



# BRIEFING FOR QLDC CANDIDATES

**JULY 2025**

**ZQN**  
Queenstown Airport

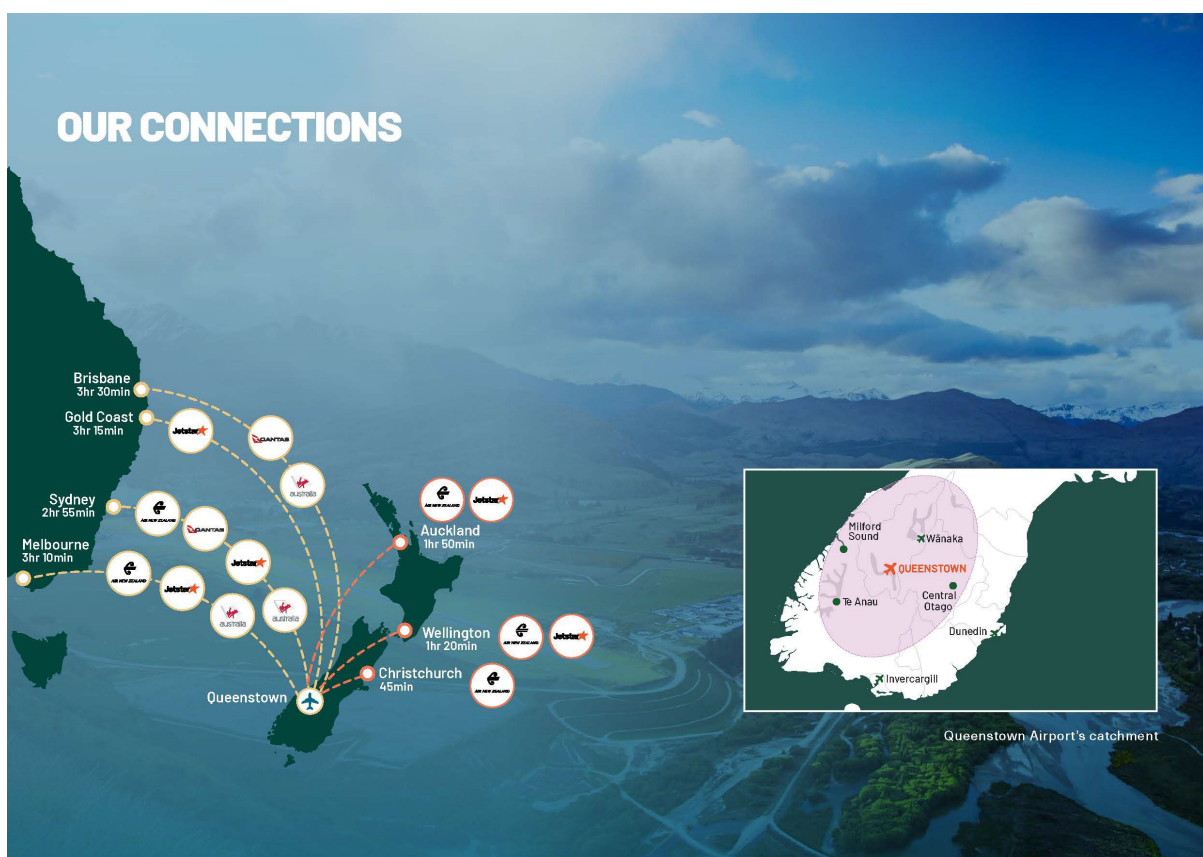
## QUEENSTOWN AIRPORT

Queenstown Airport is New Zealand's fourth busiest airport and a key contributor to the social and economic wellbeing of the Southern Lakes region.

It was established by the community in 1935 and serves a steadily growing catchment of more than 70,000 people, with daily flights to Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and the east coast of Australia. It is also the gateway to the lower South Island for visitors, providing easy access to some of New Zealand's most iconic destinations, including Queenstown, Wānaka, Fiordland, and Central Otago. Four airlines – Air New Zealand, Jetstar, Qantas, and Virgin Australia – include Queenstown in their schedules.

Queenstown Airport is also an Otago Southland Rescue Helicopter base and home to many commercial helicopters and small aircraft used for scenic flights and other commercial activities.

