

**Community & Services Committee**  
**7 July 2022**

**Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [1]**

**Department: Community Services**

**Title | Taitara**

**Adoption of the Responsible Camping Strategy 2022**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO**

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The purpose of this report is to consider recommending to Council the adoption of revised and updated Queenstown Lakes District Responsible Camping Strategy 2022.

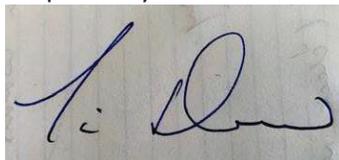
**RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA**

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That the Community & Services Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report; and
2. **Recommend to Council** that it adopts the Queenstown Lakes Responsible Camping Strategy 2022.

Prepared by:



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Responsible Camping  
Programme Manager

16/06/2022

Reviewed and Authorised by:



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General Manager  
Community Services

16/06/2022

**CONTEXT | HOROPAKI**

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- 1 Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) adopted its inaugural Responsible Camping Strategy in 2018. A review and update of that Strategy has recently been completed to final draft stage.
- 2 The Responsible Camping Strategy was developed to “promote the sustainable use of our environment for visitor and community experience through well managed, co-ordinated and responsible camping in the district”.
- 3 Review of the Responsible Camping Strategy was proposed when the initial Strategy was first adopted noting the need for such review to take advantage of data captured between 2018 and 2022. The review utilised and has referenced the data gathered to date (such as Campermate, Council data, and camper trends) to support informed strategic decision-making about the regulation and management of responsible camping.
- 4 The review also undertook to ensure alignment with any relevant legislative changes proposed by the Minister of Tourism and other Council strategies (including the Climate and Biodiversity Plan<sup>1</sup>, the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 and the Queenstown Destination Management Plan<sup>2</sup>).
- 5 Central Government funding to Local Government (via MBIE) to assist in managing problems associated with the negative impacts of Freedom Camping was withdrawn in 2021.
- 6 Financial contributions from other agencies (DOC, Waka Kotahi, LINZ) have also been withdrawn.
- 7 Review of the Strategy included initial actions to explore a financially sustainable model for managing the negative effects of camping in the district.
- 8 The updated Strategy balances the current trends in local and international tourism as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and has anticipated changes in visitor demands when international borders are reopened.
- 9 In 2021 (following a RFP procurement process) Allen + Clarke Ltd was contracted to undertake a comprehensive review and update of the current Strategy which would;
  - review, rationalise and consolidate the strategy,
  - clearly identify deliverables,
  - consider 1 year, 1-3 year and 4-10 year goals,
  - include Council’s partnership with iwi, include direct input from tāngata whenua and acknowledge responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi,
  - engage and include input from key stakeholders (including key QLDC managers, MBIE, DOC, LINZ, Waka Kotahi, neighbouring councils),

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<sup>1</sup> Noting, at the time of preparing this report the final Climate and Biodiversity Plan was yet to be considered by Council for final adoption

<sup>2</sup> Noting, at the time of preparing this report the Queenstown Destination Management Plan is in draft format

- acknowledge changes in the local and international tourism industry,
- consider the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and freedom camping,
- reflect the aims and goals of other regional strategies (including the Climate and Biodiversity Plan),
- consider future planning related to regenerative tourism and the Destination Management Plan being developed by Destination Queenstown,
- consider Council bylaws related to Freedom Camping in the district,
- consider any changes to the relevant legislative framework that may be made by Government during the review process,
- align with other territorial authorities' strategies where possible to develop a nationally relevant strategy,
- consider options for promoting legislative change,
- utilise the data gathered to date to support informed strategic decision making.

## ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

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- 10 Option 1 Do not adopt the revised Strategy and retain the existing 2018 Responsible Strategy (status quo)

*Advantages:*

- 11 No need to identify funding sources for the actions in the current strategy.

*Disadvantages:*

- 12 The work to date (including the collaborative association with partner agencies) will be diminished or lost.
- 13 Risk of diminished social license / community support if Council is not seen to keep pace and be responding to changes or issues
- 14 Poor camping behaviours will continue to impact negatively on the community and the environment. The updated information used and included in the revised Responsible Camping Strategy will not be utilised.
- 15 Majority of the short- and medium-term actions have been achieved/actioned. Retaining the existing strategy will result in stagnation of the work done to date.

- 16 Option 2 Recommend to Council that the revised Responsible Camping Strategy (2022) be adopted.

*Advantages:*

- 17 The Strategy will be an updated, relevant and enhanced tool to assist Council manage issues associated with Freedom Camping in our district.
- 18 Community values for the district and open spaces will be protected.

- 19 The international reputation of the district as a premier place to camp responsibly will be protected.
- 20 The protection of the environment will be enhanced.
- 21 The opportunities for promotion and education regarding Responsible Camping will be enhanced.
- 22 There will be continuity in the work done to date and updating the strategy shows Council continues to respond to community feedback and the changing wider context.

*Disadvantages:*

- 23 There may be costs to the rate payer to implement some of the actions in the strategy. There are likely to be costs associated with some of the activities, but funding sources would need to be identified, this could be rates, user pays, grants, etc.
- 24 This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing camping related issues because it is an update of an existing strategy that will continue to deliver benefits to the community and support a future work programme of improvements

## CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

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### > SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

- 25 This matter is of high significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because the issue of freedom camping is a matter of high importance to the district, with freedom camping being an ongoing issue and likely to increase again when tourist numbers increase once the international borders open, and it is of high community interest for residents and locals who are affected by freedom camping.
- 26 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are the residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes district community, Iwi (as represented by Aukuha and Te Ao Marama, Department of Conservation, Waka Kotahi, Land Information New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
- 27 The Council has consulted with the following groups/organisations;
  - Central Government (MBIE)
  - Iwi / mana whenua (Aukaha and Te Ao Marama)
  - Local Government
  - Relevant agencies – inc DOC, LINZ, Waka Kotahi
  - Commercial Campground owners and operators
  - Camping related Vehicle Rental hire companies

- NZMCA
- Destination Queenstown
- Lake Wānaka Tourism
- Community feedback (including Community Associations) through the 2021 Freedom Camping Bylaw review.

#### > MĀORI CONSULTATION | IWI RŪNANGA

- 28 The Council has consulted with Aukaha and Te Ao Marama. Through these agencies, iwi have been kept informed regarding the original Responsible Camping Strategy and more recently, the review and update of the Strategy.
- 29 It is important that the Council continues to engage with, and consider the views of Kāi Tahu, given the negative behaviours associated with Freedom Camping impact natural resources and resource management, which is a critical concern to iwi as kaitiaki of the land.

#### RISK AND MITIGATIONS | NGĀ RARU TŪPONO ME NGĀ WHAKAMAURUTANGA

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- 30 This matter relates to the following risk categories and risks:
- a. Environmental risk category. It is associated with:
    - i. RISK00017 relating to damage to the environment – discharge of contaminants within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a moderate inherent risk rating.
  - b. Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with :
    - i. RISK00006 relating to ineffective management of social nuisance issues within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a low inherent risk rating.
    - ii. RISK00056 relating to the 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 low inherent risk rating.
- 31 The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing us to retain the risk at its current level. This shall be achieved by the continuation of delivery of actions included in the Responsible Camping Strategy.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | NGĀ RITENGA Ā-PŪTEA

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- 32 The Responsible Camping Strategy does not contemplate any capital expenditure.
- 33 The Responsible Camping Project Control Group will assess and prioritise identified goals within the strategy and any operational costs associated with implementation will be managed within the current budget allocation.

34 Future costs related to goals within the Strategy will be costed and approved for submission into the annual budget planning rounds or the Ten Year Plan process.

### **COUNCIL EFFECTS AND VIEWS | NGĀ WHAKAAWEAWE ME NGĀ TIROHANGA A TE KAUNIHERA**

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35 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- QLDC Freedom Camping Control Bylaw 2021
- Draft Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025
- Waste Minimisation and Management Plan 2018
- Economic Development Strategy 2015
- Community Wellbeing Framework Strategy Te Rautaki Whakamana Hapori 2021
- Vision Beyond 2050
- Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan 2021
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021
- Destination Management Plan (being developed by Destination Queenstown).

36 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies

37 This matter is included in the Ten Year Plan. The Ten Year Plan provides for year-on-year operational expenditure relating to enforcement of a freedom camping bylaw.

