

WASTE MINIMISATION COMMUNITY FUND

GOT A BRIGHT GREEN IDEA?

Check out our recipient's profiles here!

Some epic initiatives have been done in the past and we look forward to receiving future ideas in reaching a common goal of zero waste.



**Inspire us with your ideas to move
our community towards zero waste!**

You might be eligible for funding through
our Waste Minimisation Community Fund.



QUEENSTOWN
LAKES DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Looking for a sign to recycle? This is it!

Wastebusters Event Recycling Signage and Bins Project.

At events across Wānaka, from the buzzing crowds at Warbirds over Wānaka to local A&P shows, it can be a challenge to get visitors, and even locals to recycle correctly.

Thanks to funding from QLDC's Waste Minimisation Community Fund, Wastebusters have made recycling at Wānaka events more accessible, fun, and easy.

The Wastebusters Event Recycling Signage and Bins Project has increased visibility of recycling to support the on-the-ground recycling service the organisation provides at events. The team invested in feather flags and high vis vests, which assists attendees to identify the closest recycling bins, and educational signage on their e-bike recycling trailers also raises awareness of recycling. The two e-bike trailers also helps the team to service recycling bins in a fun, and environmentally positive way, adding value to the experience of the event for attendees.

Gina Dempster from Wastebusters says the project was dreamt up to support event attendees to make the right choice. "We wanted people to see recycling stations easily, know where to find us, and understand why recycling matters. Our kit really helps with that."

Regarding the e-bike trailers, Gina says, "we can now move among the crowds, keep bins from overflowing, and encourage correct recycling, all while connecting people to the values of reuse and waste minimisation."

Feedback from event organisers has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the professional look and improved visibility of recycling stations. Wastebusters have also learned lessons about managing equipment and improving operational processes, ensuring the service continues to grow.

The project has set a higher standard for event recycling in Wānaka, and with continued improvements planned for wheelie bins and signage, Wastebusters is helping the community take the next step in sustainable behaviour.



Sew much fun – Wānaka Community Workshop's Fabricate classes champion reuse and repair

In response to mounting concerns relating to the global fast fashion industry, Wānaka Community Workshop launched their new sewing workshop, Fabricate.

Founded with the vision to reduce clothing and fabric waste by building community skills in reuse and repair, Fabricate is a space where members can sew, repair, pattern draft, construct and learn to create using recycled materials.

Fabricate's Gwilymn Griffith-Jones is thrilled to see that as the workshops become an established part of the community, they are seeing a marked increase in people bringing in materials directly to Fabricate to be used. "We often see two to three boxes a day of all sorts of exciting things being brought to us, which are then turned into new projects fairly quickly," he said.

Repurposed Fabricate projects include manufacturing of yoga bolsters using 175kg of shredded fabric otherwise destined for landfill, bird costumes for Wāi Wānaka, cornhole games, and cleaning cloths made from donated and recycled fabrics and cottons.

The space has also served as a great location for other community events, hosting the likes of regular repair cafes and sewing bees to make reusable produce bags as part of Plastic Free July activities.

With membership growing healthily, so too are Fabricate's aspirations to reshape the community's perception of fashion, promoting both sustainability and conscientious consumption.

Fabricate is proudly supported by the Queenstown Lakes District Waste Minimisation Fund.



Queenstown Harvest Community Garden's new Composting System nurtures sustainability

Have you ever traveled down Gorge Road into Queenstown and caught a glimpse of lush, verdant patches of garden on your way into town?

You've spotted the Queenstown Harvest Community Gardens, a testament to the power of community collaboration and sustainable living!

You've spotted the Queenstown Harvest Community Gardens, a testament to the power of community collaboration and sustainable living!

This green haven is open to locals who lack space for a vegetable garden at their place. Maintained by volunteers, these gardens flourish under the care of the community, with regular working bees ensuring the perpetual cycle of growth and harvest.

Paula Squire-Thomas from the Harvest Garden perfectly encapsulates the project's spirit with her motto, "Waste needn't go to waste!" The vision is clear: to nourish the gardens while reducing landfill waste, creating a sustainable cycle that benefits all.

The Harvest Gardens underwent a comprehensive composting system upgrade, as well as plans made to repair existing structures and establish new ones.

The garden also has ambitious plans to build a worm farm and offer bokashi bins to over 60 homes in the district, providing an accessible gateway to home composting.

This initiative, proudly supported by Queenstown Lakes District Council's Waste Minimisation Community Fund, does more than just enhance the harvest garden. By offering composting workshops, it seeks to empower the wider community with knowledge, upskilling locals to sustain both the community garden and their personal gardens.

Keep an eye on updates to discover how you can contribute to this sustainable venture. After all, every great garden thrives on the hands that tend it.

www.harvestgardens.nz



A world of worms

If the children at Queenstown Preschool and Nursery are anything to go by, it's never too early to start learning about composting and worm farming.

The children have been diving into the world of worms thanks to a new worm farm and live worms, funded through Queenstown Lakes District Council's Waste Minimisation Fund.

Rachel Rooke, the team leader of Mōa Room, has been the driving force behind the project.

Ms Rooke said they applied for the fund because they have a few "passionate garden enthusiasts" amongst staff and some of the children don't have their own gardens at home, as well as that their own preschool garden needed some love and attention.

"We started way back at the beginning with our three-and-a-half-year-olds, asking them 'what do you think a worm farm is? The level of enthusiasm with the children is amazing," said Ms Rooke.

The children went to St Joseph's School to visit a year three class who showed off their worm bin set up.

"Some of the tamariki were not impressed that the worms did wee on their hands, but they learnt that that is what makes the garden grow. The school children put all their food scraps from their lunch boxes in the worm farm."

Next, they dialled in Dr Compost for a visit.

"He answered all our questions we had about worms. The worms that we need are called tiger worms and they don't like citrus peel because it's too acidic for them.

The children have caught on very quickly what we can and cannot feed the worms," said Ms Rooke.

"The children have been absolutely engrossed in the what, why and how of the workings of a farm."

The preschool garden is receiving much more love now and they have been growing spinach, silverbeet, potatoes and rhubarb as a result of the worm farm castings.

Some of these veggies make it onto pizzas, or home to where the parents can make something with their children.

"The worm farm had to be moved out the back for the winter where there is more sun, but our journey has just begun because there is still so much to learn about keeping a worm farm and composting."

