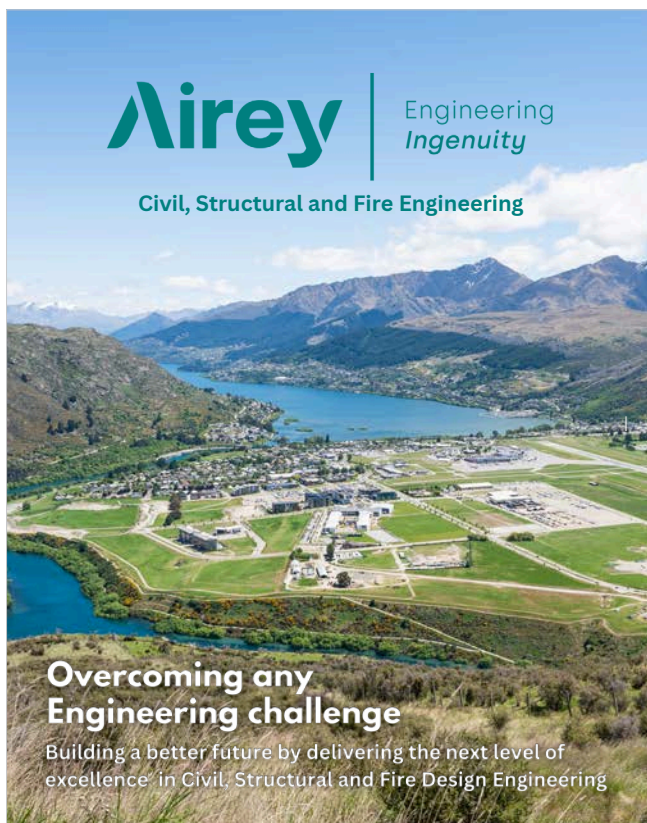
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More info qldc.govt.nz/summerdaze

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‘Postcards’ from recent events

We thought it would be good to round-up some recent events around the district with a few photos to tell the story.



LIBRARIANS GET OFF THE BOOKS, ON THE TOOLS

Queenstown Lakes Librarians Paula Mitchell (left) and Natasya Zambri (right) recently put down their books and picked up tools to install Kingston's new StoryWalk. StoryWalks display a children's book page-by-page in an outdoor setting – a fun way for families to enjoy the outdoors while promoting literacy and learning. Check out some of the other StoryWalks our fabulous librarians have installed around our the district at Hopkins Street Playground in Luggate, Hanley's Farm Playground, and Makarora Primary School.



KIDS RIP INTO READING PROGRAMME

Ka pai to dozens of local tamariki who are celebrating the impressive milestone of completing either of our local libraries' programmes 1,000 Books Before School or 1,000 Books At School. Students from Team Irirangi 1 at Remarkables Primary School are the first class to collectively achieve the latter (in less than five months!) under the guidance of teacher Mrs Angela Thompson. And congrats to Cora (top) and Alvie (bottom) – our latest Wānaka graduates of the pre-school programme! For more details, pop into your local library or check out www.qldclibraries.govt.nz.



CREATIVE SPACES IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

In November, creativity spilled out of galleries and into everyday locations across the district as part of the inaugural Creative Spaces Project – a collaboration between QLDC and Three Lakes Cultural Trust. Visitors to cafes, restaurants, libraries and shops were able to experience local culture and talent in a fresh way. Our picture shows a passer-by enjoying the work of Luggate artist Sonia Kiki Jones on display at 47 Frocks in Wānaka. For more info visit

www.threelakesculturaltrust.co.nz



RECENT FLOODING HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER WORK

October's heavy rain and strong winds led to localised flooding, washouts, fallen trees and rockfalls across the district, including this damage to Paradise Road near Glenorchy. QLDC had already set up an Emergency Operations Centre in tandem with Emergency Management Otago and other related organisations to co-ordinate preparations and response. The Kingston community was also hit by an extended power outage and lack of cellphone coverage even as lake levels receded. Huge thanks to everyone who helped with the response, especially the network of volunteer Community Resilience Groups (CRG). Interesting in joining your local group? Find details of them all at qldc.govt.nz/CRG



