

Love Queenstown
Annual Impact Report
2025-26





Protecting the environment at the heart of our home – now and into the future.



About

Love Queenstown exists to accelerate grassroots environmental action through visitor and industry engagement, enabling tourism to enrich our rohe (region) long into the future.

Our kaupapa has an intergenerational focus: how can we be good tūpuna (ancestors) and create the foundations for a thriving future long after we are gone?

Key objectives

Raise funds and awareness for grassroots environmental action.

Educate and inspire our visitors.

Create a culture of giving within our visitor industry.

Introduction



“For our community to reach its goals, we must be innovative, dedicated, and focused.

Love Queenstown is an excellent example of this – demonstrating the power of collaboration and the immense potential we have to benefit our communities indefinitely.

We are so proud to partner with Love Queenstown and look forward to working together into the future”

Jennifer Belmont
Chief Executive
45South Community Foundation

Over the past year, Love Queenstown has further strengthened its role as a platform for community-led environmental action, connecting visitors, businesses and locals with opportunities to make a positive contribution to our rohe.

Along the way, we've welcomed new partners, increased funding, and created more opportunities for visitors and businesses to connect with and give back to this special place of ours.

What inspires us most is the passion and commitment of the organisations, businesses and individuals leading this mahi. From restoring native habitats and improving freshwater health to protecting biodiversity and inspiring environmental stewardship, their work is creating lasting benefits for our environment and community.

While there's still much to do, it's so encouraging to see the momentum building. Every partnership, donation, volunteer hour and conversation strengthens a culture of care and commitment.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey over the past year - we truly couldn't do it without you.

Kā mihi nui,

Ash Bickley
Community Fund Coordinator

By the numbers FY23-26



\$124,570 in
Impact Grants

\$60,465 FY26



\$32,785 invested
for the future

\$15,115 FY26



285+ industry
donors & partners

250 FY26



9,150+ native
trees planted

2,680 FY26



350+ volunteer
opportunities shared

105 FY26



8.6m+
people reached

1.6m FY26

2026 Impact Grants



\$60,465
granted to the
community to
support local
environmental
efforts.

Whakatipu Reforestation Trust - Native Plant Monitoring Programme

The Whakatipu Reforestation Trust has spent more than a decade restoring native biodiversity across the Whakatipu Basin through revegetation, education, collaboration and community action.

A \$9,000 Impact Grant will support the ongoing maintenance of approximately 140,000 native plants already established across restoration sites throughout the district. While planting days are often the most visible part of restoration, years of follow-up care are needed to ensure plants survive and thrive.

Funding will support essential work including weeding, mulching, fencing checks and pest control, helping protect thousands of volunteer hours and years of community investment. By caring for these sites as they mature, the Trust is creating healthier habitats for native wildlife and resilient pockets of native forest for future generations.



"It's easy to fall in love with Queenstown's birds, but our lizards deserve just as much attention, and this grant helps us make sure they get it. Ngā mihi nui to the Love Queenstown team for backing this often-overlooked corner of our biodiversity" -

Anna Harding-Shaw, Whakatipu Wildlife Trust.

Whakatipu Wildlife Trust - Whakatipu Lizard Project

The Whakatipu Wildlife Trust works across the basin to protect native wildlife through predator control, biodiversity monitoring, education and community involvement.

A \$9,000 Impact Grant will support the Whakatipu Lizard Project, delivered in partnership with Southern Lakes Sanctuary. Following a successful pilot that included the discovery of threatened cryptic skinks at Jardine Park, the project will expand monitoring across three restoration sites while recruiting and training community volunteers.

The work aims to better understand how predator control supports native lizard populations and to raise awareness of these often-overlooked taonga species. As well as contributing valuable scientific knowledge, the project helps connect people with the native wildlife living in some of the basin's most visited landscapes.

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Arrowtown Choppers - Restoring Native Forest in Arrowtown

Arrowtown Choppers is a community-led organisation dedicated to restoring the hills behind Arrowtown through wilding tree removal and native forest regeneration.

Since 2020, its biennial Beech Party has brought together volunteers from across the community to plant more than 30,000 native trees around the Sawpit Gully Track.