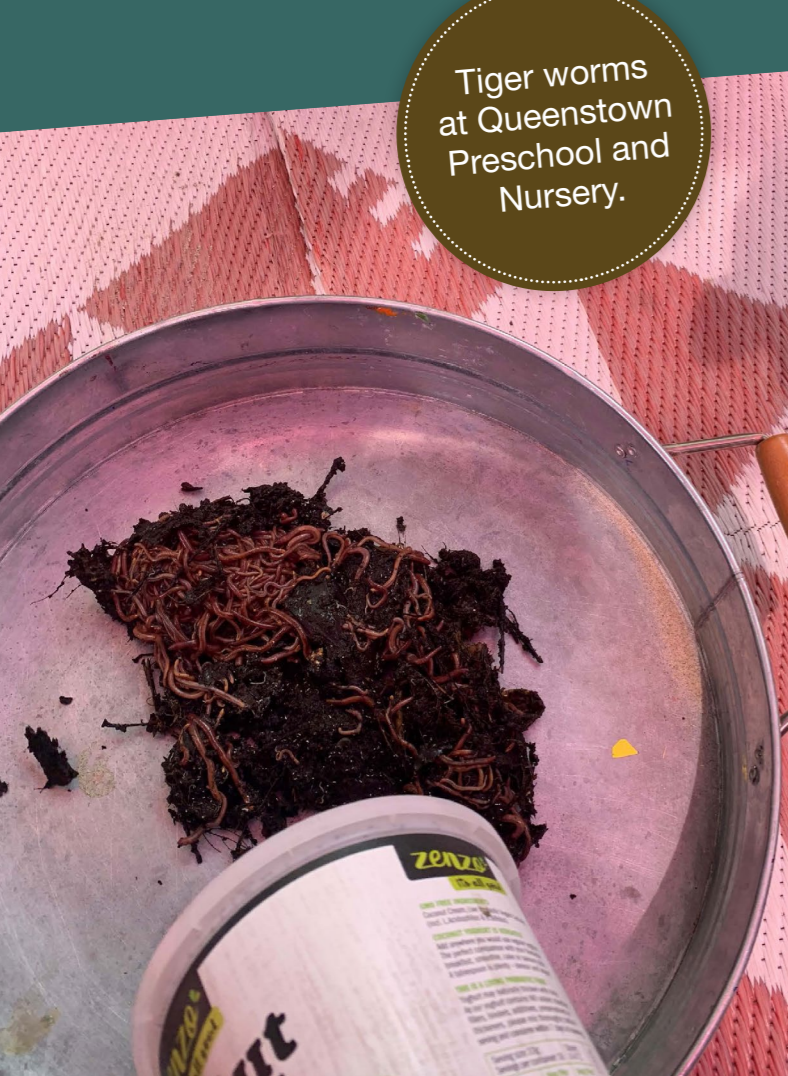
Worm farm tips and tricks:

- > Worms don't like citrus, onions, liquids, or mouldy bread.
- > Move your worm farm into the shade in summer and into the sun in winter.
- > Keep your worm farm moist but not wet.
- > Check out *Dr Compost on Facebook* for more advice.

Tiger worms at Queenstown Preschool and Nursery.

Children participate in hands-on learning about worm farming and composting.

If you're keen to try worm farming, QLDC subsidises the purchase of worms. Check out the QLDC website for more details.



Zero organic waste reaching landfill

Wānaka Primary School is a place where environmental consciousness is front and centre, with over 600 students, teachers, parents, and community members getting involved in setting up a school composting system.

The goal? Zero organic waste reaching landfill.

Wānaka Primary Schools, Jo Roberts said when students and teachers realised just how much waste could be diverted from landfill they worked together to come up with a plan and applied for funding through the waste minimisation community fund.

“Our goal is to divert food waste from lunchboxes, the staffroom, as well as paper/card waste to use in our composting systems. This will also allow us to improve our soil to grow food for the school and wider community,” Jo Roberts said.

The school has adopted new processes to make sure the system runs smoothly, with collection buckets based around the school, leadership roles for students, and rostered shifts to help maintain and upkeep the composting systems.

Students and volunteers were taught how to manage these composting systems, such as recording temperatures and moisture content.

So far, the new system has prevented 10kg of food waste a week from ending up in landfill, thanks to everyone involved and support from the Waste Minimisation Community Fund.

Future goals include educating the wider community and tamariki on food supply chains and finding new composting processes, such as worm farms.

“The skills and knowledge being spread has the power to create a generation of children who will intrinsically act and think sustainably, becoming a catalyst for community wide awareness and change.”

– Jo Roberts

Students setting up a school composting system

Students learning about how composting works

Visit qldc.govt.nz more information regarding the Waste Minimisation Community Fund.



Ditching single-use takeaway cups

Sustainable Queenstown Charitable Trust is on a mission to rid Arrowtown of single-use takeaway cups, one hot drink at a time.

Lana Cruickshank from Sustainable Queenstown said the idea to encourage Arrowtown to be SUCfree (single-use cup free) originated over the hill.

Wānaka Wastebusters, Plastic Free Wānaka and local businesses initiated a successful, community-led SUCfree Wānaka campaign aimed at making reuse the norm.

Thanks to the campaign, twenty-four cafes and caravans in Wānaka have now implemented cup-lending schemes or libraries and eleven are completely SUCfree, saving 180,000 cups from landfill annually.

"It was a no-brainer to leverage off their experience to tackle single use cups on this side of the hill," said Ms Cruickshank.

"There are also a number of reusable cup initiatives throughout the country which we drew inspiration from, including UYO, a free use-your-own resource hub, and some very accessible loan cup services including Chunky, Wanakup, and AgainAgain."

Sustainable Queenstown received funding from Queenstown Lakes District Council's (QLDC) Waste Minimisation Community Fund to support an Arrowtown focused campaign.

They have been working in partnership with the Arrowtown Promotion and Business Association to develop a functioning model of a SUCfree town which can then be applied to the wider Whakatipu area.

"The funding we received from QLDC has really helped kick-start our campaign," Ms Cruickshank said.

"We contacted local Arrowtown businesses, shops, and offices, to discuss single use plastics, and invited them to take a pledge to make their office completely SUCfree."

"For initiatives to be successful we need to engage and celebrate the community, so we ran a prize draw for those that participated, and the winner was rewarded with a local cafe voucher. We've done a similar thing with residents who have joined in, sharing photos of their delicious takeaway drinks in a reusable cup. Needless to say, there are lots of happily caffeinated Arrowtown people as a result!"

