

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee

12 September 2024

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [4]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Climate and Biodiversity Plan Update

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of priorities and progress of the Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP) for the period up to August 2024.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:

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

Prepared by:



Name: Bill Nicoll

Title: Resilience & Climate Action Manager

Date: 22 August 2024

Prepared by:



Name: Kirsty Pope

Title: Resilience & Climate Action Advisor

Date: 22 August 2024

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Pennie Pearce

Title: Acting GM Strategy and Policy

Date: 22 August 2024

Context | Horopaki

1. On 27 June 2019 Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. In response to this declaration Council approved the development and adoption of a Climate Action Plan for the period 2019-2022.

2. On 30 June 2022, Council adopted its second [Climate and Biodiversity Plan \(CBP\)](#) for the period 2022-25. This plan sets out how QLDC plans to respond to biodiversity loss and climate change in Queenstown Lakes District, with three goals, six outcomes and over 80 individual actions (see Figure 1).

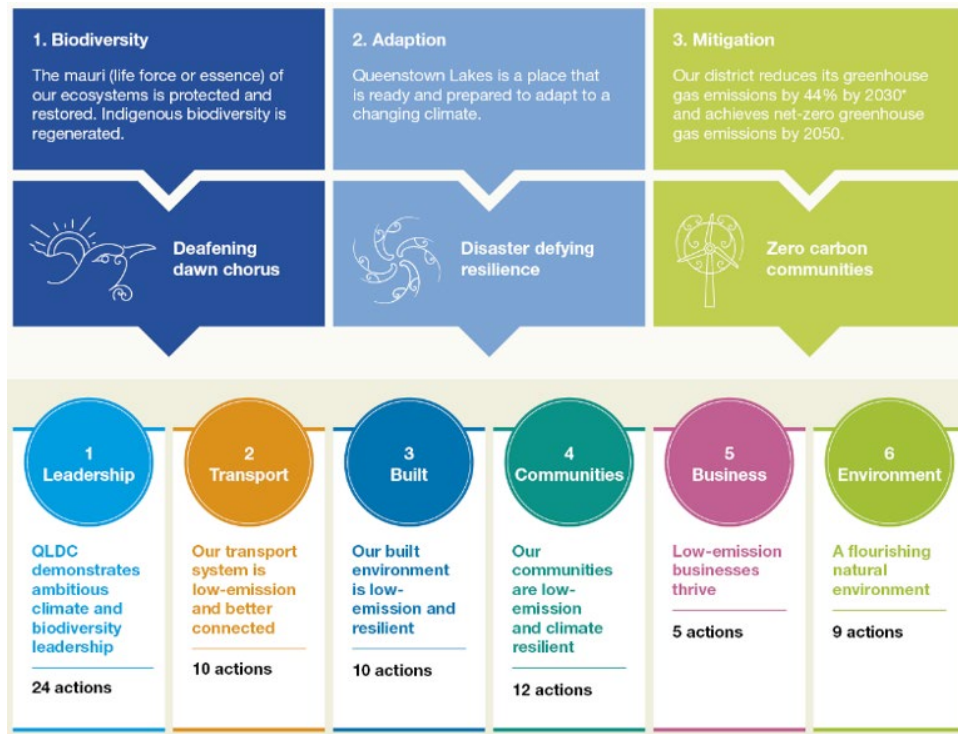


Figure 1: Climate & Biodiversity Plan Structure

3. Council has identified the following climate risks within its Organisation Risk Register. Both the Climate Action Plan 2018-2022 and the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 can be considered as treatment plans for these Tier 1 risks.
- **RISK10012 - Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency**
 - **RISK10059 - Ineffective planning and action to support climate change adaption**

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

CBP PROGRAMME STATUS

4. The status of the CBP programme of actions is detailed in the below table. Of the 81 actions that were committed to, 76 are in a state of completion or in-progress implementation.

