

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee

12 December 2023

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [5]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Climate and Biodiversity Plan Update

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of priorities and progress of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP).

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report.

Prepared by:



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Date: 20 November 2023

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Date: 21 November 2023

Context | Horopaki

1. On 27 June 2019 Council declared a climate and ecological emergency as well as approving the release of the Council’s first [Climate Action Plan 2019-2022](#) for public feedback. This plan provided a foundation for QLDC’s response to the climate and ecological emergency by laying out a broad programme of actions that spanned across five outcome areas.
2. On 30 June 2022 the [Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025](#) was adopted by Council, along with an annual plan funding increase to support its year 1 delivery. This plan sets out how QLDC plans to respond to biodiversity loss and climate change in Queenstown Lakes District, with three goals and six outcomes (see Figure 1).

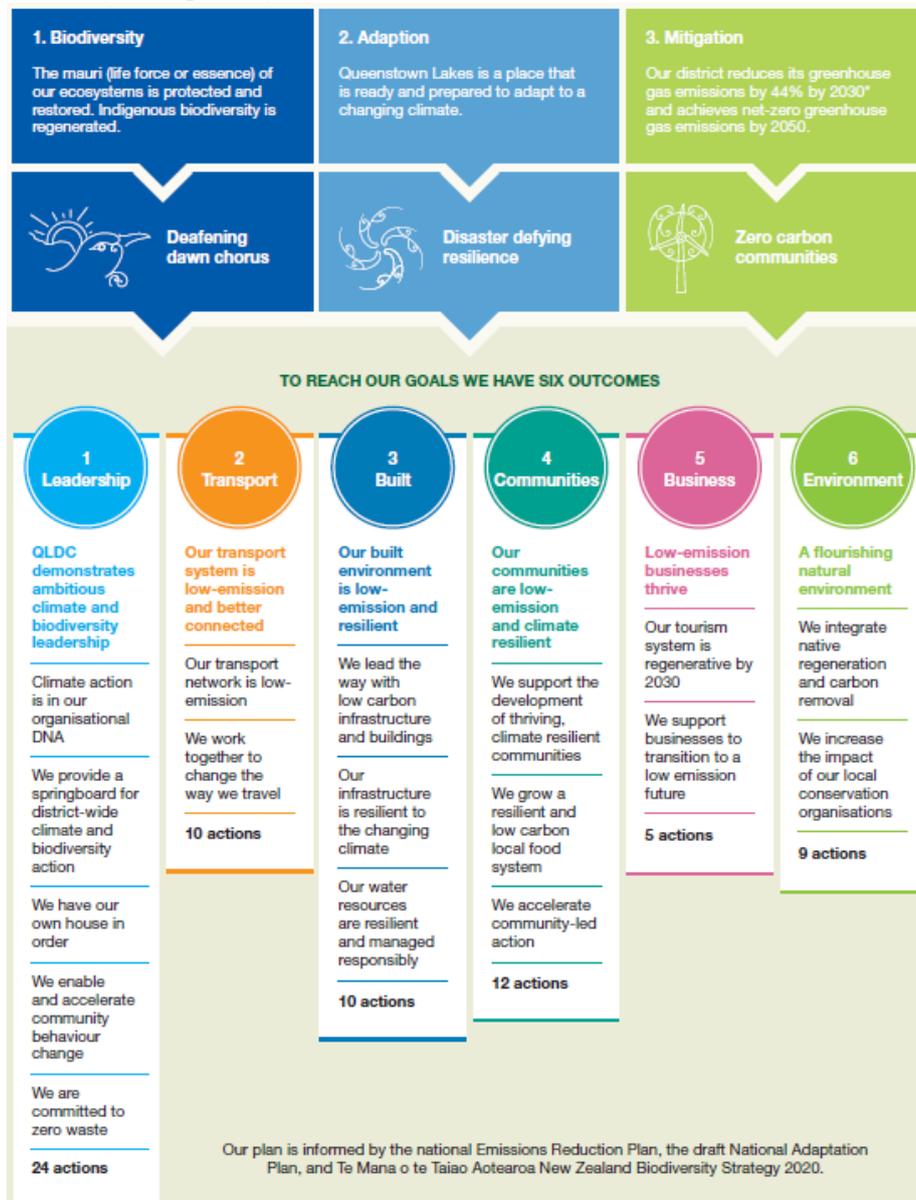


Figure 1: Climate and Biodiversity Plan Structure

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2022-2025: PROGRESS REVIEW

3. To reflect the urgency of the climate and ecological emergency, an ambitious schedule of 70 actions were committed to within the Climate & Biodiversity Plan. Council's delivery performance progress is as follows:
- **56 actions** have been started and are in progress.
 - **7 actions** are complete:
 - 1.1b Council will join a certified carbon reduction programme which includes 2030 emissions reduction targets.
 - 1.5a Conduct a carbon baseline of the 2021-2031 Ten Year Plan.
 - 1.10 Embed climate mitigation and adaptation, waste minimisation and indigenous biodiversity protection into the Planning and Development Policy Work Programme.
 - 1.14 Develop and Emissions Reduction Plan for QLDC operations. Establish the scope of the plan with the boundaries outlined in QLDC's 18/19 Carbon Footprint Report.
 - 2.1e Support local organisations to run public transport trials in the Upper Clutha
 - 4.7 Launch a Queenstown Lakes Food Network that brings together community stakeholders to develop a shared vision of a resilient, low carbon and regenerative local food system.
 - 5.1 Partner with the Regional Tourism Operators to create a Destination Management Plan.
4. The following sections provide updates on progress of key actions for each of the six outcome areas of the Climate & Biodiversity Plan.

OUTCOME 1: QLDC DEMONSTRATES AMBITIOUS CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

5. Outcome 1 involves the greatest number of actions (24) as well as the highest level of budgeted expenditure. This investment reflects the criticality of ensuring that QLDC has its house in order from an emissions management perspective and has successfully embedded climate action and biodiversity restoration into the culture and decision-making processes of the organisation.
6. The execution of this organisational change programme is a complicated challenge, as it involves several intersecting projects that are being managed concurrently. The below diagram illustrates the key elements of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions management framework (Measure, Reduce, Verify, Improve) and the associated projects and contract partners.