### **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES | KA TURE WHAIWHAKAARO, ME KĀ TAKOHAKA WAETURE**

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38 It is considered that the revised Responsible Camping Strategy is consistent with the principles of the Reserves Act 1977, the Local Government Act 2002 and the Freedom Camping Act 2011.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002 PURPOSE PROVISIONS | TE WHAKATURETURE 2002 O TE KĀWANATAKA Ā-KĀIKA**

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39 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.

40 The Responsible Camping Strategy will assist in delivering environmental and social benefits for the community. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

41 The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly 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 | NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA

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A	Final draft Responsible Camping Strategy 2022 (circulated separately)
B	The Allen + Clarke Commentary report for the final draft Responsible Camping Strategy

## Queenstown Lakes District council

### Commentary report for the final draft Responsible camping strategy 2022-2027

#### Purpose

This commentary report provides an explanation of key decisions that were made regarding the refreshed Queenstown Lakes District Council's (the **Council**) Responsible Camping Strategy 2022-2027 (**the Strategy**). The content in the Strategy is based on the analysis of key documents, reflections on changing tourism trends, and views of key stakeholders heard through interviews and workshops. It also includes a summary of amendments made to the Strategy following feedback from the Community and Service Committee, key Council staff, and Te Ao Marama and Aukaha.

#### Background

In February 2022, the Council commissioned *Allen + Clarke* to review, rationalise and update the *Responsible Camping Strategy | Te Rautaki Tikanga Pūpahi*. The review utilised and has referenced the data gathered to date (such as Campermate, Council data, and camper trends) to support informed strategic decision-making about the regulation and management of responsible camping.

The updated Strategy balances the current trends in local and international tourism as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and has anticipated changes in visitor demands when international borders are reopened. This review has also included initial actions to explore a financially sustainable model for managing the negative effects of camping in the district.

#### Methodology

The project's methodology was agreed between *Allen + Clarke* and the Responsible Camping Programme Manager. The review has taken place over four phases: project planning and inception, preparation of the draft Strategy, engagement on draft Strategy, and finalisation of the Strategy.

This report complements the updated Strategy and provides explanation for why key adaptations have been made. Seven key changes have been made to the Strategy as it stands. The explanation for why these changes have been made is outlined below.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY

### 1. The Role of the Council

The role of the Council has been outlined using three key words: *advocate, support and lead*. This aligns with the draft Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2025. These words outline the expectations for the Council's involvement in the management of camping while acknowledging that nationwide policy and regulation changes can only be implemented by central government. The three roles outline the Council's partnership with mana whenua and responsibility to residents and the environment. It also acknowledges the Council's role to work with neighbouring territorial authorities to ensure there is a coordinated and efficient approach, and to create opportunities for private businesses, tourism operators and camping groups to share the responsibility to manage camping.

### 2. Goals

Adaptations have been made to the wording of the four Goals within the Strategy to reflect the feedback received from key stakeholders. All stakeholders agreed that the overall themes of the pillars were appropriate however, the framing of the Goals could be changed to reflect new priorities such as the key concept of regenerative tourism. The wording of the Goals has been changed to reflect an aspirational end state rather than actions (which are detailed in the Objectives).

The first Goal has been changed from '*Protecting our environment*' to '*We are all guardians of the environment*'. Stakeholders agreed that the environment should be prioritised throughout the Strategy, and that residents, businesses, agencies, mana whenua and visitors all have a responsibility to act as kaitiaki for the environment. Stakeholders felt that because the environment is what draws people to the region, it should be improved by visitors and those who benefit from it. This change reflects an aspirational state for the region and regenerative concepts more clearly, and aligns with the Destination Management Plan. It also acknowledges that tangata whenua are kaitiaki of the environment within the region.

The second Goal was originally '*Improved Community Experience*'. Feedback from participants indicated that community should include residents, businesses and local and central government agencies. Private businesses, including those outside of the region, saw a role for themselves in the management of responsible camping in the district. Therefore, the concept of community has been expanded to include residents, businesses and organised groups within the region. Kāi Tahu are not specifically referenced in this goal, as they are a Tiriti partner with the Council. The wording of the goal has also been amended to state '*Our communities are included in shaping outcomes*.' This expands the goal to include a broad spectrum of stakeholders, looks to engage members of the community in a variety of ways, and aligns with language used in Vision 2050. It recognises that the community, particularly residents, need to feel heard through the process of managing camping. It also encourages the Council to collaborate with businesses to explore alternative funding models for camping infrastructure and technology (for example, joint venture, public-private partnerships, etc).

The third Goal has also been changed from '*Improved Visitor Experience*' to '*We provide a positive visitor experience*.' This framing creates a sense of ownership for the Council and others involved in the management of responsible camping. The Goal was a point of discussion during workshops

due to the subjectiveness of what a good visitor experience is perceived as. The word '*positive*' has been chosen to reflect the community's desire for sustainable and low impact travel, the visitor's expectation of a memorable experience, and the variety of camping holidays people want to have in the region.

Finally, the fourth Goal has remained largely unchanged. The efficient and effective management of resources is key, especially in the face of uncertainty of funding streams and tourist demand. Participants noted that the resources referred to within this goal should not refer just to the Council's financial resources but the physical and human resources and institutional knowledge of the Council, external organisations and industry. This goal also directs the Council to explore a user pays model.

### **3. Objectives**

The Objectives have been amended and shaped around stakeholders' perceptions of what ideal management of camping might look like. The Objectives largely reflect the overall aspiration of regenerative tourism, a principle that is recommended to shape decision making and implementation of the strategy. The Objectives have a long-term focus to prompt the Council to prioritise sustainable models of management across time and ensure camping can be enjoyed by future generations. The Objectives prioritise coordination and collaboration to promote shared responsibility across all stakeholder groups, which reflects the feedback that almost all stakeholders agreed that they have a role in the management of responsible camping.

### **4. Actions**

The Actions are the bridge between the aspirations of the Vision, Goals and Objectives, and the Council's tangible actions to influence and manage camping across the region. The number of Actions in the updated Strategy has been decreased significantly compared to the 2018 Strategy to allow for more effective prioritisation and to account for the decreased funding opportunities in the short-term. Some of the Actions align or cross-over with those from related strategies such as the Destination Management Plan, Vision 2050, the Draft Climate Change and Biodiversity Plan, and the Spatial Plan. These Actions have been flagged to encourage the various stakeholders (both internal and external) responsible for the Actions across all plans to work together to increase operational and strategic efficiencies.

### **5. Engagement with Iwi**

There was limited engagement with Kāi Tahu, Te Ao Marama and Aukaha due to their involvement in other priorities. There is a key role for iwi and mana whenua in the refreshed Strategy as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners, and it aligns with Kāi Tahu involvement in the Council's draft Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan. The inclusion of Te Ao Māori principle of manaakitanga was discussed with Te Ao Marama and Aukaha, as it is a key feature of the Strategy. Te Ao Marama and Aukaha have requested that they be given an opportunity to provide further feedback on the updated Strategy once it is finalised by the Council and continue to be updated on the management of camping in the region by the PCG.

## **6. User Pays Model**

Feedback from engagement indicated that Council and ratepayers were keen for a user pays approach to be explored to support the provision of facilities and infrastructure, and to reduce the cost on ratepayers. Although it seems unlikely that tourist demand would provide a high return on investment from this approach in the short term, it has been included as a medium-term action for the Council to explore. The success of this approach will depend on the appropriateness of sites chosen for the facilities, visitors' willingness to pay for services, the ability for the Council to collect payments, and demand for the facilities. The Council will need to consider the implementation of user pays within the Freedom Camping Act 2011. The viability of this approach should be explored, especially in the absence of national level government funding. Despite these potential challenges, a user pays model will likely be well received by the Council's residents.

As noted above, there is an Action in the third Goal for the Council to work closely with private businesses to explore additional alternative funding models, which could include joint ventures, public-private partnerships, etc.

## **7. Data Availability**

The review of the 2018 Strategy was proposed when it was first adopted. At the time, it was noted that there was a lack of reliable data available. This review was proposed to take advantage of improved data. However, the data available currently is considered inaccurate and cannot be used to solely influence the updated Strategy's development at this stage. The Strategy acknowledges that further data collection is important to make informed decisions, and it is encouraged under a number of Objectives.

Data collected pre-COVID was helpful for the Council between 2018 and March 2020, as it provided the Council with a generalised understanding of the camper typologies. However, this 2018-2020 data does not reflect current visitor trends and cannot be used to confidently predict what tourism recovery will look like. As a result, the visitor typologies have not been included in the updated Strategy due to the uncertainty surrounding visitor arrivals and changes to visitor behaviour. There is a section in the Strategy that outlines recent insights from data collected by MBIE however, it is emphasised throughout the Strategy that further data be collected by a variety of stakeholders in order to inform decision making.