ACTION STATUS	Count	%
Complete	19	23%
In progress	57	72%
Not started	2	2%
On hold	2	2%
	81	100%

Actions completed or in progress	76	94%
---	-----------	------------

5. The actions that have been categorised as being completed are listed below:

1.1a	The district will join the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Race to Zero campaign to accelerate the district-wide focus on emissions reduction.	Complete
1.1b	Council will join a certified carbon reduction programme which includes 2030 emissions reduction targets.	Complete
1.1d	Council will partner with local organisations that are leading climate action and sector transformation e.g. Wao, WAI Wānaka, Wastebusters, Sustainable Queenstown, Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism.	Complete
1.4	Establish an internal Climate Action Group with the purpose of supporting significant organisational culture change. Design and deliver a work programme for the group to lead. Example projects include: > Staff travel (e.g. encouraging public transport, walking or cycling). > Energy saving programmes (e.g. staff behaviour change campaign). > Awareness raising and campaigns (e.g. Plastic Free July). > Waste minimisation and circular economy (e.g. reusables). > Sustainable catering and purchasing (e.g. sustainable stationary). > Sustainable catering and purchasing (e.g. sustainable stationary). > Staff volunteering activities (e.g. tree planting).	Complete
1.5a	Conduct a carbon baseline of the 2021-2031 Ten Year Plan.	Complete
1.14a	Develop an Emissions Reduction Plan for QLDC operations. Establish the scope of the plan with the boundaries outlined in QLDC's 18/19 Carbon Footprint Report. Align targets with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.	Complete
1.14b	Organisational GHG emissions measurement and reporting (FY 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22)	Complete
1.15a	The Climate Action Team being a key partner in the development of the next 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy.	Complete
1.22	Develop a new website to improve our ability to communicate the progress of our Climate & Biodiversity action plan, celebrate the successes that are occurring across the district and share resources to support and accelerate change.	Complete
1.24	Increase funding for the Waste Minimisation Community Fund and continue to support local waste minimisation projects.	Complete
2.1e	Support local organisations to run public transport trials in the Upper Clutha (2022 – 2027).	Complete
2.6	QLDC expects the Queenstown Airport Corporation (QAC) to action the following as defined by QAC Statement of Intent: a. Develop an emissions reduction plan to reduce its organisational greenhouse gas emissions in line with a 1.5°C science-based target (2022-23). b. Implement the emissions reduction plan and report on progress annually. c. Advocate to government for sustainable aviation emissions reduction strategies. d. Work collaboratively with the aero industry and airlines to maximise the opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint associated with flying into and out of the district.	Complete
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.	Complete
4.9	Support composting, gardening skills, food growing hubs and the development of community composting.	Complete

4.11	Invest in a Council Climate Action contestable fund to support innovative community and business projects that respond to climate change	Complete
5.1	Partner with the Regional Tourism Operators to create a Destination Management Plan to achieve regenerative tourism by 2030.	Complete
5.3	Develop a Diversification Plan that includes climate action as a key principle.	Complete
5.5	Develop a sustainability plan template with guidelines for event organisers and embed this into the processes for QLDC’s event approval and funding.	Complete
6.9	Invest in a Council Biodiversity contestable fund to support innovative community and business projects that respond to biodiversity loss and restoration.	Complete

6. The actions categorised as being on-hold or not started are listed below. The reasons for their inactive status relate to internal resourcing constraints (1.11, 3.10), a discontinuation of the programme (2.10) or a timing delay in establishing partnership with National Public Health Service (4.2)¹.

1.11	Develop and implement a standard method of assessment of climate and biodiversity impacts and opportunities in the review of policies and bylaws.	On Hold
2.10	Partner with the Government to deliver a light vehicle usage reduction programme in Queenstown (contingent on Central Government funding of National ERP action 10.1.2A).	On Hold
3.10	Investigate options for incentivising the installation of residential rainwater collection tanks to help reduce the burden on stormwater networks and support water conservation.	Not Started
4.2	Undertake a study of the socio-economic and community wellbeing implications of climate change for the district, to help support future planning around climate adaptation and an equitable transition for all members of our community.	Not Started

7. Commentary updates on all CBP actions are published quarterly in the following section of the Climate Action website: [Our Actions | Climate Action and Biodiversity \(qldc.govt.nz\)](https://qldc.govt.nz/our-actions/climate-action-and-biodiversity). These commentaries can be accessed by clicking on the “+” symbol under the Update icon within each action.