SUCCESSION PLAN UNDERWAY AT QUEENSTOWN GARDENS

The first stage of a conifer succession planting project at Te Kararo Queenstown Gardens took place at a special ceremony in late-November. Two beautiful native trees were planted by Mayor John Glover and mana whenua representative Paulette Tamati-Elliffe (pictured), and the site was also blessed by mana whenua. The succession plan, amended after valuable community feedback earlier in the year, details how we intend to manage the gradual replacement of Douglas fir trees with native and suitable exotic trees and plants over the next 60-80 years. You can find more info on our website

qldc.govt.nz/te-kararo-queenstown-gardens



BIGGEST EVER CHRISTMAS SHOW GETS FESTIVE CHEERS

A record number of more than 2,700 people came to see three performances of this year's Christmas Show at Queenstown Events Centre. Here are Marc and Dana Hamilton standing in for the real Santa Claus and Mrs Clause (who understandably were pretty busy that weekend), along with performers Ivy Sim (11) and Ryder Wallace (9). Among the talent performing in the show's 19th year were Queenstown Gymnastics Club, Turn Up The Music's junior choir, Silk and Circus, kapa haka school groups, the Wakatipu Conservatoire of Classical Ballet and the Remarkable Men's Ballet. Image credit – Still Vision; reporting credit – ODT.

From the Chambers

There's always plenty going on at our Council and Committee meetings, here's a snapshot of some recent happenings.

NEW COMMITTEES FORMED

Under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), all Council Committees, working groups and subcommittees are discharged at the end of a council term and local authorities start again after an election. The LGA also says that a council '*must hold the meetings that are necessary for the good government of its region or district*' which means (theoretically) that it can hold as many meetings – or as few – as it wants.

However, in effect there are only a certain number of ways in which a council's activities can be sliced and diced and QLDC has generally adopted a system of various committees. At the meeting held on 27 November the Council adopted its new committee structure and decided on the Chair, Deputy Chair and members for each.

This Council wants to start afresh so the terms of reference of each Committee (i.e. their areas of jurisdiction and delegated authority) won't be agreed until the first Council meeting of 2026 on 5 February. A schedule containing the proposed dates of all Council, Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board, and committee meetings in 2026 will be adopted at the same meeting.

GLENORCHY AIRSTRIP 'GROWS UP' IN NEW RMP

The eagle-eyed amongst you will notice that there is something different about the title of this new Reserve Management Plan (RMP). The reserve in Glenorchy that houses the airstrip will henceforward be known as the Glenorchy **Aerodrome** RMP, recognition not only that it's an increasingly busy facility but also essential in any emergency. With extreme weather events becoming more common, a slip that blocks Glenorchy-Queenstown Road could stop vehicle traffic for days, meaning that access by air or boat would be the only ways of travelling

in or out. In recognition of this role, a new policy was added to the RMP to acknowledge that the Glenorchy Aerodrome *is a critical emergency response asset*. In response to a call for more facilities on the site, new policies were added that provide for *two potential new hangars and to enable storage of fuel at the airstrip*. The increasingly important roles of tourism and the film industry were recognised with a new policy allowing applications for *one off curfew exemptions for flights servicing the film industry*. In Development and Infrastructure Policies the new RMP has changed the wording around ensuring that grass airstrip improvements are undertaken if recommended by Queenstown Airport Corporation (which operates the aerodrome on behalf of QLDC). The new RMP also indicates support for developing public toilets and a waiting area on the site, both of which could be developed by a commercial operator and made available to other operators.

ADOPTION OF TRAFFIC & PARKING BYLAW

Bylaws must be reviewed every five years or they lapse. Hence the Traffic and Parking Bylaw 2025 that was started by the previous Council needed to be adopted by 13 December. In fact, it was adopted at the Full Council meeting held on 27 November.