Several tools and initiatives may be available to support data collection, such as Responsible Camping Ambassadors, Responsible Camping Hub surveys, and Campermate app usage providing visitor insights. This data can be accessed by third parties such as the Council and can be translated to inform decision making. There is the potential for these tools to be used in the future to support decision making.

In addition, private businesses noted in the interviews that real time information and data can be collected through their technology capabilities. For example, rental vehicle companies are able to track the behaviours and routes of their drivers. This real-time information could provide insights about trends at place and across time. It is key that data is collected by some stakeholders and shared to allow for a broader understanding of visitor trends.

Data has a key role in the Strategy going forward, as it will inform decisions about the provision of infrastructure, provide evidence of the impacts of camping on the environment, influence messaging and communications, and inform sustainable models for funding.

## Priorities for the Council in 2022-2023

Given the ambiguity of the future of camping, and tourism more broadly, within the region going forward, it is important the Council prioritises a key group of Actions within the Strategy. It is recommended that the Council focuses predominantly on the following Actions for the upcoming season:

- **Action 1.1.2: Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism, and tourism organisations share the Tiaki promise with visitors and promote commitment to the wero within the region.**
- **Action 2.1.1: The Council jointly promotes educational tools and communications about camping sustainably across local and regional levels** with Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), technology partners, neighbouring territorial authorities, tourism businesses, camping clubs and Department of Conservation (DOC).
- **Action 2.1.2: The Council re-establishes the Responsible Camping Ambassador programme for the 2022-23 season** with Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and DOC.
- **Action 3.2.1: The Council works with organisations to develop and use a consistent and statistically valid approach to collecting and sharing responsible camping data to better understand visitor behaviour and trends and to inform decision-making**, such as DOC, private businesses, technology partners, MBIE, tourism businesses, RTOs and Tourism New Zealand.
- **Action 4.2.1: The Council explores a user pays model for camping infrastructure so that campers contribute to their stay and the facilities they use** (for example, BBQs and bathroom facilities).

As the nature of the tourism recovery becomes clearer, due diligence is completed on the proposed actions, and funding options are explored, the Council can then focus on implementing the rest of the Strategy's Actions.

## Key changes to Strategy following feedback from the Community and Services Committee, Council staff and iwi

Feedback on the draft Strategy was sought from the Community and Services Committee, key Council staff and Te Ao Marama and Aukaha in late May. Below is a summary of the key changes that were made to the final draft Strategy:

- the Strategy has been shortened, through the removal of the communications content and some images;
- additional context was added, including references to the legislative constraints the Council operates within, other territorial authorities' strategies, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's tourism report, and the availability of data about camping;
- additional information about regenerative tourism was added to address concerns that it may be interpreted as a 'buzzword' by the community, and to provide more clarity about its purpose as a concept and its alignment with the Destination Management Plan;
- the Council's partnership with Kāi Tahu as Tiriti partners is woven throughout the Strategy and recognised as an individual principle to guide decision-making;
- the te ao Māori concept of kaitiakitanga was replaced with a more general concept of guardianship to recognise that kaitiakitanga is a role that tangata whenua has over their places and spaces;
- more clarity was provided about the difference between the concepts in the Strategy (vision, principles, goals, objectives, and actions);
- the community focused goal, goal three, was expanded to 'Our communities are included in shaping outcomes';
- the community focused objective was amended to 'Our communities benefit from the positive impacts of effectively managing camping';
- an action was added specifically addressing the requirement for educational campaigns for drivers of vehicles designed for camping; and
- the proposed costs of actions were removed in most cases to allow the Council to complete further due diligence and prioritise actions that are possible within budget constraints.

## Conclusion

The final draft of the Strategy and commentary report, with amendments from the Council and other final engagements, will be shared internally within the Council to take through its own internal processes prior to Council endorsement that is planned for August 2022.

## APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

A summary of previous methods used to manage responsible camping between 2018-2020 is provided in the below table. It also signals which tools the Council will continue to use going forward.

Tools	Details
<b>Camper typologies</b> (discontinued)	The 2018 Strategy introduced camper typologies that were used to segment different campers into groups in order to better determine targeted responses depending on their specific behaviours and needs.
<b>Responsible Camping Ambassadors</b> (to be continued)	The Council introduced Ambassadors from the 2018-19 season to support education of visitors. The Ambassadors would visit popular sites, provide guidance to campers, and check they were all camping sustainably.
<b>Responsible Camping Hubs</b> (discounted but other options explored)	Hubs were introduced to provide campers with a suitable space for which they could dump waste, shower etc. Two Hubs were created. Surveys were conducted at these Hubs to support understanding of inbound and local campers' behaviours.
<b>Enforcement</b> (to be continued)	QLDC has contracted enforcement officers to enforce camping regulations. This follows a self-funding model meaning the more enforcements are collected, the more enforcement can be undertaken.
<b>PCG</b> (to be continued)	A Project Control Group was formed with key stakeholders to ensure approaches to the management of camping is consistent. This group consists of key staff from Westland District Council, Central Otago District Council, Southland District Council and representatives from national level government agencies. This group contributed to the development of the 2018 Strategy and will be key in coordinating the implementation of the updated strategy.
<b>Site assessments</b> (to be continued in future bylaw reviews)	Site assessments were undertaken as part of the Freedom Camping Bylaw 2021 review. The sites are monitored and adjusted according to their suitability.
<b>Communications and education</b> (to be continued)	QLDC and RTOs has delivered coordinated communications through their newsletters and social media platforms since 2018. These have been well-received and had high engagement pre-COVID-19.

## APPENDIX 2: KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF PREVIOUS METHODS USED TO MANAGE RESPONSIBLE CAMPING BETWEEN 2018-2020

It is important to acknowledge the achievements made in the management of camping across the region since 2018.

- 14,600 vehicles used the Responsible Camping Hubs in the 2018-19 season.
- Central government funding helped provide resources to change campers' behaviour – there was less roadside rubbish and more respectful attitudes to signage.
- Campers were more likely to do the right thing when they knew where the infrastructure was (i.e., dump stations).
- Complaints about campers to the Council and DOC decreased.
- Monitoring and enforcement increased but infringements under the Freedom Camping Bylaw decreased.
- In December 2018 – January 2019, there were 15.69 tonnes of waste disposed of responsibly.
- Over 19,000 educational leaflets were distributed by DOC, iSITE, commercial campgrounds and upcycled by campers.



# **Responsible Camping Strategy (DRAFT)**

**2022 – 2027**

Queenstown Lakes District Council

## Message from Mayor

Queenstown Lakes has always been an extremely popular destination for campers, both domestic and international.

People are drawn to our region's dramatic landscapes, rich history, weather and the vast array of recreational activities that are on offer.

Camping is a key part of being a Kiwi – it allows us to connect with nature, make memories with our loved ones and explore new places. It has also become a popular method for overseas tourists holidaying here.

In 2018, the Queenstown Lakes District Council released a joint *Responsible Camping Strategy* with a wide range of local and central government partners to address increasing demand for camping across the region.

A lot of progress has been made since 2018, and this Strategy builds on this great work. However, it has also been a tough few years for our region, so dependent on tourism and visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic. This new Strategy will leverage on the strong working relationships we have fostered and build on resources that already exist, so that we do not reinvent the wheel. We cannot wait to welcome back visitors to our region and show manaakitanga. However, it is crucial that our district re-opens itself to visitors who show stewardship – we want them to respect, honour and give back to our environment and communities. We cannot continue to operate as we always have – we must put the environment first, and ensure that our camping behaviours are sustainable and regenerative.

Given the uncertainties of our region's recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels, our priorities are to use our resources wisely, explore financial options where campers pay for the facilities they use while in our region, and use management tools that give us the greatest return on investment.

We will always welcome responsible campers to our district. We will also continue to educate and manage campers to ensure that they behave appropriately, and that both residents and visitors can enjoy the places they love.

I am pleased to present Queenstown Lakes District's refreshed Responsible Camping Strategy. Haere mai, and welcome back to our region!

**Jim Boulton**, Mayor of Queenstown Lakes District Council

June 2022

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# Strategy at a glance

## Our Vision

“All campers who visit our region respect our environment, give back to our communities, and enjoy our beautiful landscapes sustainably.”

