

## International Visitor Levy (IVL) Initiatives

### Initiative: Visitor Infrastructure

**Purpose:** This summary is part of a submission being made by QLDC to MBIE, contributing to their preparation of advice for the Minister of Tourism on potential IVL investment opportunities for FY 2026/27, with a focus on addressing tourism-related infrastructure pressures across New Zealand.

#### Investment strategic alignment with the Government's objectives (align with at least one):

- Increasing visitor numbers
- Enhancing the visitor experience
- Retaining social licence to allow for growth.

#### Tourism goals (investment should maximise impact):

- Increasing the number of visitors in the short-term
- Increasing the number of New Zealanders employed by the sector
- Increasing the export value of tourism in the long-term. Maximising impact to meet current and future needs.

#### Investments should also:

- **Minimise duplication:** recognising that the IVL is part of a wider package of funding tools across the tourism system and should be focused on supporting systemic opportunities rather than duplicating outcomes that can be delivered through other funding tools.
- **Deliver value-for-money:** demonstrate robust value for money, strong investment discipline, whole of life costings and cohesive decision-making process.
- **Be impactful:** deliver meaningful impact by addressing systemic constraints on tourism growth or systemic barriers to effective and efficient tourism management in New Zealand.

#### Information required about each project/programme:

**Description of the initiative:** what it is, location, problem(s) that the initiative will address

**Estimated costs:** If you're providing a rough initial estimate, it's helpful if you can briefly explain how you've come to this estimate and what the unknowns and risks are. Further along the process, we will likely come back to you asking for a firm estimate.

**What are timeframes for delivery?** We're looking for provisional timeframes at this stage, such as when the project could be started, key milestones, estimated completion date.

**What is the expected impact of this initiative, and how will it be measured?** On expected impact: eg, how many people would be expected to use a freedom camping facility? What impact is it expected to have on social licence/the community? On measuring that impact: recipients of IVL funding will be required to show how they will measure the impact of the investment. Recipients will also have to report back to MBIE on actual impact.

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## QLDC Visitor Infrastructure Project Proposals

QLDC recommends investment in the following projects and programmes in the 2026-2027 FY, to maximise the impact of the IVL funding on the tourism sector visitor market in the Queenstown Lakes District and nationally:

	<b>Project/Programme</b>	<b>Investment estimate</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
1.	<b>Responsible Camping Programme Delivery</b>	\$550,000	Improved education and enforcement of freedom camping. Supporting improved visitor experience and tourism social licence.
2.	<b>Freedom camping temporary infrastructure (x 4)</b>	\$150,000	Reduced use of community infrastructure and improved environmental outcomes in freedom camping areas. Supporting improved visitor experience and tourism social licence.
3.	<b>Toilets at premium tourism destinations and hotspots (x6)</b>	\$1,300,000	Improved visitor experience at premium locations and freedom camping hotspots. Improved social licence for tourism by reducing complaints about environmental degradation.
4.	<b>Wānaka Lakefront Project (premium destination)</b>	\$2,000,000	Improved visitor experience at premium tourism destination.
5.	<b>End-of-network roads</b>	\$1,000,000	Funding to protect last-mile access to high-demand visitor sites and National Parks, enhancing visitor experience through safer, more reliable travel.
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	

