



**Shaping our Future – Carrying capacity engagement – document control**

Date	Version	Comment
18/10/23	Draft report – preliminary findings of engagement. No recommendations made	For board review & feedback
7/11/23	Work in progress for website	Minor amendments following board feedback



## **Introduction**

For a number of years, we have heard the sentiment expressed by our communities that ‘there are just too many tourists’. This was borne out by a recent Kantar survey that showed 63% of those asked felt there were too many or a lot too many visitors in Queenstown.

This piece of work is intended to unpick that headline sentiment and to provide an answer to the questions “why would you feel that there are too many tourists, what do you think are the key positive and negative impacts of tourism, how we can measure those and how can we influence/control the impacts”

The aim is to capture an unashamedly community voiced perspective in relation to these questions and feed these into actions arising from the Queenstown Lakes’ Destination Management Plan.

We note from the outset that ‘overtourism’ is not solely a function of numbers. It is an expression of the sentiment that arises when the impacts of tourism are not adequately managed.

## **Methodology**

We held two public workshops, met face to face with high school students and a selection of 20 something year old workers and circulated an online survey. We engaged with Mana Tahuna and ensured our survey was circulated to all 20 of the migrant community groups that we had contacts for. Engagement occurred over the 6 week period from late August 2023.

Participants were asked to describe what they saw as the positive and negative impacts of tourism, how the impacts could be measured, what levers, actions or controls could be applied to influence the impacts, and what would long term success in managing the impacts of tourism look like.

Responses were grouped into 4 themes – Social Impacts, Economic Impacts, Physical Impacts and Environmental Impacts. These are the themes that work around carrying capacity typically uses.

## **Findings**

This report as it stands presents what we heard – we haven’t produced a series of recommendations though that may follow. Participants verbalised a number of social impacts in a way that we hadn’t heard expressed before.

## **Sector support**

We’d like to acknowledge the generous support of the Queenstown Lakes tourism and hospitality sector in providing over \$5000 of prizes that were used to promote this engagement exercise.

**Below: a few of the answers to the questions “is there anything else you’d like to add?” recorded in our online survey.**

We need to stop vilifying tourism as it contributes substantially to our economy and most of us work in tourism in this city.

We need more public transport! It should be easy to be a tourist and not have to drive.

We need to be proactive about what our future might look like, not reactive once the 'growth' has gone too far & we are too late to claim back what we have not safe guarded in the first place.

We live an amazing place, that's why people travel here, but we need to be the guardians now.

We really can't continue to offer business certainty at the current environmental and community costs.

I feel disrespected/ dominated in my own village It disturbs me to see our environment abused and locals marginalised.

I think Queenstown has lost its sense of accessibility and community for locals. Too many tourists drive locals away from businesses and the outdoors.

We still need to remember that while Queenstown is busy - go 10 mins outside of Queenstown and it's not. And it's not overcrowded by other country standards. We just need the town and infrastructure to work better i.e. more transport options and ways to disperse visitors.

There are a lot of thoughts and feelings about this. What we need is measurable stuff.

Thanks for taking the time to try and make a difference.

Provide free shuttle busses from airport (use an arrival tax to fund it) to all hotels.

Council surcharge on rental cars to contribute to maintenance on infrastructure.

Need to better control hotel number expansion. Require them to provide worker accommodation and sufficient off street parking.

I would like to see some more focus on the social, culture and economic benefits tourism brings.

People need to be made to feel part of the community not just a slave to fill a need.

The strain on the health industry is massive. I work in Radiology. The amount of xrays, ultrasounds, mri's we do on visitors is astounding. Usually all under Acc! Affects availability for locals.

