

Item 1: Economic Update

SESSION TYPE: Briefing

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

Briefing for information and Q&A purposes only.

DATE/START TIME:

Tuesday, 20 October 2026 at 12.30pm.

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 60 mins (10 mins per external speaker, 20 mins Economic Futures)
Questions or Debate/Discussion: 60 mins (5 mins after each external speaker)

PRESENTERS:

Peter Harris – Manager, Economic Futures, QLDC
Nick Brunsdon – Informetrics Economist
Sarah Russell – Technology Queenstown CEO
Richard Barker – University of Otago – Queenstown lead
Ali Meredith – General Manager, Startup Queenstown Lakes
James Mulcahy – Senior Advisor, Destination Management, Economic Futures
Bex Woollard – Senior Advisor, Diversification, Economic Futures
Kahli Scott – Manager, Queenstown Film Office
Jan Maxwell – Arts and Events

Prepared by:



Name: Peter Harris
Title: Manager, Economic Futures
9 October 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Michelle Morss
Title: General Manager, Strategy and Policy
12 October 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Powerpoint slide presentation – Economic Update
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QUEENSTOWN
LAKES DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Economic update 20 October 2026

Context

Reporting on Economic Futures work was originally split between 2 committees and full Council. It was agreed to consolidate this into a 6 monthly workshop and annual report to Council.

After a request from the Chair, Wānaka/Upper Clutha initiatives were shared with the WUCCB on 12 October.

Annual reports to the end of June 2026 for Events, Destination Management and Diversification will be tabled at the November 12 Council meeting.

This workshop is an update on the local economy and relevant initiatives with an emphasis on changes since June.

Content

1. Economic Overview – Nick Brunsdon, Infometrics online
2. Technology Queenstown – Sarah Russell online
3. University of Otago – Richard Barker
4. Startup Queenstown Lakes – Rene Koehler
5. Economic Futures update

Economic update

Queenstown-Lakes District Council

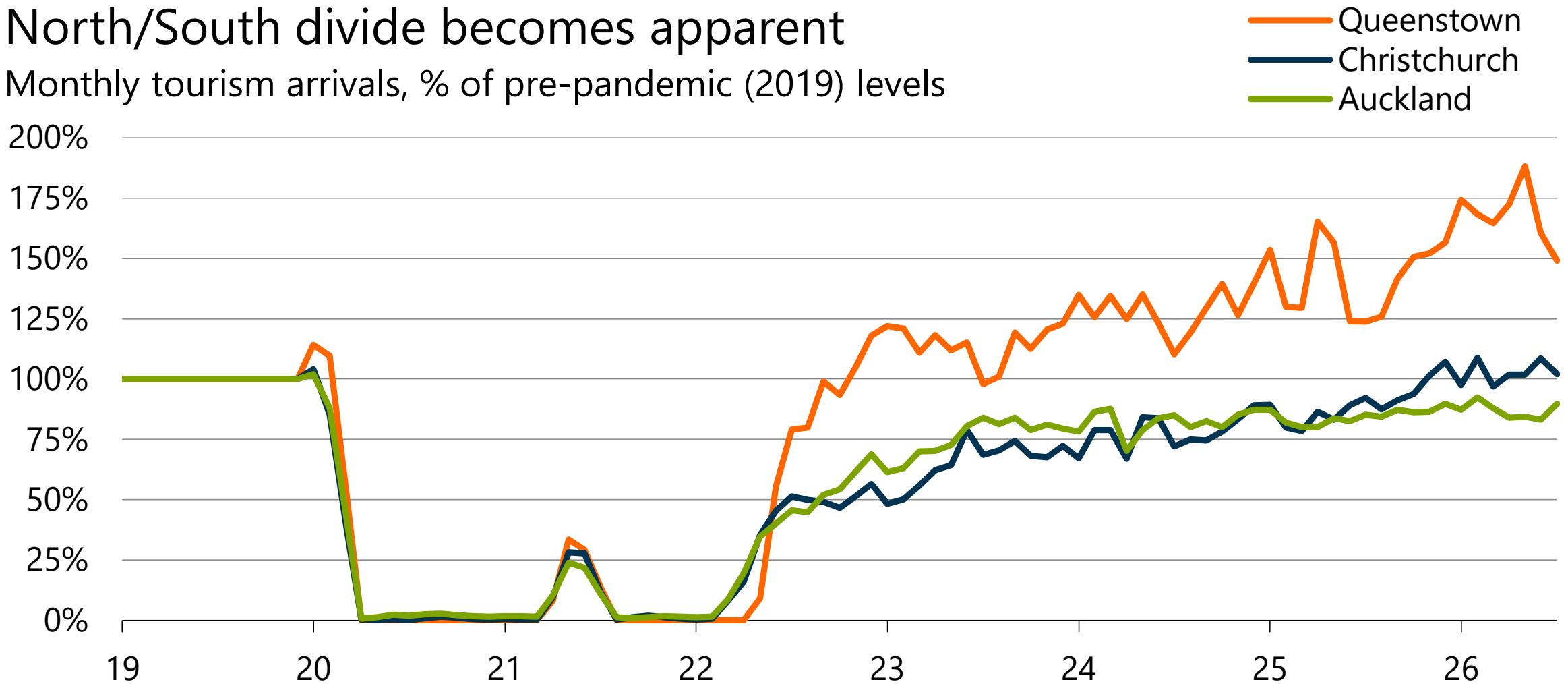
Nick Brunsdon (Principal Economist, Lead Demographer, & Director)

