

# Understanding consent fees and charges

When applying for a resource consent, it's important to understand the various fees and charges involved in the process. These costs reflect the time and expertise required to assess your application, conduct site visits, and ensure compliance with planning regulations. Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) follows the statutory requirements set out in the Resource Management Act (RMA), which means multiple professionals (*including planners, engineers, landscape architects, urban designers and noise experts*) may contribute to reviewing and processing your application. This guide explains how consent fees are structured, why certain charges apply, and what you can expect throughout the process.

## Site visits

A site visit by the processing planner will be carried out for every resource consent application. This allows the relevant officer to fully understand the site, the surrounding context, how the development will relate to neighbouring properties, and ensure there are no existing features that might affect the application. Site visits are established planning practice and are essential to sound decision making and ensuring these decisions are defensible if challenged in court. Other experts like engineers and landscape architects will also typically undertake a site visit for their reporting.

## Staff and experts

A detailed technical review will be undertaken to evaluate applications against the planning rules and policy framework for the site, considering their effects and compliance with regulations. Various staff and experts may be required to work on your application in order to do this.

- > **Processing planners:** Your resource consent is allocated to a processing planner, who will be your primary contact.
- > **Senior planners or team leaders:** They may provide guidance to the processing planner during processing. Our senior planners also manage the commissioning of experts (i.e. noise, landscape architect, urban designer) who may be involved in the processing of your application.
- > **Decision maker:** They will review the decision report, before they make the formal decision on your application. Councils' decision makers include in-house staff (planners, senior planners, resource consent team leaders, resource consent managers) or accredited Hearing Commissioners.
- > **Development engineers and other experts:** Depending on the complexity of the application, development engineers and other experts (such as noise, traffic, landscape architect, urban design) may also be required.

These individuals may charge their time to your resource consent number for any time spent working on your application.

## Compliance check

Our monitoring and enforcements officers may review and consider previous enforcement history of the site. The time taken for this will be charged to your application using the timesheet code 'Compliance Check'. This is in accordance with section 104(2EA) of the RMA.

## Contractors

QLDC uses external planning consultants to support the processing of resource consent applications. This is common practice across the country and assists councils to meet workload demands within the RMA timeframes. External planning consultants are charged at the same hourly rates as internal council processing planners. They are also trained in QLDC's systems and processes.

## GST

The itemised charges including credits (i.e. application deposit) shown on your tax invoice(s) are listed without GST and then GST is calculated on the total of all charges at the bottom of the invoice.

## Initial fee

The initial fee is made up of an administration lodgement fee of \$307.00 and monitoring fee of \$293.00 (for land use consent applications and designation related applications) if applicable. It also includes a charge relating to the overall activity status of your application or the type of application you are applying for. **This charge is treated as the application deposit.** The invoice you receive once the processing costs have exceeded the application deposit, will show the application deposit as a credit.

Please refer page 4 for an example invoice showing a breakdown of the charges.

# Discounts for going over statutory timeframes

The Resource Management (Discount on Administrative Charges) Regulations 2010 requires local authorities to provide a discount for resource consent applications not processed within the statutory timeframes set out in the RMA. The discount is 1% per day up to a maximum of 50 working days of the total processing cost.

Council process discounts on a quarterly basis. You do not need to apply, if your application is eligible for a discount, our finance department will be in contact directly with the person recorded on the application as the invoice payer.

## Timesheet codes

Our processing planners and engineering staff record their time on each application using a timesheet system. These timesheets are reviewed and approved fortnightly by Council team leaders, and the recorded time, along with any officer comments, is transferred directly to application invoices.

Because staff work on multiple applications throughout the day, they may log time for the same application at different points. This is why you might see the same timesheet code used multiple times in a day.