## Our Principles

Guardianship

Manaakitanga

Regeneration at the heart of everything

Partnership

We work together

Agile, adaptable and flexible

Data and evidence-driven

## Our Goals



We are all guardians of the environment



We provide a positive visitor experience



Our communities are included in shaping outcomes



We effectively and efficiently manage our resources



# Introduction

Camping is defined as “***staying overnight for recreation in an outdoor area for one or more nights, usually in a tent, cabin, caravan, campervan or other kind of vehicle.***”

There are many reasons why Queenstown Lakes is an extremely popular camping destination. People come to camp in the region for many reasons:

- Visiting our world-recognised landscapes
- Getting an adrenaline rush
- Meeting friends or family for a vacation
- Partying, shopping and splurging
- Getting back to nature and to unwind
- Trying recreational activities
- Eating and drinking at our incredible hospitality venues
- Resting and relaxing
- Staying for a short time before travelling elsewhere
- Creating memories with loved ones.

Our visitors camp at different sites: zero facilities, minimal facilities, basic facilities, or full facilities. They might camp on Department of Conservation (DOC) or Council land, at DOC campsites, at commercial holiday parks, or in the backcountry.

We welcome campers to our district. Camping provides affordable options for visitors who want to stay in our district or for locals to explore their backyard further. Camping allows us to reconnect with nature and make memories with our loved ones.

However, given the popularity of camping in our region (both from domestic and international tourists), and the impact that camping can have on the environment and local communities, it is crucial that it is managed effectively.

There were **488,361** overnight stays across our beautiful region between January 2018 and March 2022\*

\*CamperMate data, of overnight stays, defined as someone using the app in the same region on two consecutive days with an assumption that they stayed the night.

# Key Concepts

These terms are used throughout the document and shape the context of the strategy.

**Camping:** “staying overnight for recreation in an outdoor area for one or more nights, usually in a tent, cabin, caravan, campervan or other kind of vehicle.” Camping excludes people staying in campgrounds or other public places for temporary or permanent accommodation.

**Community:** in this context, community refers to residents, businesses, and local government; those with a stake in responsible camping.

**Guardianship:** everyone collectively acting to minimise and mitigate the negative impacts of camping on our natural environment and climate. This Strategy acknowledges the te ao Māori principle of kaitiakitanga, where Kāi Tahu and tangata whenua are kaitiaki of natural and physical resources in our region.

**Manaakitanga:** hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.<sup>1</sup>

**Manaaki Manuhiri:** visitors arriving as manuhiri and leaving as whānau.<sup>2</sup>

**Regenerative tourism:** centred around five key dimensions. These include taking a holistic approach to the management of tourism. The approach must also look long-term and take into account future generations. The third dimension is that we recognise that a thriving environment is needed to support resilient communities. A regenerative approach also focuses on relationships; an interconnected approach means we all have a role to play. Finally, our economy should be diverse and resilient to support regeneration.<sup>3</sup>

**Tiaki Promise:** A wero has been presented to visitors; a challenge and commitment to care for New Zealand. This wero is the Tiaki promise. It is encouraged that all visitors pick up this wero; to act as a guardian, protecting and preserving our home. The Tiaki promise has three key components: to care for land, sea and nature, treading lightly and leaving no trace; to travel safely, showing care and consideration for all; and to respect culture, traveling with heart and mind. These commitments are underpinned by a Māori worldview and hope to inspire everyone to connect to the natural world.<sup>4</sup>

1 Te Aka Māori Dictionary, ‘Manaakitanga’, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&keywords=manaakitanga>

2 New Zealand Māori Tourism – He Toa Takitini, ‘Our values’, <https://maoritourism.co.nz/about/our-values>

3 Regenerative Recovery Advisory Group, July 2021, ‘Final Report’, Queenstown Lakes District Council, <https://www.gldc.govt.nz/media/rosjz4s5/regenerative-recovery-advisory-group-final-report.pdf>

4 Tourism New Zealand. “The Tiaki Promise.” *Tiaki New Zealand*, <https://www.tiakinewzealand.com/about-tiaki/>

TIAKINEWZEALAND.COM  
#TIAKIPROMISE



# TIAKI PROMISE

WHILE TRAVELLING IN NEW ZEALAND I WILL

CARE FOR LAND, SEA AND NATURE,  
TREADING LIGHTLY AND LEAVING NO TRACE

TRAVEL SAFELY, SHOWING CARE  
AND CONSIDERATION FOR ALL

RESPECT CULTURE, TRAVELLING  
WITH AN OPEN HEART AND MIND

HOW TO CARE FOR NEW ZEALAND



PROTECT  
NATURE



KEEP NZ  
CLEAN



DRIVE  
CAREFULLY



BE  
PREPARED



SHOW  
RESPECT

# Camp with care in New Zealand

If you're planning on camping, here's how to do it responsibly for the best experience.

Plan your journey.  
Visit **camping.org.nz**  
or an i-SITE Visitor  
Information Centre

Stay at one of our  
many campsites

Use the toilet in your  
vehicle or a public toilet

Leave no trace or litter



# Context

## What's happened since the 2018 Strategy was released?

When the Council co-drafted the 2018 Strategy, there was a significant problem in our region. Increasing numbers of domestic and international campers were putting significant strain on our communities, facilities, and infrastructure. The supply of facilities could not meet the high demand of campers who did not follow the rules while in our beautiful region. The high volume of campers inappropriately using our reserves, inadequately disposing of their waste, and using our waterways to bathe in was not acceptable to our communities who treasure these special places.

We knew that if we did not seek to address the negative impacts of campers in the region, we would experience more negative behaviours, which has a significant affect on our communities and environment. The 2018 Strategy was developed at pace to respond to the pressures seen across the District with our neighbouring Councils and central government agencies. Despite this, the 2018 Strategy was well received and seen as a positive step forward to ensure camping behaviours were properly managed. Huge improvements were made across the District, including decreased infringements, tonnes of waste disposed of correctly, and evidence of campers doing the right thing when they had the tools to camp sustainably.

The 2018 Strategy aimed to “promote the sustainable use of our environment for visitor and community experience through well managed, coordinated and responsible camping in the District.” The Council always planned to review the 2018 Strategy after two years in light of new information about camper trends and to ensure alignment with proposed legislative and policy changes.

The Freedom Camping Act 2011, Camping-ground Regulations 1985 and NZS 5465:2001 Self-containment of motor caravans and caravans legislates and regulates the management of freedom camping nationally. While the Council needs to work within the constraints of the legislation, it has numerous tools it can use and leverage to manage campers' behaviours, including the Freedom Camping Bylaw 2021 and this Strategy.

The camping sector is faced with upcoming proposed changes to support more sustainable freedom camping across Aotearoa, which is being led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

However, in March 2020, our world shifted dramatically. The international borders were shut and as we went into lockdowns, our tourism industry, that originally employed almost half of the region's local workforce, ground to a halt. The mechanisms and programmes previously used to manage camping were stopped. However, this unprecedented time has allowed us to pause, reflect and take stock of responsible camping across the District.

This Strategy presents a clear roadmap for the next five years for managing responsible camping across our District. It continues and clarifies the strategic direction from the last four years, and builds on all that has been achieved since 2018. We've created a Strategy that is bold, aspirational and uplifting, but also allows the Council to be flexible and adaptable to future changes in this sector.

The Strategy places guardianship and stewardship at the centre of everything. The Strategy seeks to push sustainable, resilient and regenerative tourism. The hauora of the land and people in the region are pivotal in this Strategy and will guide everything we do. This is supported by the Tiaki Promise; a commitment that visitors can make to care for our land while visiting Aotearoa. This commitment is a challenge to visitors; shared by tourism businesses, mana whenua, government and more. We will leverage these offerings by increasing promotion of tools to help campers do the right thing.

The Strategy balances the rights and interests of the community and the importance of providing a great experience for all visitors. The importance of this is reflected in the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's Report: *Not 100% – but four steps closer to sustainable tourism* highlights that the wishes of communities and mana whenua should be a key input into decisions about tourism developments, particularly those that would impose significant increases in environmental pressure that have to be paid for.

We will lead the Strategy but will work collaboratively and closely with regional and national stakeholders to achieve its desired outcomes. We will partner with tangata whenua and iwi, and work with campers, residents, commercial holiday park owners, dump station managers, rental vehicle companies, regional tourism organisations, issuing authorities, camping membership clubs, and technology developers.

The Strategy aligns and supports the district's Destination Management Plan which is currently under development, in partnership with Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism. The goal of the Destination Management plan is to achieve regenerative tourism by 2030.