20th October 2026

Tourism

North/South divide becomes apparent

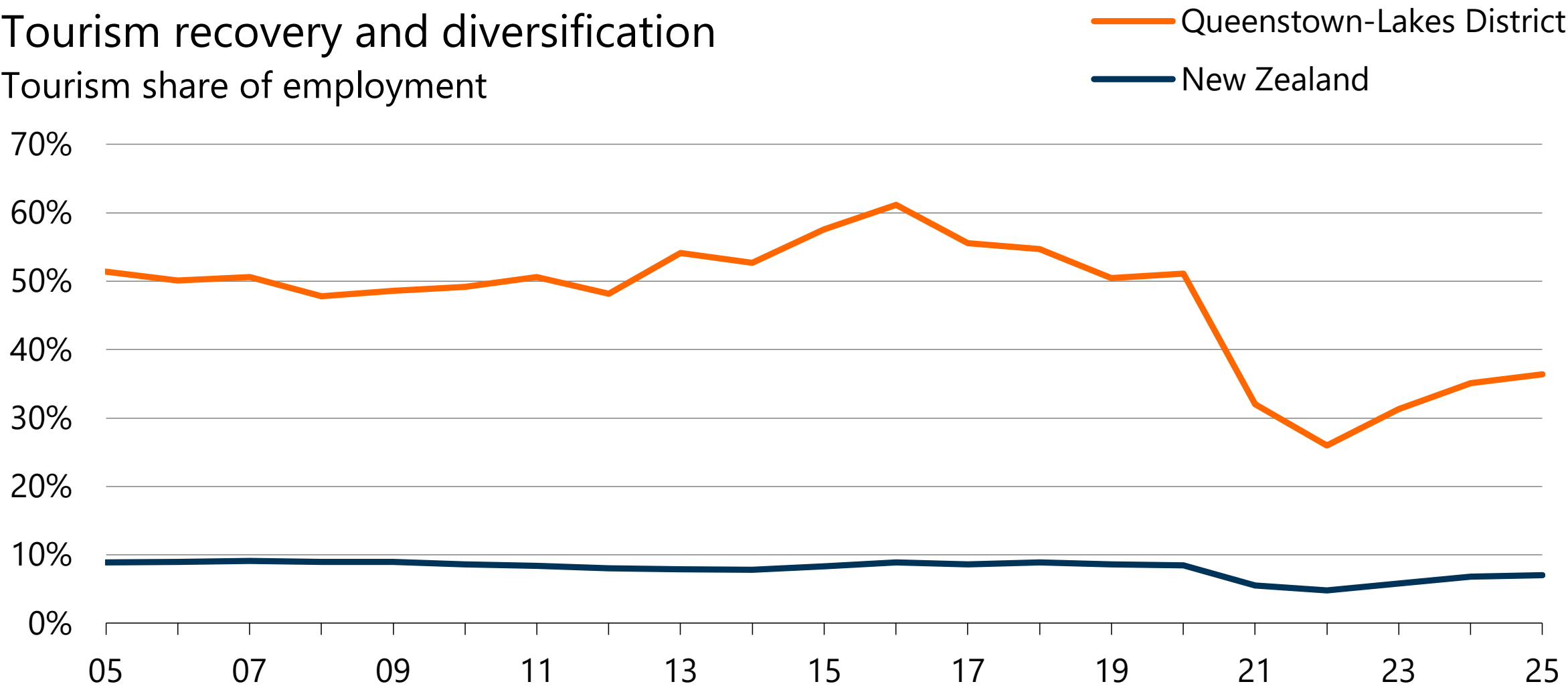
Monthly tourism arrivals, % of pre-pandemic (2019) levels