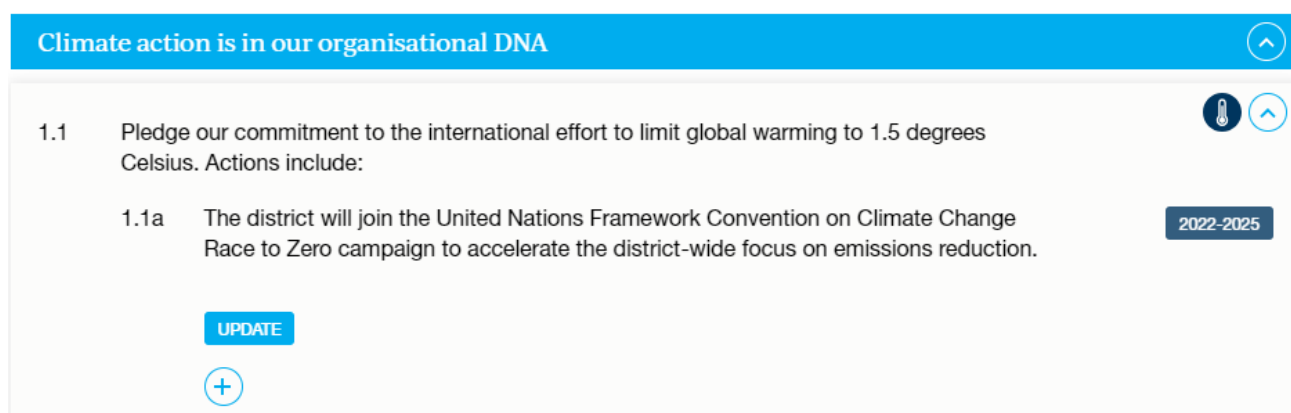


Figure 2: Climate Action Webpage action example

¹ NPHS have confirmed their commitment to help deliver action 4.2 in their 2024-2034 LTP submission.

8. The following sections provide a more detailed update on progress that is being made towards the realisation of CBP outcomes.

OUTCOME 1: QLDC DEMONSTRATES AMBITIOUS CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Climate action is in our organisational DNA

9. A major area of focus for the Resilience and Climate Action team has been on supporting the culture change transition to embed climate and biodiversity action into the “DNA” of the organisation. Although such culture shift transitions are difficult to measure, the following updates provide evidence of the positive progress that is being made.
10. In the draft Long Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 Council acknowledges the importance of climate action, details a number of key assumptions relating to climate change and biodiversity loss, and commits to a broad range of climate action priorities within the activity management plans of the organisation. These commitments to climate action were audited as a key area of focus by Deloitte, who provided positive feedback with no findings to report.
11. The 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy has also been developed with a strong focus on climate action and biodiversity considerations. This is exemplified by the first two significant decision areas of the 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy being: 1) Responding to natural hazard risks and the effects of climate change, and 2) Reducing infrastructure’s impact on the environment. Also for the first time Council has included Social Infrastructure within the scope of the strategy which means that natural resources such as parks and community spaces are considered equally with the built environment.
12. Council is taking steps to embed climate action, resilience and a commitment to the natural environment across its strategic planning framework. In the coming year a number of key strategic plans will be developed and efforts are underway to ensure that these are aligned and integrated around the common outcomes and priorities that are anchored by the QLDC Strategic Framework (Figure 3). These plans include the next Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028, Spatial Plan Gen. 2 (Future Development Strategy), Blue Green Network and the next Waste Minimisation and Management Plan. A focus is also being applied to how the plans of key partners such Kāi Tahu [Te Kounga Paparangi](#) and the district’s [Destination Management Plan](#) can be supported and enabled.