We will also work closely with neighbouring territorial authorities (Central Otago, Westland, and Southland District Councils) and central government agencies (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Department of Conservation, Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency).

We will focus on exploring alternative funding models, such as user pays models, so that campers pay for a fair share of their stay in our region.

It is not clear how long it will take for the District's visitor numbers to reach pre-COVID-19 levels. However, this Strategy will guide the Council and its partners, stakeholders and community to manage camping as people return to our region. It will be adaptable, flexible, and able to respond to changes to demand, and collect data to understand what the 'new normal' looks like.

We all have a part to play in positively influencing and promoting responsible

## Our key partners

Kāi Tahu

Department of Conservation

Toitū Te Whenua Land Information  
New Zealand

Waka Kotahi New Zealand  
Transport Agency

Central Otago District Council

Southland District Council

Westland District Council

Destination Queenstown

Lake Wānaka Tourism

## Our stakeholders

Campers from our region, New  
Zealand, and overseas

Residents' Associations and our  
communities

Ministry of Business, Innovation and  
Employment

Rental vehicle companies

Camping lifestyle clubs

Tourism businesses

Holiday parks

Trails Trusts

RESPONSIBLE  
CAMPING



ZONE  
BEGINS

# Turning Strategy into Action

**Vision:** the Strategy's overall goal, which will guide the Council's direction for the next five years

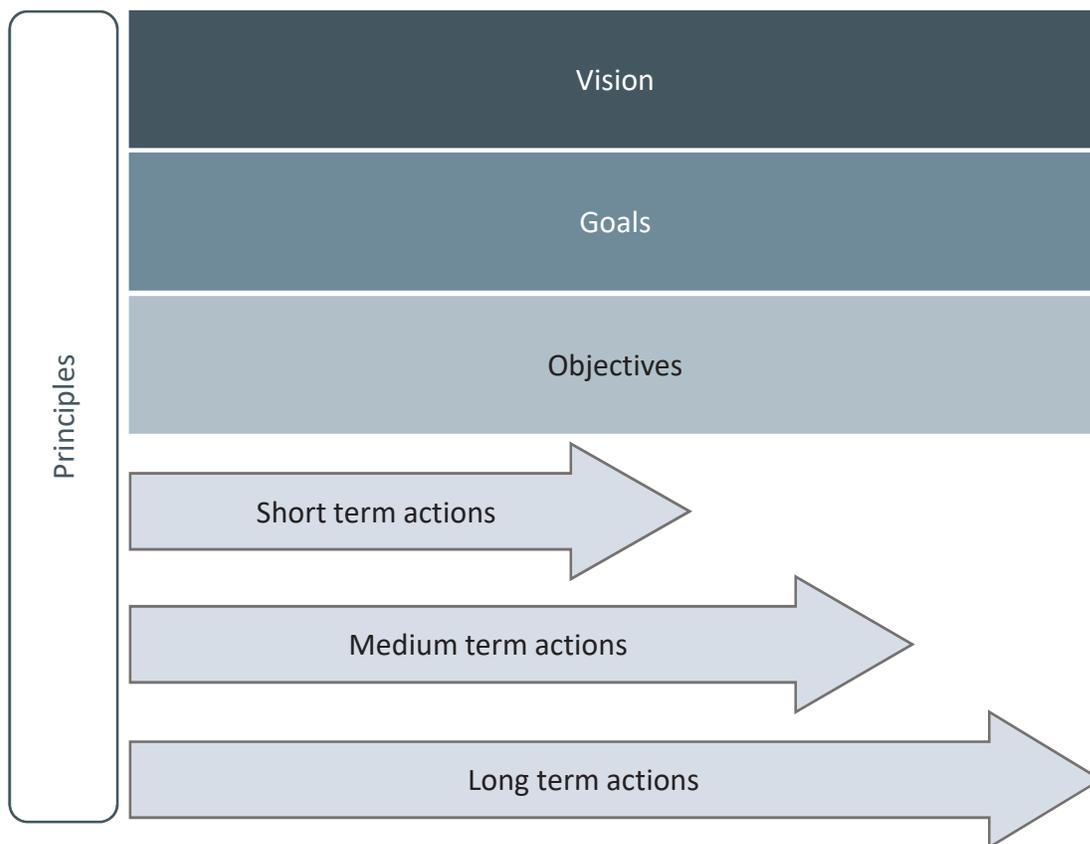
**Principles:** how we'll will behave along the way and the principles that will guide our decision making

**Goals:** the high level, broad aims that we want to achieve over the life of the Strategy

**Objectives:** the smart, measurable steps that we will take to achieve the goals

**Actions:** the specific actions that need to occur so we can achieve our goals and ultimately realise our vision

## The Strategy's hierarchy



The Strategy's hierarchy is very similar to the structure used in the 2018 Strategy.

# Responsible Camping Strategy

## Vision

**“All campers who visit our region respect our environment, give back to our communities, and enjoy our beautiful landscapes sustainably.”**

### A Regenerative Tourism Model

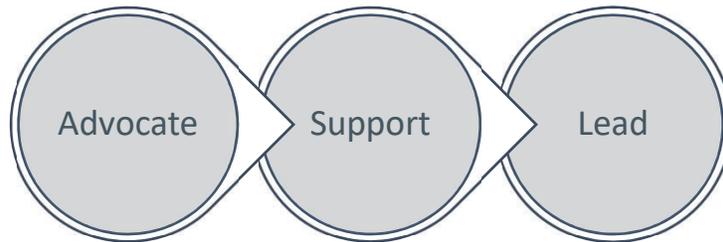


The concept of regenerative tourism will underpin all aspects of the Strategy. Our region's goal in the Destination Management Plan is that all tourism is regenerative by 2030. Using this new method to shape a positive future for tourism, responsible camping will be managed in a way that aims to improve the District's environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing. If camping contributes to the above outcomes, we can ensure wellbeing is improved and camping is available for generations to come.

Regenerative tourism opportunities will be available for campers to create a situation where the visitor economy is in service of, and adds value, to our District. We want campers to look after our District like it's their own.

The Council, along with its partners and stakeholders, will create opportunities where campers can give back to our local communities by donating their time or money to important projects across the District. These projects will contribute to the District's environment, social, cultural or economic wellbeing.

# Role of Council



## Advocate

The Council is a Treaty partner with Kāi Tahu. The Council also has a role to advocate for our people, and the environment. We have advocated strongly to ensure that people camp responsibly in our region, and we will continue to do this going forward. Our region is special, and we'll continue to protect it.

## Support

Council has been working with local businesses, neighbouring local councils and central government agencies to provide a unified approach to manage camping. We'll continue to encourage and promote a shared response which supports our community, uses resources wisely and

allow opportunities for visitors to give back to our communities.

## Lead

The way we work and invest in responsible camping across our region matters. This Strategy will take into consideration our other key plans and strategies, particularly those that prioritise the climate and environment.

# Principles

The following principles will guide the way we behave and help support decision making.

<p><b>Guardianship</b></p>	<p>Without our environment and iconic landscapes, we have nothing. We all have a part to play as guardians and stewards, to protect and improve the environment. Collectively, we will work to minimise and mitigate the negative impacts of camping on our natural environment and climate. We will prioritise sustainability, carbon reduction, waste management and the protection of our waterways and natural spaces. If we all act as guardians of the environment, our iconic landscape will remain pristine and available for generations to come.</p>
<p><b>Manaakitanga</b></p>	<p>We welcome visitors to our region with open arms. While the Council shares this responsibility with Kāi Tahu as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners, everyone has a part to play. We value the visitors who camp in our region, as they enrich our lives and stimulate our economy. We offer experiences that are inclusive and allow a diverse range of people to experience our region. However, we also have tools that we can use to prevent bad behaviour such as education and infringements.</p>
<p><b>Regeneration at the heart of everything</b></p>	<p>The Council, visitors and businesses work collectively to live principles of regenerative tourism – there is a commitment to improve our region’s social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. This will help protect our district’s pristine landscapes and recreational areas for future generations. We will encourage businesses to explore options for visitors to give back to local communities while travelling in our region.</p>
<p><b>Partnership</b></p>	<p>We have a partnership with Kāi Tahu through Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This strong partnership with Kāi Tahu will guide the decisions that are made about camping across the region.</p>
<p><b>We work together</b></p>	<p>He waka eke noa, we are all in this journey together. It is important that as owners of this Strategy, the Council, prioritises building and fostering strong working relationships with key partners, stakeholders, communities, tangata whenua and visitors. If we work together, we move beyond our individual sphere of influence and collectively take ownership of the management of camping.</p>
<p><b>Agile, adaptable and flexible</b></p>	<p>While this Strategy is a long-term document, it needs to be flexible and adapt to new trends or situations. This includes changes in demand, supply, legislative and regulatory changes, climate change, etc. We also need to use our resources efficiently and effectively by prioritising key outcomes that will have a positive impact in multiple areas.</p>
<p><b>Data and evidence-driven</b></p>	<p>Where possible, we will use data and technology to help make decisions about what investments we make.</p>

