

Understanding your rates account

2025
2026
RATING YEAR



QUEENSTOWN
LAKES DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rates for 2025–2026

Councils are constantly needing to balance the services they provide with the cost of delivering those services.

Rates rises are a challenge all councils and communities across the country are facing.

For Queenstown Lakes District, the average rates increase for 2025-2026 is 13.5%. This is in line with year two of the Long Term Plan 2024-2034 (LTP).

To help reduce the impact on rates, we've carefully scrutinised projects, services, programmes, and general operating costs in the LTP, and focused on getting the basics right. This means delivering work already underway and fulfilling existing commitments, all while staying within our financial constraints.

Council, like other businesses, has had to allow for additional cost pressures such as the significant change

in NZTA-related road subsidy funding. Despite that, we have managed to retain the planned programme largely unchanged. Most importantly, we have kept the projected rates rise in line with what was forecast last year.

Regarding the specific projects, resourcing, and costs for the 2025-2026 year, there are no significant differences from the LTP.

We know an increase at this level is historically high and challenging for some. If you think you might be unable to make your rates payment on time, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. Email rates@qldc.govt.nz or phone our rates team on **03 441 0499** (Queenstown) or **03 443 0024** (Wānaka).

What's changed?

DISTRICT-WIDE REVALUATION

Every three years, we look at the value of all properties to ensure rates are distributed fairly.

The latest rating valuation on 1 September 2024 reflects market conditions at that time, and will form the basis for rates calculations until the next valuation in 2027.

Rating valuations are used to determine your share of the district's total rates. They do not generate additional revenue for Council but instead adjust how rates are distributed among ratepayers.

Think of rates as a pie. The size of the pie does not change because of new valuations. However, your slice of pie might get bigger or smaller depending on a change to your property value in relation to the average change of values across the district.

ALTERATION TO INSTALMENT AND DUE DATES:

We've made improvements to our instalment and due dates following ratepayer feedback. There are now four equal instalment periods and consistent due dates, making it easier for ratepayers to plan for payments.

When are my rates due?

We collect rates in four equal instalments throughout the year, and we've made them easier to remember over the next 12 months:

INSTALMENT	PERIOD	DATE SENT	DUE DATE	PENALTY APPLIED DATE	PAYING YOUR RATES IN FULL If you would prefer to pay the full amount for the year in one go, you can do so by 20 August 2025.
Instalment 1	1 Jul – 30 Sep	1 Aug 2025	20 Aug 2025	25 Aug 2025	
Instalment 2	1 Oct – 31 Dec	3 Nov 2025	20 Nov 2025	25 Nov 2025	
Instalment 3	1 Jan – 31 Mar	2 Feb 2026	20 Feb 2026	25 Feb 2026	
Instalment 4	1 Apr – 30 Jun	1 May 2026	20 May 2026	25 May 2026	

BEHIND IN YOUR PAYMENTS OR CONCERNED ABOUT PENALTIES?

The penalty for late payment of instalments remains at 5%. Arrears penalties remain at 10% and will be added to unpaid balances for the previous financial year on 30 September 2025 and 31 March 2026. If you're behind or concerned about making future payments, we're here to help! Email us or give us a call to talk about a payment plan.

Paying your rates

THE EASIEST WAY TO PAY YOUR RATES IS VIA DIRECT DEBIT

A direct debit automatically deducts the amount required at the specified frequency. An application form is available at **qldc.govt.nz/rates**, via email to **directdebit@qldc.govt.nz**, or by dropping in to a Council office.

IS YOUR ADDRESS UP TO DATE OR WOULD YOU PREFER TO GET YOUR RATES VIA EMAIL?

Need to change your postal address? Simply complete the form at **qldc.govt.nz/coa-form** or email us at **services@qldc.govt.nz**. Or ditch the paper and get rates direct to your inbox – email **rates@qldc.govt.nz** with your property address and valuation number.

RATES REBATES

From 1 July 2025, increases to the income thresholds mean more people are now eligible for a rates rebate of up to \$805.

If your income is under \$32,210, you could be eligible for the maximum rebate of \$805.	If you are a SuperGold Cardholder and your income is under \$45,000, you could be eligible for the maximum rebate of \$805.
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Find out more and get an estimate of your rebate at **www.ratesrebates.govt.nz**, or give us a call on **03 441 0499** (Queenstown) or **03 443 0024** (Wānaka). Incomes over the thresholds could still be eligible for a partial rebate. Applications need to be submitted by 30 June 2026.

How are rates calculated?

