

Full Council

26 June 2025

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [8]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Adoption of Queenstown Lakes District Council Events Policy 2025

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to present the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Events Policy 2025 to Council for adoption.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Adopt** the (draft) Events Policy 2025; and
3. **Resolve** that the (draft) Events Policy 2025 will come into effect on 1 July 2025 and that the Events Strategy 2015 shall be revoked on 1 July 2025.

Prepared by:



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5 June 2025

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Michelle Morss
Title: General Manager, Strategy & Policy
5 June 2025

Context | Horopaki

1. Events are encouraged in our district as they are important to the economic, social and cultural vitality of the area, and reinforce our community identity, values and a unique sense of place.
2. Council's role in supporting events is multifaceted:
 - Council directly undertakes the delivery of New Year's Eve celebrations, also a programme of community events run by the Community Services division and supports events that mark significant national commemorations and public holidays, such as Matariki, Waitangi Day and Christmas celebrations.
 - Council provides funding to support commercial and community events through the Events Fund and Local Community Support grant programs.
 - Publicly owned land and spaces can be booked to host events.
 - Events that are not held in publicly owned spaces may still require other permissions administered through Council such as resource consents, alcohol licensing, environmental health, traffic management and use of waterways.
 - Council's Events Office provides cross-organisational liaison and facilitation services for new and existing events when navigating processes and permissions.
3. It is acknowledged that this policy cannot address a number of challenges event organisers face in our district. Increasing costs, a limited number of local suppliers, unpredictable weather and a limited number of venues and outdoor spaces mean our district is not an easy place to run events. The success and failure of events in the district hinges on a range of factors.
4. The existing Events Strategy was approved in 2015 and expired in 2018. This strategy had a strong economic emphasis and the key outcomes of this strategy are to:
 - maximise the economic benefit that events bring to the district.
 - optimise the use of district assets and venues.
 - improve the event profile in the district.
 - minimise barriers to establishing and maintaining events in the district.
5. Since this strategy was adopted ten years ago, there have been a range of strategic developments which have influenced Council's approach to events including:
 - Greater long-term strategic clarity - Vision Beyond 2050, Spatial Plan and QLDC Strategic Framework.
 - A coherent suite of strategies with specific outcomes, for example the Creativity, Culture and Heritage Strategy, Climate and Biodiversity Plan, Destination Management Plan, Economic Diversification Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, Queenstown Lakes District Welcoming Plan, and the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan.
 - Therefore, events in the district should be in service to the existing strategic direction of the district as outlined in these various strategies and plans. This is why officers have proposed that an events policy is (at this stage) more appropriate than an events strategy.

6. There has also been a change in attitudes to events and external pressures on the way they are managed, including evolving community expectations (e.g. reducing event waste and carbon emissions) and increased focus on community experience in a high growth environment – the impact events have, both positive and negative. Community experience is critical, as events need to maintain social licence to operate.
7. The new draft policy aims to reflect the community's expectation of events. It enables QLDC to hold a formal written statement of Council's position on events, as well as providing a consistent, logical framework to guide Council's decision-making. The policy was developed through a process of collaboration with the various teams involved in events across council including Parks, Venues, Properties, Regulatory, Roading, Planning, Maintenance & Operations and Environmental Health.
8. The policy does not include a strategy to proactively develop or attract events as this is beyond the current scope and resources within Council. However, Council will work collaboratively with other organisations if they wish to develop a proactive events strategy, so any new events align with the policy outcomes.

Community feedback

9. It was agreed at a public workshop with Council and the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board held on 17 December 2024, that a community feedback process would begin in February 2025 over a four-week period.
10. During this period, three community hui were held in Queenstown, Wānaka and online specifically targeting the events sector. Any interested members of the general public were also able to attend.
11. The overall community hui feedback was positive about the policy. The majority of suggestions made were about potential improvements in operational systems and processes, many of which were already being addressed through an internal QLDC Business Process review of events.
12. The following organisations and events were represented at one of the three hui:

Arrowtown Autumn Festival
Arrowtown Promotion & Business Association
Arrowtown Village Association
Challenge Wānaka
Cyclorama
Entertainment Solutions
Festival of Colour
Lake Wānaka Tourism
Lakes District Museum & Gallery
Motatapu
Mount Barker Residents Association

Queenstown Writers Festival
Skyline Queenstown
Snow Machine
Te Whatu Ora
Three Lakes Cultural Trust
Wakatipu Community Foundation
Wānaka A&P Show
Wao Wānaka
War Birds over Wānaka
Watson & Wyatt

13. Submissions through the Let's Talk portal or by direct email were received from individuals and organisations including:
- Destination Queenstown
 - Hospitality NZ
 - Japanese Family Society of Queenstown
 - Queenstown Chamber of Commerce
 - Sustainable Queenstown, DISHrupt, and SUCfree Queenstown
 - Te Whatu Ora
 - Three Lakes Cultural Trust
14. Minor changes to the draft policy were made in light of feedback from the Queenstown business community and a principle was added outlining Council's supporting role in attracting and developing events as appropriate.
15. Following workshops with the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board and Council, the following edits were made to the draft policy:
- Revision of the events policy purpose to acknowledge the benefit of events to the district.
 - Removal of the term 'high value' when referencing visitors.
 - Inclusion of a diagram to represent the policy objectives equally, as opposed to a hierarchical list.