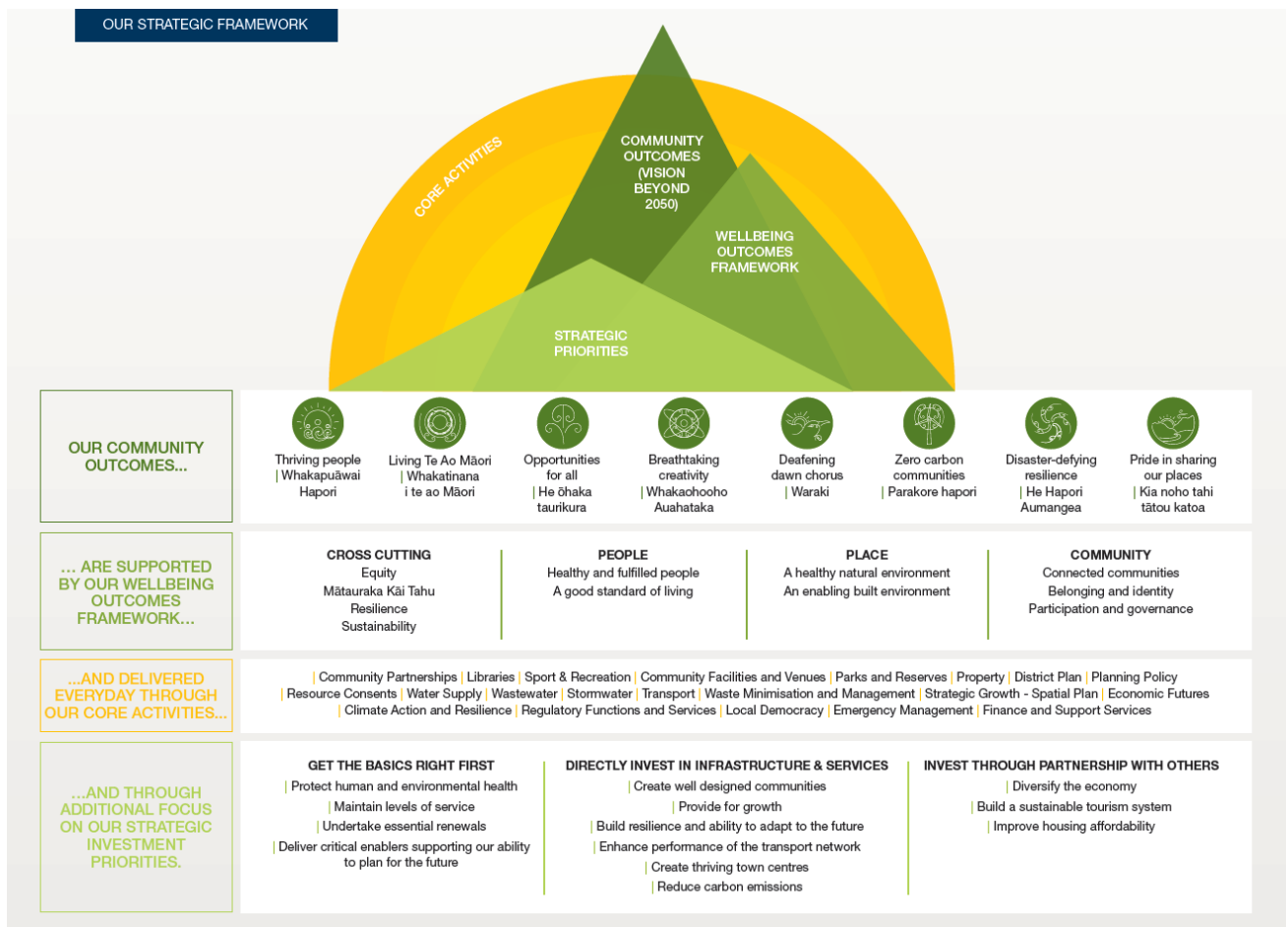


Figure 3: QLDC Strategic Framework

- Council is also taking steps to review and improve its operational processes in support of climate and biodiversity actions. An independent review of the current state of climate change and biodiversity decision-making across the organisation has been completed, alongside an analysis of global leading practice. This investigation has identified a number of areas of opportunity for new tools, frameworks, templates and information that will help ensure that climate and biodiversity considerations are factored into Council processes and decision-making. Work is now underway to assess the change management process for how these tools, guidance resources and sustainable project management methodologies can be embedded into business as usual.
- Council is also coordinating a staff-led approach to culture change through the volunteer group Rauhi. This group of committed staff are supporting and leading a range of internal sustainability and climate action themed campaigns such as Aotearoa Bike Challenge, Plastic Free July and implementation of the Workplace Travel Plan (currently being reviewed). The group focuses on delivering fun activities that enhance our values and culture, build awareness of wellbeing and sustainability issues and drive change.