Diversification

Tourism recovery and diversification

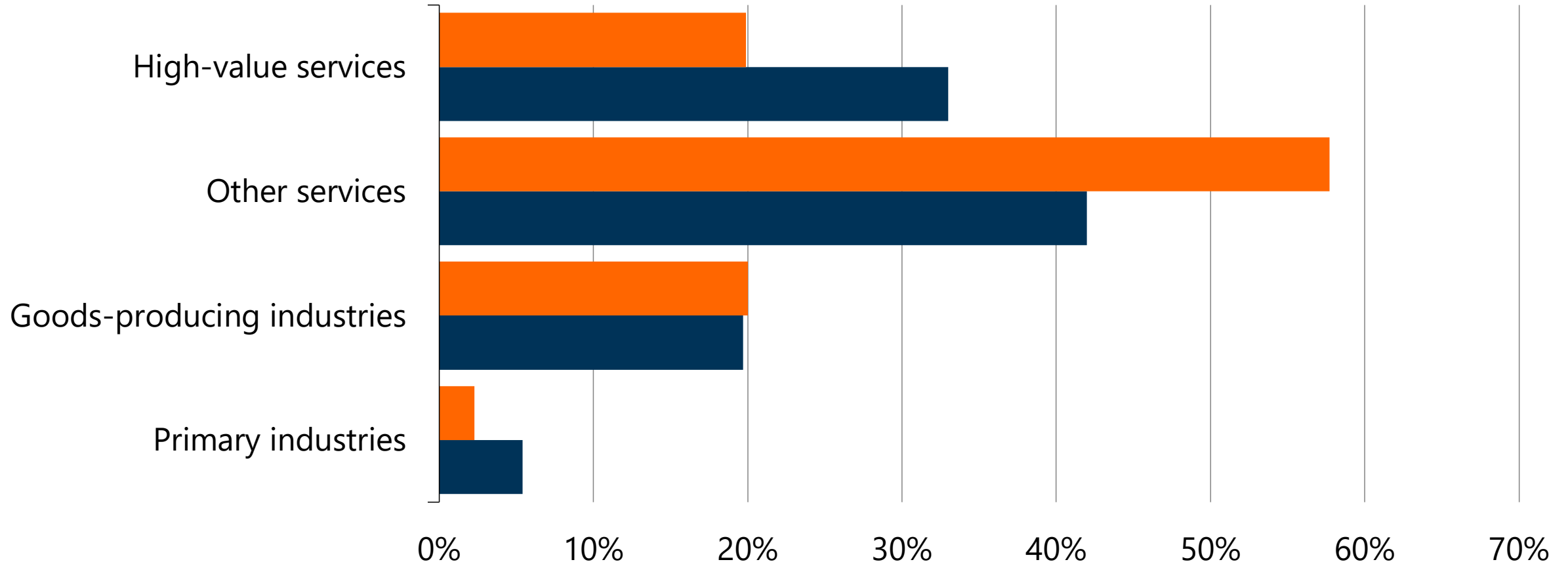
Tourism share of employment



Diversification

Unique economic structure in Queenstown-Lakes
Broad sectors, share of total employment, 2026