Objectives of the Events Policy 2025

16. There are eight objectives that have been developed and embedded in the policy to ensure events held in our district support wellbeing in the community and our key strategies. These are mapped to the QLDC Wellbeing Framework (see Attachment A – Draft Events Policy 2025). Procedures, decision-making and funding criteria will be based around these objectives, should the draft policy be adopted by Council.
17. Principle 4.2.1 of the policy acknowledges all events may not achieve all objectives equally, but an event should not contravene any of the objectives.
18. The objectives are set out below.

Event delivery objectives:

- Respect QLDC's statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Ensure the safety of event participants, workers, residents and audiences.
- Minimise the adverse impacts of events on the district, including the environment.

Community-building objectives:

- Maximise the local economic benefit that events bring by attracting visitors to events and using local suppliers where possible.
- Bring people together in ways that help create a positive sense of community.

- Create opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in and attend events.
- Respect and celebrate Mātauraka Kāi Tahu.
- Protect and celebrate the unique identity of this place.

Accompanying documents in progress

19. The following documents in the process of development will accompany the policy:

- Draft Events Policy Guidelines - outline how QLDC operationalises the Events Policy objectives and principles, and the decision making around events.
- Event Organisers Handbook - a guide that provides user-friendly and step-by-step advice for event organisers on how Council supports events and what permissions might be required.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

20. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.

21. Option 1 Adopt the Events Policy 2025 and revoke the Events Strategy 2015.

Advantages:

- The outdated Events Strategy 2015 can be replaced by a policy that provides a formal written statement of Council's position that reflects the community expectations of events.
- An opportunity to reframe QLDC's stance on events that reflect strategies and policies put in place since development of the 2015 Events Strategy.
- A set of clear objectives for events that will guide decision making by Council staff.

Disadvantages:

- No clear disadvantage.

22. Option 2 Do not adopt the Events Policy 2025 and retain the Events Strategy 2015.

Advantages:

- The Events Strategy 2015-2018 could be updated to include a proactive stance on attracting and developing events.

Disadvantages:

- The outdated 2015 Events Strategy would be retained with a primary focus on the economic return of events.
- The way Council approaches events in our district may not align with community expectations.
- If Council commits to supporting the development/attraction of events this would require funding beyond current budgets.
- Events may not be meeting the outcomes of the various QLDC strategies and plans that have come into effect since the 2015 Events Strategy was created.

23. Option 3 Do not adopt the Events Policy 2025 at this stage but request that further examination and development is undertaken.

Advantages:

- Council has an opportunity to provide more direction and can resolve any concerns about the draft policy there may be.

Disadvantages:

- Delays the establishment of a robust Events Policy to guide incoming events to our district.
- Reduces the integrity of the community feedback process.

24. This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing the matter because an Events Policy will provide clarity for event organisers to understand expectations from Council and the community and provide guidance for Council staff when considering event requests for the district.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi i kā Whakaaro Hiraka

25. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2024 because the approval of the recommendation option will align with existing policies, strategies and previous Council resolutions.
26. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes district community, visitors and organisations/individuals delivering events held in the Queenstown Lakes district.

27. The Council has sought feedback from event organisers and the general public, including a series of community hui to inform and respond to questions about the draft policy.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

28. The Council has not specifically or formally consulted with Iwi as part of the Events Policy 2025 drafting process although the report writers have received advice from the QLDC Māori Strategy and Partnerships Manager.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

29. This matter relates to the Strategic/Political/Reputation risk category. It is associated with RISK10056 Ineffective provision for the future planning and development needs of the district within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a moderate residual risk rating.

30. The approval of the recommended option will allow Council to implement additional controls for this risk. This will be achieved by providing clear guidance on the expectations of the community and Council for event organisers in our district and embed robust and supported decision making by Council staff in considering event requests.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

31. There are no immediate financial implications from adoption of the Events Policy 2025 for this financial year.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

32. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025
- QLDC – CODC Sub Regional Recreation and Sports Facilities Strategy 2020
- QLDC Disability Policy
- QLDC District Plan
- QLDC Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- QLDC Strategic Framework and QLDC Long Term Plan 2024-2034
- QLDC Tree Policy 2024
- Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan
- Queenstown Lakes District Welcoming Plan 2024-2027
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021
- Te Muka Toi, Te Muka Tākata | The Creativity, Culture and Heritage Strategy for the Queenstown Lakes District
- Travel to a Thriving Future – A Regenerative Tourism Plan
- Vision Beyond 2050
- Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2018

33. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies and strategies.
34. This matter is included in the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan (page 98).

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

35. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The proposed Events Policy 2025 acknowledges that events play an important role in helping to achieve all four well-beings in the community. The Events Policy 2025 sets specific outcomes to support district well-being by ensuring events are delivered well and meet expectations of the community.
36. The recommended option:
- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
 - Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
 - Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	(Draft) Events Policy 2025
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