



A unique place. A  
He Wāhi Tūhāhā. He Ām

---

**Attachment 2 - Attachment 2 CRG Comments relating to DMP Project 9**

## Attachment 2: CRG comments on DMP Project 9

25 January 2023

Combined comments from the Climate Reference Group (CRG) on Project 9 (decarbonisation project) of the Regenerative Tourism Plan "[Travel to a thriving future](#)" (20/12/22) are presented below. Respondents also provided additional comments on other areas of the plan.

Overall the CRG is supportive of the aspiration and intent of the keystone project 'Carbon zero by 2030', particularly if it galvanises climate action in the tourism sector and across the wider district. However, some comments made by CRG members include:

- When dealing with terms, like regenerative, carbon zero, net carbon zero, etc. it is really important to be clear about what they mean, and specifically what they mean with respect to regenerative tourism in the district.
- It should be clear that "Carbon zero by 2030" is aspirational and should more accurately be presented as a 'net zero'. Many in our community and visitors who care about this target are well informed, so care needs to be taken in the value of the marketed claim.
- It is really good to have aspirational goals and ambitions, in particular around reducing fossil fuel emissions, reducing carbon emissions, having a more thriving community etc. However, it is important to have absolute clarity on what these terms mean, otherwise there's a real risk of misinterpretation by the community. Misinterpretation can result in a loss of meaning, incorrect assumptions and a loss in trust.
- Project 9 is a 'journey to regenerative net carbon zero commenced by 2030'. Deploying existing clean-energy solutions, fostering rapid innovation, and adopting existing technology is very unlikely to have the district achieve net carbon zero by 2030, as many technological solutions are yet to be proven.
- Carbon zero goals often have to come with a quantity of carbon offsets and the quality of those offsets matters in terms of whether they're stopping carbon emissions from occurring or sequestering carbon emissions from the atmosphere.
- We cannot offset our way out of the climate crisis. While some offsets will be required to achieve net-zero, they are a means of easing the transition towards low carbon operations - not to avoid this transition altogether. Net-zero plans must prioritise reducing emissions over offsets, despite the higher financial cost which that brings, and reduce reliance on offsets, in absolute terms (tCO<sub>2</sub>e), year on year.
- The district's ability to sequester carbon from forestry is very limited and currently unproven. If the offsets came from locally based reforestation projects, then we would need to be very clear about the liabilities of using reforestation as a way to offset carbon emissions when the risk of wildfire potentially increases with climate change. If the trees were lost whether that be through fire or another reason, then there would have to be a plan for recapturing that carbon.
- As tourists should be part of, but not separate from nature, the project should commence restoring nature and biodiversity. This action would include plantings of native vegetation, which would provide a tourism contribution to sequestration.
- A decarbonisation plan can only be written once there is a clear understanding of the sector's emissions, and it is recommended that this is not done until a thorough and robust footprint has been completed. A decarbonisation plan would need annual steps laid out with realistic actions and goals.
- A scope and boundary exercise should be undertaken to understand what is included and excluded from greenhouse gas measurements and carbon footprint (e.g. will cruise ship

25 January 2023

emissions bringing tourists to the region be considered?). Having clearly defined boundaries around the footprint is critical to avoid misinterpretation of what it covers. Will the Greenhouse Gas Protocol or ISO14,064 standard be used in measuring emissions?

- All assumptions or estimates should be clearly stated, and it is recommended that the carbon footprint is audited by an independent third-party.
- Lots of emphasis is being placed on the emissions and impacts of visitors on the Queenstown environs. It will be really good to understand how much of those actually come from the service industries, which support the visitor activities, and the supporting networks and community setup in order to enable these visitor activities to go ahead.
- If we wish to consider decarbonisation of transport, then we need to move people out of single use vehicles, and this applies to the entire population of Queenstown not just a visitor economy. Consideration of those emissions generated by workers as well as visitors is required. A number of staff work out of town and commute to the main centres daily. We need to have a fossil fuel free public transport system, public transport when and where it's needed including for rural populations, and accessible and good quality cycle trails.
- People in the Queenstown environs still rely heavily on wood burning which makes for poor air quality for any urban environment. If we are going to transition to a lower carbon society an emphasis also needs to be placed on how we heat our properties, because they have implications for air quality. Fuel poverty of people living in Queenstown needs to be considered when proposing solutions.
- Service providers to the tourism sector also need to be considered in the district energy transition.

#### Concluding comments

The Regenerative Tourism Plan presents a large program of work and other than looking for community support in the delivery there is very little detail around how such a program will be funded and delivered to achieve all of the outcomes. The keystone project of the visitor economy of the district being carbon zero by 2030 is certainly an ambitious and aspirational statement. However, it needs to be very clear what it includes and what it does not include. A lot of the projects are actually about developing this detail and understanding, before proactive actions can be developed and put in place.

We need to be very careful that the statement is taken seriously and is supported by robust and clear action plans to achieve the goal, otherwise there is a risk that it loses credibility, and the community suffer the loss of trust and hope.

The CRG would be happy to have any further input to define the scope of boundary in the carbon footprint process.