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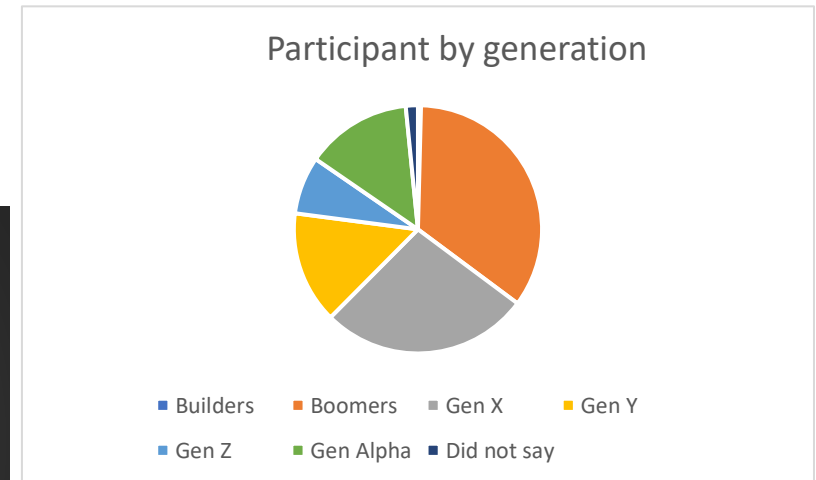
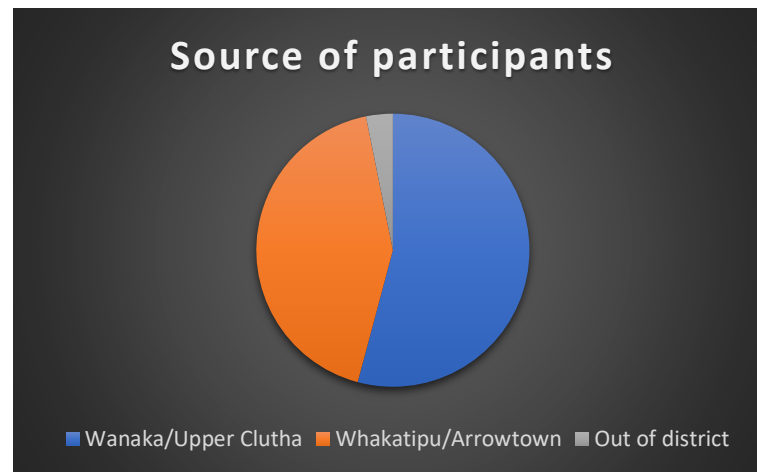
## By the numbers

**253** people participated in this engagement

**88** at face to face workshops

**163** via online survey

**2** via social media



**251** people described the positive and negative impacts of tourism from the perspective of growing up or living or working in the Queenstown Lakes District.

The online survey captured **476** suggestions about what we can measure to quantify impacts of tourism.

The online survey captured **461** suggestions for actions that could be taken to reduce or manage the impacts of tourism.

**88** people provided a description of what long term success looked like for managing the impacts of tourism on their community.

Impacts, measures, actions & success grouped into **4** themes : social, economic, physical, environmental.





One word answers describing the negative impacts of tourism



## Summarised findings

### S O C I A L I M P A C T S

Positive Impacts	Negative impacts	Measures of impact	Benchmark	Levers/controls	Success descriptions
Sharing our place Diverse community Growing community Cultural exchange Range of activities Low crime Access to things on the doorstep Todays tourist is tomorrows resident Nightlife and events Fun place to live Activities and sports	Loss of connection to community Disenfranchisement Loss of community identity Loss of place Overcrowding Alcohol Reliance on volunteers Lack of control Lack of planning Doesn't feel like New Zealand Locals aren't a priority Loss of local perks Activities etc fully booked	Family stability, length of time living in the district Community integration and engagement Ratio residents: visitors Extent of disenfranchisement Social wellbeing. No. of active cultural groups. No. of locals who say they no longer go certain places. Arrival numbers. Car hire numbers. Housing availability. Healthcare provision. % of dwellings used as VA Reported happiness Crime, family violence % of visitors from NZ Traffic accident statistics ratio NZ: visitor Range in seasonality nos.	Target ratio Satisfaction survey outputs  Infrastructure capacity No. homeless people Availability of appointments	Local democracy/ QLDC rule setting. Caps on airport arrivals Caps on numbers at places Residential VA rules Restricted hotel development Community led planning Freedom camping controls Priority access for locals Directed tourism marketing Visitor/driver education Peer pressure/ business social licence Tourists to have insurance Disperse tourists to reduce impact at any one place Residents parking zones	Queenstown tops NZ community cohesion survey  Equality between tourists and residents  Queenstown officially most culturally diverse community in NZ  Tourist quota celebrates 20th anniversary