An \$8,690 Impact Grant will support the 2027 Beech Party by funding key consumables - including protective guards - for nearly 3,000 native seedlings.

This support significantly improves survival rates during the plants' most vulnerable years, helping create healthy, self-sustaining native forest.

The project continues to combine practical environmental action with community participation, giving locals, schools, businesses and visitors an opportunity to leave a lasting positive impact on the landscape.



"Huge mihi (thanks) to Love Queenstown for our funding this year and our very kind award of the Partners' Choice grant. We are so lucky to receive this support to help restore Wai Whakaata and involve our wonderful businesses and communities. We can't wait to get started!" –

Alice Lord, Mana Tāhuna.

Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust - Restoring the Mauri of Wai Whakaata

Mana Tāhuna works to strengthen the wellbeing of people and place by weaving Te Ao Māori and mātauranga Māori into environmental and community initiatives.

An \$8,945 Impact Grant will support the planting of around 1,000 Carex and other native species along the edges of Wai Whakaata / Lake Hayes, one of the Basin's most treasured freshwater ecosystems.

Carex is a natural filter, trapping sediment and nutrients before they reach the water - helping improve water quality and support native fish and birdlife across the lake edge.

Schools, businesses, community volunteers and visitors will all have opportunities to get involved, helping restore the health and mauri of the lake while building a locally sourced supply of native plants for future restoration efforts.

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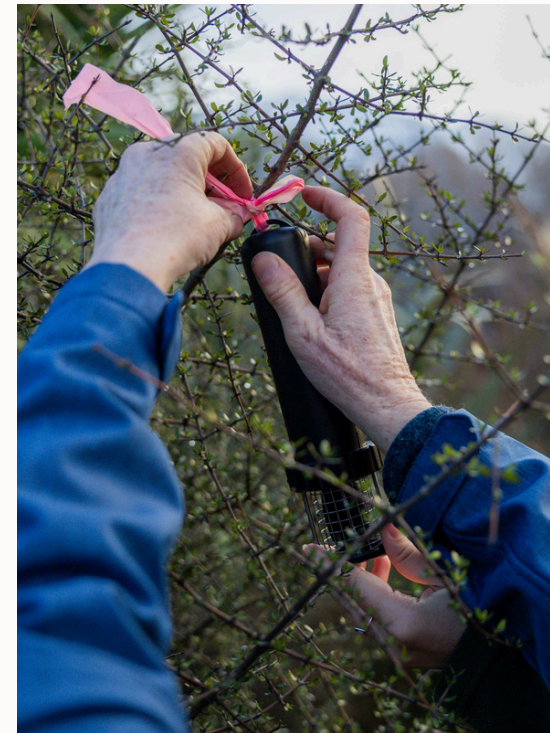
Tucker Beach Wildlife Trust - Protecting Braided River Wildlife

Tucker Beach Wildlife Trust restores and protects the Tucker Beach Wildlife Reserve through habitat restoration, pest control, wildlife monitoring and community engagement.

A \$6,500 Impact Grant will support ongoing rabbit control efforts across 37 hectares of the reserve. Rabbits damage restoration plantings, disturb nesting habitat and attract predators into sensitive braided river ecosystems.

By reducing rabbit numbers, the project will help protect threatened native bird species, including banded dotterels, while supporting the long-term success of habitat restoration work already underway.

The reserve is visited by thousands of people each year and provides valuable opportunities for learning, volunteering and connecting with one of the region's most unique ecological environments.



"We are so grateful to be receiving this funding that allows us to build on the previous two years' worth of work in dark skies biodiversity monitoring. This year, we'll get to put bat monitoring literally into the hands of our community members who will be able to go out and listen for the bats both at home and out in the hills and help grow our kete of knowledge" -

Leslie Van Gelder, Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Skies Group.

Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Skies Group - Discovering the Creatures of the Night

The Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Skies Group helps protect the internationally recognised Tāhuna Glenorchy Dark Sky Sanctuary while inspiring people to learn about the wildlife that thrives beneath its night skies.

A \$5,520 Impact Grant will support the group's Creatures of the Night project, combining biodiversity monitoring with hands-on community education.

Activities include bat monitoring, moth and lizard surveys, citizen science opportunities, educational resources and interactive tools designed to engage both residents and visitors.

