

**SUBMISSION ON QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL  
DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2019-2020**

**To:** Queenstown Lakes District Council  
Private Bag 50072, Queenstown 9348

**Name of submitter:** **Queenstown Chamber of Commerce**

**Address:** Level 2, The Forge, 20 Athol Street,  
**Attention: Anna Mickell and Craig Douglas**

1. This is a submission on the Draft Queenstown Lakes District Council ("the Council") Annual Plan 2019-2020 ("the Plan").

The Queenstown Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the Draft Queenstown Lakes District Council Annual Plan 2019-2020.

The Chamber communicates with local and central government to achieve effective outcomes for its members. Its' key services include the provision of current and relevant information to the membership, advocacy on behalf of the members, recognising and rewarding achievement and generally contributing to the vibrancy of the business community.

The Chamber is motivated by the best long-term outcomes for the business community and is an independent voice with no vested interest. Therefore, the Chamber is pleased to be able to present this submission on behalf of the 645 Queenstown businesses it represents and would like to make comment on the following areas:

**1. Variance to budget – capital works**

***Delayed capital works programmes have real and opportunity costs***

The Chamber commends QLDC on their ambitious capital expenditure plans to support the projected growth of the region and supports the investment priorities and urges that this work continues at pace.

It is of concern that QLDC are budgeting to delay the Queenstown Town Centre capital expenditure programmes over the upcoming period due to slow progress with NZTA.

The Chamber recognizes the challenges inherent with this work, however lack of progress has both an opportunity and real cost to businesses operating in

Queenstown, the quality of life of residents and the visitor experience and urge QLDC to continue this work at pace.

With respect to the development of the Lakeview site, we acknowledge the impact of development on the residents currently living on this site currently, however we support rapid moves to improve the intensification, quality and scope of housing on the site for the benefit of a wider group of workers and residents.

With respect to the development of the Lynch Block on the Lakeview site, The Chamber would like QLDC to consider commissioning research to identify an appropriate business model/partner to develop a short-term (3 to 18 month) worker accommodation development (as opposed to homes) to support the projected growth of tourism-related activities in the region.

Lack of short-term worker accommodation in the region has a negative economic impact on key tourism businesses. Visitor demand for accommodation and land availability pressures has led to market failure with respect to housing workers. The Chamber considers that short-term worker accommodation should be viewed as core tourism infrastructure.

Neither employers, nor QLDC, feel that the total burden of staff accommodation should be placed on their respective entities. The Chamber proposes that work commences to share the responsibility for housing short-term workers between QLDC and employers.

The Chamber would like QLDC to consider a long-term investment horizon with respect to the Lynch Block and undertake research, with the Chamber, to explore innovative private/public business partner models.

## **2. Variance to budget – environmental management and regulatory functions.**

### ***Review of consent processes required to improve productivity and throughput.***

The Chamber notes the significant variance to budget with respect to environmental management and regulatory functions and attributes this cost to increased cost of appeals and overhead. The consultation commentary suggests that cost recovery will be sought to ensure cost to ratepayers is minimised.

Feedback from Chamber members suggests that QLDC internal processes for consenting may be poorly optimised, resulting in time-delays for all parties, and in some cases, duplication of effort by engineers and planners. Increasing charges to users to offset the impact of this variance should be balanced with a review of QLDC processes with respect to how to work more productively with the development/construction community to minimise the impact of appeals and overhead on all parties.

### **3. Cloud Hosting and 3 Waters**

The Chamber supports investment in Cloud Hosting of core IT infrastructure and continuing the 3 Waters Work.

### **4. Public and active travel**

***More visibility on investment in public and active travel is required (it's more than just building infrastructure or putting on subsidised buses).***

The 2019-2020 Annual Plan public consultation document acknowledges that “we’ve a lot of work to do to get people thinking differently about how we travel”.

The Chamber is concerned that moving both staff and customers around the district is impacting adversely on both quality of business and life and is a significant contributor to a degradation of social license for tourism within the region.

We consider ease of movement around Queenstown will continue to worsen prior to the commencement and during the infrastructure/capital works improvements and as more residential developments come to fruition. Further, the Chamber is concerned about the ‘double-burden’ of parents with respect to commuting; transporting their children safely to school and then themselves to work.

The Chamber is unable to review the extent to which QLDC is investing in the development of public transport infrastructure and active travel in this draft annual plan and note the \$324k set aside for the subsidy of public transport and transport infrastructure.

We recognize the tripartite approach under the *Way-to-Go* initiative however are concerned accountability for progress is diffuse. Further, the major capital projects inherent in most of this work means that some smaller, more pragmatic responses to congestion may be being overlooked by QLDC and ORC.

Investment in local commuter behaviour change (workplace education), visitor awareness of active and travel options (prior to arrival), improved bus stop signage, on-boarding optimization (to reduce delays) and transport ambassador programs are all examples of low-cost optimization programs which should be prioritized now.

### **5. Variance to budget – proposed rates increases**

The Chamber notes variance to budget on the proposed rates increase, but recognises that commercial and accommodation rate payers feel the impact of these increases less severely than residential and MU commercial ratepayers due to the cost shift from blue bags to a QLDC collection for residential customers.

Continuing to manage expenditure to budgeted rates increases as the 10 year plan unfolds is essential.

The Chamber remains supportive of initiatives to increase QLDC revenue with the use of targeted visitor rates or levies provided these levies are applied expertly and equitably and spent in the same manner.

**The Queenstown Chamber of Commerce**

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Anna Mickell

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 09/04/2019