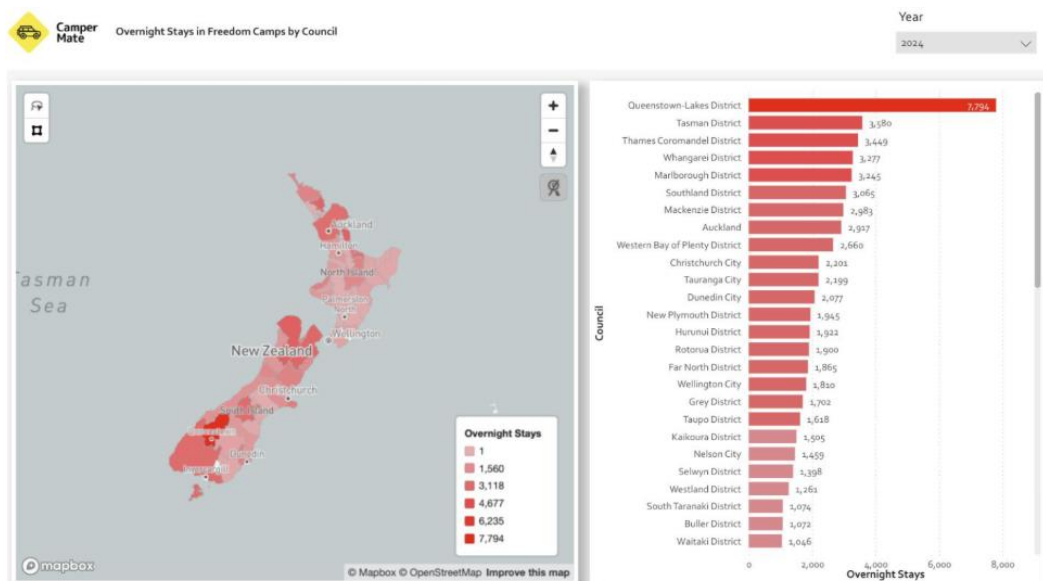
## Project 1: Responsible Camping Programme Delivery

### Description of the initiative: what it is, location, problem(s) that the initiative will address

To support the delivery of a comprehensive 2026-27 responsible camping programme for the Queenstown Lakes District. This programme aims to protect the environment, community amenity and the reputation of the district as a special and high-quality visitor destination. This programme will be delivered in partnership with local Department of Conservation (DOC) teams and supported by the Regional Tourism Organisations' promotion of the Tiaki promise, encouraging manuhiri to act as guardian, protecting and preserving Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Queenstown Lakes District is known to be one of the most popular camping destinations in New Zealand, and the most popular place for overnight 'free camping'. The total number of overnight campers over 2024 was 7,794, or more than double the number of overnight stays at the next most popular territorial authority area<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

The popularity of freedom camping in New Zealand has significantly increased in recent years. It is estimated that the number of international visitors practicing freedom camping rose from 10,000 to 123,000, in the decade between 2008 and 2018<sup>3</sup>.



Over the past two

years, community sentiment towards both international and domestic tourism in Queenstown Lakes has declined and is currently at a level below the NZ average. The Tourism Approval Rating Score, which highlights resident's overall perceptions of tourism, was at 19 for the region compared to 48 for the NZ average. Residents are feeling the strain as visitor numbers rise to pre-Covid Levels,

<sup>1</sup> CamperMate app, Overnight Stays at 'free camps', 2024

<sup>2</sup> Representative of freedom campers who use the Campermate app, as such, not all freedom campers are captured. In addition, the counts are dependent on several variables but nonetheless remain a useful proxy for analysis. Examples of such variables include: **Overnight Stays** - are recorded when an app user first detected within 500m of their previous day's last location on the following day. e.g. If an app user stays in the same location multiple times, each night is counted as an overnight stay. **Free Camps Stays** - refer to overnight stays within a 200-meter radius of a free campground's GPS coordinates.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/tourism/tourism-projects/responsible-camping/responsible-camping-working-group/>

alongside the pressure from rapid population growth. While many Queenstown residents (95%) have personally benefited from tourism activity in their local area, an almost equal majority (97%) have been adversely impacted.<sup>4</sup>

CamperMate and summer ambassador observations highlight some of the community sentiment to freedom campers.

*CamperMate camper reviews of Allenby Place freedom camping area, December 2025:*

*“Only 3 spots and they go super early. also the local residents appear to be waging war against the constant stream of campers going past their residence. Please stay away as the signs are getting quite aggressive and someone is going to get a tomato to the face.”*

*“There are only 3 spaces and they are full by 5.00pm. The council app is hopeless. It is dusty and the locals are frustrated and hostile. We went to Albert town, its on the river and lots of kids. It's only a few bucks, worth the move.”*



### Estimated costs:

Estimates reflect requested contribution from IVL funding. Additional costs will be covered by QLDC co-funding.

Summer Ambassadors	\$300,000
Enforcement Officers (Cougar Security)	\$150,000
Fleet car costs	\$50,000
Communication resources, signage, surveys	\$50,000
	<b>\$550,000</b>

### **Summer Ambassadors**

Summer Ambassadors will be hired in 2026-2027 to engage with camping visitors in the district and to educate them on appropriate behaviour and expectations. Ambassadors have proven their effectiveness in previous seasons and reduced tourist and public conflict, improved management of resources and reduced pollution and public health issues created in the environment.