"We've also ensured that every Arrowtown hot drink vendor has been given access to information around how to implement SUCfree options and offered ongoing support if needed."

Ms Cruickshank said ditching single use cups is an easy first step when it comes to sustainability.

"An estimated 300 million cups go into landfill, litter our streets and waterways in Aotearoa each year. Contrary to popular belief, takeaway cups can't be recycled and are rarely compostable - you need a commercial compost facility for this. Inevitably customers will put them in the bin for landfill, or into recycling which contaminates the rest of the contents," said Ms Cruickshank.

"If you don't have a keep cup already, there are lots of affordable options out there, even preloved cups from the thrift shops. You can also use a mug or even a mason jar. Or treat yourself and take five minutes to sit down and enjoy your drink at your café of choice. Choosing not to use single cups is one of the simplest sustainable swaps you can do that will definitely make a difference."

Lana Cruickshank leading by example

The Gold Nugget doesn't SUC!

Rationale in Arrowtown is proudly single-use-cup free!



Less construction waste heading to landfill

Construction business Naylor Love Central Otago is working towards a more sustainable waste management system. Construction waste is a significant, nationwide issue with approximately 40-50% of all waste going to landfill construction and demolition related.

Andrew Blackford, Design Manager for Naylor Love says they are in the process of standardising separation of recyclable and waste materials across building sites. To make this possible, consistent, clear, and durable signage is required.

“The aim is to make our signage standard across all our sites. This means when our people and subcontractors move around our sites they will see the same consistent signage, and the right material ends up in the right bin. Ultimately the goal is to reduce the amount of construction waste heading to Victoria Flats Landfill.”

“Consistency is key to getting good results. It removes excuses people can have about not knowing what to do.”

To support them in their mission, Naylor Love received funding as part of QLDC’s Waste Minimisation Community Fund.

Naylor Love has made new signs with clearer instructions. Signs were previously typically fixed to the bins and often ended up departing site with the bin, so they have created their own stands to keep them onsite.

Naylor Love also want to reduce the amount of waste coming onto sites by having material delivered in reusable packaging. “A lot of our products come wrapped in single use plastics and we are exploring better ways to do this with our suppliers.”

For example, palletised deliveries wrapped in shrink wrap – pallets have been used in shipping logistics for 100’s of years but shrink wrap is a relatively modern convenience item – we need look back in time to understand how deliveries were made and can be made going forward without it.”

“We are also minimising the amount of timber that warps when it gets wet by using the reusable tarps.”

“Slowly we are gaining traction and helping to change the culture of our own organisation and hopefully, with time, the sub-contractors that work with us. The industry needs to change and it’s important to us that we can be a leader in this transition.”

Naylor Love staff separating recyclable materials

Cardboard? Plastic? Naylor Love have got it sorted.



Hotel puts scraps to good use

The Hilton hotel company is serious about reducing its environmental impact and preserving the beautiful destinations in which it operates.

It is proud of its claim to be the first major hotel company to establish science-based targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. And it is taking major steps to reduce its environmental footprint through its Watts, Water and Waste programmes.

Waste prevention, recycling, and food upcycling and donation are all key components of creating a greener hospitality industry, the company says.

"We have pledged to reduce our waste, including food waste, by 50% by 2030."

In Queenstown, Hilton has found a win-win solution to help with that.

Food scraps from its kitchens and diners' plates are fed into a food waste dehydrator, set up with the help of a \$6,000 grant from the Queenstown Lakes District Council's 2021 Waste Minimisation Community Fund. The dehydrated product, essentially compost, is donated to a local community garden.

Chris Ehmann, general manager of the Hilton Queenstown Resort & Spa and DoubleTree by Hilton Queenstown, says the project diverts about 200 kilograms of food waste from landfill each week.

"We only have one planet and we need to take care of it! We are very focused on how to reduce our carbon footprint and support local organisations," he says.

The introduction of the composting programme required some training in sorting food waste at source, as well as changes to some processes. However, Chris says staff were quick to adapt and support the programme.

"We are fully operational and composting all of our food waste. The WMCF grant helped get this programme established."

Now, Chris and his team are looking for other ways to reduce waste and create a circular economy.

Hilton staff members feed food waste into the dehydrator.

Hilton staff members remove wilding pines from a plot of land they look after near the Skyline Gondola.

We only have one planet and we need to take care of it!



Construction waste: let's skip the skip!

Construction and demolition waste, made up of a wide variety of materials including concrete, plasterboard, wood, metal, brick, glass and soil, accounts for around a third of all material sent to QLDC's Victoria Flats landfill.

Much of this material could be diverted from landfill through good practices before and during construction focused on reducing, reusing and recycling.

Enter the Better Building Group.

Part of Wao Charitable Trust – a community non-profit set up right here in our district to inspire and enable communities to move towards a regenerative, sustainable future – the group has been running workshops to show firms practical ways to reduce waste.

Monique Kelly from Wao said the workshops, which are supported by QLDC's Waste Minimisation Community Fund, have different topics aimed at different roles from tradies to architects.

"The first workshop looks at what the problem is, the second shows how to set up a waste minimisation plan, and the third highlights ways to reduce waste in the design process," she said.

"Joel Herbert, Trade Sales Manager at PlaceMakers and a founding member of the group, has spoken about how at one of the first meetings he learned about the waste generated by certain packaging which was not recyclable and went straight to landfill. Since then he's been working to find alternative packaging which PlaceMakers has managed to roll out nationwide."

"We believe collaboration is the key to success and that no one person or business can tackle this alone. For example, we've seen skip providers helping builders with waste separation as well as creating solutions for materials recycling."

Ms Kelly said the building industry, like many sectors, has been under a lot of pressure these last two years.

"Supply issues have caused major disruption but the silver lining might be that materials become more precious with less going into the skip."

And with the know-how shared at the Better Building workshops the future of construction waste in our district is looking greener.

Find out more at: www.facebook.com/WaoAotearoa or www.wao.co.nz

Joel Herbert
from PlaceMakers
talking about
construction
waste



Local approach to tackling single use coffee cups

Did you know that every year New Zealanders throw away nearly 300 million disposable coffee cups?

The Chunky team is on a mission to reduce this and we're proud to support their endeavors through the last Waste Minimisation Community funding round. We sat down with the team to talk about their loan cup scheme.

