

Queenstown-Lakes District Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Level 3, Bradley Building, 19 Rees St
Queenstown

28 January 2026

Downtown Queenstown Lakefront Food Traders - Queenstown Business Chamber of Commerce feedback

The Queenstown Business Chamber represents a broad cross-section of local businesses and is committed to ensuring a thriving, well-managed, and economically resilient town centre in downtown Queenstown. We recognise the unique vibrancy that street trading can bring to the downtown Queenstown waterfront; however, the current situation at the lakefront is unsustainable and inconsistent with both community expectations and Council's stated direction.

Our members have raised concerns about ongoing non-compliance, food safety, the occupation and monopolisation of public space, and the reputational risk to established businesses. These concerns are consistent with what has been reported this past year, including repeated instances of traders ignoring spacing and movement requirements, leaving equipment in place overnight, and operating in ways that restrict public access.

1. Key Concerns

Non-Compliance and Public Space Management

Public reporting and Council workshops have confirmed persistent challenges with non-compliance, including vendors ignoring spacing requirements, overstaying permitted time limits, and leaving equipment in public spaces overnight. This behaviour has contributed to congestion, impeded public access, including access to lakeside steps, and has led to a monopoly effect on prime public space.

Impact on Established Businesses

Fixed-premise businesses continue to raise concerns about unfair competition from unregulated or non-compliant stalls operating directly outside their doorways. These businesses face high regulatory, rental, and operational burdens that are not matched by mobile traders. Councillors have acknowledged this imbalance and its impact on the amenity and function of the town centre.

Legal and Regulatory Uncertainty

The ongoing judicial review of the *Activities in Public Places Bylaw* has created additional uncertainty and limited the Council's enforcement options at times. Vendors challenging the bylaw have sought greater transparency and clarity in the consultation process, while continuing to operate during the proceedings.

2. Queenstown Business Chamber Position and Proposed Solutions

Support for a Regulated, Sustainable Lakefront Trading Model

The Chamber supports a structured and enforceable approach to lakefront trading that:

- Protects public access and amenity
- Ensures consistent and equitable compliance
- Maintains Queenstown's reputation for quality and professionalism
- Aligns commercial activity with the town centre strategy and community expectations

Immediate Need for Better Enforcement and Clarity

The Chamber is concerned by the perceived lack of progress on applying the bylaw consistently throughout summer months. We encourage Council to adopt immediate, visible steps to ensure compliance within the bounds of current legal proceedings.

Establishment of a Defined Lakefront Trading Precinct

We recommend the development of a clearly delineated, capped, and actively managed lakefront trading zone on the Lakefront 'promenade'. This approach should include:

- Strict limits on vendor numbers
- Transparent, criteria-based permitting
- Clear operational and food safety standards
- Regular monitoring and a zero-tolerance approach to persistent breaches

A Fair Go for All Businesses

Mobile traders should be held to standards proportionate to those required of permanent businesses. This includes food hygiene standards, waste management, safety measures, and the payment of appropriate fees. In addition, the additional outdoor dining costs imposed on

businesses represent a further unfair balance comparative to the lack of costs imposed on street traders.

3. Conclusion

The Chamber is committed to working constructively with QLDC and downtown Queenstown stakeholders to achieve a balanced solution that protects Queenstown's amenity and supports economic vibrancy. We respectfully request that Council take decisive action to address the well-documented issues currently affecting the lakefront and provide clarity on the long-term management of trading in this area.

Should you require any further information or support, please contact me.

Ngā mihi nui,



Sharon Fifield
Chief Executive