Here is a summary of the timesheet codes used and the corresponding work undertaken:

**Vetting:** used for all time associated with vetting your application by the processing planner (the process for formally accepting or returning an application under section 88 for the RMA). This includes:

- > An initial review of your application against the requirements of the RMA.
- > An initial assessment of District Plan provisions including checking rule breaches.
- > Requesting further information to satisfy section 88 (if deemed appropriate by the processing planner) and reviewing that information.
- > Making the formal determination that your application can be formally accepted or needs to be returned.
- > Advising our Technical Support Team that the application can be formally accepted or needs to be returned.
- > Administrative record keeping tasks, including recording and updating process timeframes, as required by the RMA and LGA<sup>1</sup>, the processing planner and development engineer are required to do this throughout the process and will charge time for it under the following timesheet codes.

**Research history of site:** used for all time spent undertaking desktop research into the history of the site and surrounding area, including reviewing previous consent applications, on Council's GIS, eDocs<sup>2</sup> or any other resource.

**Site visit – site and surrounds assessment:** used for all time spent undertaking the site visit. This includes travel time to and from the office and can include time spent looking at the site from different locations to understand the site and how the development will relate to neighbouring properties. Also included is time taken to make notes and taking supporting photos on site, and review when back in the office.

**Prepare/circulate int/ex report requests:** used for time taken by the processing planner to draft and send requests (if relevant to your application) to other Council departments, such as development engineering, parks and reserves, and environmental health.

This also is used for time taken to draft and send expert report request to the senior planner organising expert peer reviews. It may also include time taken by the senior planner to organise the expert peer review quotes and commission the work and liaison with the applicant's agent over these matters.

**Liaison/correspondence with applicant:** used for time taken to email or phone applicant or applicant's agent throughout the process. Note, this also includes all time that Council's processing planner or development engineer spends responding to communication from the applicant or applicant's agent.

**Liaise with Engineer:** used for time taken by the processing planner to discuss aspects of the application with the Engineer (including reviewing additional information that has been requested and received and their engineering report).

**Liaise with Planner:** used for time taken by the Engineer or Decision Maker to discuss aspects of the application with the processing planner.

**Liaise with Experts:** Time taken by the processing planner to discuss with the expert peer reviewer aspects of the application, including discussion regarding additional information that has been requested and received, along with their expert report.

**Receive int/ex report, continue assessment:** used for time taken to review internal Council comments or report(s) received from other Council departments (such as development engineering, parks and reserves, and environmental health).

This is also used for time taken by the processing planner to review expert peer review report(s) received.

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Act 2002

<sup>2</sup> eDocs is our online file portal which gives public access to property and consents records.

**Draft and send request for further info:** used for time spent by the processing planner or development engineer drafting and sending emails to the applicant/agent for further information required under s92(1). This includes time taken to phone applicant or agent regarding further information, including any required follow up discussions with the applicant/agent regarding why the further information request is required.

**Further information under s92(1) received – reviewing:** used for time taken to review the further information received by applicant/agent. If information received is not satisfactory then additional time to rectify can also charge to this code.

**Meeting with applicant/consultants:** used for time taken by the processing planner or development engineer to meet with applicant or applicant's agent regarding the application.

**Drafting S95 Notification Determination Report:** used for all time spent by the processing planner for preparing the full s95 notification determination report. This notification report determines whether the application is to be processed non-notified, limited notified to specific persons, or publicly notified. If public notification has been volunteered by the applicant the processing planner still needs to prepare a short report. The processing planner may start this report early in the processing of the application and complete it over various days as each step is completed, i.e. after vetting, after receiving further information. This timesheet code may be used for all RMA applications that require a notification determination.

**Drafting S104 Assessment Report:** Includes all time taken to draft up the s104 assessment and decision (whether the application should be granted or not), including draft consent conditions. This is the second part of the recommending report and decision. It covers the assessment of the application against relevant national and regional policies, The District Plan policies and objectives, and any other matters as required by the RMA. This report includes the processing planner's recommendation on whether the application should be granted or declined. It also includes the processing planner's time to compile appendices to the report/decision, and time spent responding to any queries received from the decision maker.