We provide a springboard for district-wide climate & biodiversity action

15. Council has committed to support and partner with local organisations who are leading the way in terms of climate action, biodiversity restoration and community resilience leadership across the district. A major fulfilment of this commitment came during the recent 2024-2027 Community Fund.
16. As part of the Community Grants process, QLDC provided an additional \$200,000 in funding from the Climate and Biodiversity budget towards a wide range of organisations that support biodiversity, food resilience, zero waste, and sustainability initiatives across the district. The allocation of this funding was aligned with actions 4.11 and 6.9 within the CBP.
17. The recipients of this additional funding included the following organisations: Te Tapu ō Tane, Tucker Beach Wildlife Trust, KiwiHarvest, Food for Love, Grow Wānaka Community Garden, WAO, Southern Lakes Sanctuary, WAI Wānaka, Mana Tāhuna, Te Kākano Aotearoa Trust, Sustainable Glenorchy, Baskets of Blessings Charitable Trust, Whakatipu Reforestation Trust and Glenorchy Nursery.

We have our own house in order

18. The Resilience and Climate Action team have been coordinating an organisational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions auditing programme with Toitū Envirocare for all annual Council emissions dating back to a baseline year of 2018-2019. The setting of a baseline year allows us to establish and measure progress towards reduction targets, and 2018-2019 was selected to align with Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, and to avoid the disruptive conditions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.
19. The auditing and certification of these annual emissions is now fully up to date with Council receiving Carbonreduce recertification for the FY2022-2023 in July.
20. Preparations are now underway for the audit of the FY2023-2024 GHG inventory which will occur in November 2024.
21. The Toitū reporting confirms that Council is making progress towards reducing its scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions through incremental performance improvements across the organisation. It is noted that while positive, these will be insufficient to achieve the targets of 44% emissions reduction by 2030 that have been committed to for the Carbonreduce certification and CBP goals. To reach this target investment in clean energy projects, such as the LPG conversion of swimming pool heating will be required. This project has been consulted on as part of the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan and staff are awaiting the outcome of the deliberations.

22. We enable and accelerate community behaviour change

23. Quarterly updates and latest news and articles continue to be provided on the Climate & Biodiversity website. These can be found here: <https://climateaction.qldc.govt.nz/latest-updates/>