<sup>4</sup> Views on Tourism Results - Queenstown 24-25

[https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/queenstownnz/Views\\_on\\_Tourism\\_Summary\\_Queenstown\\_2024\\_25\\_4538bc82-dc3b-47a8-be91-ec07b7c1cf51.pdf?utm\\_term=here&utm\\_id=fortnightly&utm\\_source\\_platform=act\\_on\\_software&utm\\_campaign=DQ%20Fortnightly%20Remarks%20-%20DD%20Month%20YYY&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=email&utm\\_source=act\\_on\\_software](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/queenstownnz/Views_on_Tourism_Summary_Queenstown_2024_25_4538bc82-dc3b-47a8-be91-ec07b7c1cf51.pdf?utm_term=here&utm_id=fortnightly&utm_source_platform=act_on_software&utm_campaign=DQ%20Fortnightly%20Remarks%20-%20DD%20Month%20YYY&utm_medium=email&utm_content=email&utm_source=act_on_software)

QLDC recruited seven ambassadors for the summer season 2025-2026 (Dec 2025 to April 2026). The teams work in pairs, and are out daily educating campers in rotating shifts of 7AM to 5PM and 10AM and 8PM with a focus on engaging campers when they are getting up or settling down for the evening at freedom camping sites, during the daytime they visit QLDC and DOC reserves to check for education and engagement with visitors and report any issues observed to officers.

Ideally for the coming summer season QLDC will again recruit eight Ambassadors (four in Wānaka / Upper Clutha and four in Whakatipu/Queenstown), starting mid-November through to end of April. Four vehicles will be supplied to allow Ambassadors to cover our large district and maintain a regular presence at known freedom camping hotspots.

To ensure a competitive rate for the ambassador role the full charge out rate through the recruitment firm will be approximately \$45 per hour plus GST (\$30 per hour to the ambassadors). The budget set for six months for all eight roles is \$300,000. This includes uniforms, training costs and potential handover training staff handover (estimate two weeks) for new staff as it is not always possible to keep ambassadors for the whole season.

### **Freedom Camping Enforcement**

The anticipated increase in visitors to the Queenstown Lakes District over the 2026-2027 summer period will require more enforcement staff to monitor the district for undesirable camping activity, educate and where necessary issue infringement notices. Additional enforcement staff will be contracted through QLDC's current enforcement provider for the summer season and costs cover wages, training and credentials (\$150,000 plus QLDC co-funding). The increased coverage helps manage unlawful campers who have been moving further afield than the standard spots closer to towns. Coverage as part of scheduled patrols will cover locations including the full length of Glenorchy Road, Crown Range, Gibbston, Hāwea, Wānaka and Luggate Red Bridge.

### **Educational collateral / signage / technology**

Develop and distribute information brochures and associated collateral. Communicate on camping blogs / travel websites including CamperMate. Liaise with local and national media. Use CamperMate (TripTech) technology to monitor and report on camping behaviour. Use CamperMate to improve notifications and education messages to campers visiting the district. Tablets to support camper surveys and education/engagement with campers (four tablets, one with each vehicle). Promote Tiaki Promise and have a strong focus on waste minimisation and climate action messaging. The more aware and educated visitors are about how to travel responsibly in the Queenstown Lakes District, the less need there should be to issue infringement notices. Budget allowance for maintenance of damage to signs.

### **What are timeframes for delivery?**

The timeframe for delivery is mid-November 2026 to April 2027.

### **What is the expected impact of this initiative, and how will it be measured?**

The Responsible Camping Summer Programme is designed to balance community interests with visitor experience by promoting sustainable camping practices and compliance with local rules. It

runs during the peak summer season and focuses on education first, supported by enforcement when necessary.

The Summer Ambassador and Responsible Camping Summer Programme is expected to significantly improve camper behaviour, reduce environmental impacts, and strengthen community social licence by providing friendly, proactive education at freedom camping sites. High site usage is anticipated, with early-season data and observations already showing demand including such as **2,068 camper check-ins and 531 ambassador site visits in the first month of the 2025–2026 season**. We expect that sites will remain near or at capacity throughout the remainder of the summer.

