

15 September 2026

[REDACTED]
C/- [REDACTED]
Sent via email to [REDACTED]

**Request for Official Information
LG26-0286 - Cost of Head Start**

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 18 August 2026 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

1. **What was the total cost to the council for of all activities and work undertaken to develop and finalise its response to the Government's Head Start local government initiative? For clarification purposes, this request is for the total cost or the best estimate of the total cost to the council of the Head Start initiative. Points 2-5 below are for components of this total.**
2. **What consultants and contractors were engaged to advise or provided information or analysis for the council's response to Head Start and what was the cost of each provider's services? What were the titles of any reports provided by these consultants or contractors?**
3. **What was the total cost to the council for informing or consulting with local communities and how much was spent on surveys, advertising, informational publications (flyers, pamphlets, etc.), public meetings, websites and other such activities.**
4. **What was the total cost of any extraordinary or special council meetings or workshops held regarding Head Start or the council's response to it?**
5. **What other costs were incurred by the council under this initiative and what was the value of those costs?**

QLDC RESPONSE

In response to your request, the QLDC Strategy and Policy Team was consulted.

Decision to release information

1. **What was the total cost to the council for of all activities and work undertaken to develop and finalise its response to the Government's Head Start local government initiative? For clarification purposes, this request is for the total cost or the best estimate of the total cost to the council of the Head Start initiative. Points 2-5 below are for components of this total.**

QLDC's total identified cost for its involvement in the development and finalisation of its response to the Government's Head Start initiative was \$11,744.45 (excluding GST).

This comprised QLDC's share of costs associated with the shared Otago Mayoral Forum work programme:

- Morrison Low – original engagement: \$7,900 (excluding GST).
- Morrison Low – additional costs: \$2,800 (excluding GST).
- Mayoral Forum facilitation (two days): \$1,044.45 (excluding GST).

Total: \$11,744.45 (excluding GST).

2. What consultants and contractors were engaged to advise or provided information or analysis for the council’s response to Head Start and what was the cost of each provider’s services? What were the titles of any reports provided by these consultants or contractors?

As above, Morrison Low was engaged by the Otago Mayoral Forum to provide advice and analysis in relation to the Head Start initiative. The cost of its services to QLDC is included in the total set out in response to item 1.

Morrison Low’s “Head Start Options, Councils of Otago Region” report can be found on the [Otago Mayoral Forum website](#).

A separate supplementary Morrison Low Advisory report, titled “Head Start Option 4 Supplementary, Councils of Otago Region”, was provided to Council and is publicly available as Attachment C to Item 1 of the [3 August 2026 Full Council Meeting](#).

No other consultants or contractors were identified as having been engaged by QLDC to provide advice, information or analysis for its response to the Head Start initiative.

3. What was the total cost to the council for informing or consulting with local communities and how much was spent on surveys, advertising, informational publications (flyers, pamphlets, etc.), public meetings, websites and other such activities.

QLDC did not incur any costs for informing or consulting with local communities in relation to the Head Start initiative.

The independent assurance undertaken in relation to the community survey analysis and results was arranged and paid for by the Otago Regional Council. This cost was therefore not incurred by QLDC.

No separate QLDC costs were identified for surveys, advertising, informational publications, public meetings, websites or other community engagement activities.

4. What was the total cost of any extraordinary or special council meetings or workshops held regarding Head Start or the council’s response to it?

QLDC’s share of the cost of two days of Mayoral Forum facilitation undertaken in relation to the Head Start initiative was \$1,044.45 (excluding GST)..

No other costs were identified in relation to extraordinary or special meetings or workshops regarding Head Start or QLDC’s response to it.

5. What other costs were incurred by the council under this initiative and what was the value of those costs?

No other costs were identified as having been incurred by QLDC in relation to the Head Start initiative beyond those outlined in response to the preceding items.

QLDC trusts that the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Right to review the above decision

You have the right to request an investigation and review of this decision by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the LGOIMA. Further information is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with QLDC, please contact Rebecca.Pitts@qldc.govt.nz (Director Democracy Services).

Proactive release of LGOIMA responses

QLDC proactively publishes responses to requests made under the LGOIMA where the information is considered to be of wider public interest. As such, please be aware that a response to your request may be published on [QLDC's website](#) or otherwise made publicly available. Where this occurs, any personal information will be redacted in accordance with the [Privacy Act 2020](#) and applicable withholding grounds, to ensure individuals' privacy is protected.

Kind regards,



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