**Drafting and finalising s42A Report:** used for notified applications in place of using the 'drafting s104 assessment report' above. This also includes time spent by another planner reviewing this report.

**Drafting decision for other types of applications:** used for the processing planners time to draft up the decision report, including the assessments required and any consent conditions. It also includes their time to compile appendices to the report/decision, and time spent responding to any queries received from the decision maker.

*Draft reports/decisions are draft working documents that are subject to change and have not had a final decision made on them. Because of this, they are unavailable for viewing. The applicant/agent receives the final report and decision once this has been made.*

**Decision Maker Review including Sign Off:** used for the time spent by a decision maker reviewing and making a decision on the application. The decision maker is required to review all application documents including plans, check and confirm any national, regional or District Plan provisions that are applicable have been captured and addressed, review the processing planners recommending report and draft conditions. A decision maker may have questions for the processing planner when forming their decision. This is part of robust decision making and can be an iterative process, which is why this code may appear multiple times on your invoice.

*Councils' decision makers include in-house staff (senior planners, resource consent team leaders, resource consent manager) or accredited Hearing Commissioners who can also undertake decision making on non-notified applications.*

**Finalising Decision:** used for the processing planner to finalise the report containing the decision. This happens following the Decision Maker's review and incorporates any changes, ensuring all the right plans and relevant application material are stamped and approved, completing information required for central government, and sending to the Technical Support Team for issue.

**Editing and Issuing Decision:** used for time taken by the Technical Support Team to issue the final decision to the applicant. This includes formatting the decision, saving your decision in the Council system (required by legislation for recording keeping), information required for central government and updating Council's system to show that the decision has been issued.

The consent is of direct benefit to the applicant, not the ratepayers of the district. As such the charges associated with the processing of the consent application are wholly payable by the applicant.

## Payment options

While we are unable to reduce the amount owing or leave these bills unpaid, we can discuss payment options. Please contact us on **03 441 0499** or [consentdebtors@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:consentdebtors@qldc.govt.nz)

## Further help

If an agent (i.e. consultant planner/architect/surveyor) lodged your application, they should be able to help you understand the charges on your invoices. More information can be found on our [Charges and Fees webpage](#). If you're still unsure, please email your query and application reference to [consentdebtors@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:consentdebtors@qldc.govt.nz)

# Example of invoice breakdown

- 1 This credit is your application deposit relating to the overall activity status of your application or your application type. This is the initial fee deposit minus the administration fee and monitoring fee (which is held separately for later use).
- 2 Charges and credits are shown on the invoice as GST exclusive and the GST is added in this line of the invoice.
- 3 These charges reflect the time spent on your application (please see timesheet codes above). Once these charges on your application exceed the credit from your application deposit, an invoice is issued.
- 4 Your invoice may show charges dating back several weeks or months. This is because your application deposit has been used and treated as a credit towards your application charges.

## Tax Invoice

GST # 49-635-680

APPLICANT'S NAME  
BILL PAYER'S EMAIL  
BILL PAYER'S POSTAL ADDRESS

**Tax Invoice No:** 123456  
**Tax Invoice Date:** 31/03/2025  
**Customer No:** RM123456  
**Application No:** RM123456

### Time & Materials

01/02/2025	<i>Application Fees</i>	Cdt from initial fee	1.00	Each	-2,653.04	-2,653.04
01/02/2025	Vetting <i>Initial review of application.</i>	Processing Planner	10.00	H	182.61	1826.10
10/03/2024	Drafting S95 Notification Determination Report <i>Begin drafting report, set out template. Permitted baseline, begin assessment.</i>	Processing Planner	10.00	H	182.61	1826.10

**Total Exclusive** 999.18  
**GST** 149.88  
**Invoice Total (NZD)** 1,149.06

**Please Note:** Invoices are due on the 20th of the month after being issued.