Your rates account shows the different kinds of rate we collect. Some are based on the property’s capital value which includes the value of the land and any improvements such as buildings. Other rates are charged as a fixed amount.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CAPITAL VALUE RATES ARE:	
GENERAL RATE Pays for emergency management, forestry and some sundry items including debt servicing for the landfill acquisition.	WHAT ARE FIXED CHARGE RATES? These are rates that are charged as a fixed amount, so that each property type pays the same. There are five fixed charges:
RECREATION AND EVENTS RATE Pays for 80% of the cost of passive parks and reserves, walkways, public toilets, events, and contribution to the operating shortfall for Alpine Aqualand. All these activities are classified as “people driven” with the impact of visitors largely passed on to the properties classified as accommodation, commercial and residential.	SPORTS, HALLS AND LIBRARIES CHARGE Pays for provision of sports fields, libraries, and community facilities other than Alpine Aqualand and Wānaka Aquatic Centre. This charge only applies to residential properties (including mixed use, country dwellings and primary industry).
GOVERNANCE RATE Pays for 80% of the cost of governance, community leadership and communications.	AQUATIC CENTRE CHARGE Applies to residential ratepayers (including mixed use, country dwellings and primary industry) and covers the operating shortfall for Alpine Aqualand and Wānaka Aquatic Centre.
REGULATORY RATE Pays for 80% of the cost of regulatory services such as planning and resource management, the district plan, building control, dog control, environmental health, and non-user-pays liquor licensing. This rate also goes toward defending legal claims related to alleged building defects.	UNIFORM ANNUAL GENERAL CHARGE Covers the public-benefit portion of cemeteries, community development and grants, property (including housing), and Wānaka airport. It also funds 50% of costs to defend legal claims related to alleged building defects and contributes to promoting the district.
	RECREATION AND EVENTS CHARGE Pays for 20% of the cost of parks and reserves, walkways, public toilets, and events. Included in that is a contribution to Alpine Aqualand’s operating shortfall. These activities are classified as “people driven” with the impact of visitors largely passed onto the properties classified as accommodation, commercial and residential.
	GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY CHARGE Pays for 20% of the cost of governance, community leadership, communications, and regulatory services. Regulatory services cover planning and resource management, the district plan, building control, dog control, environmental health, and non-user-pays liquor licensing.

How are my rates spent?

Rates help pay for services essential to keeping our community healthy and safe. We also want to ensure our community and local economy continue to thrive today and into the future.

ROADING RATE

Ensuring our roads, footpaths and other amenities within the road reserve are up to standard.

WATER SUPPLY RATE

Providing a safe drinking water supply.

TOURISM PROMOTION RATE

Promoting the district — this rate helps fund Destination Queenstown, Arrowtown Promotion and Business Association and Lake Wānaka Tourism.

STORMWATER RATE

Maintaining and upgrading our reticulated stormwater systems.

WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGE

Helping fund residential waste and recycling collections, the transfer stations and recycling initiatives.

SEWERAGE RATE

Running reticulated sewerage and wastewater systems.

QUEENSTOWN TOWN CENTRE TARGETED RATE (STREET UPGRADES)

Recovering the cost of major infrastructure and street upgrades in the Queenstown Town Centre from those who benefit most.



How do we keep the rates fair?

Your level of rates depends on how your property is being used, where it is, and what services are available.

DIFFERENTIALS BY LAND USE

Categories include residential, dwelling plus residential flat, hydro- electric power, vacant sections, accommodation, CBD accommodation, commercial, CBD commercial, primary industry, country dwelling, country dwelling plus flat, and mixed-use apportioned.

These categories are used to allocate targeted rates for roading, stormwater, tourism promotion, waste management, water supply, sports, halls and libraries, governance, recreation and events, regulatory, and for general services.

TARGETED RATES BASED ON SERVICE

The two categories based on service are connected and serviceable. These categories are used to differentiate targeted rates for water supply, water scheme loan, sewerage, and sewerage scheme loan.

TARGETED RATES BASED ON LOCATION

The categories are:

1. Location within the Wānaka-Upper Clutha ward.
2. Location within the combined Queenstown-Whakatipu and the Arrowtown-Kawarau wards.
3. Location within the area comprising the former Arrowtown ward.
4. Location within the wider Queenstown CBD area.

These categories are used to differentiate targeted rates in roading, Queenstown CBD, transport, stormwater, tourism promotion, and for the aquatic centre.

Remission and postponement policies

REMISSION POLICIES

You can apply to have part of your rates remitted under the following circumstances:

- A** Community, sporting and other organisations with property used exclusively or mainly for these purposes and which is not operated for private financial profit; e.g. St John Ambulance or the Bowling Club.
- B** Land protected voluntarily for natural, historic or cultural conservation purposes.
- C** Land affected by natural calamity or damaged by the effects of a natural disaster.
- D** Uniform Annual Charges and Targeted Rates on contiguous rating units in separate ownership, used jointly as a single entity – i.e. land owned by the same ratepayer/s and considered a single property.
- E** Rate Penalties – incurred penalties may be remitted if the ratepayer can provide evidence that it is fair to do so.
- F** Sundry Remissions – to remit rates that are the result of an error, are considered uneconomic or that are not able to be recovered.
- G** Māori Freehold Land, when the land is unoccupied and no income is generated from it.
- H** Remission of Postponed Rates – allows the Council to remit rates in accordance with approved postponement policies.
- I** Rates on Land that has made Lump Sum Contributions – allows the Council to remit annual loan rates for properties that have previously paid lump sum contributions.
- J** Rating of Separately Used or Inhabited Parts of a Rating Unit – to limit the occurrence of multiple charges on properties with separate uses or inhabitants where it is fair to do so.

POSTPONEMENT POLICIES

You can apply for a rates postponement under the following circumstances:

- K** Residential Land Subject to Zone Changes – residential rateable property which has been rezoned.
- L** Extreme Financial Hardship – residential rateable property where the ratepayer is experiencing extreme financial hardship.
- M** Rate Postponement for Farmland – rural rateable property used as farmland but has the potential for non-farming development.
- N** Rate Postponement for Elderly – residential rateable property where the ratepayer is 65 or over, a New Zealand citizen and owns no other property.

MORE INFORMATION

You will find more information on these policies in the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, under Rates / Rates Remission and Postponement Policies.

Need to talk to us?

If you're unsure whether you can make a payment or you have other questions, please get in touch by emailing **rates@qldc.govt.nz** or calling our Rates team on **03 441 0499** (Queenstown) or **03 443 0024** (Wānaka). Our friendly staff will be able to discuss options available to you.

FIND OUT MORE

Find out more about your rates at **qldc.govt.nz/rates**