

Full Council

25 June 2026

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [11]

Department: Community Services

Title | Taitara: Community Fund 2026-2027 Allocation Recommendations

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

This report provides an overview of the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Community Fund 2026-2027 (Community Fund) application and review process and seeks approval from Council on the recommended funding allocations.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report; and
2. **Approve** the following recommended funding allocations from the QLDC Community Fund 2026-2027:

| Organisation | Recommended Grant (\$) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Central Lakes Family Services | 10,000 |
| Central Otago Budgeting Services Inc. | 4,500 |
| Hanleys Farm Community Garden Association Incorporated | 5,500 |
| Headlight Trust | 3,500 |
| Ikatan Masyarakat Indonesia di Queenstown (IMIQ) | 3,000 |
| KiwiHarvest | 13,000 |
| KnowYourstuffNZ Charitable Trust | 4,000 |
| Māori Women's Welfare League - Whakatipu-Wai-Māori | 5,000 |
| Mental Hunts Charitable Trust | 3,500 |
| Mint Charitable Trust | 10,000 |
| Ngā Uri Whakatipu Charitable Trust | 20,000 |
| Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society | 3,000 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Parent to Parent NZ Incorporated | 5,000 |
| Pivotal Point Charitable Trust | 10,000 |
| Predator Free Wānaka | 10,000 |
| QT Community Cats | 2,500 |
| Queenstown Association of Migrants Pinoys Incorporated | 5,000 |
| Queenstown Fijian Community Charitable Trust | 5,000 |
| Red Frogs NZ | 4,000 |
| Rotary Club of Mount Aspiring Incorporated | 12,000 |
| Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust | 5,000 |
| Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Skies Group ¹ | 5,000 |
| Te Kura Whakatipu o Kawarau Friends of School Association | 2,000 |
| The Weekday Challenge ² | 8,000 |
| Tucker Beach Wildlife Trust | 10,000 |
| Upper Clutha Senior Citizens Inc | 5,000 |
| Victim Support New Zealand Inc. Manaaki Tāngata Aotearoa Manatōpū | 6,000 |
| Wakatipu Toy Library Incorporated | 5,000 |
| Whakatipu Community Hub Charitable Trust | 20,000 |
| Women's Shed Aotearoa | 3,500 |

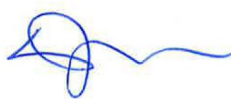
Prepared by:



Name: Marie Day
Title: Community Partnerships Manager

8 June 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Dave Winterburn
Title: Acting General Manager,
Community Services

9 June 2026

¹ The Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Skies Group is a subgroup of the Glenorchy Heritage and Museum Group.

² The Weekday Challenge grant will be paid from the 2025-2026 operational budget for Travel Demand Management.

Context | Horopaki

1. The QLDC Community Fund is an annual, contestable fund supporting not-for-profit, charitable, and voluntary community organisations within the Queenstown Lakes District. The Fund enables these organisations to deliver projects and services that contribute to the district's social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing. This is in alignment with the Council's Strategic Framework and the wellbeing outcomes set out in Vision Beyond 2050.
2. The Fund is administered consistent with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi, and supports initiatives that strengthen community connectedness, enhance environmental sustainability, and foster cultural inclusion. Applications are assessed against their alignment with these outcomes, their capacity to address identified community needs, and their contribution to local Wellbeing Outcomes.
3. The QLDC Community Fund 2026-2027 round opened on 1 April 2026 and closed on 30 April 2026. The timetable was published through QLDC's communications channels and followed up through the 2026 Funding Series workshops delivered in partnership with *huddl*, Three Lakes Cultural Trust, Sport Central, and the Conservation Alliance.
4. Community organisations across the district continue to experience sustained cost pressures with delivery costs, including rent, utilities, fuel, insurance, and wages, rising in parallel with those of the households and service users they support.
5. National sector data indicates increasing demand for community services concurrent with constrained funder capacity. Community Networks Aotearoa has reported that the community and voluntary sector is under increasing pressure while demand for services continues to grow.
6. Operational funding remains the most consistently cited gap in the community funding landscape. Most national and philanthropic funders restrict their grants to project costs only, leaving rent, utilities, administrative salaries, governance overheads, and core staffing under-supported. QLDC is one of a small number of funders in the district that provides operational funding to local community organisations through the Community Fund, and demand for this category of support has continued to grow.

2026-27 Community Fund Applications and Process

7. For the 2026-2027 funding round, 66 applications were received via the SmartyGrants online grants management platform. A summary of applications is as follows:
 - 66 applications received
 - Total annual amount requested (year one): \$893,295
 - Minimum amount requested: \$2,000

- Maximum amount requested: \$139,983
- Number of applications including operational support: 41
- Number of project-based applications: 36

8. A year-on-year comparison with the Community Fund 2025-2026 round is set out in the table below:

| Metric | 2025-2026 round | 2026-2027 round |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Applications received | 54 | 66 |
| Total requested (year one) | \$724,401 | \$893,295 |
| Budget available | \$180,000 | \$180,000 |
| Oversubscription ratio | 4.02:1 | 4.91:1 |

9. The assessment process for the 2026-2027 round comprises:

- Eligibility checks against the Fund's criteria
- Officer assessments against the QLDC Wellbeing Outcomes
- Expert and decision panel discussions (full Council)
- Scoring and aggregation
- Alignment checks with the QLDC Strategic Framework and all relevant Council policies and strategies.

10. The Community Fund Application Review workshop was held on 28 May 2026. This was a public-excluded session, consistent with prior years and with the commitment made to applicants that all information submitted would be treated as confidential and commercially sensitive.