Q. Tell us about the new venture into Loan Cups and what you're hoping to achieve with the project.

While many of us try to do the right thing, it can be easy to forget to take your own cup out with you all the time. The Chunky Loan Cup system is a not-for-profit initiative that supports cafés with free membership. It's an effort to reduce the amount of waste caused by the use of single use coffee cups.

Q. How has the Waste Minimisation Community Fund supported your initiative?

The grant has allowed us to hire someone to liaise with cafés and help get the system underway in Queenstown.

Q. Talk us through how the Chunky Loan Cup scheme works.

Customers will pay the participating café \$10 as a refundable deposit for the use of the loan cup. The customer can then choose to bring their cup back to be used for their next coffee. They can bring their own clean cup or swap for a clean one.

Alternatively, they can bring back the cup in return for their deposit. The cups can be returned to any participating café, not just the café it came from, and we also have return points at KAPA at Queenstown Airport and Mooch in Frankton.

Q. How can local businesses join in?

We can be contacted at info@chunky.nz. We welcome local businesses who are interested in participating.

Q. What is your longer-term vision for the districts café culture and the Chunky Loan cup project?

We're hoping for the widespread use of reusable cups in Queenstown. Ideally, consumers will ultimately take ownership of their own cup, and our loan cup system gives people the opportunity to make the transition happen.

If you're in Wānaka and want to do your bit, keep an eye out for SUCfree (single use cup) Wānaka in local participating businesses. Find out more at facebook.com/sucfreewanaka



Ardmore Street, Wānaka



RefillNZ nationwide initiative

We celebrate another recipient of our Waste Minimisation Community Fund, RefillNZ, a nationwide initiative that Sustainable Queenstown and QLDC are helping to roll out across the Queenstown Lakes District.

Here we chat with Jess Larmont from Sustainable Queenstown about how the project is progressing locally.

Q. Let us know what RefillNZ is all about and what you have set out to achieve in the Queenstown Lakes District?

RefillNZ is an awesome nationwide initiative that focuses on three main issues: reducing single-use plastic, saving money on buying bottled water and promoting Aotearoa's drinkable water to locals and visitors (when they come back!).

Q. Well done on receiving a grant through the QLDC Waste Minimisation Community Fund for 2020! How has this grant helped roll out the project?

Thanks, we're thrilled to have received support from QLDC. This grant has enabled us to grow the number of RefillNZ water stations in the district far more quickly than if we'd been doing it as a side project.

It's also allowed me the time to deliver the sticker and posters in person and, consequently, have great conversations with cafés, bars, restaurants and tourist attractions about their sustainability practices.

Q. It's great to hear local businesses are getting behind this sustainability initiative, tell us how others can take part and the benefits of doing so?

So far we've contacted more than 60 businesses across the district, inviting them to join the #Refillution (as it's called!) and there's always room for more! For a \$20 sign-up fee, anywhere in Queenstown Lakes with a water station or water fountain can be added to the RefillNZ map and app and become visible to everyone looking for a place to fill up their own water bottle.

Q. I'm sure there are people out there that are keen to chip in and support the RefillNZ cause, do you have any tips for how can they make a difference?

Download the RefillNZ app on Apple or the Rankers Camping app on Android and whip it out the next time you're out of water; no doubt there will be a refill station nearby. QLDC has even signed up all the water fountains so you can find your nearest water location easily!

Q. What's your takeaway message to the local community?

One choice from one person really does make a difference. Keep a water bottle on you when you're out and about and get rid of the need to buy plastic bottles. Sustainability can actually save you money and buying a reusable bottle now will save you buying endless plastic bottles of water over time.

Matt Ward from RefillNZ at Smiths Craft Beer House, points to the Refill NZ logo at the bar

Liam Wright stands outside RefillNZ at The Exchange café in Queenstown



Waste audit and education programme

The spotlight on the Queenstown Chamber of Commerce and chatting to Fiona Reeve about its initiative to help local businesses improve their waste and recycling practices.

Q. It is heartening to hear that local businesses want to incorporate environmental sustainability into their everyday business practices. Talk us through how the Chamber's waste minimisation initiative helps facilitate this?

Queenstown is a fast-growing community and to ensure we can continue to enjoy this beautiful region for generations to come, ethical business practices and growing a sustainable economy are key, particularly as we move into a post-COVID environment and rebuild our economy.

Sustainability is a key interest area for the Queenstown Chamber, partly due to the commercial sector's large contribution to landfill waste. We identified an opportunity to engage with the Queenstown business community via our membership base to help them navigate their waste reduction journey.

Q. From what we understand you're bundling a waste audit programme with an education element. What a great idea. Can you tell me more about this?

We find that many businesses understand the importance of reducing their environmental impact but often people don't know where to start. We ran an introductory workshop in March for businesses providing them with guidelines and practical knowledge to help implement and maintain waste reduction initiatives.

The session featured a facilitated panel discussion from three leading sustainability advocates followed by a Q&A. Gina Dempster from Wastebusters spoke about waste reduction and how to introduce a sustainability plan and Kath Buttar from QLDC provided some context around recycling in our district.

We also had Russ Mackintosh from Cardrona who provided valuable working examples of how staff engagement helped to successfully eliminate single-use items from their mountain cafes and saved them money.

The workshop was a great chance for businesses to get together, share experiences and collaborate with others moving towards a zero-waste goal. It also provided an opportunity to offer an expression of interest to businesses keen to take part in the waste audits.

Q. What have been the benefits of working with Wastebusters and Council to get your project off the ground?

It's been incredibly valuable working with Wastebusters and the Council on this project. Wastebusters brings a wealth of experience as a community enterprise leading the way in waste reduction. Sharing their knowledge via our workshop and carrying out hands-on audits that analyse waste streams for local businesses has been key to the success of this project. The funding we've received from the Council has meant we can offer these audits and the workshop free of charge to the business community, helping local businesses improve their waste and recycling practices.

Q. Awesome to hear that free waste audit programmes will be underway with four local businesses. Who are you working with and what's involved?

We are working with a cross section of industries for these audits, with Warren and Mahoney Architects, construction firm Wilson Contractors, five-star hotel Millbrook Resort and Kinross Boutique Vineyard Hotel, Cellar Door and Bistro all on board.

