

RRAG Scenarios

December 2020

[Vision Beyond 2050](#) articulates our ‘desired’ future for the Queenstown Lakes District. Planning for the future however doesn’t always deliver perfection – and planning a recovery from such a major hit as COVID-19 is particularly uncertain. So, in addition to keeping our eye on the prize of where we want to go, it is also important to understand the pressures that might push us off that path.

For this purpose, we have created seven high-level scenarios that articulate key challenges that could emerge during our recovery and as our district evolves. These alternative futures will be used as one tool in our toolkit to help us evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different recovery strategy options. It is worth noting that the scenarios are intentionally simple and high level – their purpose is to encourage people to consider different perspectives on possible effects and response options, and to encourage the use of adaptive planning.

Scenario 1: Managing Growth

In this scenario we are back to pre-2020 projections and both population and visitor numbers are rapidly growing.

Efforts to bring the pandemic under control were broadly successful, thanks to the development of an effective vaccine. Remote working practices, normalised during the pandemic, look like they will endure. As a result, our region is seeing an influx of New Zealanders and internationals wanting to move here. With the rapid economic recovery, domestic tourism markets remain strong. As international borders re-open, there is growing evidence of pent-up travel demand. The region is once again at risk of experiencing significant growing pains.



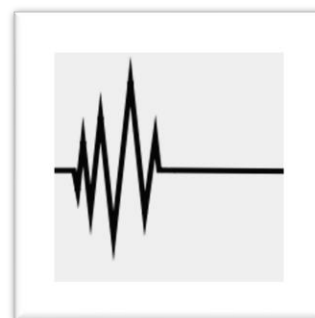
Key Questions for this scenario:

- *How effective are the checks and balances in place to ensure that our future growth will be regenerative rather than exploitative?*
- *How well is our infrastructure investment approach aligned to meet the needs of the projected growth?*
- *How do we grow community connectedness and a shared sense of purpose through this growth period?*
- *Will we grow in ways that increase our resilience to future shocks, or further entrench our vulnerabilities?*
- *How are the benefits and costs of this growth going to be appropriately distributed/shared?*

Scenario 2: The second hit....

Just as the region is recovering from the pandemic, disaster strikes, and region is shaken by a strong local earthquake.

Psychologically, this is a devastating blow for the region. There is significant infrastructure damage, key transport routes are impacted, and the region is buffeted by ongoing aftershocks. With a large repair bill, a population in flux, and a vulnerable economy, the region is facing a significant infrastructure affordability challenge. Have we sufficiently invested in our region's resilience to sustain a second hit?



Key Questions for this scenario:

- *How resilient is our critical infrastructure and are we investing in the right places to build resilience over time?*
- *Are we investing enough in our community connectedness, such that we have sufficient social capital to see ourselves through the tough times?*
- *Are we growing the right kind of leaders (both individuals and institutions) that will help see us through times of adversity?*
- *Have we invested in local, regional and international networks and relationships sufficiently such that others will help us with the hard mahi required for the recovery?*

Scenario 3: Life after the gold-rush

Recovery from COVID-19 has taken much longer than many predicted.

In the Queenstown Lakes District there is reducing economic confidence but our people are determined to make the best of it. People move here because of their love for the place – and while the current situation is tough, they can see it is still a great place to live, work and play. Reflecting on our extractive history from the gold-rush era, what does our community look like if the rush is over?



Key Questions for this scenario:

- *Given the proportion of new residents to our region, how well are we embedding people to our communities such that they 'stick' here even when times are tough?*
- *How well are we diversifying our economy and growing the financial resilience of our district?*

- *How are we leveraging the talent and creativity in our region sufficiently to come up with new ideas?*
- *In the face of financial pressures, how might we prioritise infrastructure investment to sustain the attractiveness of our region as a place to live, work and play?*

Scenario 4: Beyond tourism?

In this scenario, the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, but in its wake comes a similar, yet different, kind of crisis for tourism in our region.

Increasing awareness of climatic change, large-scale climate protests and flight-shaming around the globe are challenging the appeal of holidaying in Queenstown and surrounds. We have been talking about diversifying our economy for many years – will this provide the impetus to finally do it?



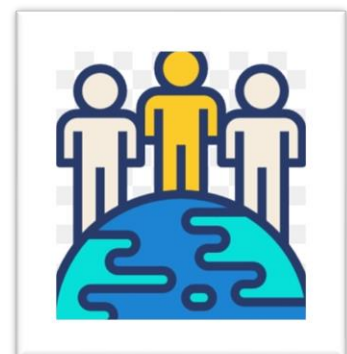
Key Questions for this scenario:

- *Who leads the conversations that might be needed in order to diversify our economy?*
- *What is the balance between central/local government led initiatives and local private sector and community led organisations?*
- *How well are we leveraging the talent and creativity in our region sufficiently to come up with new ideas or scale up existing ones?*
- *Are there different forms of tourism that we could explore that are more regenerative for visitors and our communities alike?*

Scenario 5: Sustainable growth?

If we had to find ways to cope with an influx of new residents, what would that mean for our environment, infrastructure, and communities?

Sydney has just experienced its third summer in a row of extreme temperatures and we are seeing the early signs of increasing numbers of ‘climate migrants’ moving to the region. This is on top of huge population growth from New Zealand’s returning diaspora. If we can’t readily stem the influx of people, how can we intentionally grow to meet the needs of our expanding community in a sustainable way?



Key Questions for this scenario:

- *Do we have a solid understanding of our region’s capacities and natural limits for growth?*
- *Do we have the planning structures in place to be able to manage growth intentionally?*

- *Do we have any levers to moderate this growth? What, if any, is the justification for wanting to “shut the door”?*

Scenario 6: A place for all?

As prices increase, families and long-time residents are starting to be priced out of the market.

As the world becomes a stranger and riskier place, New Zealand’s reputation as a safe haven for the rich and famous amplifies with more and more wealthy people buying up property in the region. If more and more people chose to ‘holiday’ in the region rather than live here, what does that do for the soul of the community? Are there ways we can ensure our region remains welcoming to all and fosters our sense of community?



Key Questions for this scenario:

- *How well are we embedding people into our communities?*
- *Are we investing sufficiently in our social infrastructure that nourishes the region’s sense of community, its’ character, its’ soul and its’ social capital?*
- *Do we have the planning structures in place to be able to address housing and living affordability issues within the region?*

Scenario 7: Effecting change

Positive change can so often get bogged down by structural inertia, resistance to change, and vested interests.

At the time the Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group (otherwise known as the RRAG) was formed, there was hope and optimism that it would generate fresh thinking, help to diversify our economy, and be a mechanism to bring positive change for our region. How can we ensure positive changes are implemented?



Key Questions for this scenario:

- *Do we have a clear focus on which aspects of the recovery are our priority?*
- *Do we have the right capabilities and capacity to deliver on our priorities?*
- *How well can we work with others to understand and influence the broader system of recovery?*
- *What is the balance between central/local government led initiatives and local private sector and community led initiatives?*