# Goals and Objectives



## We are all guardians of the environment

Campers understand their impact on the environment and act responsibly

Camping opportunities are available for future generations



## We provide a positive visitor experience

Campers have the tools and knowledge to camp sustainably and do the right thing

Our region's facilities are fit for purpose for all types of campers

Campers' positive behaviour means they are welcomed in our region



## Our communities are included in shaping outcomes

Our communities benefit from the positive impacts of effectively managing camping

We work collaboratively with businesses to manage sustainable camping

We prioritise strong working relationships across government



## We effectively and efficiently manage our resources

We realistically manage camping in the region with the resources available

We prioritise economically sustainable models to manage camping

We understand changes in the camping system



# We are all guardians of the environment

## Objective 1.1: Campers understand their impact on the environment and act responsibly

### Context

### Actions

Camping can have a toll on the environment.

It is important that all people camping in our region understand their impact on the environment and know how to camp sustainably.

Campers need to know what the expectations are when they arrive – they should understand how to follow the rules, do the right thing, and protect the environment.



We will explore new opportunities with private businesses so campers can dispose of their waste and water in a way that protects the environment.

We will encourage the Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) to increase promotion of the Tiaki Promise in our region, so campers recognise and live the Tiaki Promise's values. Campers will also have the opportunity to camp sustainably through low-carbon itineraries.

We will explore technology options so we can ensure campers have the knowledge to camp sustainably.

## Objective 1.2: Camping opportunities are available for future generations

### Context

### Actions

Camping activities need to be sustainable to protect and prioritise the hauora of our landscapes, waterways and environment. The impact of camping should be minimised and managed to ensure it can be enjoyed for years to come.

Our community and visitors show respect for our pristine environment and region.



In the longer-term, we will reassess our QLDC sites (managed and leased) and DOC sites to understand the impact of camping on these sites.



## We provide a positive visitor experience

### Objective 2.1: Campers have the tools and knowledge to camp sustainably and do the right thing

#### Context

It is important that campers understand how their behaviours impact on our environment, landscapes, waterways and precious flora and fauna.

Often, campers may not realise that they are acting unsustainably.

We will ensure that campers have the tools and knowledge to make sustainable choices, while enjoying their stay. This will preserve our incredible region for everyone.



#### Actions

We will jointly promote educational tools and communications about camping sustainably at a local and regional level.

We will re-establish the Responsible Camping Ambassador programme to monitor campers' behaviours and provide them with educational tools while camping.

### Objective 2.2: Our region's facilities are fit for purpose for all types of campers

#### Context

It is important that we offer a range of camping facilities for all types of campers who come to visit. We have a finite number of spaces suitable for camping so we must use our resources wisely.



#### Actions

We will explore alternative funding models to deliver a range of camping facilities, infrastructure and technology with private businesses, so that the Council is not predominantly paying for camping in the region. This could include exploring options for new types of camping.



## We provide a positive visitor experience

### Objective 2.3: Campers' positive behaviour means they are welcomed in our region

#### Context

Campers provide economic, social and cultural value to our region. However, some campers require support to ensure they do the right thing while visiting our region.

Our communities will show manaakitanga to our guests who do the right thing.



#### Actions

We will encourage the RTOs to promote positive visitor behaviour through communications channels before, during and after visitors' journeys.



## Our communities are included in shaping outcomes

### Objective 3.1: Our communities benefit from the positive impacts of effectively managing camping

#### Context

#### Actions

Our region has always been a popular camping destination for residents, and domestic and international tourists alike.

We particularly welcome campers visiting from elsewhere who take pride in our region and look after it like it is their own home.

Our local communities and residents can provide campers with opportunities to add economic, cultural, social, and environmental value to our region.



We will provide opportunities for residents to engage in camping management through the Responsible Camping Ambassador programme or other similar initiatives.

We will also partner with community groups and businesses to ensure visitors have opportunities to participate in or contribute to projects linked to sustainability or regeneration.

### Objective 3.2: We work collaboratively with businesses to manage sustainable camping

#### Context

#### Actions

Before COVID-19, Queenstown Lakes was experiencing significant demand for camping across the region.

The future demand for camping is unknown – we do not know when the tourists will return or how long it may take to reach pre-2020 demand levels.

However, our region needs to be prepared for changes to visitor trends. We need to consistently collect data.

When visitors do return, we need to ensure they travel safely and responsibly.



We will work with organisations to collect and share camping data in a consistent way to better understand visitor behaviour and trends. We'll use this to make informed decisions.

We will also work with organisations to ensure visitors drive safely while in New Zealand.



## Objective 3.3: We prioritise strong working relationships across government

### Context

Government agencies and businesses all have a stake in responsible camping in the region. To ensure we work efficiently together, strong relationships must be maintained.

Each agency has capability that can be leveraged to create positive change.

A number of legislative and regulatory changes are being made that will have implications for the management of responsible camping.



### Actions

We will collaborate with neighbouring Councils to promote a unified approach to camping communications and enforcement.

We will implement the new sustainable freedom camping legislative changes with MBIE, and advocate for a national camping strategy and a review of the camping legislation.



**Objective 4.1: We realistically manage camping in the region with the resources available**

Context

Actions

Resource allocation is uncertain. The limited economic resources available need to be understood and used in a way that provides the best return on investment.

It is important that funding allocation and management tools used are flexible as circumstances (demand, legislative changes and behaviours) change.

The Council has a number of tools it can use to manage camping including regulation and enforcement.



We will prioritise management tools that have the best return on investment, and we will redirect funds based on what the most effective initiatives for managing camping are.

We will evaluate the initiatives we implement within this Strategy.

The Council will regularly review its regulatory and enforcement systems.

**Objective 4.2: We prioritise economically sustainable models to manage camping**

Context

Actions

The management approach and related funding should be proportionate to the tourist demand and its impacts where possible.

Enforcement approaches should be targeted to ensure funding is used to focus on high priority areas.

Facilities for camping are costly. It is important they are fit for purpose and directly impact visitor experience and the pressure on the environment.



We will explore a user pays model for components of the camping stay, so campers contribute to the facilities that they use.



**Objective 4.3: We understand changes in the camping system**

Context

Actions

In order for camping to be sustainable, changes in the system need to be understood in order for appropriate action to be taken.

The uncertainty created by the impacts of COVID makes making decisions difficult. It is important that data be used to inform decision making.



The Responsible Camping Ambassadors and DOC Rangers will collect data on campers in our region so we can understand them better.

## Monitoring and review

It is important that the Council dedicates time to monitor and review this Strategy to ensure its long-term success.

It is unclear how long it will take for visitor numbers in our region to reach pre-COVID-19 levels. However, we will use monitoring and reviewing tools to ensure that our management of camping is effective, efficient and matches the level of demand within the district.

In addition, effective monitoring and review will help the long-term sustainability of this Strategy, as it will provide clear opportunities to identify what is working well and where areas for improvement lie. It will also allow the Council to work closely with key partners and stakeholders to share experiences and provide joint solutions to areas of concern.

The Council may consider the following components as part of its ongoing monitoring and review:

- enforcement and infringements
- expenditure within the district from visitors
- planned visits to the region
- environmental impacts on campsites
- impact on resources and infrastructure throughout region for camping
- recognition of the Tiaki Promise
- feedback from regenerative projects.

Data can be collected using a variety of methods, including through Ambassadors, Enforcement Officers and/or volunteers, mobile applications, surveys of campers and residents, the Council's website data, and the Council's partners within the Strategy (i.e., businesses).