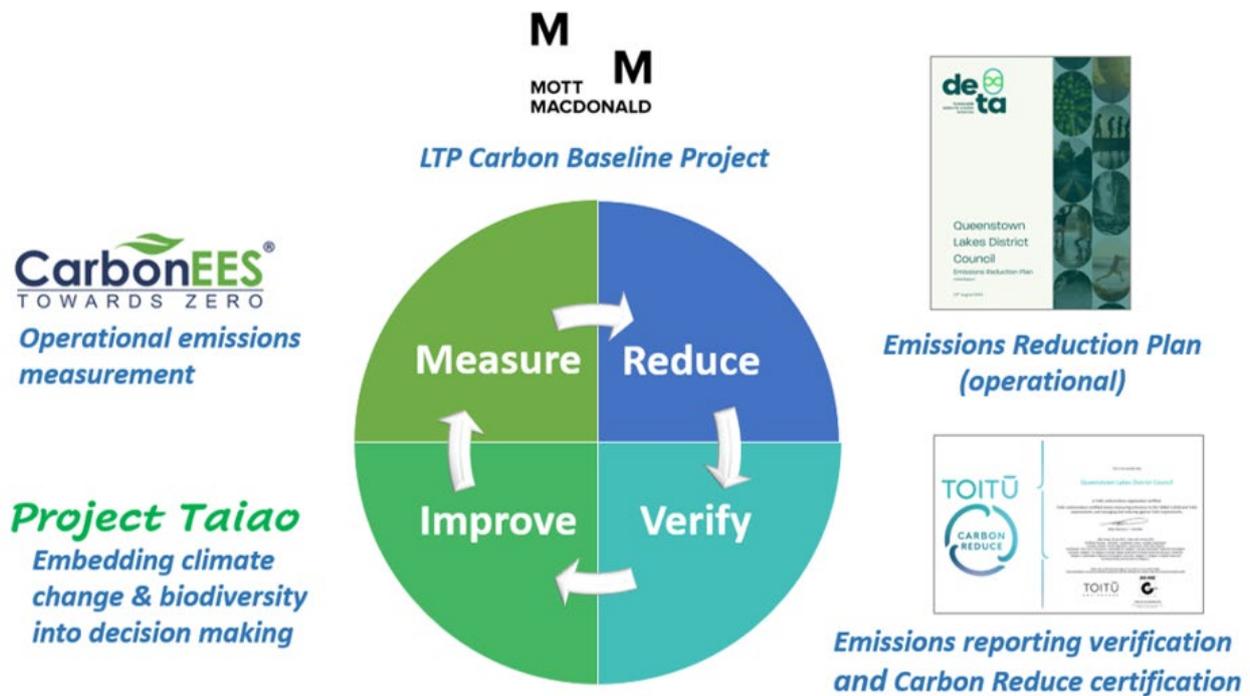


Figure 2: GHG Emissions Management Framework

Action 1.14: Organisation Emissions Reduction Plan

7. The final version of an Organisation Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) for Council’s operational carbon emission was signed off in September and is provided as Attachment A to this report.
8. The ERP evaluates the potential reduction pathways for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions that would allow Council to achieve its target of a 44% reduction against our 2019 baseline.
9. The emission reduction opportunities that were modelled included: conversion of LPG heating at the swimming pools, conversion of the remaining fleet to battery electric vehicles (BEV), building energy efficiency improvements, street lighting conversions, solar system installations, waste water efficiency improvements, renewable energy certificates (RECs) and energy saving from improved water demand management.
10. The results of the modelling for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions (excluding wastewater) are shown in Figure 4. This demonstrates that there is significant potential to reduce emissions through commitment to several key fossil fuel replacement projects.