### P H Y S I C A L I M P A C T S

Positive Impacts	Negative impacts	Measures of impact	Benchmark	Levers/controls	Success descriptions
Provides facilities for locals	Infrastructure overload Congestion Car dominant Inadequate facilities Poor medical facilities Urban sprawl Lack of worker accommodation Lack of cohesive planning	Infrastructure network relative to population Traffic volumes Average traffic speeds % of different land usages Uptake of PT use by visitors Nos. of campervans/freedom campers Nos. of self drive tourists Nos. of rental vehicles Congestion in remote areas	Maximum numbers that infrastructure can support	Frequency/routes of PT Mini bus PT Priority lanes Mode shift Park n ride Free shuttles Pedestrianisation Off street parking reqs New car parks	Queenstown tops NZ community cohesion survey  Equality between tourists and residents  Queenstown officially most culturally diverse community in NZ  Tourist quota celebrates 20th anniversary



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Positive Impacts	Negative impacts	Measures of impact	Benchmark	Levers/controls	Success descriptions
Domestic tourism Employment for locals Marketing local products Entrepreneurship Start ups Youth employment Support/ancillary industries Visitor give back Money Cheap public transport Domestic employment for Kiwis Retail choices	Low wage economy Ratepayer burden Lack of economic diversity Housing costs Costs of everything Locals paying tourist prices Second homes Marketing spend Impact of millionaires Offshore corporates Short term stays Cost of medical treatment Short stay destination	Income average/range/spread across groups Availability & cost of healthcare Diversity of business/jobs Housing affordability % locally (NZ) owned businesses % of economy based on tourism Affordability of rates Cost of infrastructure per person Price inflation Overall affordability Visitor spend % of rates funding tourism Cost of tourism vs tourism income. Ratio of sector employees to visitors Effect of tourism on house prices	Relative to wider NZ averages  NZ Average Rentals max 30% med wage Purchase max 3x med income  Rates c/f other districts	Border tax Bed tax Parks/places entry tax Give back funding/labour Holiday home tax Local pricing/discounts Domestically owned businesses Road tolling Car rental tax Reduce marketing spend Off peak pricing Higher parking fees for visitors Rating differentials	DQ winds up Tourist tax pays for 1000 <sup>th</sup> home Local cards for everything Tourism no longer the main economic earner Zero poverty QLDC debt free Jobs in manufacturing Empty homes taxed Visitor numbers regulated Economy no longer vulnerable to pandemic Affordable groceries, fuel, housing, services Slow tourism trending

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Positive Impacts	Negative impacts	Measures of impact	Benchmark	Levers/controls	Success descriptions
Trails Active transport Visitor give back Most tourists are usually clean Pride in environment	Transport emissions Urban sprawl Waste production Loss of green space Impacts on biodiversity Water quality General degradation Overcrowding Unregulated numbers Loss of favourite places	DoC visitor numbers Water usage Wastewater volumes Water quality Aquifer replenishment Carbon neutrality to/from district Noise – aviation, boats Solid waste volumes Environmental impacts Biodiversity Bird counts Carbon emissions Length of stay	Carbon neutrality in building Aquifer replenished annually Net zero Db levels Circular economy Natural quiet levels Biodiversity baselines established	Visitor give back schemes Better waste management /recycling More toilets Planting schemes	More bikes than cars NZ predator free due to tourist funding Fantastic public transport for locals and visitors alike Environmental focus, not consumerism focus Still space to breath Net Zero achieved 100% food locally grown Keas cause chaos in town centres

## What our young residents told us.

### Positive Impacts

- Different cultures
- Happy landlords
- Can create money from tourists
- Lots of stuff to do around Wanaka
- Enhance the cultural diversity
- More fun experiences
- New Languages
- Always lively and filled with life & energy

Bad  
Our culture is lost.

