

30 January 2026

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██████████
Sent via email to ██████████

Request for Official Information LG26-0012 – Fire Cause Investigator - Frankton Golf Centre

Dear ██████████

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 16 December 2025 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

- **Do you have the official FENZ [Fire and Emergency New Zealand] report?**

QLDC RESPONSE

In response to your request, we consulted with the QLDC Sport and Recreation Team.

Decision to withhold information

QLDC has good reason under sections 6(c) and 7(2)(f)(i) of the LGOIMA for withholding the information requested. QLDC considers it is necessary to refuse the requested information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 6(c) – the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain the effective maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial.
- Section 7(2)(f) – the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through—
 - i. the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members or officers or employees of any local authority in the course of their duty.

Section 6(c) of the LGOIMA allows for the withholding of information related to ongoing negotiations or deliberations if its release would potentially affect the conduct of public affairs. This provision aims to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive negotiations and deliberations, which can support decision-making processes and manage the balance between transparency and privacy.

In this case, the Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) report has been received and forms part of Council's investigation and review of the incident. While this process is underway, Council is unable to comment further on the matter at this stage.

Disclosing related information at this stage could undermine the integrity of the investigation. Accordingly, the information is therefore withheld under section 6(c) of the LGOIMA.

Section 7(2)(f)(i) of the LGOIMA is intended to uphold the effective conduct of public affairs by ensuring that members, officers, and employees of local authorities can express their opinions freely and frankly in the course of their duties. This provision recognises that open communication is essential for informed decision-making and effective governance.

In this case, the withheld information consists of draft reports and documents prepared to inform internal discussions. Drafts often contain provisional views, incomplete assessments, or options that were not ultimately pursued. Disclosing them can inhibit honest discussions, misrepresent the authority's final position and discourage staff from testing ideas freely in the development phase.

The need to maintain an environment where officials can express their views without fear of public scrutiny is paramount. Thus, the rationale for withholding the requested information is to protect the integrity of the decision-making process and ensure that public affairs are conducted effectively.

Public interest considerations

In assessing whether to withhold information, QLDC carefully evaluates the public interest—particularly whether disclosure would enhance transparency, accountability, or informed public engagement. This assessment includes weighing those benefits against the potential harm that could result from releasing the information.

QLDC acknowledges the public interest in ensuring transparency and accountability among local authority members and officials and supports the principles of good governance. We remain committed to releasing information wherever appropriate. However, in this instance, QLDC considers that the need to maintain the free and frank provision of advice outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Releasing the requested information could inhibit honest discussions and lead to self-censorship, ultimately undermining the quality of advice and deliberations within the local authority.

Therefore, QLDC has determined that section 7(2)(f)(i) of the LGOIMA applies. In this case, no overriding public interest has been identified that would justify its release.

Right to review the above decision

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact Rebecca.Pitts@qldc.govt.nz (Engagement and Communications Manager).

We trust that the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,

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