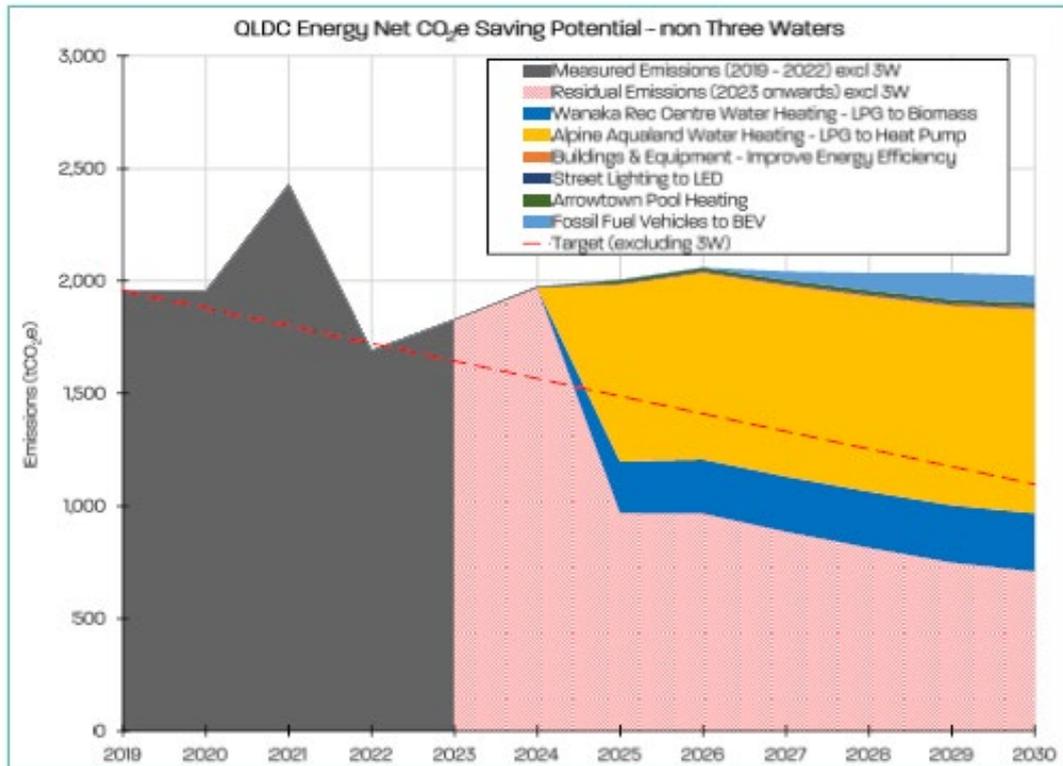


Figure 3: Emissions Reduction Plan- Potential emission reduction pathway to 2030

11. Based on this modelling, the Climate and Biodiversity Plan target of a 44% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (against a 2019 baseline, aligned with the 1.5°C science based target pathway) is achievable.

Target (tCO ₂ e)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Limit warming to well below 2°C	1,957	1,909	1,860	1,811	1,762	1,713	1,664	1,615	1,566	1,517	1,468	1,419
Limit warming to 1.5°C	1,957	1,879	1,801	1,723	1,644	1,566	1,488	1,409	1,331	1,253	1,174	1,096

Figure 4: Annual Science Based Targets (excluded three waters)

12. The ERP is an important document to support Council’s application for Toitū carbonreduce certification as well as any future application that Council may make for a Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) [Climate Action Loans](#).

13. Emissions reduction is a key strategic priority for Council and information on emission reduction opportunities has been fed into the Long Term Plan (LTP) process.

Action 1.1b: GHG emissions verification and carbon reduction certification

14. In May 2023 a team from Toitū Envirocare audited QLDC's organisational GHG emissions for FY2018-19 (baseline year) and FY2019-20 (year 2). The baseline year was selected as a comparison for future years, as it was prior to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 response. QLDC received Toitū [carbonreduce](#) certification in July 2023.
15. A second Toitū audit was completed in September 2023 for the years FY2020-21 (year 3) and FY2021-22 (year 4). Verification of these results is expected to be completed in December 2023. A further audit for FY2022-23 (year 5) will be undertaken in February 2024.
16. The preliminary results show a decrease in all Category 1 emission sources from the baseline year to year 4, with the exception of forestry activities, stationary diesel for heating, and carbon dioxide use for pool water treatment.
17. The harvesting of Coronet Forest commenced in January 2020 and was undertaken to reduce the seed source of wilding pines and allow the land to be replanted in indigenous vegetation. Replanting Coronet Forest with indigenous species (action 6.6a of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan) will remove the carbon emissions associated with harvesting over time, and create a permanent ecological reserve that supports the restoration of the district's biodiversity.
18. To maintain carbonreduce certification QLDC will be audited on an annual basis, with progress tracked towards achieving the targets outlined in the organisational Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) (action 1.14).

Action 1.22- Develop new Climate and Biodiversity Plan website

19. The development of a new website to communicate the progress of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan is a key project that has had to be placed on hold due to resourcing constraints.
20. A reset of the project plan to launch this site has now been completed and work is underway to launch this before Christmas 2023.
21. The website will allow Council to communicate and promote its Climate Action and Biodiversity progress in a more effective manner. The new website will allow regular progress updates on all Climate and Biodiversity Plan actions to be posted, stories of climate and biodiversity success from across the district to be shared, latest news and research on climate and biodiversity to be collated, navigation to partner organisation websites and information to be provided on what individual, business and schools can do to support the achievement of the district's climate and biodiversity goals.