It is designated as a lifeline utility under Civil Defence legislation, which means it must be able to function to the fullest extent possible during and after an emergency, such as a large earthquake.



## WHY ZQN?

You will see ZQN on luggage tags, flight schedules, and Queenstown Airport branding. ZQN is the unique three-letter International Air Transport Association (IATA) code used to identify Queenstown Airport. The airport's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) code is NZQN.

## QAC OVERVIEW

The airport is operated by the Queenstown Airport Corporation (QAC), which is a council-controlled trading organisation under the Local Government Act 2002. The company is owned by one majority and one minority shareholder:

- 75.01% by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC)
- 24.99% by Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL).

QAC's primary activity is the safe and efficient operation of Queenstown Airport, facilitating air connectivity to the lower South Island through the provision of infrastructure to meet the needs of our customers, residents, and visitors. QAC also manages Wānaka Airport and the Glenorchy Airfield on behalf of the Queenstown Lakes District Council.

### Operating as a CCTO

As a council-controlled trading organisation, QAC is expected to make a profit and pay a dividend to its shareholders. In the financial year ending 30 June 2024, shareholders received a total dividend of \$19.9 million. The council's portion was \$14.7 million, which equated to about \$485 per ratepayer. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have paid more than \$40 million in dividends to shareholders.

### Statement of Intent

Every year, QAC produces a Statement of Intent covering a three-year period. It is a public and legally required document that sets out the company's purpose and objectives, the nature and scope of the activities to be undertaken, and the financial targets and non-financial measures by QAC's performance may be evaluated. A draft SOI is delivered to QLDC by 1 March every year. Following consideration of any feedback from shareholders, a final SOI is delivered to QLDC by 30 June each year. QLDC agreed to the current SOI at its meeting in Wānaka on 26 June 2025. You can find it [here](#).

### Governance

QAC is governed by a [board of six directors](#) – five, including the Chair, appointed by QLDC and one appointed by AIAL. The board's role is to govern and direct QAC's activities within the parameters of the Statement of Intent. It is the body responsible for strategic and operational decision-making within the company and is accountable to the shareholders for the company's financial and non-financial performance.

### Corporate reports

QAC has a 30 June balance date. Financial reports and other disclosures dating back to 2011 can be found on our website [here](#).

### Working at Queenstown Airport

Queenstown Airport Interim Chief Executive Todd Grace, supported by an [experienced senior management team](#), leads a staff of about 85. [Shane O'Hare](#), who currently heads Launceston Airport in Tasmania, Australia, will take over the CEO's role in September. Hundreds more people work for the government agencies that support airport operations, such as Aviation Security, Airways, the Customs Service, and the Ministry of Primary Industries, and for privately operated businesses such as retailers, food outlets, rental car agencies, and general aviation operators. This makes the airport one of the biggest workplaces in the district.

## Regulatory obligations

QAC is subject to numerous pieces of legislation. These are the key Acts under which we operate:

- Civil Aviation Act 2023 – This Act came into effect on 5 April 2025, replacing the Civil Aviation Act 1990 and the Airport Authorities Act. Part 139 of the Civil Aviation Rules provides for the certification of our aerodrome, its operation and its use.
- Resource Management Act – Queenstown Airport is a requiring authority under the Resource Management Act. This has enabled the designation (a type of zoning) of land and airspace for Queenstown Airport's safe and ongoing operation.
- Civil Defence Emergency Management Act – Queenstown Airport is defined as a lifeline utility. QAC has specific duties under the Act, including ensuring the airport can continue to function during and after an emergency.
- Health and Safety at Work Act – QAC's directors and senior leadership team are people conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) under the Act and have the duties and obligations of PCBUs for Queenstown Airport.
- Local Government Act – QAC is a council-controlled trading organisation (CCTO) as defined in the Local Government Act.
- Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act – As a CCTO, QAC is subject to Parts 1-6 of this Act, which includes obligations to provide official information.
- Companies Act – The directors of QAC are subject to the duties of directors specified in this Act, including the duty to act in good faith and in the best interests of the company.