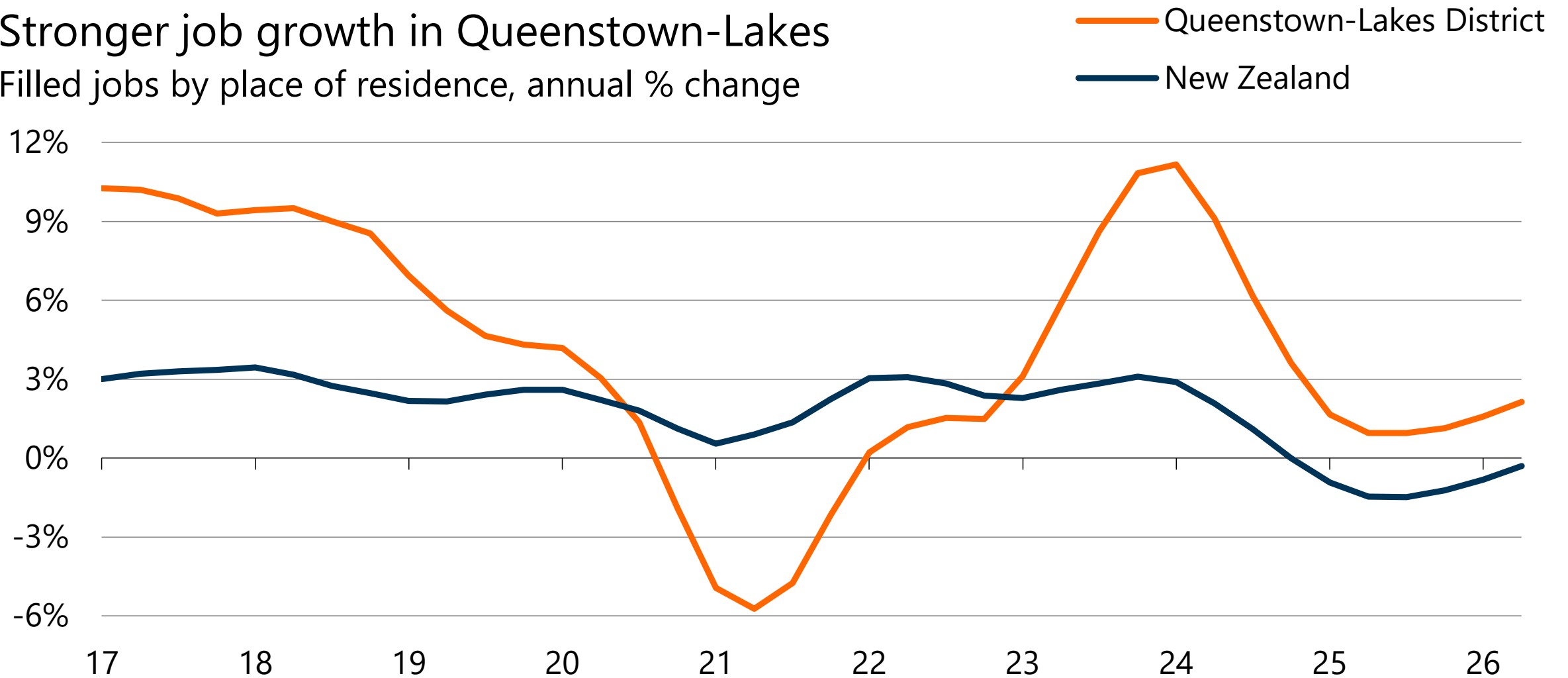
Queenstown-Lakes District
New Zealand



Economic growth

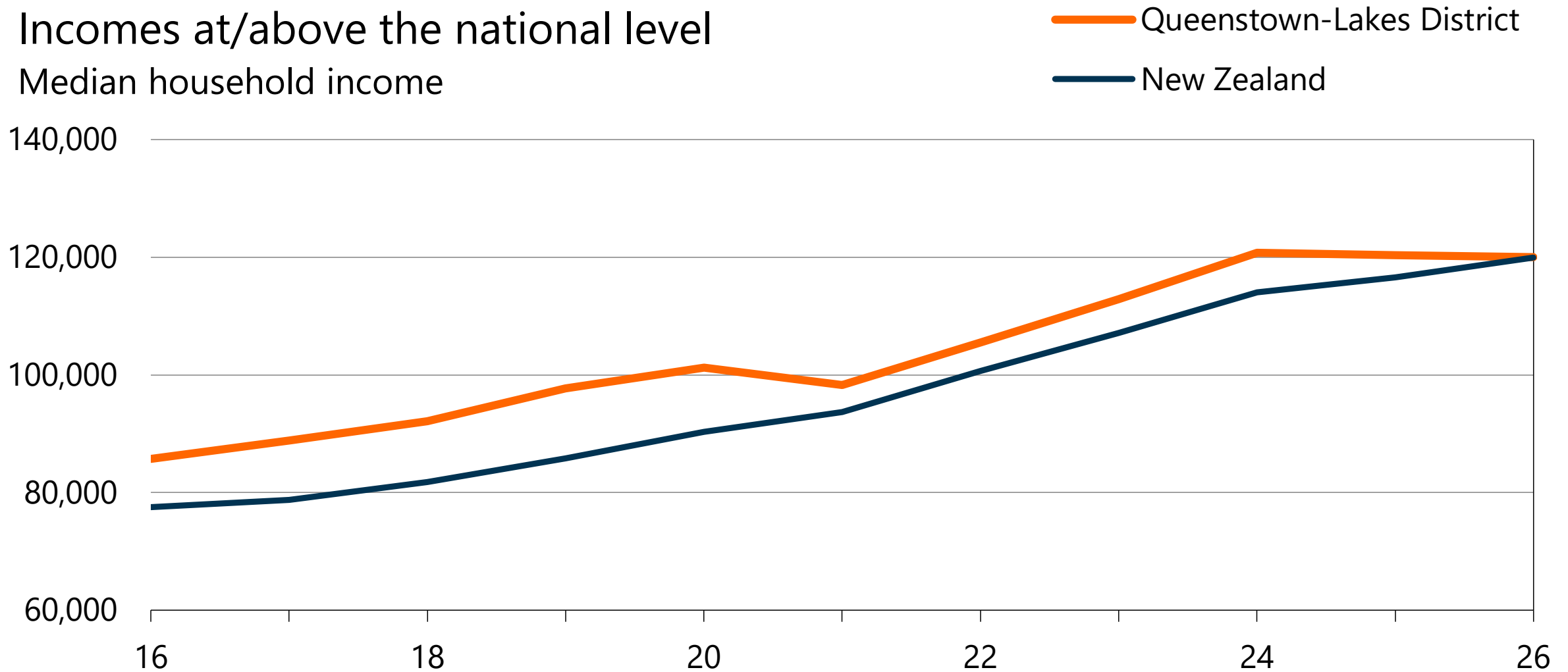
Stronger job growth in Queenstown-Lakes

Filled jobs by place of residence, annual % change



Economic growth

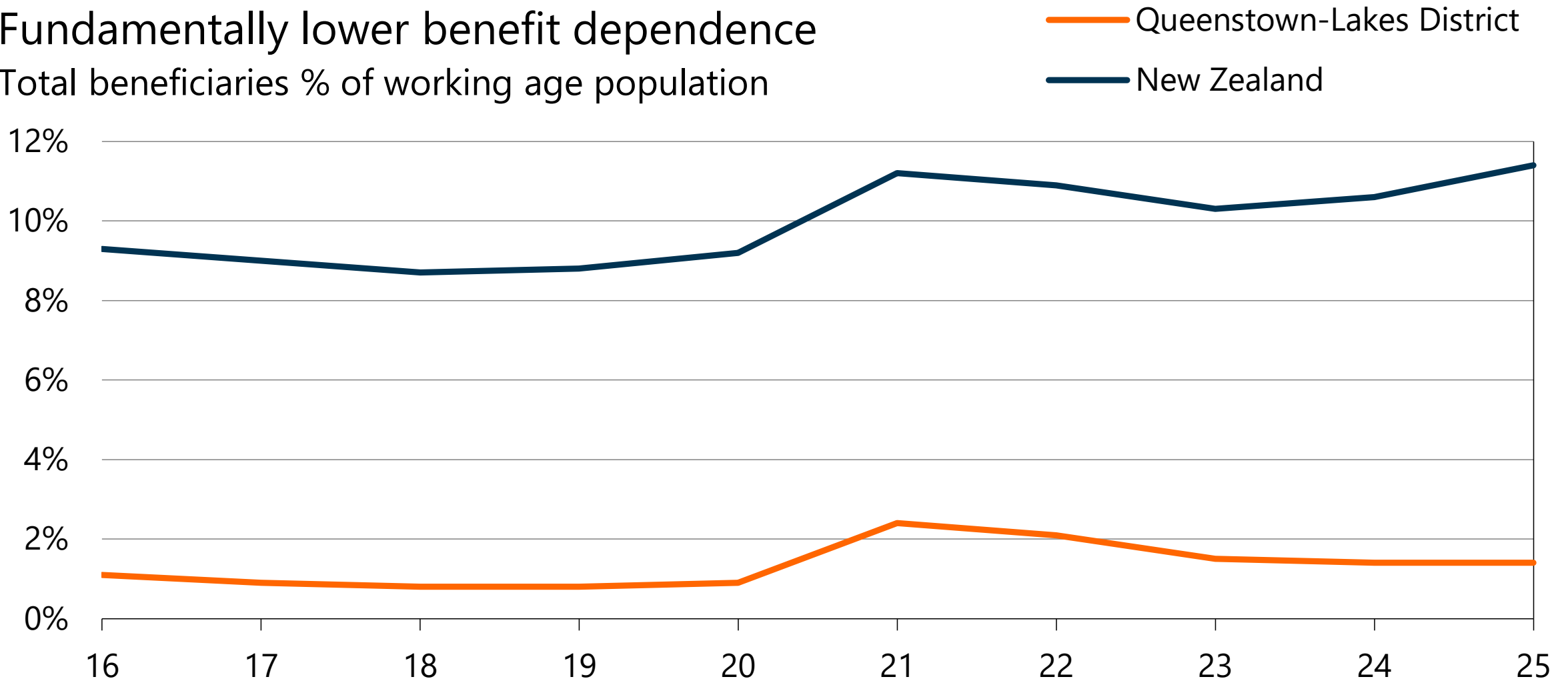
Incomes at/above the national level
Median household income



Society

Fundamentally lower benefit dependence

Total beneficiaries % of working age population



Questions?

Nick Brunsdon (Principal Economist, Lead Demographer, & Director)

Nick.Brunsdon@infometrics.co.nz



Update and questions



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University
of Otago

ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST UNIVERSITY

Update and questions



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Update and questions



People come here
with ideas, talent,
connections and
ambition.

Our opportunity is to **unlock**
their potential





Our why

- Inspire people
- Back their ideas
- Create opportunities for the next generation

Our team



Ali Meredith

General Manager



Rene Koehler

Wanaka Lead



Simon Leckey

Growth Coach



Annette Gardyne

Marketing Lead