OUTCOME 2: OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEM IS LOW-EMISSION AND BETTER CONNECTED

Action 2.1e- Upper Clutha Community Shuttle Trial

22. Following a successful Community Shuttle Trial by Community Networks/LINK Upper Clutha in 2022, QLDC in conjunction with Lake Wānaka Tourism (LWT), funded a second trial that ran between 29 May and 18 August 2023.
23. The trial was supported by a project team with representatives from QLDC, LWT, Yello, Community Networks/LINK and Otago Regional Council.
24. The aim of this second trial was to test the design options for a potential public transport service in the Upper Clutha and collect further patronage data and feedback to inform long-term public transport planning.
25. Interest in the project has been high across Otago as it delivers upon a key commitment in the [Regional Public Transport Plan](#) (5.3.2) to trial new services models to improve community access to the public transport network.
26. A report on the outputs of this project has now been completed and is provided as Attachment B. This report has been prepared by the Community Networks/LINK project lead and circulated to partner organisations and the media.

OUTCOME 4: OUR COMMUNITIES ARE LOW-EMISSIONS AND RESILIENT

Action 4.6a- Community Climate Adaptation Projects- Wildfire risk

27. A Wildfire Working Group has been established to support the mitigation planning for wildfire risk across Council reserves. There are several workstreams that are being coordinated to support a holistic approach to wildfire risk reduction. These include workstreams on public education and risk communication, business cases for vegetation management and investment in environmental monitoring and early warning detection systems.
28. The project to install Environmental Monitoring systems around both Ben Lomond Reserve and the newly acquired Mt Iron Reserve is progressing well. Five sensors will be installed in late November/Early December around these sites in a project between Spark Innovation Team and [Attentis Environmental Sensors](#).