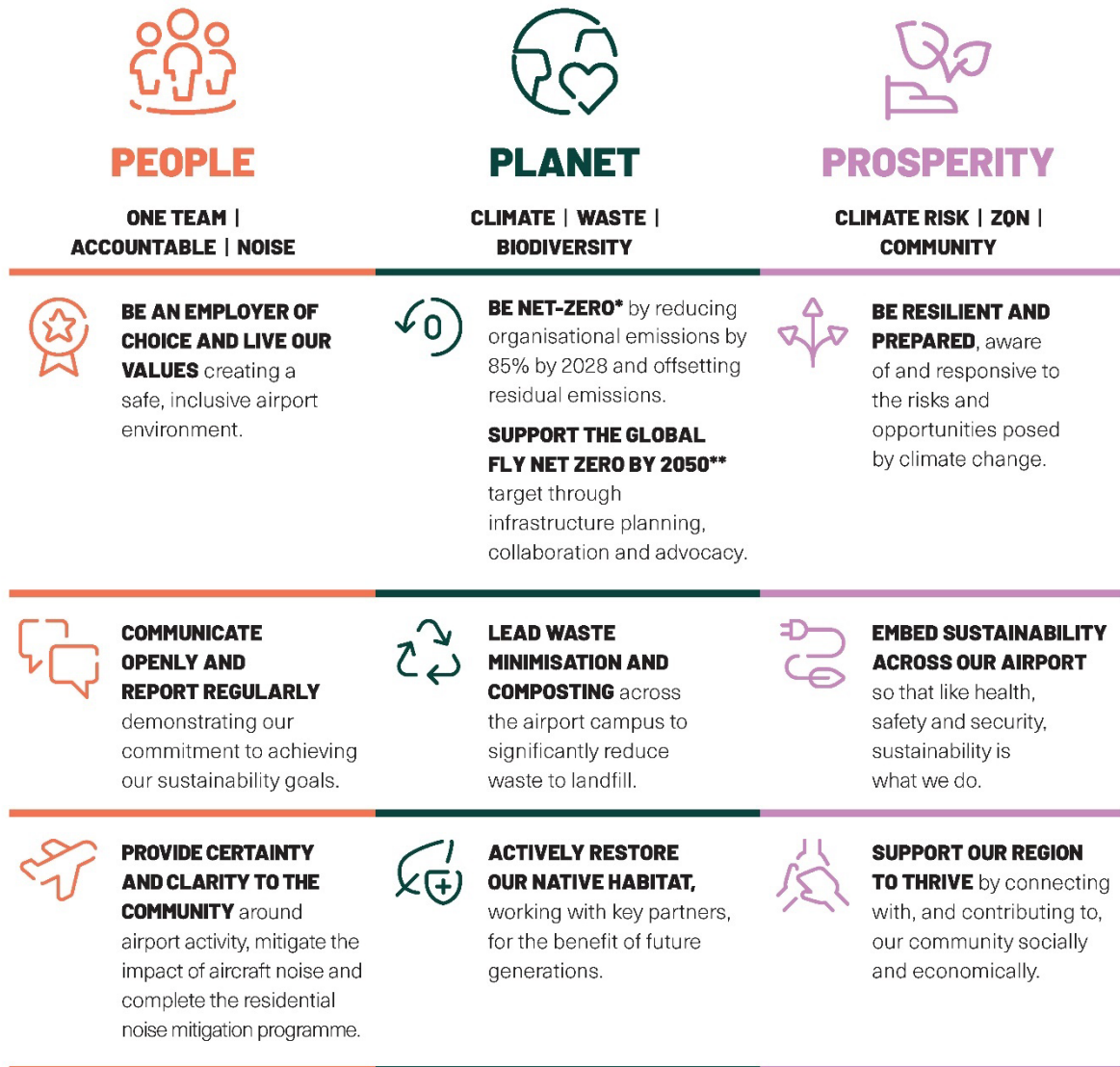


## Facts & figures

Our website provides a [dynamic report](#) where you will find the latest data on Queenstown Airport's aircraft and passenger numbers, historical statistics, trends, and forecasts.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Queenstown Airport has set ambitious sustainability targets. Verified emissions data is provided annually, and between our initial carbon audit in 2019 and the publication of the [2024 Sustainability Report](#) we reduced our organisational carbon emissions by 71%. We are targeting an 85% reduction by 2028. We have achieved Level 4+ Airport Carbon Accreditation from the Airports Council International (ACI), which is stringently audited. Our [Sustainability Strategy](#) aligns with QLDC's Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan.