The business goes through a process of a hands-on waste audit to help them understand the volume and type of waste generated from their operations and then provides them with recommendations on how to effectively reduce, reuse and recycle. We are looking to support these businesses as they implement change, working with Wastebusters to identify opportunities for zero waste education for staff and providing advice relevant to their waste streams.

Q. Does the Chamber have a plan to share the findings from these audit programmes?

We are looking forward to seeing the results of the waste audits and are keen to share some of the findings as case studies at the end of the year once these businesses have been able to implement some of the recommendations and review the outcomes in terms of waste reduction.

Q. What is the longer term vision for this project?

The hope is that we can use these case studies as a way to inspire other businesses to start their own waste reduction strategy.

The 2021 Waste Minimisation Community Fund recipients were set to be announced as Scuttlebutt went to print. Check out www.qldc.govt.nz or our Facebook page for more.

Seth Moir from Windy Ridge Farm delivering milk to Kinross Vineyard.

Gina Dempster from Wastebusters.

Russ Mackintosh from Cardrona Alpine Resort.



Queenstown Golf Club Organic Waste Composting initiative

It's time for another recipient of our Waste Minimisation Community Fund to shine! Here Matthew Judd, General Manager of Queenstown Golf Club, shares how their Organic Waste Composting initiative came about and their drive to support other clubs in reducing their organic waste.

Q: Tell us what sparked the idea to implement a system to reduce organic waste and how the waste minimisation grant from QLDC helped kick-start the project?

Having lived onsite at the club for three years it was painful to see the amount of food waste that ends up in the bin from our café kitchen, café users, and our onsite residence.

Knowing how simple it is to compost food waste inspired the idea to set up composting at the club and reduce this material unnecessarily going to landfill. The grant helped us purchase the materials and build the compost system with support from Dr Compost, aka Ben Elms.

The project diverts 20 litres of organic materials per day from landfill which will equate to more than 7 tonnes for the year!

Q: What parts do different staff members play to make the project tick?

Our greenkeeping team constructed the compost bins on site and they also provide the carbon material for the composting via leaves and woodchips. Our café staff separate the food waste from general waste and recycling and then take it to the compost bins. Everyone has been really engaged in the project, which is great!

Q: We've heard you are keen to share your learnings with other golf associations, how is this going?

We are in the process of compiling a case study outlining how we built the compost bins and the composting process. This case study will be shared with all golf clubs domestically through New Zealand Golf.

Q: What is in the works for the next stage of the project?

Our next stage is to start using some of our compost on the golf course. We are hoping to use more organic fertilisers on the course and compost tea will become part of this. We will also use the compost in gardens around the golf course and clubhouse.

Q: What advice would you share with other local businesses keen to follow in your footsteps?

Give it a go! Composting is easy to set up and implement. Not only does it save waste going into the landfill it also saves money in reduced rubbish collection costs.



Rescuing good food from landfill

“Why should we let perfectly good food go to landfill when there are people who need it?”

This is the question Kayleigh Simons-Smith asks herself.

Ms Simons-Smith is the Queenstown branch manager for KiwiHarvest, a food rescue charity that collects good food before it goes to waste and delivers it to those in need.

“Food insecurity around New Zealand is a real problem – even here in our district which from the outside has a reputation for being affluent. For many, the fact that some of our district’s families are struggling with food security will come as a shock,” she said.

KiwiHarvest has been working in Queenstown with support from QLDC since 2018, rescuing good food from supermarkets and wholesalers that would otherwise be destined for landfill. Last year it rescued more than 80,000kg of food locally.

Once the food is collected, KiwiHarvest delivers it to community groups and charities including Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust, Happiness House and Whakatipu Youth Trust.

And there’s another major benefit to rescuing food – and that’s environmental.

“Food that is disposed of incorrectly doesn’t break down properly and creates harmful greenhouse gases as well as filling up our landfills unnecessarily. So the benefit of rescuing food is two-fold for me: we can reduce our carbon emissions from landfill, and we can help whānau in need. It’s a win-win,” said Ms Simons-Smith.

More recently the Queenstown team has branched out into collecting food from cafés and bakeries.

Using funds from Council’s Waste Minimisation Community Fund they bought an e-bike from ChargeAbout Queenstown and a trailer from Christchurch to help with their food collection.

“It’s the perfect size for getting around the CBD’s small streets and we’re stoked to have received support from the fund to help make this happen.”

A team of volunteers help with the food collection, pedalling around town three times a week. The food is from the previous day which cafés were unable to sell but is still good to eat.

Those currently signed up to the project are Queenstown Signs Café, Yonder, Bespoke Kitchen, Starbucks Queenstown, Taste and Savour, Exchange, Vudu Larder and Queenstown Bakery.

If you’re interested in volunteering, run a café that would like to donate food, or simply want to learn more contact Ms Simons-Smith on Queenstown@kiwiharvest.org.nz or 021 385 246.

Yonder staff participating in KiwiHarvest’s food rescue mission.

Kayleigh Simons-Smith on the new e-bike and trailer used for collecting food around Queenstown CBD.

Kayleigh Simons-Smith (right) rescuing food from The Exchange to deliver to charities supporting families in Queenstown Lakes.



Hāwea Grove Project

The Hawea Grove Project is all about achievable sustainable living. Here we chat with Keith Stubbs, founder and filmmaker of the project and supporting webisode series - a case study on eco-building in the district – about how things are progressing.

Q: We love the idea of documenting an eco-house build from start to finish and sharing learnings for anyone with an interest to follow, what made you want to do this?

When we first purchased this piece of land, I looked around at many prefab options for smaller residential dwellings but found that a lot of them used petrochemical-based materials. What I perceived as being more “sustainable” due to less waste being produced on site quickly became very questionable to me, due to the unknowns around what goes into the prefab options and where/how they are being made.

Don't get me wrong, prefab dwellings may be great solutions but all the options I researched were not forthcoming with their material sourcing and manufacturing. That process made me wonder how many other consumers are making decisions with limited understanding.

Q: How has the community responded to your project so far?

Very positively! People genuinely seem interested to learn more about the building industry from a consumer's perspective. We had a local primary school do a project on eco building based on our first few videos. The students sent me a list of questions (some were very entertaining) which I answered via video. We do get the occasional social media comment with a little more scrutiny in it, usually because the viewer has taken something out of context or not watched the whole series.

Q: Congratulations on being one of the six recipients of the QLDC Waste Minimisation Community Fund for 2020, can you tell us how this has helped your project along?