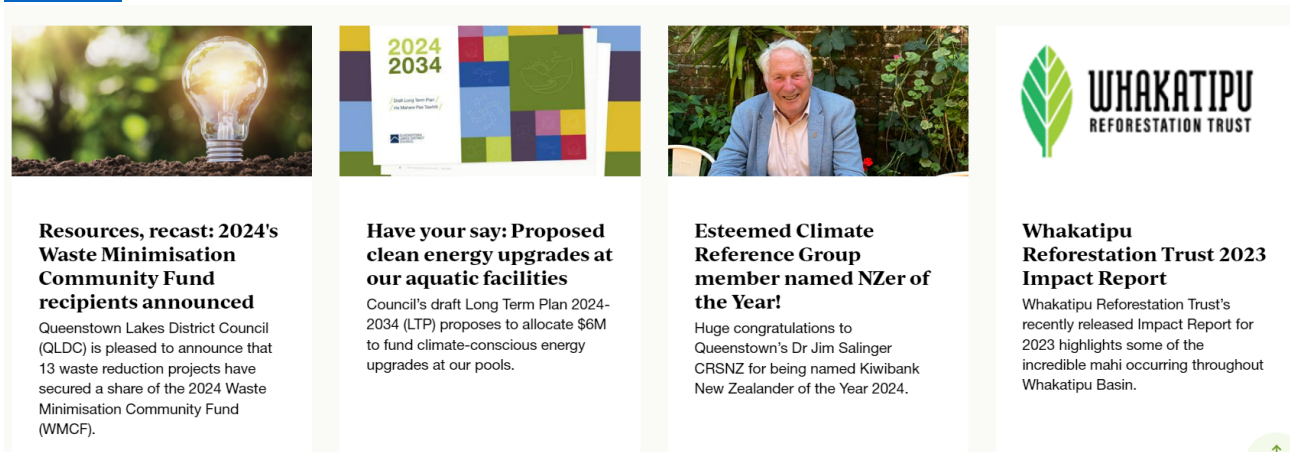


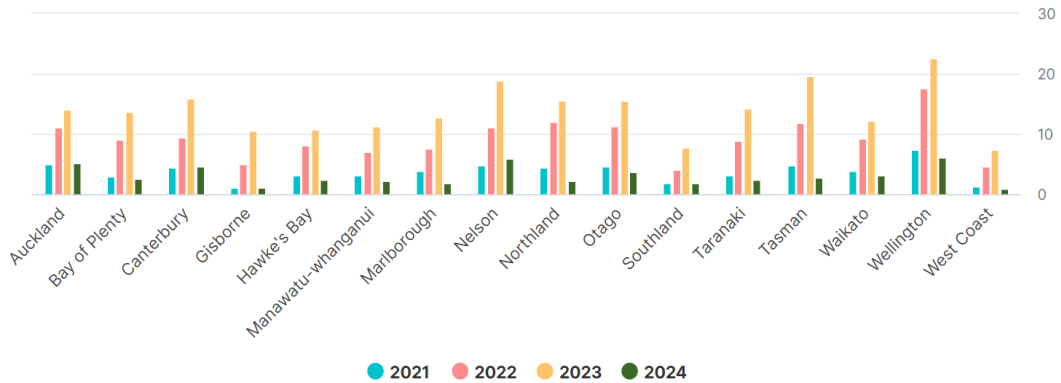
Figure 4. Latest updates page with a selection of articles available in our newsletter.

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

Our transport network is low-emission

24. The topic of EV charging infrastructure has received a high level of interest of late at both a central government and local level.
25. From a central government perspective the [National Charging Strategy](#) was released last year (see [QLDC Submission here](#)) and this was closely followed by the release of the National party policy commitment for [Supercharging EV Infrastructure](#). This policy has now been included within the draft [2nd National Emissions Reduction Plan \(ERP\)](#) as a “Pillar of transport decarbonisation” with a commitment to install a network of 10,000 public charge points by 2030.
26. To enable this commitment the ERP describes a work programme that will involve central government facilitating private investment through removal of regulatory hurdles, improvements to standards, and working with Electricity Authority and a new cross-agency taskforce to create a more enabling environment for installations.
27. Local government are being encouraged to support this enabling approach by integrating EV charging considerations into their strategic planning and supporting a partnered approach to delivery of local EV charging projects.
28. Council is well aligned with these recommendations as it has already begun to factor EV charging into its strategic planning e.g. Parking Strategy work programme, and is working closely with partners in the energy sector to evaluate potential projects and model the potential demand scenarios associated with the decarbonisation of the district’s light vehicle fleet.
29. To help forecast future requirements Council is tracking the progress of the district’s transition to alternate fuel vehicles (see figure 5) and investigating options to identify key sector partners who can assist with the expansion of the local EV charging network.

Percentage of light vehicles



Light vehicles registered 12 months to July 2024					
	Market Share	Ranking in NZ	BEV	PHEV	All
Queenstown	5.8%	9th	18	27	778
Wānaka	4%	22nd	9	7	400

Figure 5. EV market share by region and town
(Source: [EVDB: EV market share by region](#))

OUTCOME 3: OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT IS LOW-EMISSION AND RESILIENT

We lead the way with low carbon infrastructure and buildings

30. QLDC continues to support the Superhome Movement in review of their Superhome Design Guide and develop the SuperReno Design Guide. Both guides will provide advice on building sustainably and improving the performance of homes, using the 'Base', 'Better', 'Best' benchmarks.
31. Research into potential barriers in the District Plan to small scale and community scale renewable electricity generation is being undertaken by a Massey University Master of Resource and Environmental Planning student as a Professional Inquiry project.