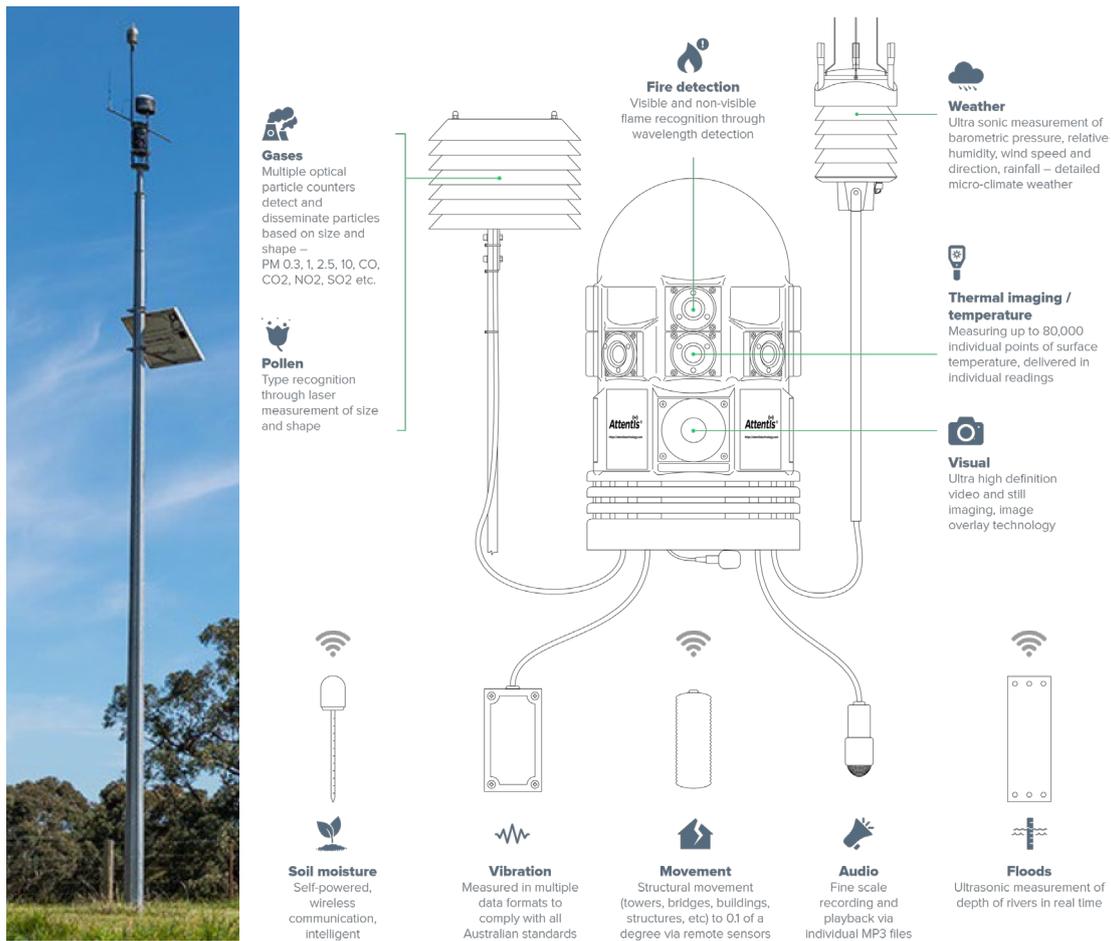


Figure 5: Attentis Intelligent Sensor

29. A [media release](#), [webpage](#) and a series of drop-in sessions have been conducted to share information about the capabilities of the new sensor network.
30. The capability for these sensors to be utilised for monitoring other natural hazard sites, such as landslips is being investigated.

Action 4.6a- Community Climate Adaptation Projects - Glenorchy Head of the Lake Hazards programme

31. Otago Regional Council (ORC) is coordinating the Glenorchy Head of the Lake Hazards Programme, working with QLDC and the local community to discuss the natural hazards issues, and possible future options for the area.
32. The ORC Natural Hazards team provided an update to the ORC Safety and Resilience Committee on 9th November, on the progress of this programme. A link to this report can be [found here](#).