Building on previous conservation successes, the project will help deepen understanding of Glenorchy's unique nocturnal ecosystems while encouraging more people to play an active role in protecting them.

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Whakatipu Wilding Control Group - Equipping Community Conservation

Whakatipu Wilding Control Group is a community-led charity working to protect the Whakatipu's iconic landscapes and alpine biodiversity from invasive wilding conifers.

Volunteers are at the heart of this work, contributing thousands of hours each year to controlling one of the region's most significant environmental threats.

A \$3,680 Impact Grant will help replace ageing volunteer tools, including saws, loppers and pruning equipment used across community wilding control projects. While simple in concept, reliable equipment is vital for keeping volunteers safe, engaged and effective.

The project will support ongoing community and visitor participation while strengthening long-term efforts to protect native ecosystems and outstanding natural landscapes across the basin.

"Thanks to the Love Queenstown Impact Grant, our dedicated wilding control volunteers will have access to the high-quality tools they need to continue their valuable conservation work, helping to protect our landscapes and biodiversity from wilding pine threats" - Sue Rose.



"Since 2015 our community has planted over 140,000 native trees across the Whakatipu Basin, but getting a seedling in the ground is only the first step — it's the years of weeding, pest control and site care that turn a planting into a thriving habitat. This funding will help us protect that investment, so the thousands of volunteer hours already given aren't undone" - Sararose Brown, Whakatipu Reforestation Trust.

2026 Additional Funding



Whakatipu Reforestation Trust - Native Restoration and Planting Efforts

As well as this year's Impact Grant, the Whakatipu Reforestation Trust will receive \$5,975 in pre-tagged funding to support native tree planting, including partnered planting initiatives at Jardine Park.

This funding will help establish more native seedlings and grow community involvement in restoring forest across the region.



Love Queenstown Endowment - Sowing the Seeds of the Future

Our focus from day one has been on the future: how can we be good tūpuna / ancestors and lay the foundations for a thriving home long after we are gone.

In addition to the grants awarded this year, a further \$15,115 has been invested into the Love Queenstown Endowment Fund, with twenty percent of everything we raise enabling long-term, substantial funding opportunities that will benefit this place for generations to come.



Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust - Restoring Wai Whakaata Lake Hayes

Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust has also been awarded the \$2,500 Partner's Choice Grant, voted on by Love Queenstown's key partners and supporters.

This funding will support the Trust's wider restoration efforts across the Wai Whakaata catchment, building on the native planting already underway around the lake and strengthening the long-term health and mauri of this treasured freshwater ecosystem.

Engagement

Industry volunteer events

Love Queenstown's fourth industry planting day, delivered in partnership with the Whakatipu Reforestation Trust, Queenstown Lakes District Council, and Skyline, brought together over 120 volunteers to plant a further 2,400 native seedlings at Jardine Park.