Lucy Holzberger

Events Coordinator

Our board



David Wallace

Chair, Wanaka



Michaela Blacklock

Wanaka



Sophie Wiltshier

Queenstown



Emma Pickering

Queenstown



Cody Tucker

Board observer, Wanaka



Our focus

To help people with ideas take the first step towards becoming founders.

Connected

Accessible

Local

Connected

Regular events



**WĀNAKA
TECH
MEETUP**

More tech in this town than you'd expect.
One room, once a month.
Talk to someone else who gets it.

STARTUP QUEENTOWN LAKES
logic

**COFFEE
JAM**

REAL CONVERSATIONS.
GREAT PEOPLE. GOOD COFFEE.

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER
7:00 - 9:00AM
MOUNTAIN CLUB
Beech Street Meeting Space

AN EVENT PARTNERSHIP HOSTED BY
STARTUP QUEENTOWN LAKES Mountain Club

STARTUP QUEENTOWN LAKES

LUNCH & LEARN

WITH GUEST SPEAKER, MAT WEIR
FOUNDER OF FIRST TABLE

Wednesday, 7 October 1:22:00PM
50 Stanley Street, Queenstown
Register Early, Limited to 10 spaces

KINDLY SPONSORED BY Invest South

first table

**FLYING
KIWI
ANGELS**

ANGELIC DROP IN SESSION

FOUNDERS OF ALL STAGES ARE WELCOME
FOR A 30 MIN CHAT WITH A GROUP OF
FLYING KIWI ANGELS

ONLINE WEBINAR

Raising Capital.

