

ARLA Annual Report 2025-2026

Submitted: 4 September 2026

1. Please provide the name of your District Licensing Committee.

Queenstown Lakes District Licensing Committee

2. Please provide a generic email address to which general correspondence will be certain of a response.

alcoholinspectors@qldc.govt.nz

3. Please provide the name, email, and contact phone number of your Committee's Secretary.

Anthony Hall, Anthony.Hall@qldc.govt.nz +64 3 450 0312

4. Please name each of your licensing inspectors and provide their email and contact phone number.

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The following questions relate to the number of licences and managers' certificates your committee issued and refused during the 2025-2026 financial year:

New Licences 2025-2026

- 1. In the 2025-2026 year, how many total Applications did your committee grant for New 'on licences'**
= 43
- 2. In the 2025-2026 year, how many total Applications did your committee refuse for New 'on licences'**
= 1
- 3. In the 2025-2026 year, how many total Applications did your committee grant for New 'off licences'**
= 17
- 4. In the 2025-2026 year, how many total Applications did your committee refuse for New 'off licences'**
= 0
- 5. In the 2025-2026 year, how many total Applications did your committee grant for New 'club licences'**
= 0
- 6. In the 2025-2026 year, how many total Applications did your committee refuse for New 'club licences'**
= 0

New Managers' Certificates 2025-2026

- 1. In the 2025-2026 year, how many new managers' certificates did your Committee issue?**
= 532
- 2. In the 2025-2026 year, how many applications for managers' certificates did your Committee refuse?**
= 9

Licence Renewals 2025-2026

1. In the 2025-2026 year, how many licence renewals did your Committee issue?
= 177
2. In the 2025-2026 year, how many licence renewals did your Committee refuse?
= 0
3. As of 30 June 2026, what is the total number of On-Licences (new and existing) in your licensing district?
= 331
4. As of 30 June 2026, what is the total number of Off-Licences (new and existing) in your licensing district?
= 123
5. As of 30 June 2026, what is the total number of Club-Licences (new and existing) in your licensing district?
= 21

Managers' Certificate Renewals 2025-2026

1. In the 2025-2026 year, how many managers' certificate renewals did your committee issue? = 563
2. In the 2025-2026 year, how many managers' certificate renewals did your committee refuse? = 1

Questions

1. Please comment on any changes or trends in the Committee's workload in 2025-2026.
 - The Committee continued to manage a high-volume and increasingly complex and novel applications included:
 - Beercycle (new conveyance on-licence for a 15-seater bicycle),
 - The Helicopter Line (new s.35 complementary off-licence),
 - The Committee have also dealt with increased community interest in applications with 535 public objections to one new off-licence application alone:
 - Super Liquor Lake Hawea (new bottle store off-licence application which 538 public objections, the most applications received in this district),
 - Super Liquor Wanaka Central (new bottle store off-licence with 116 public objections, over half of which were received from a trade competitor or assisted by a trade competitor)
 - Due to the growth being experienced in the Queenstown Lakes District, the Committee is also dealing with a large number of licences per capita (~162 residents per licence). There has also been an increase in the number of businesses changing hands leading to a 15% increase in the number of temporary authorities received over the past year.
 - There has been a 15% increase in the number of renewal on-licences issued.
 - There has been a 5% increase in New Managers Certificate Applications (lodged).
2. Please comment on any new initiatives the Committee has developed/adopted in 2025-2026.
 - During the year the Council and Committee progressed several practice improvements, including:
 - refreshed public information relating to DLC hearings and processes,

- councillor education on alcohol licensing and DLC independence through workshops and council reports have been undertaken,
- a formal review and recruitment process for DLC membership, and development of updated governance material and terms of reference have also been undertaken due to panel appointments coming to an end with new appointments and re-appointments occurring.

Local Alcohol Policies (LAPs)

1. **Has your Territorial Authority developed a Local Alcohol Policy?**
= No
2. **If the answer is yes, at what stage is your Local Alcohol Policy?**
= NA
 - a) Draft
 - b) Provisional
 - c) Under Appeal to ARLA
 - d) Adopted
 - e) In Force
 - f) Abandoned
3. **If the answer to 2 is 'in force', what effect do you consider your Local Alcohol Policy is having?**
= NA
4. **If the answer to 2 is 'in force', what date is your Local Alcohol Policy due for review.**
= NA