Our infrastructure is resilient to the changing climate

32. Council is partnering with Transpower, Aurora, Powernet and other industry stakeholders to develop a forecast of future peak electricity demand scenarios for the district. A working group has developed a range of scenarios for different population and economic growth and decarbonisation pathways out to 2050. These scenarios provide insight into the potential scale and timing of power infrastructure investment as well as the critical role that flexible demand management (e.g. managed EV charging) will play in reducing peak levels of electricity demand.
33. QLDC is also supporting several cross-sector working groups that are evaluating future decarbonisation options for transport pathways for the district. This includes working with partners to support Project 9 initiatives within the Destination Management Plan (e.g. Electrify Queenstown event), working with regional council to support decarbonisation of the public transport fleet, supporting QAC with their decarbonisation planning and investigation of alternate offline transport solutions for the district.

OUTCOME 4: OUR COMMUNITIES ARE LOW-EMISSION AND CLIMATE RESILIENT

We support the development of thriving, climate resilient communities

- 34. QLDC continues to work closely with Emergency Management Otago to build the capability and capacity of the local Community Response Group network and to support education and community resilience development across the district.
- 35. The tracking of group development in terms of ‘forming’, ‘training’ and ‘fully operational’ is being monitored by Emergency Management Advisors, with new dashboard functionality to support the sharing of information currently under development.

Queenstown Lakes

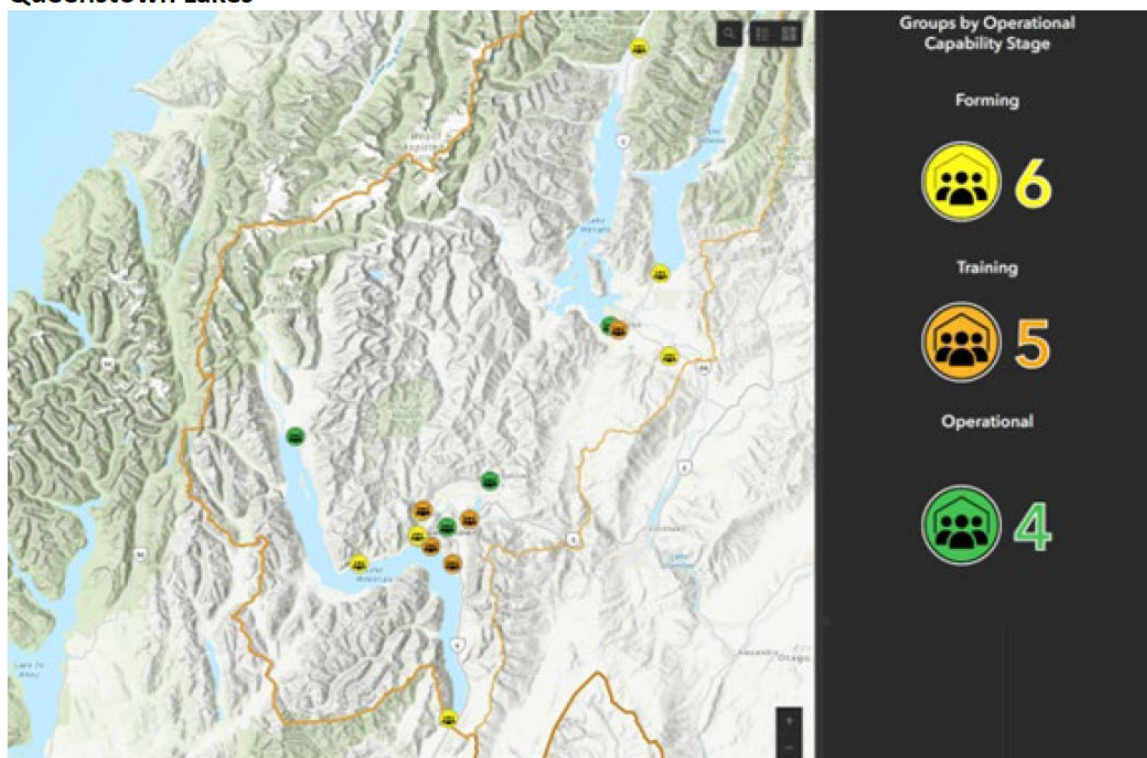


Figure 5. Community Response Group development across the district

- 36. Emergency Management Otago have also recently published a new [Otago Community Resilience Strategy](#). The Strategy presents a model for the development of community response capability based on the following maturity phases:

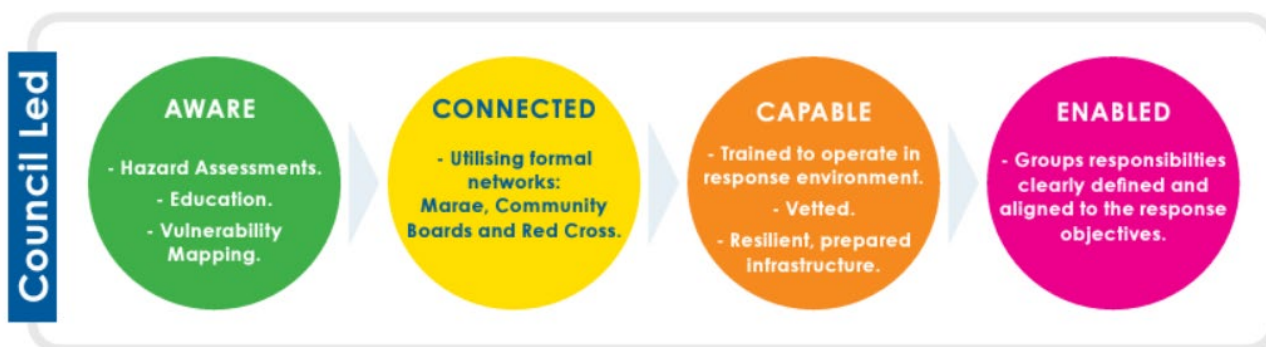


Figure 6. Community response capability model

37. Strong progress is being made with supporting the capability development of groups across the district. A wide range of education workshops and technical training sessions have been completed with groups that have enabled Community Emergency Preparedness brochures to be developed and distributed to communities. Examples of these resources can be found here: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/community/emergency-management/community-response-groups/>
38. In July and August caches of over \$40,000 in emergency equipment were also distributed to a number of Community Response Groups across the district. Included within the cache of equipment were generators, solar eco-flow batteries, lighting equipment, heaters, whiteboards, first aid kits and large gear boxes. This equipment will add to the VHF radio equipment that was purchased in the last financial year.

We grow a resilient and low carbon local food system

39. The Queenstown Lakes Food Resilience Project is progressing well. The first two workshops in phase 2 of the project were held in May. The workshops involved group discussion over membership and brainstorming of potential initiatives to enhance the resilience and capacity of the local food system. The group has now been renamed as the Southern Lakes Kai Collective (SLKC) and will be meeting again later in September.

OUTCOME 6: A FLOURISHING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

We increase the impact of our local conservation organisations

40. Over the past few months, the Resilience and Climate Action team has supported and coordinated the development of Te Rōpu Whakamana te Taiao. The purpose of the group is to transform the long-term economic prosperity of the district's conservation sector so that it has the capacity to protect, restore and enhance Te Taiao for future generations. The group will support the delivery of actions within the Climate and Biodiversity Plan, Economic Diversification Plan and Destination Management Plan.
41. Members from various QLDC teams also recently took part in the initial hui for the [Otago Regional Council \(ORC\) Integrated Catchment Management Plan](#) programme which has recently been launched for the Queenstown Lakes District. The aim of the programme is to 'Create a catchment action plan through an integrated, ki uta ki tai (from mountains to sea) approach, recognising all parts of the system have a relationship with each other. A focus on community, iwi and stakeholder values, with practical action to have positive impacts for te taiao (the environment)'.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

42. 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, Long Term 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

43. 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 with representations from Aukaha and Te Ao Marama within the Climate Reference Group.
44. Opportunities for alignment and integration with Kāi Tahu's Climate Change Strategy Te tāhū o te whāriki are being discussed and explored.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

45. 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.
46. 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 and Biodiversity Plan. These actions represent a broad risk control response to the challenges associated with emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration.
47. 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 & Risk Committee.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

48. 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

49. 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:
 - Draft 2024-2034 Long Term Plan
 - Draft 2024-205430 Year Infrastructure Strategy
 - 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>

50. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the above named.

51. 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

52. 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

53. There are no legal considerations to take into account at this time.

54. 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

55. 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.
-