# Action Plan

## Goal 1: We are all guardians of the environment

#	Action	QLDC Responsible Teams	Partnership	Year of Delivery	Cost
<b>Objective 1.1 Campers understand their impact on the environment and act responsibly</b>					
1.1.1	The Council explores opportunities to jointly fund more waste disposal facilities (for rubbish and wastewater) for campers in the region with private businesses.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, Regulatory, PCG	DOC, private businesses, tourism operators	2023-ongoing	
1.1.2	Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism, and tourism organisations share the Tiaki promise with visitors and promote commitment to the wero within the region.		RTOs, Tourism New Zealand, DMP Steering Group	2022-23	-
1.1.3	The Council explores opportunities for technology solutions that supports real time communication to campers to ensure they stay in the right places and act responsibly (e.g. phone applications with GPS markers).	Responsible Camping Programme Manager	Technology partners, tourism businesses	2022-24	
1.1.4	The Council supports Destination Queenstown and Lake Wanaka Tourism to create a Low Carbon Camping Itinerary. Links to CCBAP 1.13	PCG	RTOs	2025-2027+	
<b>Objective 1.2: Camping opportunities are available for future generations</b>					
1.2.1	The Council encourages reassessment of the impact of camping on public campsites (QDLC managed and leased sites and DOC sites) and their facilities in the region to ensure they are fit for purpose. Links to Spatial Plan Outcome 1 Strategy 9	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG	Leased campsite operators, DOC	2025-2027+	

### Key

2022-2023 = short term | 2023-2024 = medium term | 2025-2027+ = long term

Costings to be determined. Due diligence required to determine cost and prioritisation based on resource available.

## Goal 2: We provide a positive visitor experience

#	Action	QLDC Responsible Teams	Partnership	Year of Delivery	Cost
<b>Objective 2.1: Campers have the tools and knowledge to camp sustainably and do the right thing</b>					
2.1.1	The Council jointly promotes educational tools and communications about camping sustainably across local and regional levels. <i>Links to Spatial Plan Outcome 1 Strategy 8</i>	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, Communications, PCG	RTOs, technology partners, TAs, tourism businesses, camping clubs, DOC	2022-ongoing	\$
2.1.2	The Council re-establishes the Responsible Camping Ambassador programme relative to increased visitor numbers in the 22-23 or 23-24 peak camping season.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG	MBIE, DOC	2022-2023 2023 -2024	
<b>Objective 2.2: Our region's facilities are fit for purpose for all types of campers</b>					
2.2.1	The Council explores alternative funding models with private businesses to deliver a range of camping facilities, infrastructure and technology across the region (for example, joint ventures, public-private partnerships), including new types of camping (e.g. EVs).	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG	Private businesses, tourism businesses, camping clubs, technology partners	2023-2024	
<b>Objective 2.3: Campers' positive behaviour means they are welcomed in our region</b>					
2.3.1	Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism works with tourism businesses to welcome international visitors back to NZ and promote positive visitor behaviour through their communication channels before, during and after visitors' journeys.		RTOs, tourism businesses	2022-2023	-

## Goal 3: Our communities are included in shaping outcomes

#	Action	QLDC Responsible Teams	Partnership	Year of Delivery	Cost
<b>Objective 3.1: Our communities benefit from the positive impacts of effectively managing camping</b>					
3.1.1	The Council provides opportunities for residents to engage in the management of camping through the Ambassador programme or similar initiatives.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, Regulatory, PCG	Residents' Associations	2022-ongoing	
3.1.2	The Council partners with community groups and businesses to provide opportunities for visitors to participate in or contribute to projects linked to sustainability and regeneration in the region, and ensure visitor give back opportunities in the DMP are extended to responsible campers. <i>Links to CCBAP 5.1 and 6.8</i> <i>Links to DMP</i>				
<b>Objective 3.2: We work collaboratively with businesses to manage sustainable camping</b>					
3.2.1	The Council works with businesses to develop and use a consistent and statistically valid approach to collecting and sharing responsible camping data to better understand visitor behaviour and trends and to inform decision-making.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG, Spatial Plan	DMP Steering Group, DOC, private businesses, technology partners, MBIE, tourism businesses, RTOs, Tourism New Zealand	2022-ongoing	
3.2.2	The Council works with businesses to promote safe driving of motor vehicles designed for camping across the region.	PCG	RTOs, Tourism New Zealand, tourism businesses, technology partners, Waka Kotahi	2023-ongoing	

#	Action	QLDC Responsible Teams	Partnership	Year of Delivery	Cost
<b>Objective 3.3: We prioritise strong working relationships across government</b>					
3.4.1	The Council collaborates with neighbouring Councils to promote a unified approach to communications about and enforcement of camping. <i>Links to Spatial Plan Strategy 8</i>	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG		2022-ongoing	
3.4.2	The Council implements the new sustainable freedom camping legislative changes.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG, Regulatory	MBIE	2023-2027	
3.4.3	The Council advocates for a national camping strategy alongside other territorial authorities. We will also advocate for a full review of the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to enable Councils to more effectively manage camping in their regions.	PCG	MBIE, DOC, Territorial Authorities	2025-2027	

## Goal 4: We effectively and efficiently manage our resources

#	Action	QLDC Responsible Teams	Partnership	Year of Delivery	Cost
<b>Objective 4.1: We realistically manage camping in the region with the resources available</b>					
4.1.1	The Council prioritises management tools that have the greatest return on investment and redirects funds based on most effective initiatives.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG, Regulatory		2022-ongoing	
4.1.2	The Council evaluates initiatives implemented over the short- and medium-term actions in this strategy.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG		2025-2027	
4.1.3	The Council regularly reviews its regulatory and enforcement system to ensure it effectively manages visitor behaviour.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, Regulatory, PCG		2022-ongoing	
<b>Objective 4.2: We prioritise economically sustainable models to manage camping</b>					
4.2.1	The Council explores a user pays model for camping infrastructure so that campers contribute to their stay and the facilities they use (e.g. BBQs or bathroom facilities). <i>Links to Spatial Plan Strategy 9</i>	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, PCG, Regulatory		2023-2024	
<b>Objective 4.3: We understand changes in the camping system</b>					
4.3.1	The Council's Ambassadors and DOC Rangers collect data on campers to increase understanding of campers in the region.	Responsible Camping Programme Manager, Regulatory, PCG	MBIE, DOC	2022-ongoing	

**NO  
CAMPING**



**ZONE**

# Alignment with other key documents

It is important that this Strategy aligns with the Council's other key documents, plans and strategies, as well as central government and other regional council documents.

When drafting the Strategy, we considered the following Council, central and local government and industry body documents.



## Additional Strategic Documents

A number of recreational vehicle and camping strategies were reviewed to inform the development of this Strategy. The strategies were collated from New Zealand regions which face similar demand issues and have both rural and urban camping options. As well as this, a range of Australian and UK Recreational Vehicle Strategies were reviewed. The strategies reviewed include:

New Zealand

- Central Otago Responsible Camping Strategy 2010
- Tasman Responsible Camping Strategy 2020

Australia

- Albany, WA Nature Based Camping Strategy 2018-2022
- Baw Baw Shire Council RV Strategy 2020-2023
- Cook Shire, QLD RV Strategy 2021
- George Town Council RV Strategy 2012
- Gladstone Region, QLD RV Strategy 2019
- Toowoomba Region RV Strategy 2015
- Townsville, QLD RV and Camping Strategy 2020

United Kingdom

- Peak District, UK Motorised Vehicle Strategy 2012

## **Climate Action Plan Te Mahere Āhurangi o Ngā Tau 2019-2022**

The Plan's purpose is to meet the challenges of the climate and ecological emergency that was declared in 2019. This Plan discusses creating a sustainable tourism system within the region; promoting the Tiaki Promise; designing a process to understand ecological impacts at specific locations that are under pressure from climate change and/or unsustainable tourism practices; and developing a scheme to encourage visitors to 'give back' to local environmental initiatives. The Plan also pushes for the District to become the most sustainable tourism system in New Zealand.

## **Draft Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025**

The Draft Plan sets out how the region will respond to climate change. The Draft Plan notes that forward-thinking approaches are needed to respond to climate change, including te ao Māori principles, residents' experience, productivity, emissions reduction and environmental protection. There is a proposed commitment to ensure tourism is regenerative by 2030.

## **Waste Minimisation and Management Plan 2018**

The Plan identifies that Council's visions, goals, objectives, targets and methods for achieving effective and efficient waste minimisation and management. The Plan considers waste produced by both residents and visitors.

## **Economic Development Strategy 2015**

The Strategy's aspiration is to encourage economic development that protects and enhances the District's unique environment. One key economic development goal's is to encourage higher contributions from visitors to the region.

## **Community Wellbeing Strategy Te Rautaki Whakamana Hapori 2021**

The Strategy aims to define and guide the Council's role in promoting its residents' wellbeing. It explains that the District's economic history as a host community has instilled a strong sense of manaakitanga into the residents' DNA.