The bylaw doesn't detail or describe specific parking but instead sets out the framework for managing parking in the district. However, in response to public feedback, an explanatory note has been added at the start of the bylaw to outline its overall purpose.

In response to changing transportation choices, the bylaw incorporates rules for shared zones or paths and adds electric vehicles to the definitions. There are also new provisions for obstructions on roads or footpaths with an exception made for Council-authorised rubbish containers – but make sure there's someone available to move them from the roadside after rubbish day because the bylaw states that they shouldn't be left out for more than 24 hours!

Make memories, not waste this Christmas

The holiday season is all about celebrating, connecting with friends and whānau, and enjoying a well-earned summer break. But it's also one of the most waste-heavy times of the year, with previous estimates showing New Zealand households generate around 30% more waste over Christmas from food scraps, packaging, wrapping paper and more.

This year, WasteMINZ is encouraging all of us to rethink how we celebrate with their Low Waste Holidays campaign, running from December through January. The message is simple: Make memories, not waste.

The digital campaign shares practical, easy tips to help reduce waste throughout the festive season, from creative decoration ideas and low-impact gift wrapping to smarter shopping, cutting down food waste, and planning a low-waste summer holiday.

SOME TOP TIPS FOR A LOW WASTE HOLIDAYS:

Plan your meals – like making a shopping list, portion wisely and by eating leftovers, as this not only reduces waste but save money too.

Rethink wrapping – reuse fabric, old maps, artwork, or recycled paper instead of buying new single-use wrapping paper.

Gift differently – give experiences, homemade treats or second hand, after all, memories last longer than stuff.

Whether you're hosting Christmas lunch, heading away, or simply looking to reduce the post-holiday rubbish pile, small changes from many people can make a big difference.

Join the movement: #LowWasteHolidays #MakeMemories
For more tips, resources, and information, visit wasteminz.org.nz/events/low-waste-holidays

Get me via email



This newsletter is mailed to our local residents and out-of-town, NZ-based ratepayers six times a year. If this means you, and you still want to receive a hard copy, then sweet as – you don't need to do anything.

But if you'd like to join the thousands of people who prefer to receive a digital copy via email then it's easy to switch. Just email services@qldc.govt.nz with the word "newsletter" as the subject and be sure to include your name, postal address and the address of your property in the district so we can cross you off the mailing list.

We'll send you a website link six times a year to view/download all future issues instead (and won't spam you with anything else!). You'll be helping us reduce the number of copies we print and distribute.

And remember, every issue is also on our website qldc.govt.nz/lets-talk-korero-mai



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Keep your private water supply safe

As many people return to their holiday homes in our district this summer, it's a good reminder that if you rely on a private drinking water supply, you're responsible for maintaining, monitoring, and treating it. This helps protect not only your own household but anyone else who drinks from it.

Arsenic can occur naturally in some bore water around our district. Found at low levels in soil, rocks, air and water, people may consume small amounts over time without obvious health effects. However, drinking water with high levels of arsenic can be harmful, and consuming moderate levels over many years may also lead to long-term health issues. Regular testing is the best way to ensure your water remains safe.

If you own or manage a bore or supply water to more than one household, you also have a duty of care to provide safe drinking water. If you're returning for the summer season, it's a great time to check your system, ensure your filters and treatment are functioning, and confirm your latest test results show levels for arsenic and E. coli.

THANKS FOR JOINING US

In late November, QLDC and Otago Regional Council (ORC) hosted two drop-in sessions for households on private water supplies. These were well attended, with residents calling in to ask questions, learn about water testing, and speak with Environmental Health Officers about how to keep their supply safe.

If you're on a private bore, spring, or other non-Council supply and couldn't make it, you can still get advice on what to test for, how to maintain your system, and where to find accredited support.

If you're on a Council water supply, you can disregard this information – your water is routinely monitored.

For more information on arsenic in drinking water and a list of IANZ-accredited laboratories, visit

[📍 taumataarowai.govt.nz](https://taumataarowai.govt.nz)



Staff from QLDC and ORC at one of the recent drop-in sessions.