Town is super busy

Take up the good local walking spots.

### What do we want from tourism in the future

- Public hospital
- Lower emissions
- Underground hotels
- Equality between locals and tourists
- Autonomous vehicles
- Robot tourist guides
- Botanical gardens
- Separate parking for tourists and locals
- Free public transport
- Deals for locals – restaurants, ski fields, other stuff
- Renewable energy transport
- More diversity
- Tourism funds everything in Wanaka
- Gondolas connecting places

③  
get to know interesting people!

### Negative Impacts

- Fewer job opportunities
- Drunk/alcohol
- Too many photos
- Our culture is lost
- Accidents on the road
- Stuff is overpriced
- They take jobs
- Increase in violence
- Lake Health
- Lift lines are too long
- Personal boundaries
- Everything always busy
- Lack of proper housing for locals
- Overpriced
- Locals aren't priorities

Lift lines are too long

They take all the jobs

top 3

Bad	Good
Bad driving	Funding public places
Pollution	Money
Not respecting	Bring diversity
Doc	

less connections with people  
↳ you sort of know everyone you meet is a foreigner so people just instinctively don't CONNECT! †

electricity  
global warming stops  
...tion

Public transport  
- Cheaper than making more roads

Maybe makes our town <sup>look</sup> stupid ya know,  
doesn't really make us look like a proper NZ town

## Discussion – key findings

Our communities strongly value the connection with visitors and the diversity of culture they bring but the numbers of visitors cause loss of connection with community and place with feelings of being overwhelmed and disenfranchisement. Places are seen to be overcrowded and degraded by visitors.

Reducing peaks in visitor numbers, using off peak pricing, and geographically dispersing tourists were important strategies to reduce these impacts along with caps in arrival numbers or numbers at specific places.

The 'churn' of residents was felt to be a key indicator of the strength (or weakness) of the local community – how long can people last here? Because residents feel that some places they used to frequent or meet have been lost to tourists, there is a desire to create new places, parks, spaces at Frankton where residents can meet on their own terms in 'normal' surroundings.

Many expressed the sentiment that they felt like second class citizens in a system that prioritises tourists. This is reflected in the significant number of comments captured that reflect a desire for actions that would prioritise those who live here and recognise the importance of the local workforce who make a lot of this possible. Feelings of equality would be a great outcome.

We value the opportunities, vibrancy, range of activities and tourism brings but the affordability of these offerings often puts them beyond the reach of residents. Indeed, the view that tourism increases all aspects of local cost of living was frequently expressed. The impact on access to healthcare was also a key issue.

There was strong support for, and calls to encourage more locally owned businesses as these are seen as much more likely to recycle earnings within the district and these types of businesses are much more relatable to those who live here.

We heard a clear expectation that 'decision makers' can and should act to manage the impacts of tourism. Many examples of how this could be done were captured ranging from planning policy to taxes and tolls. As expected there was strong support for tourist taxes to pay for the cost of infrastructure with the suggestion that visitor numbers be limited to match the ability of existing infrastructure to cope in the short term.

Congestion is a big issue but the vast majority of comments focused on improved Public Transport routes, frequency, types of service, mode shift, park n ride, and pedestrianisation. Rental car taxes and road tolls were frequently mentioned as actions to reduce traffic.

Carbon emissions, water usage, waste production, noise pollution, environmental and biodiversity degradation are key environmental issues and all can be measured. Use of visitor give back schemes, restricting numbers to places, and shifting the focus from consumption led tourism to environmentally based travellers were all suggested actions.



Thank you to our supporters.



NGĀI TAHU Tourism