While there is broad community support for the freedom camping bylaw, some negative sentiment towards freedom camping persists. The ambassadors have observed negative interactions between campers and residents in this location. These interactions are reflected in some Request for Service (RFS) and on CamperMate online forum discussions between campers.

The programme is designed to ease community pressure by reducing inappropriate camping behaviours, improving compliance with the new Freedom Camping Bylaw, and offering visible, responsive management at known 'hotspots'. Its impact will be measured through quantitative indicators such as camper check-ins, RFS, infringements issued, ambassador engagement hours, and survey responses, alongside qualitative data from ambassador reports, community feedback, and trends in resident complaints. Together, these measures ensure the programme not only supports sustainable visitor management but also helps maintain public confidence and protect shared spaces.

**On measuring that impact: all recipients of IVL funding will be required to show how they will measure the impact of the investment. Recipients will also have to report back to MBIE on actual impact.**

An end of season report will be provided documenting the investment and its impact.

## **Project 2: Freedom camping temporary infrastructure (x 4)**

### **Description of the initiative: what it is, location, problem(s) that the initiative will address**

The Queenstown Lakes District has a shortage of ablution facilities for visitors and freedom campers. This has resulted in additional pressures on community facilities, such as showers at local recreation centre and public litter bins being used for camper waste.

The Responsible Camping Programme would like to explore temporary infrastructure such as pay-to-use facility pods and technology solutions to manage freedom camping sites (e.g., boom gates, number plate recognition cameras, pay-to-use facility pods) and software (e.g., booking systems, dashboards, reporting) to reduce in person operational costs, improve compliance, enhance visitor experience and reduce environmental degradation.

The district's increasing visitor numbers mean unmanaged camping sites place stress on infrastructure and community wellbeing.

<b>Proposed location</b>	<b>Reason for location selection</b>
<b>Luggate Red Bridge Reserve</b>	The Luggate Red Bridge Reserve is a high use freedom camping site with minimal facilities. It is used extensively by campers wishing to explore Wānaka and the surrounding area. The area provides for 50 campers but is frequently used by 70+ vehicles freedom camping.
<b>Kingston Freedom Camping Site</b>	The Kingston Freedom Camping site is a high use freedom camping site with minimal facilities. It is used extensively by campers wishing to explore the Whakatipu area and enjoy lake activities. The area provides for 50 campers but is frequently oversubscribed.
<b>Recreation Centres</b>	Shower facilities for gym and swim users are frequently used by visitors and freedom campers in Wānaka and Queenstown. This puts pressure on already stretched facilities and causes conflict with other centre users at peak times.

**Estimated costs:** \$150,000 IVL Funding for Freedom camping temporary infrastructure at four possible locations.

### **What are timeframes for delivery?**

If IVL funding is allocated to this programme of work, QLDC proposes an accelerated install program to address the current issues being experienced and to improve the tourist experience as quickly as possible. Further scoping is required, but could have an accelerated delivery over the next 12-months in time for the next peak summer period.

### **What is the expected impact of this initiative, and how will it be measured?**

Technology solutions would offer a way to manage high-use freedom camping sites by combining digital bookings, pay-per-use ablution infrastructure, and real-time monitoring tools. It would control overcrowding, offering a scalable, cost-effective solution to reduce pressures on local

infrastructure. Improving access to essential services would enhance the overall visitor experience, while reducing environmental degradation.

Digital bookings and real-time occupancy visibility could prevent situations where visitor numbers exceed capacity, while also reducing issues such as littering and inappropriate toileting. These improvements support more sustainable site management and contribute to better community sentiment around how freedom camping areas are used and managed.

Impact will be measured through usage data, revenue generated through pay-per-use facilities, compliance indicators and community feedback.

### **Project 3: Public toilets (x6)**

**Description of the initiative:** what it is, location, problem(s) that the initiative will address

Queenstown Lakes District has a shortage of clean and accessible public toilet facilities in some areas of the district, used predominately by visitors. The difficulty the district has in providing this critical infrastructure can have a disproportionately negative, impact on visitors' enjoyment of their stay and the time – and money – they spend in the area.

