

A joint media release from Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism

Queenstown Lakes' regional tourism organisations evolve under a shared services model

Queenstown, New Zealand (2 July 2024) Destination Queenstown (DQ) and Lake Wānaka Tourism (LWT) have announced they will deliver their FY24/25 business plans under a new streamlined shared services model.

The shared services model will lead to a range of opportunities and efficiencies for both Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), while ensuring both destinations retain their RTO and unique brands.

Since the development and adoption of the region's destination management plan, Travel to a Thriving Future, DQ and LWT have been working closer than ever before with the plan providing an overarching strategic framework for both RTOs.

The shared services model does not advocate for amalgamating the two RTOs, but instead focuses on sharing services to achieve efficiencies and greater outputs, while retaining independent governance and operations. The most obvious immediate advantage is the opportunity to gain economies of scale to maximise resource across the organisations.

DQ CEO Mat Woods said that while the Upper Clutha and Whakatipu communities are different, they are inextricably linked. Both need the assurance of welcoming communities to underpin tourism, and both need to ensure tourism is sustainable in order to support thriving communities.

“The shared services model will still recognise the individuality of each location, their brands, their strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. The key objectives of the shared services model are to gain efficiencies between the two RTOs, maximise value, provide the environment for collaboration, create an improved structure to deliver on DMP projects at a region wide level, and lead to alignment and efficiencies across conventional marketing work,” Mat said.

In the new model, certain RTO functions will take a regionwide approach, instead of being specific to just Queenstown or Wānaka. This includes community funds (Love Queenstown and Love Wānaka), human resources and administration, data and insights, finance, travel trade and business events.

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Gizelle Regan who moves into the role of Head of Destination for LWT says it is very important to note that the Queenstown and Wānaka brands will remain independent, reflecting their towns and staying authentic to place, but the move brings a whole new level of collaboration which will in turn bring more opportunities.

“Critically LWT members will get access to a wider range of services as part of this model which they can’t currently afford independently. While both organisations will benefit from different ways of thinking, different experience and different destination knowledge and capability,” Gizelle said.

Calum McLeod, LWT Board Chair, emphasises that this model will enable the region to get more value from the targeted tourism levy by getting rid of duplication and supporting efficiencies. The member dollar will go further via the common vision for tourism in our region.

“Shared services and sharing capabilities will lead to shared expertise across the region rather than doubling up on key capability areas. As sister regions, more can be achieved by working together and taking a collaborative approach,” Calum said.

Wharf developments (trading as Wānaka isite) which LWT owns, will remain a standalone and independent business, and is not part of the shared services agreement. Elizabeth Hills is stepping into the role of General Manger at the isite. Ownership of the isite is a strategic asset for Wānaka and is an area where Queenstown can learn from Wānaka.

The role of the RTO Boards will be to ensure the RTO’s annual plans are being delivered under the shared service models and ensuring accountability from the RTO teams.

The shared services arrangement will be reviewed twice annually to ensure it is delivering benefits for both RTOs.

Both office locations will remain as they are currently to ensure a local RTO presence in both communities, reporting lines for staff stay the same and no FTE roles will be lost.

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BACKGROUND:

The RTO strategy has evolved to support the goals of [Travel to a Thriving Future](#), the district wide destination management plan, as well as continuing to support the visitor economy with values aligned destination marketing, product development and capability building in line with a regenerative tourism future.

The region's two RTOs, Lake Wānaka Tourism and Destination Queenstown in partnership with Queenstown Lakes District Council, came together to develop a roadmap for tourism which puts people and place at its centre and enables a viable and regenerative tourism future by 2030. By harnessing the collective knowledge, expertise, experience and values of both our industry and community, the goal is to collectively design our own path to regenerative tourism. The strategy is an output of the [Grow Well | Whaiora Spatial Plan](#), a formal partnership between QLDC, Kai Tahu and the Crown.