PETER RAMSAY
MAINLAND ANGELS

WAYNE HUDSON
FLYING KIWI ANGELS

ANGEL INVESTING INTRODUCTORY SESSION
Learn how to access funding, expertise, networks,
and ongoing support from investors nationwide.

STARTUP QUEENTOWN LAKES FK4 MAINLAND ANGELS

**REMOTE
WORKERS
DRINKS**

Working remotely in Queenstown?
Come along for a drink and meet some of the
other people doing the same.

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER
5:00pm - 8:00pm
KIA ORA DIGITAL
Lakefront @ Hilton

HOSTED BY
STARTUP QUEENTOWN LAKES kiaora digital

Connected Community Tech Labs



Meet the Community Tech Lab cohort

Three community organisations, three local build teams and five weeks of building, starting 12 October.



Connected

Event partners



Connected

Nationwide programs

HackAotearoa*

BUILD DAY · FREE

Queenstown

Friday 16 October

9:00am – 5:00pm

Kia Ora Digital - Lakefront @ the Hilton, Kawarau Falls

SUPPORTED BY

 **STARTUP**
QUEENSTOWN-LAKES

kiaora
digital

Accessible

- Inclusive language
- Profile: early stage
- Dedicated outreach to minorities



Accessible Founder stories

Startup Queenstown Lakes's post

Startup Queenstown Lakes
14 September at 12:54 · 🌐

Queenstown startup QuickCrew tackles hospitality staffing shortages
👉 Titles are generated by AI from Meta

A very Queenstown problem, and a smart local response.
Sandra and Barbie saw firsthand how hard it can be for hospitality businesses to find staff when they need them. Now they're building QuickCrew to do something about it.
We just love seeing another Queenstown idea taking shape. 💜
Thanks for sharing the QuickCrew story Ministry of Awesome 🍷



Sandra
is helping hospitality
businesses find staff
when they need
them most.

"we understand the real needs
of businesses and workers."

Quick Crew

MOA
Ministry of
Awesome

Manatū Whiri
Ministry for Women

News 21 Sept

Gab Ruiz: Building a Little Piece of Mexico in Glenorchy

Mexico was already in Glenorchy. Now it's official.

For the past few years, Gab Ruiz, co-owner Gaby De la Rosa and the team at Casa Jaguar have been building a little piece of Mexico in Glenorchy. The food, the recipes, the hospitality, the language, the culture. The whole experience of walking through the door.

At the end of August, Mexico came to have a look.

The Ambassador of Mexico in New Zealand drove out to Glenorchy to present Casa Jaguar with a Sello M, a recognition of authentic Mexican gastronomy awarded through the Mexican authorities and the Academia Mexicana de Gastronomía.



Startup Queenstown Lakes
11m · Edited

A big thanks to everyone who joined us yesterday for our Founder Lunch & Learn! 🍷

Huge thanks to [Invest South](#) for sponsoring the session, and to [Mat Weir](#), founder of [First Table](#), for sharing his story, lessons and insights from building his business. A special thanks to [Prue Halstead](#) for sharing what investors look for, and to [Nick Bolton](#) for sharing his experience of building [Planit](#).

It's always great to get founders in a room, share what's really happening behind the scenes and learn from each other.

Keep an eye out - our next Lunch & Learn will be announced early next week! 🗓️

Great lunch, great kōrero, great people 🍷👏



Lunch & Learn · 7 October

Thanks for supporting

 **Invest South**

 **first table**

Accessible Welcoming Communities collab

Pathways for kids



Local

- Localised events
- Online events
- Distributed team across both Wanaka and Queenstown



Impact

\$5.2M

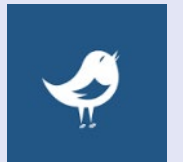
Investment from Mainland
Angels across last 4 years

\$1.79M 

Investment from Mainland
Angels into startups last year

\$12M

Recent raise for
First Table





RACERANGER



Economic Futures Team Goals

1

Destination Management

Tourism as a force for good

2

Diversification

Growing incomes and career choices

3

Events we can be proud of



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Destination Management

Building capability: Digital Catalyst 2.0 - online assessment for tourism businesses to highlight where technology offers the most benefit – then support to put improvements in place

Strengthening direction and accountability: DMP refresh, annual reporting, and RTO funding and governance review

Enabling sustainable investment: IVL submission, visitor levy modelling, and regional deal advocacy

Diversification

In September 2025 the idea was floated to create a fund that would encourage

- New ways to deliver on the Diversification Plan
- Groups to collaborate together to create solutions individual groups could not deliver alone

The pilot fund attracted 13 enquiries and six applications. Three projects were supported.