To ensure the district is supported by a network of high-quality, accessible, and safe public toilets that enhance visitor experience, community wellbeing and protect public health. These facilities will meet current and future needs. Toilets are a key asset that supports a good visitor experience and improves social licence for tourism (e.g. reduces complaints about toileting in the environment by freedom campers). The toilets proposed will be in high-volume visitor locations throughout the district to support the increase in demand generated from increasing visitor numbers.

The toilet infrastructure proposed relate to sites that are highly impacted by the increase in visitor numbers and don't currently have adequate infrastructure to meet requirements. This has led to instances of human waste being discovered in their vicinity which is not only a significant hygiene issue but presents the areas very poorly.

<b>Proposed location</b>	<b>Reason for location selection</b>
<b>Ben Lomond Reserve (Queenstown)</b>	Premium high-use visitor destination, partially used for Skyline Queenstown operations. Currently no toilets available in this highly used reserve, which is near Queenstown CBD. Proposed toilet locations are approved in the Reserve Management Plan.
<b>Queenstown Gardens</b>	Premium high-use visitor destination within Queenstown CBD. Toilet location agreed with community in the Development Plan.
<b>Arrowtown River Reserve</b>	Premium high-use visitor destination in Arrowtown. Toilets planned for in recently drafted development plan. Requirements for additional toilet facilities in this location.
<b>Luggate Red Bridge Reserve</b>	The Luggate Red Bridge Reserve is a high use freedom camping site. There are two dated long drop toilets which are extensively used by freedom campers and visitors travelling between Luggate and Wānaka.
<b>Stony Creek (Wānaka Tree)</b>	Premium high-use visitor location, mainly known for the famous "Wānaka Tree".
<b>Camphill Road Carpark (Hāwea)</b>	This is a high use parking area used by freedom campers, recreational users of 'the Hāwea Wave' and for walkers and bikers using the adjacent trails along the on the Hāwea River.

**Estimated costs:** \$1,300,000 from IVL (plus \$500,000 co-funding from QLDC) for six two-bay toilets.

Cost for a 2-bay toilet delivered and installed is approximately \$300,000 based on three recent toilets QLDC have installed. The project generally seek to install an Exeloo/ Permaloo type toilet

facility with 2 toilets per block creating an accessible toilet stall available to visitors in the given locations. Some locations may require a dry vault solution due to the distance from services.

There is limited funding in the QLDC Long Term Plan for additional toilet facilities and as such these projects may not proceed if co-funding is not available.

Projected funding will allow QLDC to contribute 25% of funding to these projects. In the absence of further rate increases to fund debt, a further or full contribution to each project would not be possible without delaying or putting on hold these projects.

### **What are timeframes for delivery?**

If IVL funding is allocated to this programme of work, QLDC proposes an accelerated install program to address the current issues being experienced and to improve the tourist experience as quickly as possible. Based on the investigation of the following factors, we aim to have the toilets installed within 12 months:

- Delivery timeframes
- Resource consent requirements
- Location planning
- Landscaping considerations
- Site preparation
- Building consent exemptions
- Connection to services / dry vault options
- Ground conditions (geotechnical assessment)

QLDC find the proposed facilities fit for purpose for the following reasons;

- a) These type facilities are proven in delivering public toilet facilities within expected timeframes.
- b) The asset can be easily relocated if demands on sites change over the life of the facility.
- c) The units provide capability to report occupancy/usage which can be provided to MBIE for monitoring facility investment returns to the tourism industry.
- d) Facilities are CPTED Design Compliant to ensure maximum user safety.

### **What is the expected impact of this initiative, and how will it be measured?**

**Expected benefits from the project are as follows;**

- Provide new and improved facilities to meet the needs of visitors
- Increased cleanliness with demand met at areas where there are no facilities, or an increase required.

- Reduction in the current environmental and public health issue of visitor's toileting in significant and sensitive landscape environments
- Appropriate, modern facilities to underpin the value of the highly frequented tourist locations
- It will enhance the community capacity for attracting and managing increased tourist visitation.
- Provide economic benefits for a local business to maintain the toilet facility.

Tourism is critical to the economic success of the Queenstown Lakes District, and it is equally critical that we hit the right balance between meeting the expectations of our community and visitors and ensuring this plan is affordable. The challenges of visitor growth faced by our ratepayers are disproportionately high compared to other tourism centres.