33. The update included details of the community workshops held in late August, the progress of the Social Impact Assessment that is currently being undertaken by Beca Consulting, the outputs from a new Hazard Assessment report into the Buckler Burn and details of the successful application

for a Ministry for Environment Nature Based solutions grant to investigate flood and erosion mitigation on the Dart-Rees flood plain.

34. The report also provides update on the progress towards the development of the Head of Lake Whakatipu natural hazards adaptation strategy. The target date for completion of this strategy is June 2024.

Action 4.8- Queenstown Lakes Food Network

35. In November QLDC launched a new book called “Our Community Kai Story”. The book was created to celebrate the vital role that food plays in connecting our local community and as a

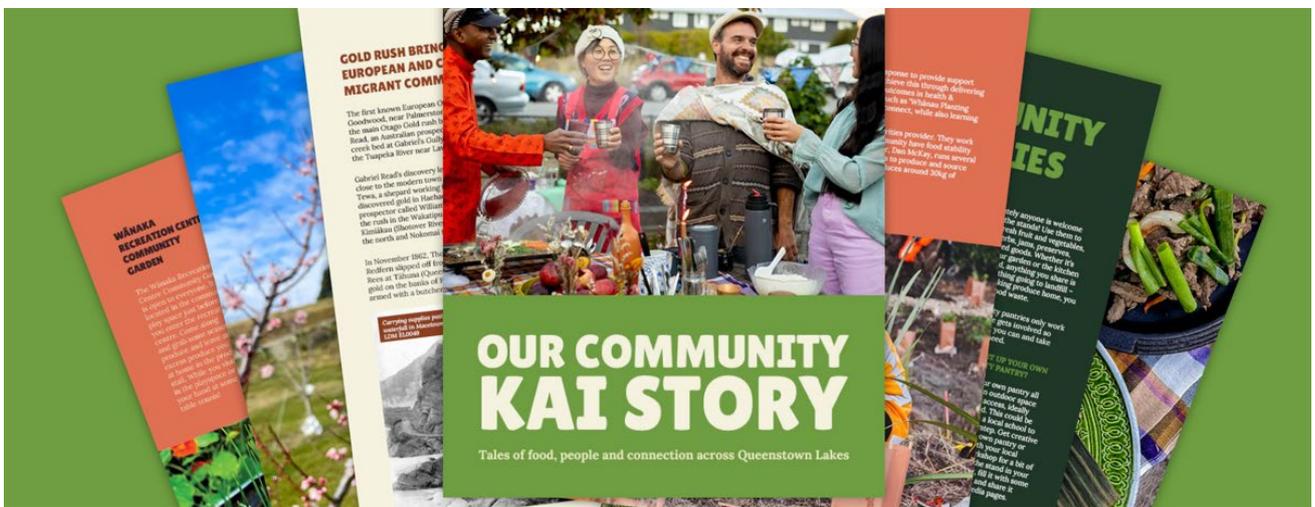


Figure 6: Our Community Kai Story Book

tribute to the collective resilience that was demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