Summer Reading Challenge

Looking for a fun, screen-free holiday activity for the kids this summer? We've got just the thing!

Queenstown Lakes Libraries is inviting young readers to join this year's Summer Reading Challenge: Forest Quest.

Developed in collaboration with Whakatipu Reforestation Trust and Te Kāhano, the challenge is a fun way to engage children in reading. And best of all, participation is easy and free – simply pop into your local library to register a child.

Once registered, young readers will receive their first challenge card, and for every five books read, they will receive a prize*. This year's prizes include a kōwhai seedling kit, stickers, and the Tree Tops card game – specially designed to showcase native plants that grow in our district.

Last year's challenge saw an increase in library visits over summertime. During the 2024-25 summer period, children and their carers accounted for more than 1,900 library visits and an astounding 6,235 books checked out. Let's see if we can reach even higher this year!

Available for children of all ages, the challenge runs until 14 February.

**Prizes are subject to availability.*



Children's Librarian Shana Makuta said each year the Summer Reading Challenge aims to inspire young readers to learn something new, have fun, and most importantly, to keep reading over the summer.

Gibbston community meeting: landfill reconsent

Gibbston Community Association (GVA) and QLDC's Property & Infrastructure team look forward to meeting local residents to discuss the upcoming reconsenting of Victoria Flats landfill. The team will outline how the site operates, its proposed future development design, and the specific consents being applied for.

Everyone welcome at Kinross tasting room, Wednesday 4 February at 7.00pm. Find more information on GVA's Facebook page.



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Taylah's Tuia reflections

WHAT HAS YOUR YEAR INVOLVED?

Throughout the year, there were five Tuia wānanga: Tuia i Runga, Tuia i Raro, Tuia i Roto, Tuia i Waho, and Tuia ki te Heretangata. Each wānanga focused on a different kaupapa, such as connecting with the whenua, deepening our relationships, and reflecting on and celebrating the year we had spent together. For many — including me — this year has involved a huge amount of personal growth, cultural reconnection, and stepping into spaces that once felt intimidating. Every weekend provided an opportunity for me to embrace my culture, connect with other rangatahi Māori, and enjoy some incredible kai.

During the final wā, we also had the privilege of hosting the 15-year celebration of Tuia. We reflected on the kaupapa's evolution, honoured its legacy, and listened to past recipients share their experiences and the impact Tuia has had on their lives.



WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHLIGHTS?

One of the biggest highlights of this kaupapa has been being surrounded by other rangatahi Māori in a truly safe and supportive space. Over the year, I have formed so many special connections with rangatahi from all across the country, and I am immensely grateful for the impact each one of my Tuia whānau has had on me.

Like many other participants, my overall highlight from the four wānanga I attended would have to be Tuia i Roto (weaving within). This was the wānanga I was most hesitant about, especially after being told to prepare something to share with the group — whether a song, dance, poem, piece of writing, or even a game. I originally went in with the mindset that I wouldn't share anything. However, once the group sharing began, I listened to the powerful stories and vulnerability of the other rangatahi. Their courage inspired me to prepare a piece of writing of my own. Standing in front of everyone to share my kōrero was challenging, but stepping into that vulnerability — surrounded by support, encouragement, and aroha — became one of the most meaningful moments of my year.

ANY CHALLENGES YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME?

One of my biggest challenges this year was learning to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. At the start of my Tuia journey, I found it really difficult to break out of my shell. Growing up as a Māori wahine in Queenstown — disconnected from my whānau, culture, and reo — often left me feeling like I didn't quite belong within Te Ao Māori. Going into Tuia, I was nervous that I would be judged for my lack of knowledge and confidence in my reo. But this kaupapa shattered all of those worries. For the first time, I was able to share openly about myself and my journey without feeling judged or out of place. A saying that was repeated often throughout the wānanga was, "Be comfortable with being uncomfortable," and this mindset truly transformed my experience.

HOW HAVE YOUR FUTURE GOALS BEEN INFLUENCED BY YOUR PARTICIPATION?

