

Full Council

25 June 2026

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [10]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Events Funding Round 2026-27

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to consider the recommendation of the Events Panel for the 2026-27 financial year.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Agree** to the recommendations of the Events Panel for funding amounts under \$30,000:

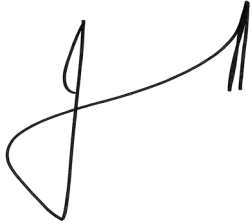
Queenstown Marathon	\$25,000
Arrowtown Autumn Festival	\$24,000
Motatapu	\$20,000
Lake Hayes A&P Show	\$16,700
PROJECTA	\$15,000
NZ Open	\$15,000
Central Lakes Polyfest	\$13,000
Festival of Colour	\$13,000
Global Games	\$10,100
The Valley	\$10,000
RIPE - Wānaka Wine & Food Festival	\$10,000
Queenstown Multicultural Festival	\$9,500
NZ Mountain Film Festival	\$8,700

3. **Agree** to the recommendations of the Events Panel to refer the following events to Local Community Support

Diwali
Natural Selection
The Uninvited
Arrowtown Long Lunch
SnowMachine
Arrowtown Gin Festival
Wānaka Beer Festival
Aryburn Classic Car

4. **Approve** funding for the Wānaka A & P Show and Challenge Wānaka of \$30,000 each.

Prepared by:



Name: Jan Maxwell
Title: Relationship Manager Arts and Events

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Pennie Pierce
Title: General Manager, Strategy & Policy

Context | Horopaki

1. The Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Events Fund is managed and administered by the QLDC Events Office. This fund supports events run by QLDC and has a contestable allocation delivered through an annual application process.
2. From the total budget of \$1,050,000, \$800,000 has been pre-allocated to cover the costs of Council hosting New Year's Eve events both in Wānaka and Queenstown, as well as Waitangi, Matariki and Christmas events.
3. For the 2026-27 funding round, 23 applications were received via an online grants management system (SmartyGrants) requesting a total of \$645,686.
4. Funding is available to support costs including waste and carbon emissions reduction measures, venue hire and active transport plans. Of the \$645,686 requested, a total of \$412,948 was for allowable costs.
5. For the 2026-2027 events funding round, officers have again prioritised the development and support of event sustainability measures, to help mitigate negative the environmental impacts that events may cause including generation of waste and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Environmental sustainability was again a weighted assessment criterion, and applicants were directed to include sustainability items in their budget for funding.
6. The Events Panel met to consider applications to the Events Fund on 26 May 2026. The panel is made up of the members of the Community & Environment Committee which is chaired by Councillor Wong. Two other members of the Community & Environment Committee also took part in this meeting, namely Councillor Bartlett and Councillor White. The Panel recommended the approval of 13 allocations to local events.
7. The Event Panel recommended that eight events be referred to the Local Community Support funding process for in-kind support of less than \$5,000.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

8. All recommendations of \$30,000 or more need to be approved by Council (as per a Council decision of 26 June 2013). Only six awards of this nature can be made in any year (as per a decision of 19 December 2013).
9. For this funding round, two funding requests of over \$30,000 or more have been recommended for Council consideration by the Events Panel.
10. The QLDC Events Policy sets out the objectives and principles of Council's events vision and this was approved by Council on 26 June 2025.
11. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.

12. Option 1 Accept the panel's recommended allocation of \$250k contestable funding.

Advantages:

- The events funding will be used as per its original intent to provide support for events that are both well managed and sustainable within our district.

Disadvantages:

- Overriding the recommendations negate the time and consideration put into the process by the Events Panel.

13. Option 2 Accept the panel's recommendation, with amendments.

Advantages:

- Council can make changes to the detail of the recommendation to better reflect its values.

Disadvantages:

- Reduces the integrity of the assessment and panel process.

14. Option 3 Decline the panel's recommended allocation of \$250k contestable funding.

Advantages:

- The events budget would not be used this year for this purpose, freeing up funding for other purposes.

Disadvantages:

- The events funding would not be used for the purpose for which it was created and some events may not be able to continue due to financial constraints.

15. This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing the matter because it enables the fund to be used for the purpose it was intended, and maintains the integrity of the assessment and panel process. Specifically, the panel recommends the allocation of funding to 13 events (of less than \$30,000) as detailed in the attachments, and recommends that Council approve funding of \$30,000 each for Wānaka A & P and Challenge Wānaka.

[Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki](#)

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

16. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2024 because the approval of the recommendation option will align with existing policies, strategies and previous Council resolutions.

17. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are the residents and ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes District and the event organisers who have applied for funding support.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

18. The Council has not specifically consulted with Iwi as part of the events funding assessment.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

19. This matter relates to the Strategic/Political/Reputation risk category. It is associated with RISK10022 Ineffective operations and maintenance of community services or facilities within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.

20. Approval of the recommended option will allow Council to retain the risk at its current level. This will be achieved by the process of application review and recommendations from the Events Office and Events Panel.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

21. The recommended funding amounts and Events Funding Panel decisions are within the 2026/27 events funding budget of \$1,050,000.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

22. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- 2025 Events Policy;
- The principles of the Vision Beyond 2050 including both Breathtaking creativity, Pride in sharing our places and Zero carbon communities;
- Destination Management Plan – ‘Identify opportunities to support local events, activities, facilities and initiatives which help reinforce community identity, values and a unique sense of place;
- Community Pricing Policy –In-kind support pricing;
- The QLDC Disability Policy through consideration of accessibility identified in the event planning process;
- Climate Change and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 through supporting events to reduce carbon and waste impacts; and
- Creativity, Culture and Heritage Strategy – ‘Enhance the arts, culture and heritage sector’s capability and capacity to achieve sustainable income, funding and investment.’

23. This matter can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

24. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The Events Office activity and funding will attract and support the future delivery of events held in the district in the most efficient, effective, and appropriate way, benefitting both business and households (economically and culturally). As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

25. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Events Panel Report
B	Final Budget Recommendation