## **Vision Beyond 2050**

The region aspires to be a community that holds true to the values that collectively define the District. These visions include being kaitiaki of their protected and restored incredible environment, flora and fauna; and our people and visitors respect the privilege of accessing our rivers, lakes and mountains.

## **Destination Management Plan (in progress)**

Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism and the Council are partnering on a Destination Management Plan to provide a roadmap for a regenerative tourism system by 2030. It is expected that the Plan will be finalised in mid-2022.

## **Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan 2021**

The overarching goal of the Plan is to 'Grow well' or 'Whaiora', which translates to 'in the pursuit of happiness' in te reo. One outcome of the Plan is to create a sustainable tourism system. There is a need to balance the pressure residents can feel from increased visitor numbers with the region's tourism-reliant economy. Better coordination is needed to ensure visitors tread lightly and are welcomed.

## **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021**

The Strategy's Vision is to provide a rich and diverse network of open spaces that are valued by the community and protected and enhanced for future generations. The spaces should provide for communities, mana whenua and visitors.

## **New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy 2018**

The Government Tourism Strategy aims to enrich New Zealand through sustainable, productive and inclusive tourism growth. This Strategy includes outcomes that New Zealanders' lives are improved by tourism; New Zealand delivers exceptional visitor experiences; and tourism protects, restores and champions the natural environment, cultural and historic heritage.

### **Tiaki Promise**

The Tiaki Promise is a commitment to care for New Zealand, for now and for future generations. It is pitched at both New Zealanders and visitors. The Tiaki Promise states that while travelling in New Zealand, people will care for the land, sea and nature, treading lightly and leaving no trace; travel safely and considerately; and be respectful of cultures.

### **Department of Conservation Heritage and Visitor Strategy**

The three goals of the Heritage and Visitor Strategy are to protect, connect, and thrive. The purpose is to sustainably manage visitors to protect and enhance the value of New Zealand's natural, cultural and historic heritage.

### **Tourism 2025 & Beyond**

The Tourism Industry Aotearoa has a goal to grow a sustainable tourism industry that benefits New Zealanders with four key goals: delivering outstanding visitor experiences, Aotearoa's environment is enhanced by tourism; New Zealanders are welcoming hosts; and the tourism industry's contribution to the national economy grows.

### **Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's Report: Not 100% – but four steps closer to sustainable tourism**

This report highlights that the wishes of communities and mana whenua should be a key input into decisions about tourism developments, particularly those that would impose significant increases in environmental pressure that then have to be paid for.

The report recommends two key policy proposals that include making any future central government funding for tourism infrastructure conditional on environmental criteria and aligned with mana whenua and the local community's vision for tourism development. The second recommendation is strengthening the existing standard for self-contained freedom camping, improving oversight of the certifying process and requiring rental car agencies to play a greater role in collecting freedom camping infringement fees and fines.

# Data on domestic visitors to the Queenstown Lakes District

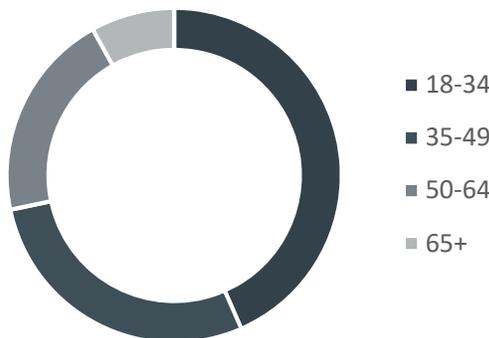
As at May 2022, there are **4,201,260 potential overnight trips** planned to Queenstown Lakes District.



**74% will be adults only** while only 26% will come with children.



**68% will fly into Queenstown**, while 32% will drive into the region.



**43% of planned visitors are between 18-34 years old**, compared to 28% aged 35-49, 20% aged 50-64, and 8% aged 65+.



**46%** want to stay in a hotel and



**7%** want to stay in a holiday park in a tent or camping vehicle and



**36%** want to stay with family and friends



**6%** want to freedom camp and

**4%** want to stay at a DOC campsite

# Data on domestic campers coming to the Queenstown Lakes District

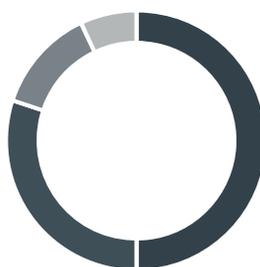
As at May 2022, there are **661,023** potential overnight camping trips in freedom camping sites, DOC campsites or commercial holiday parks planned in the District.



**66% will be adults**, while only 34% will come with children.



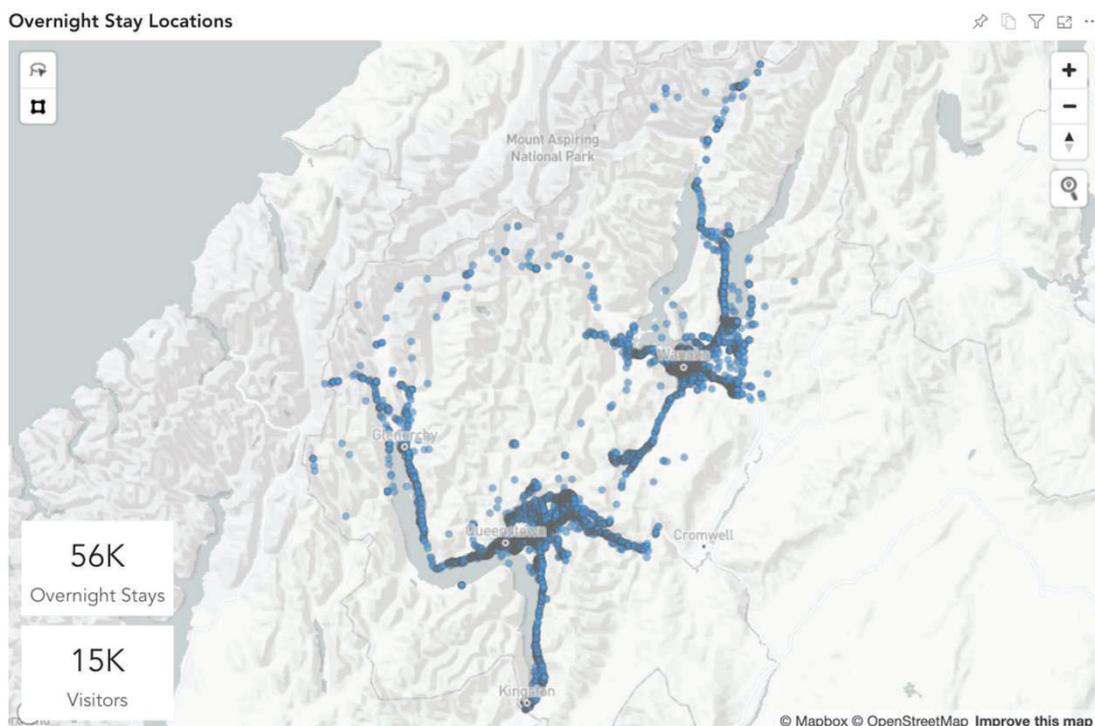
**51% will fly into Queenstown**, while 49% will drive into the region.



- 18-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65+

**50% of planned visitors are between 18-34 years old**, compared to 30% aged 35-49, 13% aged 50-64, and 7% aged 65+.

## Overnight stays in Queenstown Lakes District, January 2021-May 2022





Lake Wanaka, New Zealand

**QLDC Council  
7 July 2022**

**Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [1]**

**Department: Community Services**

**Title | Taitara:**

**Adoption of the Queenstown Lakes District Council Tree Policy 2022**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO**

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The purpose of this report is to review and recommend for adoption the Queenstown Lakes District Council Tree Policy 2022.

**RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA**

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That Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Recommend** to Council that the Tree Policy 2022 be adopted.

Prepared by:



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Planner  
16/06/2022

Reviewed and Authorised  
by:



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Planning Manager  
16/06/2022

Approved by:



Thunes Cloete  
General Manager  
Community Services  
16/06/2022

**CONTEXT | HORPOAKI**

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- 1 The previous Queenstown Lakes District Council Tree Policy (Tree Policy) was adopted in 2006, with minor amendments in 2010.
- 2 Since then, the District has experienced rapid residential growth, infill development and a substantially increased public infrastructure programme. Subsequently this has intensified the built urban environment and put council trees under increasing pressure for removal.