36. The story book was developed and published through funding from the Climate and Biodiversity Plan and supports the following focus areas within Action 4.8:

- a. Community garden initiatives across all communities in the district.
- b. Supporting the Pātaka Kai movement for community pantries.
- c. Increasing the commitment to urban edible planting.
- d. Mapping of fruit and nut foraging sites across the district.
- e. Supporting community education.
- f. Building the capacity of our food recovery and community food services network.

37. Proceeds from the sales of the story book will be donated to KiwiHarvest, a local food rescue organisation dedicated to preventing good food from ending up in waste.

OUTCOME 5: LOW-EMISSION BUSINESSES THRIVE

Action 5.5-Sustainable Event Guide

38. A waste and emission reduction guide for event managers is under development which will bring together best practice guidance from the sector.
39. Industry feedback on the new toolkit will be coordinated and key partner organisations such as Sustainable Queenstown will be involved in its promotion. A workshop will be presented to support event organisers with information on how to run sustainable events.

OUTCOME 6: A FLOURISHING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Action 6.1 Undertake a review of the impact of climate change on indigenous ecosystems in the district

40. QLDC is supporting work to investigate the impacts of climate change on local indigenous ecosystems through an optimal biodiversity mapping project. The research is being led by Wildlands Consultants and project managed by Southern Lakes Sanctuary. A report on the project will be shared with Council in the new year.
41. The aim of the project is to produce an open-source resource that can be used to guide biodiversity planning for the district.
42. The GIS mapping tool and report provide potential habitat and vegetation types, as well as potential predator elimination sites for the Queenstown Lakes District.
43. The project which is nearing completion, is an important foundation piece for a larger programme of activity that relates to the restoration of indigenous ecosystems across the district.

Action 6.2 Integrated Biodiversity Work Programme

44. A review of QLDC's biodiversity commitments in reserve management plans, policies and work programmes is complete. Engagement with community groups, ORC and other conservation organisations is continuing.
45. As part of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan funding, QLDC is supporting several ecological restoration projects with local partner organisations. The following organisations received funding at the end of FY2022-2023:
 - Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust - catchment restoration for Te Wai Whakaata Lake Hayes.
 - Upper Clutha Wilding Tree Group - wilding-tree control on the Mt Iron Reserve to allow for natural revegetation and re-planting
 - WAI Wānaka - Urban Catchment Group are planning, facilitating and preparing sites for maintenance, and conducting water quality monitoring on QLDC managed reserves as agreed with the Council's Parks & Reserves Team.
 - Whakatipu Reforestation Trust - indigenous revegetation projects on QLDC managed reserves within the Whakatipu Basin.

- Te Kākano Aotearoa Trust - indigenous revegetation projects on QLDC reserves in the Upper Clutha Basin.

Action 6.5 Blue-Green Network

46. Boffa Miskell has been engaged to develop the Blue-Green Network, which is a key initiative within both the Spatial plan and Climate & Biodiversity Plan. The Blue Green Network Plan will comprise of a number of Community Open Space Network Plans for each settlement and Priority Development Areas. It will inform the planning for the future open space provision, biodiversity corridors and recreation and ecological connections for communities across the district, focusing on the Priority Development Areas.
47. Wānanga with representatives of mana whenua, and workshops with key stakeholders were held in August to explore issues and aspirations for the Blue-Green Network, test existing gap analysis of the network, explore solutions to address gaps, and identify opportunities for enhanced ecological and recreational connectivity through priority areas and settlements. This is accompanied by online engagement with key stakeholders who were unable to attend the workshops.
48. Wider community engagement for the Blue-Green network will be undertaken early 2024. It is intended that the Blue-Green Network Plans will be an important future mechanism that QLDC will use to determine and prioritise spending on parks, open space, and social infrastructure for the community.