Thank you. This fund has been a huge help as it's allowed us to put more time into the series and focus on areas that have no sponsorship opportunities, such as waste management, re-using and recycling. We would be doing these things anyway but now we can put more time into episodes focused around these topics. I'm particularly excited about the biochar kiln episode which will feature towards the end of the series.

Q: How did lock down affect the progress of the build, did you come across any silver linings?

Lockdown really just delayed everything for a month or so. Personally, I welcomed the time, enjoying spending it on the land in a more natural state and taking the time to learn about topics like embodied carbon and research different materials / suppliers.

Q: How can people tune in and get access to all the great knowledge you are discovering on The Hawea Grove build journey?

Each episode is published on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Just look up “Hawea Grove” on your preferred channel and follow along. We also publish each episode on our website haweagrove.nz, where you can subscribe to our mailing list to be notified when new episodes are released. To watch the back catalogue, visit haweagrove.nz/category/episodes/

We welcome input and suggestions, so if there's an aspect about eco building you'd like to hear more about, please let us know.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone out there who is considering an eco-build but doesn't know where to start?

Consider why you want to do it primarily. Is it because you want an energy efficient home and low energy bills? Or is it because you are concerned for our environment and climate change? Those two things do go hand-in-hand to an extent, as energy efficient homes are better for our environment in terms of energy consumption (which NZ houses are historically very poor at). But if the cost of having an energy efficient home means lots of carbon emissions during the manufacturing process (particularly from overseas suppliers where the electrical grids are generally more polluting), is it worth it?

Once you've decided which one of those is more important to you, find an architect and builder who have the same values as you, and be clear on your objectives. Spend time researching designs and materials like hempcrete, and keep your floor plan as simple as possible. The more corners you have, the less efficient your home will be.

Keith Stubbs on site at the Hawea Grove project.

The Hawea Grove, Hawea.



Better Building Resource Circulation project

We're proud to support a range of local waste reduction initiatives through the Waste Minimisation Community Fund. This edition we put the spotlight on a joint Wastebusters and WAO Wānaka project to combat construction and demolition (C&D) waste in the district.

With all the construction underway throughout the district, diverting construction and demolition waste from landfill is a fantastic idea. Can you talk us through how your project supports reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of this type of material?

Our campaign is championing reuse of surplus materials through trading on the dedicated construction app CivilShare and donating to community groups or not-for-profits like Wastebusters where material can be used instead of scraped.

This year we've seen ply offcuts being made into rodent traps, surplus timber transformed into bike jumps and materials like roofing iron and insulation reused in small projects.

Through the campaign we're also highlighting diversion opportunities like packaging and scrap metal recycling, and developing online resources to help companies develop their own waste management plans so more materials can be recovered for reuse and recycling.

Q. What drove you to look for a solution to this mounting problem within the building industry?

A construction industry survey carried out by WAO Wānaka in October 2019 revealed all the respondents were concerned about the industry's waste problem.

In response, Wastebusters and WAO, alongside the Better Building group, wanted to implement a resource recovery campaign aimed at using excess construction material in the community instead of sending it to landfill.

Q. What has the uptake been like with the local building industry?

We're seeing a real enthusiasm and interest across the building industry in reducing building waste to landfill, and finding local reuse solutions to keep building resources in circulation.

There's been an uptake in recycling from building sites and increasingly, builders are seeking assistance with their waste management practices.

Feedback from the building industry demonstrates that a change in culture is starting to happen, with some clients asking for information about builders' waste minimisation plans. Good waste minimisation and recycling can give companies a commercial advantage and reduce the build's carbon footprint.

Q. We're proud to support this initiative through the Waste Minimisation Community Fund. Can you share how the funding has helped your project along?

We really appreciate QLDC's support and backing of this project. Thanks to the funding we've been able to reach more people through events, workshops and face to face, and have initiated excellent collaboration between the building industry, building suppliers and community groups.

The funding has helped us find local solutions to reuse and recycle C&D materials and take positive steps as a community to keep surplus building and ex demo material out of landfill.

Q. How can local building companies get involved?

Anybody interested in reducing their building waste can follow our journey on Facebook (Better Building Southern Lakes) or get in touch via email ruth@wastebusters.co.nz.

Q. What would future success look like in the Construction and Demolition waste space to Wastebusters and WAO Wānaka?

We want to see a circular economy lens applied to the industry and construction waste designed out of projects. In the meantime, we'd like to see waste management practices on site that focus on recovery through reuse, repurposing and recycling.

Wooden pallets and reused old roofing iron used in the construction a wood shed

226 tonnes of C&D waste is thrown away every week in the Queenstown Lakes

Sort material on site so it can be recycled or reused (example of set up by Dunlop Builders)



Take action against textile waste with Re-Action

Ever thought about what happens to a uniform once it has done its duty on the front line?

In New Zealand alone, approximately 220,800 tonnes of textile waste are produced annually. An estimated 2,177 tonnes of this waste is made up of branded company uniforms.

When companies rebrand, garments with the outdated logo are no longer appropriate for staff, or others in the community, to wear. This is a problem that Wastebusters has been concerned about for a long time, as they find it hard to find new homes for company branded uniforms through their reuse store.

That's where Re-Action comes in – to repurpose new and pre-loved uniforms and give them a new life of adventures.

In collaboration with Re-Action, a collective in the French alps with the mission of keeping outdoor gear out of landfill, and RealNZ who donated 200 garments for the pilot, Wastebusters brought the 'Re-Action' uniform repurposing project to life, thanks in part to a grant from QLDC's Waste Minimisation Community Fund.

"The mission of the Re-Action project is to keep outdoor gear out of landfill and add to the circular economy," said Sophie Ward, Wastebusters Project Manager.

Through the talented creative efforts of Wastebusters staff and friends, old uniforms are redesigned and given a second life with experienced local sewers covering up old branding using patches and sewing techniques. The clothes are then sold in-person and online, where staff proudly share the unique background story of each garment with customers, adding value and meaning to its second life.

"All of the 200 garments have been rebranded using reclaimed fabric from old jackets and tents and waste fabric donated to Wastebusters and from New Zealand clothing manufacturers," said Sophie.

Beyond reducing waste, Re-Action raises awareness about textile waste, encouraging conversations around an issue that often goes unnoticed, but needs urgent attention and innovative solutions.