\* For scopes 1, 2 and limited scope 3 emissions compared to our 2019 baseline year. Local native reforestation credits are applied to scope 1 and limited scope 3 emissions. Renewable energy certification is applied to scope 2 emissions.

\*\* The four commercial airlines operating at ZQN have committed to International Air Transport Association's target.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Partnerships Programme at Queenstown Airport has a clear goal – to support our region to thrive by investing in positive collaborations and financial partnerships. We support a range of events and community organisations that align with our values and benefit this region and its people. These include the Whakatipu Reforestation Trust, Coastguard Queenstown, KiwiHarvest, and the Lake Hayes A&P Show. This year, the ZQN Community Fund was launched to provide smaller grants to charities making a meaningful difference in our region. You can learn more about this [here](#).

## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Considerable effort has gone into community engagement and long-term planning in recent years. In 2022, the QAC board approved a 10-year [Strategic Plan](#). Our mission is to proudly connect our home with New Zealand and the world. Our vision is to be an innovative airport that people love to travel through, and the community takes pride in. A [Master Plan](#) to deliver on that aspiration was finalised late in 2023. It was endorsed by the Queenstown Lakes District Council before being approved by the QAC board. It will guide the largest infrastructure development programme in the airport's history, and detailed precinct planning is underway now. The first big project – the installation of an engineered materials arresting system to mitigate the risk of an aircraft overshooting the main runway – was completed on time and within budget earlier this year. You can learn more about this project in [this video](#).

## MANAGING NOISE

Queenstown Airport operates within the noise boundaries set in the District Plan (see the diagram below). It offers a Noise Mitigation Programme to those who own residential properties within the inner and mid noise contours and pays for a range of noise-reducing measures, depending on where homes are located. These measures can include mechanical ventilation systems, noise-suppressing insulation or double glazing. You can read more about this programme [here](#).



## Queenstown Airport Liaison Committee

The Queenstown Airport Liaison Committee was formed in 2013 and meets quarterly. Its purpose is to provide the opportunity for the airport, the community and other stakeholders to engage regarding noise-related issues at Queenstown Airport. At the meetings, the committee is presented with information about noise complaints or queries from residents. It monitors how Queenstown Airport deals with those complaints, aircraft activities, unplanned engine-testing incidents, and the airport's operational report, which includes updates on the Noise Mitigation Programme. Minutes from committee meetings are available on our website [here](#).

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Wildlife management is an ongoing safety priority for airports and airlines globally. Queenstown Airport has a comprehensive wildlife management plan and a dedicated Wildlife and Airfield Safety Manager. Birds are actively deterred from settling on or near the airfield. For many years, we have worked closely with a local ecologist with expertise in bird behaviour in this area. We adapt our tactics in response to seasonal activity and migration patterns. Extensive drainage reduces ponding on the airfield, and grass is carefully managed to make the airport an unattractive habitat. Members of our airport emergency service team perform regular airfield checks and monitor bird activity with high-definition cameras. A range of bird-scaring tools, including light flashes and sounds, are used to scare away birds. The airport has also invested significantly in rabbit-proof fencing and rabbit culls.

## WĀNAKA AIRPORT

Wānaka Airport is wholly owned by QLDC and operated by QAC under a management services agreement with QLDC. We work with QLDC and Wānaka Airport tenants to ensure the aerodrome is well managed, safe, secure and operating efficiently. In July 2024, the Director of Civil Aviation determined Wānaka Airport must be managed under the authority of a Part 139 Qualifying Aerodrome Operator Certificate from 1 July 2027. We are supporting QLDC to obtain the necessary certification. You can read more about this process on the QLDC website [here](#). Responsibility for long-term strategic and master planning and investment at Wānaka Airport rests with QLDC. It has appointed the independent consulting firm Egis to facilitate the development of a vision and potential future scenarios for Wānaka Airport in consultation with key stakeholders, the Wānaka Upper Clutha community, and the wider district. You will find information about this process [here](#).

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact:

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