11. At the review workshop, officer recommendations for the 2026-2027 funding allocations were presented to the full Council. The decision panel (full Council) reviewed the recommendations, discussed alignment with community priorities, and agreed any amendments to the proposed allocations.

12. Officers advised the decision panel of other operational funding that could be contributed to enhance the grant recommendations. These contributions are offered from operational budgets with clear strategic alignment to the grant. The additional funding recommended is:

- \$10,000 to Ngā Uri Whakatipu Charitable Trust (total grant will be \$20,000)

- \$10,000 to KiwiHarvest (total grant will be \$13,000)
- \$8,000 to The Weekday Challenge (total grant will be \$8,000)

13. If the final Community Fund 2026-2027 funding allocations are approved by full Council at the 25 June 2026 meeting, applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application soon after the meeting. Successful applicants will be provided with a funding agreement and following the completion of the required documentation, the grants will be paid out.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

14. 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.

15. Option 1 Approve QLDC Community Fund 2026-2027 allocation recommendations (based on the decision panel review recommendations).

Advantages:

- **Timely Distribution:** Ensures that community organisations receive funding promptly, allowing them to continue their essential work.
- **Community Support:** Enhances the wellbeing, resilience, and development of the local community through targeted financial support.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Supports QLDC's strategic objectives by fostering community-led initiatives and promoting social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing.

Disadvantages:

- **Resource Limitation:** Limited financial resources may result in some applicants not receiving the funding they requested.
- **Potential Dissatisfaction:** Unsuccessful applicants may be dissatisfied with the outcome.

16. Option 2 Approve the QLDC Community Fund 2026-2027 allocation recommendations with further councillor changes.

Advantages:

- **Flexibility:** Allows elected members to adjust allocations based on emerging insights or community needs.

- Responsiveness: Enables funding decisions to better reflect feedback from presentations or recent developments.
- Strategic input: Gives Council the opportunity to shape funding in line with broader strategic or political priorities.

Disadvantages:

- Objectivity risk: May compromise the structured and consistent officer and panel assessment process.
- Perceived unfairness: Could be seen as inequitable if changes lack clear rationale.
- Administrative burden: Significant changes may complicate communications and add to the administrative burden.
- Impact trade-offs: Reducing funding to higher-impact projects may weaken overall fund effectiveness.

17. Option 3 Decline all QLDC Community Fund 2026-27 allocation recommendations

Advantages:

- Administrative support: No funding provided for the 2026-27 Community Fund and no work required of Council officers to distribute funding.

Disadvantages:

- Strategic alignment: Does not enhance the wellbeing, resilience, and development of the local community through targeted financial support.
- Applicant dissatisfaction: All applicants will be dissatisfied due to the time and effort made through the application process.

18. This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing the matter because it ensures timely fund distribution to community organisations based on the decision panel's recommendations, supports community wellbeing and resilience, and aligns with QLDC's strategic goals.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

19. This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2024 because it involves the allocation of public funds to community

projects, which has a material impact on community wellbeing and supports strategic objectives outlined in QLDC's Strategic Framework. While the fund allocation does not significantly alter levels of service or involve strategic assets, it directly impacts community organisations that deliver key services across the district. This decision aligns with QLDC's commitment to enhancing social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing as set out in the QLDC Strategic Framework.

20. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are:

- Residents and ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes District;
- Not-for-profit, charitable, and voluntary community organisations applying for funding;
- Community groups and their beneficiaries across the district; and
- Community stakeholders with an interest in local development and community wellbeing.

21. The Council has undertaken a formal application process for the QLDC Community Fund 2026-2027, managed through the SmartyGrants platform. Engagement with community organisations occurred during the application phase, providing guidance and support for applicants.

22. Further engagement will be undertaken through community updates and post-funding reporting requirements. This ensures transparency in fund distribution and demonstrates community impact as part of the Council's commitment to good governance and accountability.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

23. This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK10004 Community Partnerships do not achieve objectives within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a moderate residual risk rating.

24. The approval of the recommended option will allow Council to implement additional controls for this risk. This will be achieved by ensuring that funding is allocated to community organisations with demonstrated capacity, sound governance, and alignment with the QLDC Wellbeing Outcomes, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful project outcomes.

25. Additional controls include:

- Requiring project plans, measurable outcomes, and robust post-funding reporting to track progress and impact, ensuring transparency and accountability. The detail expected is proportionate to the funding allocated.
- Engaging in ongoing communication and support with funded organisations to identify and address challenges early, reducing the risk of project underperformance.

- Facilitating capacity-building initiatives and offering guidance to community groups to enhance their capability to deliver successful projects.

26. These measures will collectively support community partnerships in achieving their objectives, strengthening the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the Queenstown Lakes District.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

27. There are no additional operational or capital expenditure requirements beyond the existing approved budgets for the QLDC Community Fund 2026-2027 and the additional contributions from operational budgets set out in section 13. The funding allocations are within the budgetary provisions outlined in the Annual Plan 2026-2027.

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

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

- QLDC Strategic Framework and Vision Beyond 2050, including the wellbeing outcomes Whakapuāwai Hapori | Thriving people, Whakatinana i te ao Māori | Living te ao Māori, and He ōhaka taurikura | Opportunities for all;
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi;
- Te Muka Toi, Te Muka Tākata | Creativity, Culture and Heritage Strategy;
- Welcoming Plan | Te Waharoa ki ngā Hapori;
- QLDC Disability Policy;
- QLDC Community Facilities Strategy;
- QLDC Financial Strategy; and
- Significance and Engagement Policy 2024.

29. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies.

30. This matter is included in the Annual Plan 2026-2027.

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

31. 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. This funding round aligns with the Act by empowering communities through locally led decision-making and by supporting community organisations that deliver social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing outcomes for the district. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

32. 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.