As we have wrapped up the year with Tuia, I've spent a lot of time reflecting on what I want my future to look like. I've noticed that every time I return from a Tuia wānanga, I feel more grounded, connected, and whole as a person. This kaupapa has inspired me to continue integrating Te Ao Māori into my everyday life and has encouraged me to seek out more opportunities that strengthen my identity and cultural journey. I am now planning to continue studying Te Reo Māori so that one day I can teach my children to kōrero fluently and carry our reo proudly into the next generation. Although I am not yet set on what my future career or pathway will be, I know with certainty that Te Ao Māori will always be at the heart of it.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAMME?

If I could recommend anything to a Māori rangatahi, it would be Tuia. This kaupapa has been one of the most rewarding and transformative experiences of my life. When I first entered the programme, I wasn't sure it was meant for someone like me. Even though I had heard so much positive feedback from past Tuia participants and those around me, I worried that my shyness would hold me back, and I was genuinely scared to give this kaupapa a chance. But choosing to step into it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. The people you meet, the connections you build, and the sense of belonging you feel are truly unmatched. Tuia is the first space where I felt I could be authentically myself, without hesitation or doubt. Leaving this journey, I feel whole — grounded in my culture, confident in who I am, and more connected to the world around me than ever before.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

Ngā mihi nui to Aunty Meaz and Matua Gilbertson for giving me the push I needed to give this kaupapa a chance. I really appreciate the efforts you put in to help prepare me for applying and attending the wānanga. I would also like to thank Topaz and Glyn for this amazing opportunity. I am so grateful that I was pushed to have this experience.

I would also like to give my biggest thank you to my mum. Without your eagerness and persuasion for me to apply for Tuia, I'm not sure I would have given it a go. You gave me confidence in myself that I didn't yet see, reminding me that I am capable, deserving, and ready for opportunities like this. You made sure that I didn't miss out on such an amazing experience, pushing me in the moments I hesitated and celebrating every step I took. Thank you for believing in me so strongly that I learned to believe in myself too. Thank you for believing in me so strongly with so much love and care.

For more info and enquire about joining the programme visit www.mtfj.co.nz/youth-development or email topaz.river@qldc.govt.nz



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Lakefront New Year celebrations

Head to the Queenstown and Wānaka lakefronts for the traditional New Year celebrations. It's all free to enjoy!

Both events kick off with family-friendly entertainment in the afternoon followed by live music and, of course, spectacular fireworks displays at midnight.

There'll be safe zones in both towns from 29 December through to the main event thanks to the awesome efforts of Red Frogs volunteers.

See page 23 for more great summer events.

QUEENSTOWN

1.00-5.00pm	Family fun at Earnslaw Park including face painting and roaming entertainers
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Main Stage: EARNSLAW PARK

7.30-8.00pm	Fish Pie Four
8.00-9.30pm	Highland Storm
9.30-11.00pm	Turtle Funk + special guest Elliott Allemand
11.00pm-1.00am	CNE

DJ Stage: MARINE PARADE (MC – Davie Dubs)

9.00-10.30pm	DJ Pops + Riddim Cartel
10.30-midnight	DJ Cuz
Midnight-1.00am	DJ Rasty

Fireworks at midnight

WĀNAKA

2.00-4.30pm	Family fun at Dinosaur Park including face painting, roaming entertainers and games
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Main Stage: ARDMORE STREET LAYBY

8.00-8.30pm	Superficial
8.30-10.45pm	Wānaka Project
10.45pm-1.00am	The Mandates

DJ Stage: ARDMORE STREET LAYBY

9.00-11.00pm	Red Frogs DJ
11.00pm-1.00am	DJ Jordi

Fireworks at midnight

ALCOHOL-FREE AREAS

We warmly encourage visitors and locals to enjoy a festive season marked by responsible enjoyment. A timely reminder then that QLDC's Alcohol-Free Areas in Public Places Bylaw supports a family-friendly environment by reducing the potential for alcohol-related offensive behaviour.

