

15 August 2025

Sent via email to [REDACTED]

LG25-0210 – Rutherford Road and the Draft Freedom Camping Bylaw

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION – RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 22 July 2025 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

Please provide the following information regarding the Draft Freedom Campers By-law, including any work related to freedom camping on Rutherford Road:

- 1. The total costs spent to date on preparing the Draft Freedom Campers By-law, broken down by:**
 - Consultants
 - Lawyers
 - Advisors
 - Internal staff and resourcing costs
- 2. Copies of any cost-benefit analysis or evaluation of ongoing costs undertaken regarding the by-law, including:**
 - Anticipated costs of monitoring and enforcing the by-law if enacted.
 - Expected financial impacts on ratepayers.
 - Any internal or external reports or memos evaluating the financial or operational impacts of the proposed by-law.
- 3. Details of the process for implementing the by-law if enacted, particularly any expected resourcing, operational, or budgetary impacts on QLDC.**

QLDC RESPONSE

Release of information

In response to your request, we consulted with the QLDC Community Services Directorate.

Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, please provide the following information regarding the Draft Freedom Campers By-law, including any work related to freedom camping on Rutherford Road:

In relation to Rutherford Road, as rural roads were treated consistently in the draft bylaw, there has been no specific work done in relation to Rutherford Road. The 26 June 2025 Council Report ([item 6](#)) details information about rural roads. Please see points 36-39 in the report. The technical assessment undertaken by Tonkin and Taylor can be found [here](#) which provides the advice on which the draft bylaw was developed.

1. The total costs spent to date on preparing the Draft Freedom Campers By-law, broken down by:

- **Consultants**
- **Lawyers**
- **Advisors**
- **Internal staff and resourcing costs**

Costs (excluding GST) from July 2024 to the end of June 2025:

- Consultants - \$171,150.02 Tonkin + Taylor expert site assessments and subsequent reporting
- Lawyers - \$70,366.23 on legal advice
- Advisors - \$44,195.02 on a Project Manager
- Internal staff and resourcing costs - \$127,942.45 staff costs time sheeted until the end June.

2. Copies of any cost-benefit analysis or evaluation of ongoing costs undertaken regarding the by-law, including:

- **Anticipated costs of monitoring and enforcing the by-law if enacted.**

Enforcement and monitoring will be conducted within current budgets.

In 2024-2025 financial year Council spent approximately \$150,000 (excluding GST) on Freedom Camping enforcement. In previous years the annual cost has been approximately \$190,000 (excluding GST). To note, in past years this sum included a portion of funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to increase summer patrols.

In 2024-2025, without a freedom camping bylaw, enforcement was focussed on the Reserves Act and breeches of the Freedom Camping Act, such as camping in a non-self-contained vehicle.

It is expected the 2025-2026 costs will be approximately \$190,000 (excluding GST) if the new bylaw is adopted by Council. The cost will depend on the bylaw rules that are approved, the levels of service required, increased demand and the level of noncompliance experienced. The enforcement of the Freedom Camping Act is undertaken through a proportionate enforcement approach where resources are adjusted subject to demand and non-compliance observed and enforced. There is an aim of being cost neutral where possible with money from infringements covering the cost of the service.

- **Expected financial impacts on ratepayers.**

Review of the 2021 bylaw was planned to commence in 2026, therefore the quashing order from the High Court has brought forward this bylaw development process. The costs associated with reviewing Council's bylaws including staff time and advertising will be met within current Council budgets and there are no financial impacts on ratepayers.

Enforcement patrols for the new bylaw will be operated across the district within current budgets and can be scaled up or down depending on demand.

- **Any internal or external reports or memos evaluating the financial or operational impacts of the proposed by-law.**

The costs associated with reviewing Council's bylaws including staff time and advertising will be met within current Council budgets and there are no financial impacts on ratepayers.

The 26 June 2025 Council Report ([item 6](#)) details anticipated operational costs for the upcoming summer season.

3. Details of the process for implementing the by-law if enacted, particularly any expected resourcing, operational, or budgetary impacts on QLDC.

The wider responsible camping programme operational expenditure for 2024-2025 was approximately \$333,000 (excluding GST). The successful implementation of a new freedom camping bylaw will require appropriate budget to put in place and monitor. Costs for the 2025-26 Responsible Camping Programme are estimated at approximately \$420,000 (excluding GST) and include considerations such as:

- a. ambassadors (i.e., wages, uniforms, required resources)
- b. communications (i.e., printed resources and targeted messaging through CamperMate and/or other commercial advertising to campers)
- c. fleet
- d. signage (i.e., education signs in all restricted freedom camping sites if a bylaw is adopted, as well as signage marking the correct areas for freedom camping highlighting the nearest toilet)
- e. site maintenance.

We trust that the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,



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