The sustainable business model is about more than just recycling – it's about reviving obsolete items and fostering sustainable choices in the corporate world. Sophie Ward from Wastebusters hopes this can inspire more businesses to think of sustainable options when rebranding their companies.

Re-Action has proven effective at reducing the volume of textile waste while providing affordable, sustainable garments to the community.

Garments have been rebranded using reclaimed fabric.

Wastebusters's transformative Re-Action project is made possible through the support of 16 organisations and QLDC's Waste Minimisation Community Fund.



Glenorchy reusable nappy bank promotes sustainability from birth

The arrival of a newborn baby into a family is a special time, and the Glenorchy Reusable Nappy Bank loves supporting local families as they welcome their newest family member into their lives.

The Glenorchy Reusable Nappy Bank is a community-driven initiative that shares a dozen reusable packs containing twenty washable nappies that can be rotated around new families within the region for years to come.

Led by Glenorchy local Michelle Green, the Nappy Bank not only provides a practical solution to waste reduction, but Michelle also educates families about the impact of disposable nappies on the environment.

“When I had my second son, we bought new reusable nappies, because they were both in diapers, but it was really expensive,” said Michelle.

“And I thought it would just be a shame if people didn’t do it because of the cost, and could we, as a small community, have a communal hub.”

The Nappy Bank received \$2,000 from the Queenstown Lakes District Council’s Waste Minimisation Community Fund, which contributed to the purchase to another eight packs of reusable nappies that will last in the community for around three years.

Families can borrow the nappy packs for as long as they need, and once they are done with them, they can return them for another family to use.

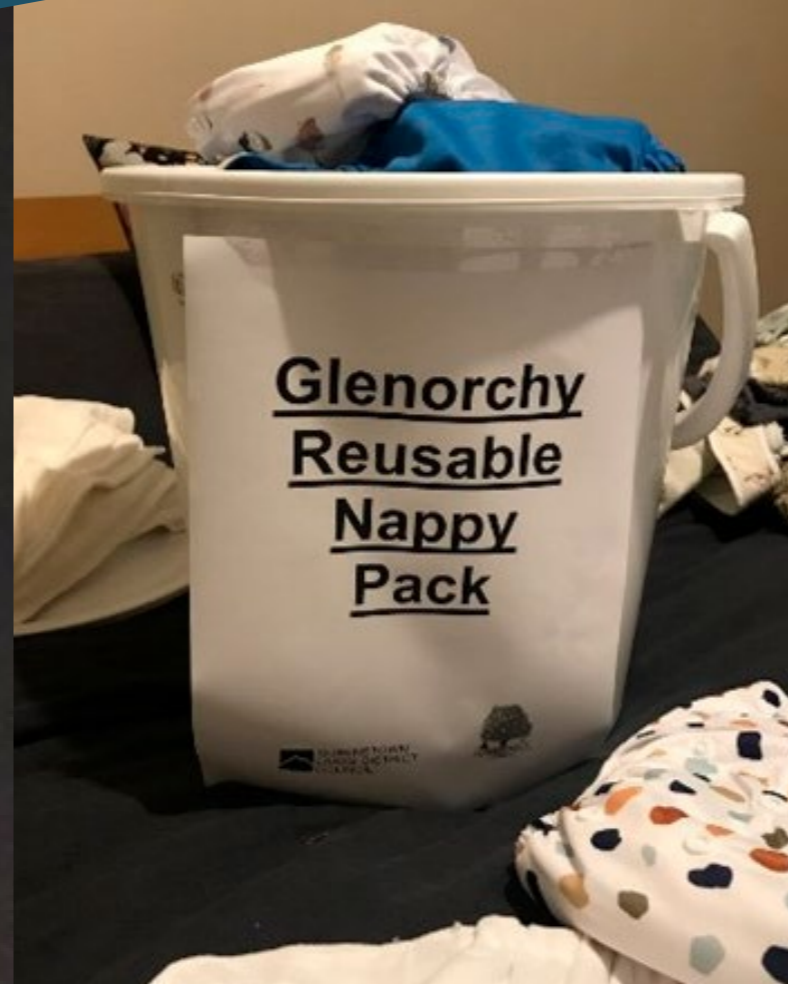
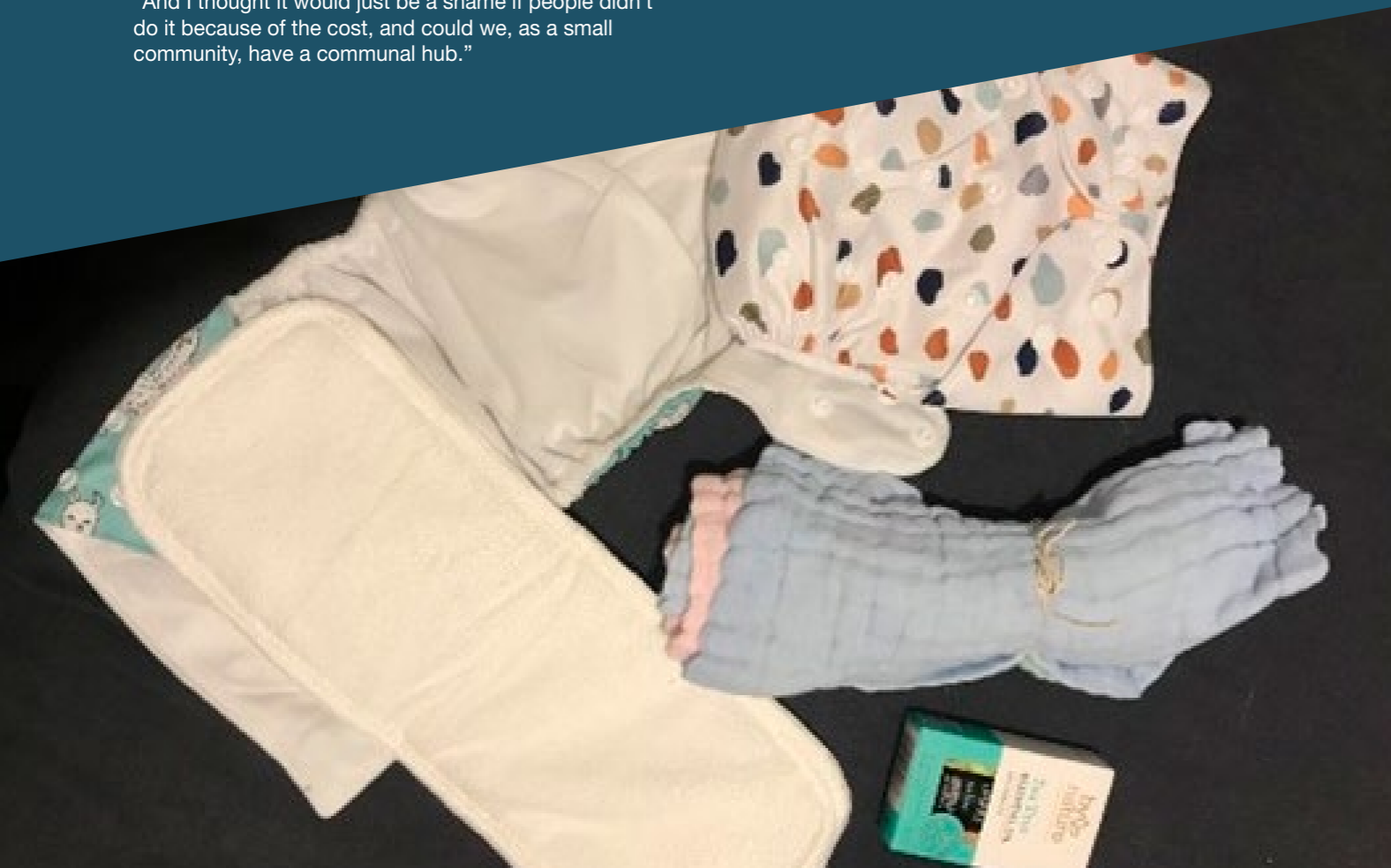
In addition to reducing waste, using reusable nappies also saves families money in the long run. While the initial cost of purchasing reusable nappies may be higher than disposable ones, the cost per use is much lower, which adds up over time.