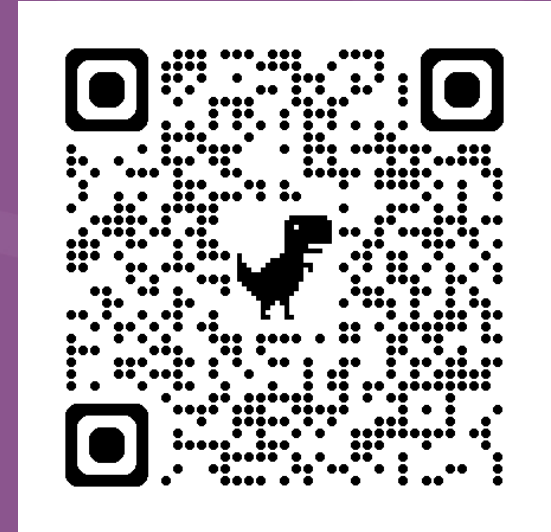
Creativity & Innovation

Growing the creative economy
of Queenstown Lakes



Full version 14 minutes

Creativity & Innovation — Three Lakes Cultural Trust



Individual Stories →



Luke Sargent

Founder, Southern Lite Packs

Luke designs and makes lightweight outdoor packs in Queenstown Lakes, combining practical problem-solving, craft and a deep connection to the landscape.



Philly de Lacey

Film and Television Producer

Philly offers a behind-the-scenes view of screen production and the many creative, technical and practical roles that bring stories to life.



Paris Tainui

Tā Moko Practitioner

Paris explores tā moko as a living cultural practice—grounded in identity, whakapapa, drawing and the responsibility carried through each mark.



Alice Herald

Jeweller and Designer

Alice transforms ideas, drawings and precious materials into finely crafted jewellery, revealing the patience and precision behind a creative practice.



Brad Hurdell

Founder, Immortal Camera Systems

Brad designs and builds specialist camera systems, bringing together engineering, filmmaking & experimentation to capture images in new ways.



Charity Tycker

Co-founder, AWOL

Charity shares the journey of turning an idea into an adventure vehicle business – bringing together design, problem-solving & entrepreneurship in Queenstown Lakes.



More Than a
Playground







Built by local developers. For local good. ■

Software for community organisations across the Queenstown Lakes district, at no cost to the organisation.

[Meet the three](#)**3**

TOOLS BEING BUILT

6

PAID DEVELOPER SEATS

5 weeks

ONE BUILD, START TO FINISH

Open source

FREE TO REUSE



GLENORCHY

Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Sky Sanctuary

Sky readings taken by hand, two people at a time, and typed into one person's spreadsheet.



KELVIN HEIGHTS

Whakatipu Reforestation Trust

Seed, nursery, planting and survival records in Excel files that cannot talk to each other.



QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown Mountain Bike Club

Trail audits and feature inspections noted on the trail, then typed up again afterwards.



Startup Queenstown Lakes



Queenstown Coders Connect



FLINT Queenstown



Queenstown Resort College



huddl



Technology Queenstown



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2026 Diversification fund

29 enquiries or Expressions of Interest (vs 13 2025)

10 eligible applications (vs 6 in 2025)

Independent funding panel – meets tomorrow (21 October) to allocate funding

Once funding allocated, funding agreements drafted including conditions recommended by panel

All projects to be completed by December 2027

Our aim is to offer support to everyone who enquires – even if not eligible for funding

Film

Production Facilitation

Netflix television series *Queenstown* filmed over the winter period - approximately \$40 million in local economic impact and 450 jobs for cast and crew, many filled by locals.

The film office facilitated Council permissions including location permits, unit base permits and parking requests, which equated to approximately \$20,000 in permissions-based revenue for Council.

Location Access & Film-Friendliness

Continued advocacy for streamlined permissions systems across Council, DOC and LINZ land to encourage compliance and enhance film-friendliness of district – included in the Regional Deal.



On set of Netflix's *Queenstown*



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Film

Regional Capability on Show

Several locally filmed productions have, or will soon, hit screens, showcasing our regional filmmaking capabilities on a global stage: *Heart of the Beast*, *A Remarkable Place to Die Season 2*, *East of Eden*, *Tenzing*, *Klara and the Sun*

Talent Development

Ongoing programmes to further develop our outdoor and adventure filmmaking capabilities - New Zealand Mountain Film Festival Adventure Film School, The Southern Documentary Accelerator, The Outsiders Talent Development Programme, and the Depth of Field Summit for Women in the Action Sports and Outdoor Media industry.

"I have been coming to Queenstown to shoot long -form drama semi -regularly since 2018, across multiple productions. Over that time, I have witnessed the skill base of local Queenstown film crew steadily build and mature. This transition from irregular commercial work and occasional major productions [...] to more stable, ongoing long -form drama work has been significant for the region."