Alcohol-free areas are in place overnight from 6.00pm-6.00am **every day of the year** in Queenstown CBD, Arrowtown, Frankton, Wanaka CBD and Lake Hāwea.

In addition, Queenstown and Wānaka CBDs are alcohol-free **round-the-clock** from 6.00am Christmas Day until 6.00am on 6 January.

Check before you go – maps showing all these locations can be found on our website:

 qldc.govt.nz/alcohol-free-areas



Lake Hayes A&P Show



The Lake Hayes A&P Show returns on 10 January 2026 to celebrate rural life for the 110th time.

This year's theme 'Paddock to Pantry' will shine a spotlight on our local food – from the farmers and growers who produce it, to the delicious creations that fill our pantries and tummies. To bring the theme to life, the show will feature a new exciting attraction: the 'Lake Hayes Larder' will be the ultimate foodie zone celebrating local artisan food and drink, including tasting stalls, interactive activities, special guests and live cooking demos.

Full details at lakehayesshow.com



Set against the stunning backdrop of Lake Hayes this special event is organised by the community, for the community and features thrilling competitions, family-friendly entertainment, and a celebration of rural life. See you there!

OTHER AWESOME SUMMER EVENTS

29-31 December	Rhythm & Alps
3 January	Glenorchy Races
3 January	Wānaka Rodeo
16-25 January	Queenstown Bike Fest / McGazza Fest
24 January	The Valley Festival – Gibbston
24 January	The Ruby Swim
31 January	Wānaka Summer Concert
7 February	Lake Hāwea Family Fishing Classic
7 February	Arrowtown Gin Festival
15 February	Natural Selection Bike
19-21 February	Challenge Wānaka
20-22 February	Ayrburn Classic - Tour d'Elegance
26 February-1 March	NZ Golf Open

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Summer hours and contacts



Our offices in Queenstown and Wānaka will close at midday on Wednesday 24 December and reopen at 8.00am on Monday 5 January.



As always, we'll still have a team of people available 24/7 to take your call and help resolve any urgent issues that crop up – just give us a call on 03 441 0499 (Queenstown) or 03 443 0024 (Wānaka).



Another option for non-urgent issues is Snap, Send, Solve – a handy little app that allows you to report issues in your local area on the spot, using your mobile device. These issues are then automatically sent QLDC's way! *Please note, these will not be monitored over the Christmas closedown.*



A full list of opening hours for our sport and recreation facilities, libraries and transfer stations can be found online at qldc.govt.nz/summer-101. You'll also find lots of other helpful info about summer in the Queenstown Lakes District.

QLDC OFFICES

Queenstown Office:

10 Gorge Road
Private Bag 50072, Queenstown
Phone: 03 441 0499

Wānaka Office:

47 Ardmore Street, Wānaka
Phone: 03 443 0024

E-mail: services@qldc.govt.nz

Office Hours:

Weekdays 8.00am – 5.00pm

QUEENSTOWN EVENTS CENTRE

Alpine Aqualand
Alpine Health & Fitness
Indoor Courts
Sports fields
Phone: 03 450 9005

WĀNAKA RECREATION CENTRE

Wānaka Pool
Indoor Courts
Phone: 03 443 9334

PAETARA ASPIRING CENTRAL

Indoor Courts
Studio
Phone: 03 450 1721

VENUES

For more information on our venues please head to qldc.govt.nz/venues

LIBRARIES

For library opening hours and locations please head to qldclibraries.govt.nz

TRANSFER STATIONS

Whakatipu: 110 Glenda Drive
Frankton Industrial Area
Phone: 03 348 5126

Upper Clutha: Cnr of Ballantyne & Riverbank Roads
Phone: 03 348 6125

HARBOURMASTER

Report non-compliance of waterway rules by phone **03 441 0499** or email services@qldc.govt.nz
In an emergency on the water always **call 111**

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING CONTACT

Let's Talk Kōrero Mai is published bi-monthly by Queenstown Lakes District Council to inform ratepayers and residents of council activities.

Sam White ✉ communications@qldc.govt.nz
Feedback and ideas are welcome.

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