“It’s been really fun meeting all the new families and babies,” Green says. “They’re put in contact with me, and I take them a nappy pack, and often stay for a cup of tea, and get to know them.

“We’ve also started sending out welcome baskets for newborns, so we’ll put a reusable nappy in there and some information about getting involved.”

The success of the Glenorchy reusable nappy bank has inspired other communities to create similar initiatives, modelling how local initiatives can make small yet impactful steps towards a more sustainable future. QLDC is incredibly proud to support the initiative which has helped new families and future generations in the region.

“Thank you so much for starting the reusable nappy bank. After having two kids and seeing how much waste standard nappies generate it finally gave me the motivation to switch to washables for my third. It is so easy to use and not that much extra work. I only wish I had started earlier.” *Sego, a parent from Glenorchy.*



Empowering hands and minds: Wānaka Community Workshop's MenShed

The MenShed is not just for Men but a cross section of people from the Upper Clutha area that come together to volunteer and enjoy each other's companionship.

On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, the Wānaka Community Workshop (WCW) is buzzing with activity thanks to the MenShed, a local group of Upper Clutha volunteers that come together to upcycle building materials that would otherwise have gone to landfill, into products needed within the community.

Developed as a community resource, the WCW provides the MenShed access to tools, materials, and the space to build and repair projects; and creates a

place where new skills can be learned and fostered. To date, the MenShed group have made a variety of items from waste timber including rat traps, skink and gecko hotels for Te Kākano, a battery recycling station for QLDC, and a picnic table for Bike Wānaka.

As the WCW relies on sponsorships and grants to grow and maintain the workshop, the group applied to the Queenstown Lakes District Council Waste Minimisation Fund to help purchase a thicknesser planer machine to add to the existing suite of machinery with the purpose of increasing membership, participation, capability, and waste diversion.

"The benefits for our trust are massive. The WMCF provides us with the cash to purchase bigger items that have a huge benefit to our ability to complete projects." Said Ben Acland, Wānaka Community Workshop Trustee.

This initiative not only benefits the environment but also has a positive impact on the wellbeing of many people in the Upper Clutha by providing a place to learn while forming friendships and connections over a shared love of DIY.

QLDC is proud to support wonderful initiatives like the Wānaka Community Workshop which are essential for building sustainable and resilient communities.

To learn more about the Wānaka Community Workshop visit their website: wanakacommunityworkshop.org.nz



Transforming the Future: Lake Hayes A&P Show Leads the Way in 55% Waste Reduction!

The Lake Hayes A&P Show is a well-loved community event that brings together families, organisations, competitors, and trade exhibitors from around the region.

In 2023, the organisers of the popular event sought to increase sustainability initiatives while decreasing the waste generated during the event. Fittingly, the 2023 Lake Hayes A&P Show theme was 'Going Waste Free', which brought the issue of waste minimisation to the forefront of people's minds and set the tone for the event.

To achieve this, they created a waste minimisation 'hub' that showcased ways to minimise waste, including composting, reducing food waste at home, and displaying eco-friendly food packaging options. The hub featured representatives who actively engaged with the public on waste minimisation topics, as well as cooking show demonstrations using leftover food.

Additionally, the organisers set up food waste collection bins throughout the event to prevent food waste ending up in landfills. The 'mug library' initiative

encouraged visitors to borrow a ceramic mug for their hot drinks, and then return it to be washed and reused. Visitors were also encouraged to bring their own reusable cups and water bottles, further reducing the use of single-use cups.

Thanks to these initiatives, the Lake Hayes A&P Show produced 580kg of waste, compared to the 2021 show that produced 1290kg total waste, reducing the total waste to landfill by 55% in 2023.

With the support of Queenstown Lakes District Council, event organisers were able to secure funding through the Waste Minimisation Community Fund to increase their waste minimisation practices and introduce better sustainable options to the event.

Lake Hayes Show Secretary Rachel Norris said that funding from the Waste Minimisation Community Fund enabled them to implement several new initiatives at the 2023 show, furthering them on their journey to becoming a waste-free event.

"These initiatives were very well supported by the local community and show attendees which was great to see. Combining the WMCF funding with other waste minimising initiatives, we exceeded our target and managed to more than halve our total waste produced from the previous show," she said.

"For those thinking about applying for funding, it's definitely worth getting creative with waste minimising ideas and putting a submission together. The WMCF team were so helpful by providing guidance and contacts to help the process and achieving maximum impact."

An incredible achievement from the team and everyone involved, we cannot wait to see what they will accomplish in the years to come, while inspiring other events to include some of these ideas.



Visit the QLDC website for more information:
 www.qldc.govt.nz/wmcf

