

26 March 2025

██████████
Sent via email to ██████████

LG25-0051 - Council confirms sale of Commonage land block

Dear ████████,

REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION – PARTIAL RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 27 February 2025 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

- 1. How much of the land has been sold over the years i.e., what was the original block vested in 1971?**
- 2. On the prior two occasions you've tried to sell the last tranche, why have the deals not proceeded – were there offers on the table and if so at what value?**

QLDC RESPONSE

Partial release of information

- 1. How much of the land has been sold over the years i.e., what was the original block vested in 1971?**

The Government vested 100 acres (40.47 hectares) of land on the Queenstown Commonage that the Council could develop and sell. While we have not been able to determine when the first stage was developed and sold, we note that stage three was sold in the early 1990's. The last stage (stage 10) was developed and sold in 2002/2003. That brought the total of developed and sold land to 30.8267 hectares, leaving a further 9.64 hectares that Council can develop and sell.

- 2. On the prior two occasions you've tried to sell the last tranche, why have the deals not proceeded – were there offers on the table and if so at what value?**

While the details of previous offers remain confidential due to commercial sensitivity, the site was not sold as no offers met the Council's valuation, which aligned with ratepayers' expectations.

Decision to withhold information

We have good reason under section 7(2)(b) of the LGOIMA for withholding the information requested. We consider it is necessary to withhold this information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 7(2)(b) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect information where the making available of the information—

- (ii) would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

Section 7(2)(b)(ii) of the LGOIMA is intended to protect information whose release could unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of individuals or entities involved. This provision recognises the need to safeguard commercially sensitive data, which is essential for preserving the overall commercial standing of both individuals and businesses.

In this case, the information withheld contains confidential property offers, the release of which could compromise the broader commercial position of the individuals or entities concerned. Disclosing this information could impact the parties' future negotiating positions and expose them to undue risks, potentially affecting their ability to engage in future transactions.

In this case, protecting the commercial interests of the parties involved outweighs any potential public interest in disclosure. Therefore, withholding the requested information is necessary to preserve the integrity of their commercial operations and sustain business confidence.

Public interest considerations

We consider the interests of the public when making decisions to withhold requested information, including considerations in favour of release, whether the disclosure of the information would promote those considerations, and whether those considerations outweighed the need to withhold the information.

Promoting the accountability and transparency of local authority members and officials is in the public interest, as is the public interest in "good government". Where possible, we have favoured the release of information. However, QLDC considers that withholding information to protect the commercial interests of an individual or entity, is a consideration not outweighed by the public interest in favour of its release.

We conclude that the important Section 7 withholding interest identified - to protect the commercial interests of the individual or entity subject to the information - which relate to a subset of the requested information, is a consideration not outweighed by a countervailing public interest requiring release.

Right to review the above decision

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz (Stakeholder and Democracy Services Manager).

We trust the above information satisfactorily answers the relevant components of your request.

Kind regards,

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