**On measuring that impact: all recipients of IVL funding will be required to show how they will measure the impact of the investment. Recipients will also have to report back to MBIE on actual impact.**

QLDC will measure toilet usage and source visitor and community feedback to report on impact of this investment.

## **Project 4: Wānaka Lakefront Project**

### **Description of the initiative: what it is, location, problem(s) that the initiative will address**

The Wānaka Lakefront project focuses on the restoration and development of ecological systems and landscape design that reflects the cultural and environmental importance of the lake, while enhancing ecological health and improving visibility and access to the water. [QLDC - Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan](#)

The Lakefront Development has been designed around four key objectives:

- Restore and enhance ecology
- Provide continuous public access
- Improve land use
- Provide a diverse range of facilities

Four stages of the project have been completed. These have enhanced the lakefront experience and delivered significant community and visitor benefits. There are three remaining stages to be completed which leaves the waterfront experience feeling unfinished and the areas less resilient to the impacts of high use e.g. parking on the grass open areas. Progressing these projects will ensure visitors will be able to enjoy a fully integrated and cohesive lakefront environment.

### **Three remaining parts to the Wānaka Lakefront Project**

**Stage 4 Wānaka Lakefront Shared Pathway:** Construction of a formal pathway in the Wānaka Lakefront area adjacent to the town centre. This section is the missing link between two completed sections of the shared pathway and needs to be formalised to create continuous access. Construction of the shared pathway (approximately 1300m) will reduce user conflict and provide clear navigation through the area for walkers and bikers in the busiest area of the Wānaka Lakefront.

**Stage 4 Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan Upgrade:** Upgrades to the area of the Wānaka Lakefront adjacent to the town centre to enhance the public reserve area in the busiest part of the Wānaka Lakefront. This area includes the main carpark on the Wānaka lakefront for cars and buses and areas used by lakefront commercial tourism operators. Undertaking upgrades to this area will enhance the public space for visitors and community enjoyment and use.

**Stage 6 Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan Upgrade:** Upgrades to the area between Stoney Creek and the Wānaka-Mt Aspiring Road Carpark to enhance the public reserve area. This area includes the carpark that is used for access to the Wānaka Tree. The Wānaka Tree is one of New Zealand's most photographed natural landmarks and a major tourist attraction. Improving the carpark will help resolve car and bus capacity issues (which have a high impact on local community trying to access facilities in the same area) and improve stormwater management adjacent to Lake Wānaka.

### Estimated costs:

These are the total costs for the overall project. We are requesting \$2m towards this project which will be used to deliver the shared pathway and to begin planning and design on the other projects.

Project	Estimated costs
<b>Stage 4 Wānaka Lakefront Shared Pathway</b>	\$1,014,000 (based on engineers estimate from preliminary design). Exact costs will be determined as the design is finalised.
<b>Stage 4 Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan Upgrade</b>	\$5,714,000 for planning, design, and construction; from the QLDC Long Term Plan 2024-34.
<b>Stage 6 Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan Upgrade</b>	Planning and construction costs unknown

### What are timeframes for delivery?

**Stage 4 Wānaka Lakefront Shared Pathway** – Design will be completed by June 2026. Procurement and construction milestones to follow.

**Stage 4 Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan Upgrade** – Project could be started from June 2026. Project likely to take 5 years including planning, design, and construction. Currently planned to begin 2028.

**Stage 6 Wānaka Lakefront Development Plan Upgrade** – Project could be started from June 2026. Project likely to take 1-2 years for planning and construction.

What is the expected impact of this initiative, and how will it be measured? What impact is anticipated (e.g. use, community or social licence benefits) and how that impact would be measured. All IVL recipients will need to report back to MBIE on outcomes.

The primary attraction for tourists and visitors to Wānaka is its natural landscape. To continue attracting visitors sustainably, it is essential to protect Lake Wānaka by restoring and enhancing the surrounding ecology. These projects aim to improve both the visitor experience and the ecological quality of the site. Ecotourism can be defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, sustain the well-being of local people, and involve interpretation and education.” Ecotourism is a strong draw for many visitors, and this project supports environmental protection and conservation initiatives around Lake Wānaka.

