

To   Kī a	ALL MEDIA
From   Nā	QLDC Communications
Date   Te rā	Monday, 18 October 2021

## New initiative helping businesses and schools target net zero carbon emissions

---

The Wao Climate Action Initiative from local environmental not-for-profit group Wao Aotearoa is giving local businesses and schools the knowledge and tools to calculate their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and take action to reduce them.

The group is working with regional tourism organisations Destination Queenstown (DQ) and Lake Wānaka Tourism (LWT), and Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) who are jointly funding the project.

Wao Aotearoa board member and IPCC Lead Author Dr. Carly Green said the project's vision is to accelerate the district towards net zero carbon emissions and help build a regenerative community.

"The aim of the Climate Action Initiative is to establish a district-wide baseline for GHG emissions and support everyone in the community to make a meaningful impact on reducing them. It will build on work already being done by some businesses, individuals and organisations, including in the rural sector which is being supported by Wai Wānaka, another local non-profit," she said.

"We're especially keen to work with smaller, tourism-related businesses that want to make measurable changes but may be unsure how to begin. The learnings we gain from working with an initial group of 20 will help us create resources that can be used by organisations across all different sectors. Similarly our schools toolkit will ultimately be available to others across the country via the national EnviroSchools programme."

QLDC Climate Action Programme Manager Katherine Durman said the project aligns closely with Vision Beyond 2050 and the Queenstown Lakes District Climate Action Plan.

"Two of the statements within Vision Beyond 2050 are zero carbon communities and deafening dawn chorus, while the Climate Action Plan sets out how we will achieve our goals of net zero

carbon emissions by 2050 across the whole district and be resilient to the local impact of climate change,” she said.

The Wao Climate Action Initiative is split into two phases: ‘Calculate for Climate’, an initial period to set the overall context and gather data, followed by ‘Fast Track to Neutral’ featuring a series of workshops and resources to help participants work through emission reduction strategies and develop their own reduction response plan.

DQ and LWT are helping identify local businesses that meet three criteria, namely that they are locally owned and operated, motivated by taking collective action and don’t currently keep an inventory of their emissions.

DQ Chief Executive Paul Abbot and LWT General Manager Tim Barke said in addition to the Wao Climate Action Initiative the organisations were currently working together to develop a destination management plan for the whole district based on the concept of regenerative tourism.

“Regenerative tourism means creating value in a way that ultimately makes our home a better place over time. Work like the Wao initiative and the destination management plan will help us achieve that,” said Mr. Abbot.

“The first step in reducing greenhouse gases is measuring our current emissions. The work of local organisations like Wao Aotearoa will help us make real progress toward net zero,” said Mr. Barke.

Businesses and schools involved in the project will be invited to participate in a dedicated event at the forthcoming Wao Summit to be held in Wānaka from 26-31 October.

“By connecting businesses with students we hope to encourage intergenerational collaboration and foster a group of informed young people entering the workplace with the knowledge and passion to create real change locally and further afield,” said Dr. Green.

## **ENDS | KUA MUTU.**

QLDC media contact: [communications@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:communications@qldc.govt.nz) or call 03 441 1802.

Wao Aotearoa media contact: Arna Craig – [arna@wao.co.nz](mailto:arna@wao.co.nz) or call 022 0684968.

DQ media contact: Lu Morris – [lum@queenstownNZ.nz](mailto:lum@queenstownNZ.nz) or call 03 441 0700.

LWT media contact: Gizelle Regan – [gizelle@wanaka.co.nz](mailto:gizelle@wanaka.co.nz) or call 03 443 1001.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION | KĀ PĀROKO TĀPIRI:**

- Full details about Wao Summit 2021 are available at [www.wao.co.nz/summit2021](http://www.wao.co.nz/summit2021)
- For information about the Queenstown Lakes District Climate Action Plan visit <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/your-council/our-vision-mission/climate-action-plan>
- For information about Vision Beyond 2050 visit <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/your-council/our-vision-mission>
- For information about the destination management plan for the district and regenerative tourism visit [www.regenerativetourism.co.nz](http://www.regenerativetourism.co.nz)