Operation

1. **Please comment on the ways in which you believe the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 is, or is not, achieving its object. Note: the object of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 is that:**
 - a) *the sale, supply, and consumption of alcohol should be undertaken safely and responsibly; and*
 - b) *the harm caused by the excessive or inappropriate consumption of alcohol should be minimised.*
 - The Act provides a strong framework for licensing, accountability and harm minimisation, particularly through the object in section 4, the statutory decision criteria, reporting-agency input, public participation and enforceable licence conditions.
 - In the Queenstown Lakes District, the framework operates in a demanding visitor destination with a high concentration of licensed premises, major events, remote sales and complex business models. These factors can create practical gaps, uncertainty and disproportionate workload unless legislation, regulations, fees and national guidance remain clear and current.
2. **What changes or trends in licensing have you seen since the Act came into force?**
 - We are finding that applicants are lodging more unique applications testing the waters with the DLC to see if they will approve these licences. Queenstown appears to be a testing ground for individuals who have business models which are novel and innovative in nature and as a result require far greater scrutiny and testing against the legislation.
 - Amendments under the Community Participation Act have also meant that significant numbers of public objections are now received against one application (often a new off-licence application). Prior to the Amendment Act, numbers of objections were lower though still occurred. Objections

were also previously more individualised whereas now most objections are on pre-formatted forms online.

- Due to the larger number of public objections and more complex applications, it is taking licensing inspectors longer to assess and report on applications. Further, the groups who facilitate the pre-formatted objections can be hostile to deal with, openly critical of the DLC's in hearings.
- Positive feedback has been received from licensees regarding the repeal of the Sacrosanct day's restrictions following the commencement on 3 April 2026 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Act 2026. In a community such as the Queenstown Lakes District, this Amendment has been particularly helpful given the significant number of international tourists who visit from various countries around the world where they will not necessarily have knowledge or understanding of the New Zealand laws and restrictions. Previously this would have led to many businesses being required to close, are now able to stay open and continue to operate as normal.
- We have noted that many of the clubs in the district are lodging less special licence applications for events which are booked to occur at their venues by non-members (members of the public) or are not lodging special licence applications at all. This is somewhat concerning given the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act has not had amendments made in relation to club activities, nor have special licence provisions changed. Meetings have been undertaken and information has been provided to clubs regarding the requirement to apply for and be issued special licences for events where non-club members will be able to purchase alcohol from the club.
- An increasing number of supplementary documentation required to be provided with applications, as well as information submitted for hearings, is being generated by Artificial Intelligence. One hearing saw the applicant responding to DLC questions by primarily using ChatGPT. There are some concerns with the use of AI in that information generated isn't necessarily factually correct, as well as the information not necessarily being the applicants' own words. This then leads to concerns around applicants not completely understanding the information produced by AI.

3. What changes to practices and procedures under the Act (if any) would you find beneficial?

- Some beneficial changes appear to have been included in the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill as previously outlined.
- Some legislated changes appear to be captured in the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill currently awaiting it's second reading in Parliament. It is anticipated that should the Bill succeed, adequate help guidance documentation is provided to Licensing Inspectors, Police, Health, DLC's, licensees and the general public to aid in understanding any changes, how the changes are to be assessed and applied, transitional timeframes, and templates.
- Mandatory qualifications of training of DLC Members, Commissioners and Chairs need to be provided for in the legislation. It is key that DLC members are trained in and understand the interpretation of law, inquisitorial processes, hearing processes, assessments of evidence, and questioning. This will go some way to eliminating political influence placed on inspectors, non-councillor DLC members, and DLC secretaries where contentious applications are being considered.

- It is also crucial that the independence of inspectors is strengthen considerably from pressures placed on them by employers, DLC members, and DLC secretaries to write reports in certain ways, to ignore ongoing issues with certain premises in order to keep businesses in the community, and to be able to easily lodge an appeal to a DLC decision when it is considered appropriate. A practice directive from the Authority or formal letter to each Chief Executive of each Council clarifying the fact that Chief Licensing Inspectors are unable to sign off the grant of licences, licensing inspectors are unable to write DLC decisions and making it abundantly clear that territorial authorities are required under section 197, to support licensing inspectors to act independently when “exercising and performing their functions, duties, and powers”.
- It is appreciated that the Ministry of Justice will undertake a review of all licensing fees in 2027 as is required to be carried out every five years in accordance with section 404 of the Act. During the fees review, it would also be appropriate to include a review of the Cabinet set fees for payment to District Licensing Committee Chairs, Commissioners and members. These fees have not increased over the life of the Act, unlike the provisions outlined with the legislation for territorial authorities to increase fees by way of a fee’s bylaw, there is no such provision for DLC members.