CLIMATE REFERENCE GROUP

49. Following an independent appointment process led by the Governance subcommittee, Dr Leslie Van Gelder was confirmed as the new chairperson for the Climate Reference Group to replace the former chair Bridget Legnavsky.
50. A [media release](#) to recognise this important milestone has been released and the first “reset” meeting of the group was conducted on 19th September.
51. An all-day workshop was held on 26th October during the WAO summit. The workshop provided an opportunity for the group to discuss the key challenges that the district faces, reflect upon the strategic landscape that the group operates within, and align over the priority areas for exploration. Group members were able to attend events and participate in presentations during the summit to help promote the leadership mantle of the Group.
52. Funding for elements of the WAO summit was provided from the Climate & Biodiversity Plan and QLDC Events Grant, with several sessions (e.g. sustainable tourism, construction waste minimisation and community resilience) featuring QLDC staff.

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

53. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy because it is consistent with existing strategy, and does not impact on the objectives set out in the Financial Strategy, Ten Year Plan or Annual Plan. Although the Climate and Biodiversity plan is of high importance to the district and community, the matter is of low significance due to the fact that current progress is aligned with the goals and outcomes of the plan.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

54. The Council has partnered with rūnaka representatives in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-25 and undertakes regular engagement on its progress through the Climate Reference Group.

55. Opportunities for alignment and integration with Kāi Tahu’s Climate Change Strategy Te tāhū o te whāriki are regularly being discussed and explored.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

56. This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK10012 Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.

57. The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing us to implement additional controls for this risk. This shall be achieved through the implementation of the 70 actions with the Climate & Biodiversity Plan. These actions represent a broad risk control response to the challenges associated with emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration.

58. The effectiveness of the implementation of these risk controls is supported through the advisory oversight of the Climate Reference Group and the governance of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

59. There are no variances to operational budgets or resource implications to consider at this time.

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

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

- The Climate and Biodiversity Plan is aligned to the principles of the Vision Beyond 2050, particularly Zero Carbon Communities, Disaster-Defying Resilience and Deafening Dawn Chorus <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
- Related policies, strategies and bylaws (including Management plans) include:

- 2018-48 Infrastructure Strategy
 - 2018 Three Waters Asset Management Plan
 - 2018 Transportation Activity Management Plan
 - 2018 Waste Minimisation and Management Plan
 - The QLDC Disability Policy was considered in the development of the Climate & Biodiversity Plan.
<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/FINAL-Disability-Policy-May-2018.pdf>
 - Further reference to Council policies can be found here: <http://www.qldc.govt.nz/policies>
61. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the above named.
62. This matter is included in the [Long Term Plan](#)
- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive - pg. 5
 - What's Changed?- pg. 19
 - Taking Climate Action pg. 45
 - Disaster Defying Resilience pg. 54
 - Climate Action – pg. 166
 - Risk, Resilience and Climate Action- pg. 167
63. This matter is also included in the [Annual Plan](#)
- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive- pg. 4

Legal Considerations and Statutory Responsibilities | Ka Ture Whaiwhakaaro me kā Takohaka Waeture

64. There are no legal considerations to take into account at this time.
65. The Council has statutory responsibilities under the [Climate Change Response \(Zero Carbon\) Amendment Act 2019](#) as a reporting organisation.

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

66. The recommended option:
- Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The Climate and Biodiversity Plan plays a central role in delivering upon this purpose through its focus on environmental stewardship, community resilience and intergenerational equity;
 - Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
 - Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
 - Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Queenstown Lakes District Council Emissions Reduction Plan- FINAL
B	Community Shuttle Trial- Final Report