Expected benefits:

- New and improved public spaces to meet the needs of visitors
- Enhanced community capacity for attracting and managing increased tourist visitation
- Attractive waterfront areas that encourage increased tourism spend

- Improved accessibility to and around the lake
- Enhanced wayfinding for all visitors ensuring a cohesive and user-friendly experience
- Enhanced social and cultural identity through placemaking
- Attractive waterfront areas that encourage increased tourism spendImproved ecology and stormwater management adjacent to Lake Wānaka

The individual projects relate to the Wānaka Lakefront which is highly impacted by increasing visitor numbers and doesn't currently have adequate infrastructure to meet the needs.

There is funding available in later years of QLDC's Long Term Plan 2024-34 or limited funding available for these projects currently. Project funding would allow these projects to be completed or completed earlier.

## **Project 5: End-of-network roads**

### **Description of the initiative: what it is, location, problem(s) that the initiative will address**

End-of-network roads are the final sections of the roading network that provide last-mile access to nationally significant visitor destinations, including conservation land, National Parks, alpine areas, and remote settlements. In the Queenstown Lakes District, these roads include locations such as Skippers Road (including Skippers Bridge), Glenorchy–Queenstown Road, Kinloch / Greenstone Road, and Mount Aspiring Road. They carry relatively low everyday traffic volumes but very high visitor importance, acting as single points of access to premium experiences that underpin the district’s tourism export value.

These roads face a combination of steep terrain, narrow alignments, ageing structures, and increasing exposure to climate-driven hazards such as slips, erosion, flooding, and asset failure. Recent closures, including the [ongoing closure of Skippers Bridge](#), demonstrate the vulnerability of this infrastructure and the immediate consequences for visitor safety, access reliability, and destination reputation. Because there are no alternative routes, failures result in full loss of access, unsafe informal behaviour, or displacement of visitors onto other already-constrained parts of the network.

Without a proactive, system-level approach, the risk profile will continue to worsen. Consequences of inaction include more frequent unplanned closures, increased safety incidents, pressure on gateway locations, damage to sensitive environments from unmanaged access, and erosion of community and mana whenua confidence in how tourism pressures are being managed. Over time, this undermines the social licence for tourism and the long-term value of some of New Zealand’s most iconic destinations.

This initiative seeks IVL funding to support early-stage investigation, risk assessment, and programme-level business case development for these high-risk end-of-network roads. IVL is an appropriate funding source because visitors are a primary beneficiary of access and a significant contributor to wear, risk exposure, and management costs. Early-stage investment is necessary to define problems clearly, assess options, and ensure any future capital investment is well-targeted, affordable, and delivers value for money.

### **What are timeframes for delivery?**

Subject to IVL funding approval, the programme would commence in the 2026/27 financial year. Initial activity would focus on discovery and evidence-gathering, rather than construction. This includes asset condition surveys, geotechnical and resilience assessments, targeted LIDAR and modelling, and definition of safety, access, and resilience risks across priority end-of-network roads.

The discovery and audit phase will establish a consistent evidence base across multiple roads, enabling comparison of risks, costs, and benefits, and informing prioritisation. In parallel, programme management capability would be established to coordinate technical inputs, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with national transport and conservation agencies.

### What is the expected impact of this initiative, and how will it be measured?

The expected impact is improved protection of visitor access to nationally important destinations, reduced safety risk, and stronger long-term resilience of the tourism system. By addressing end-of-network roads as a coherent programme rather than in response to failures, the initiative supports a more reliable visitor experience, protects destination reputation, and helps maintain community and mana whenua confidence that tourism pressures are being responsibly managed.

Safeguarding last-mile access is critical to sustaining a premium experience in a destination that contributes disproportionately to New Zealand's tourism export earnings. While the initiative does not deliver immediate physical upgrades, it creates the conditions for smarter future investment decisions and avoids costly, reactive responses to asset failure or crisis.

Given the non-construction nature of this phase, impact will be measured through readiness and risk-reduction indicators rather than traffic or asset outputs. Measures will include completion of condition and risk assessments, delivery of a programme-level business case, identification of priority investment pathways, and establishment of baseline data on closures and disruptions. Over time, this will support a reduction in unplanned closures, improved network resilience, and increased stakeholder confidence, in line with MBIE's expectations for tracking actual impact beyond the funding period.