Peter Meteherangi Tikao Burger –
Director *A Remarkable Place To Die*

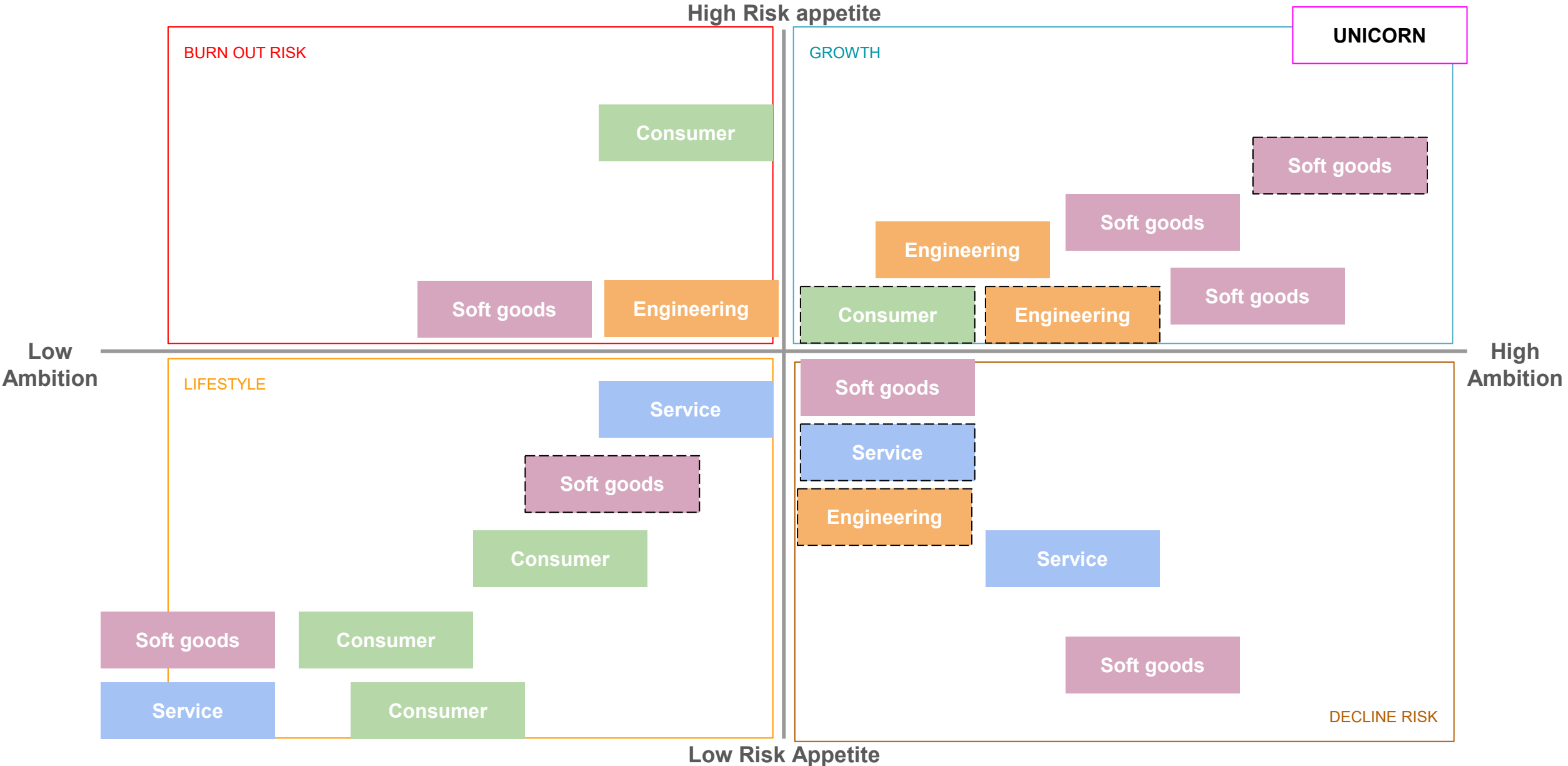


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Wildtech stocktake



Other diversification initiatives

Industrial Batteries – 40% subsidy available via EECA– launching 27 October, expressions of interest open until 10 November

Beverages - collective approach to freight costs being researched

Lifetime value of the visitor – private sector pilot planned

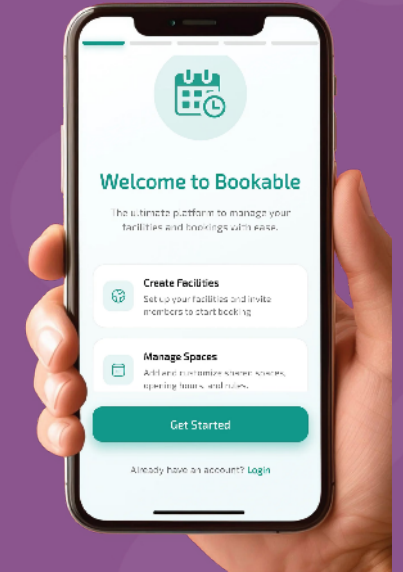
Help offered to artists to supplement incomes by offering creative experiences to tourists

Exploring support available to young people to find work, and start business

Arts and Events

Venue booking system launched – will streamline up to 6000 bookings/year

Police Crowded Spaces Strategy crowd safety –
Police Crowded Spaces Strategy prompted
orders for 2 vehicle security barriers



District Public Art 10-year Strategy launched - aiming to install 1 artwork each year

Questions?

Next steps -

Thursday 22 October - Snapshots Event -

Thurs 12 November - 2025/26 Annual reports on Destination Management,
Diversification and Events to Full Council