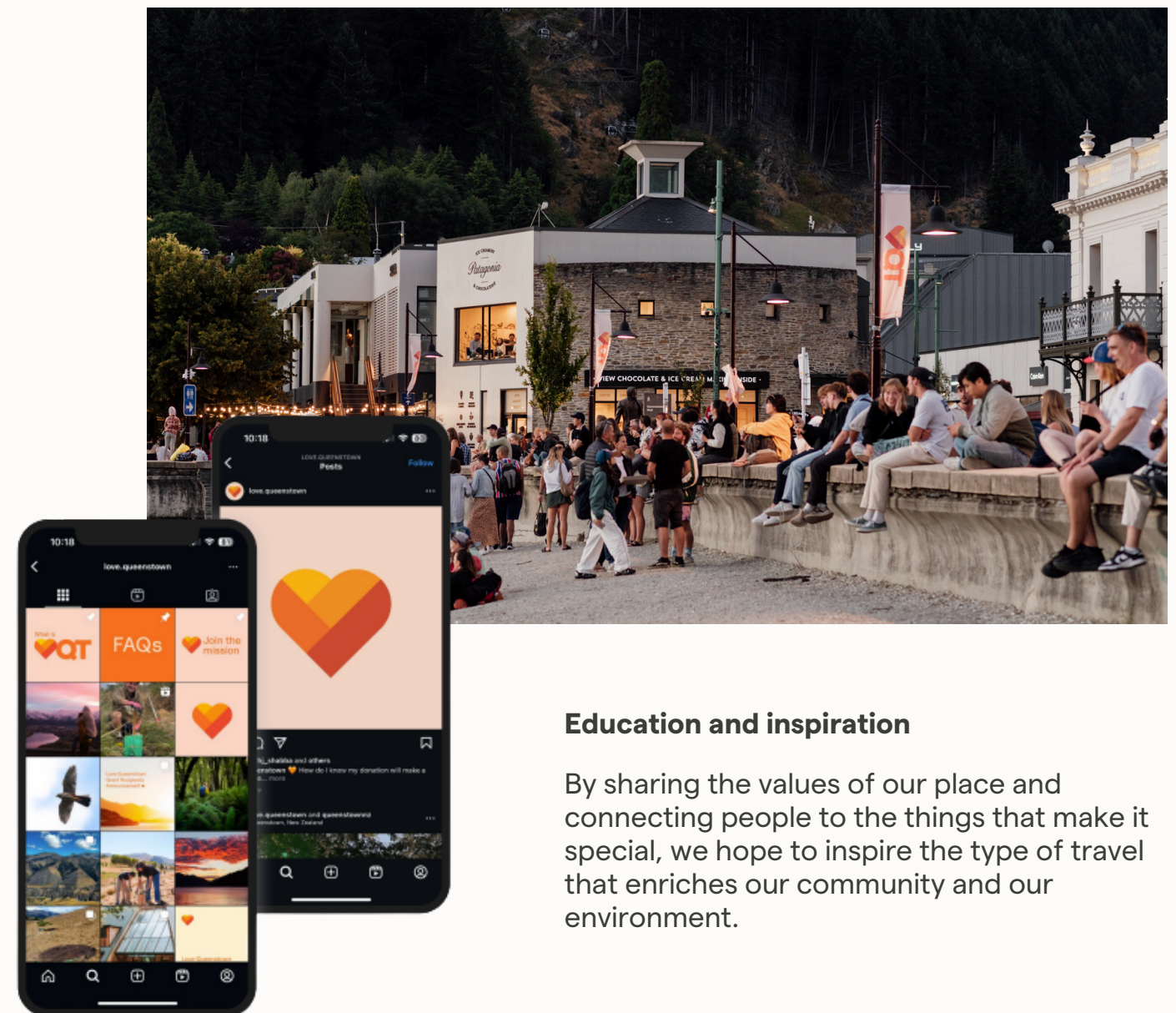
1 industry planting day

120 volunteers

2,400 native plants

Reach

1.6m+ reached
5.9k+ subscribers



Education and inspiration

By sharing the values of our place and connecting people to the things that make it special, we hope to inspire the type of travel that enriches our community and our environment.

Supporters



Destination Queenstown

Love Queenstown was the first initiative to come to life from the region’s Destination Management Plan, Travel to a Thriving Future, developed collaboratively by Destination Queenstown, Lake Wānaka Tourism and QLDC. As our delivery partner, Destination Queenstown connects us with businesses and visitors, and provides the operational support that powers our work.



45South Community Foundation

Love Wānaka and Love Queenstown are delivered in partnership with the 45South Community Foundation, a donor-driven charitable trust championing local philanthropy. The Foundation oversees risk, audit, and compliance, manages charitable fund allocations, and administers the Love Queenstown Endowment Fund.



Business Partners & Supporters

American Universities International | Alpine Luxury Tours | Appellation Wine Tours | Arrowtown Distillery | Avani Hotel | Canyon Brewing | Catch a Fish | Destination Think | Experience Co (NZONE Skydive) | EzyTours | GWD Motor Group | Haka House Queenstown | Lylo Queenstown | Onsen Hot Pools | Otago Event Providers (Valley Fest) | Queenstown Airport | Relax It’s Done | Roam DMC | Ryd | Skyline Queenstown | Tauck International | Tourism Innovation Group | WanaHaka | Watershed Saunas | Ziptrek Ecotours

Impact Partners

This collective of businesses go above and beyond to support Love QT. As Impact Partners, they donate 1% of their net proceeds or \$10,000 or more each year, creating lasting impact for our people and our place.





