

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>Position:</b>	Senior Legal Counsel - Corporate
<b>Department:</b>	Assurance, Finance & Risk
<b>Location:</b>	Queenstown
<b>Reports to:</b>	Associate Counsel - Corporate
<b>Date:</b>	January 2023

### BACKGROUND

Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) is a territorial authority in Te Waipounamu South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, with a current resident population of approximately 48,300 which is projected to increase to 61,350 by 2031<sup>1</sup>. The Queenstown Lakes District is also a premier tourist destination making a significant contribution to the national economy. In recent years, the district has experienced significant and sustained growth in both resident population, and in international and domestic visitor numbers. Our demand projections forecast this growth to continue<sup>2</sup>. The overall growth pressures the district is experiencing has led to the 2021 -2031 Ten Year Plan setting out an ambitious programme of work, with over \$1.6 billion of capital investment to be made over the decade<sup>3</sup>.

QLDC has a central role to play in maintaining and enhancing the quality and liveability of the outstanding environment of the district. It also has a central role in development and regulation and provides high quality services and infrastructure to residents and visitors; managing the district's parks, trails, libraries and recreational facilities; enabling sustainable development through consenting services; and regulating local activities. QLDC's role in leading the recovery effort for the district in response to COVID-19, also means that the diversification of the district's economy is an increasingly important priority for our Council.

The community outcomes set out in the 2021 – 2031 Ten Year Plan are directly extracted from [Vision Beyond 2050](#), which is our community vision statement:



<sup>1</sup> [QLDC demand projections, March 2022](#)

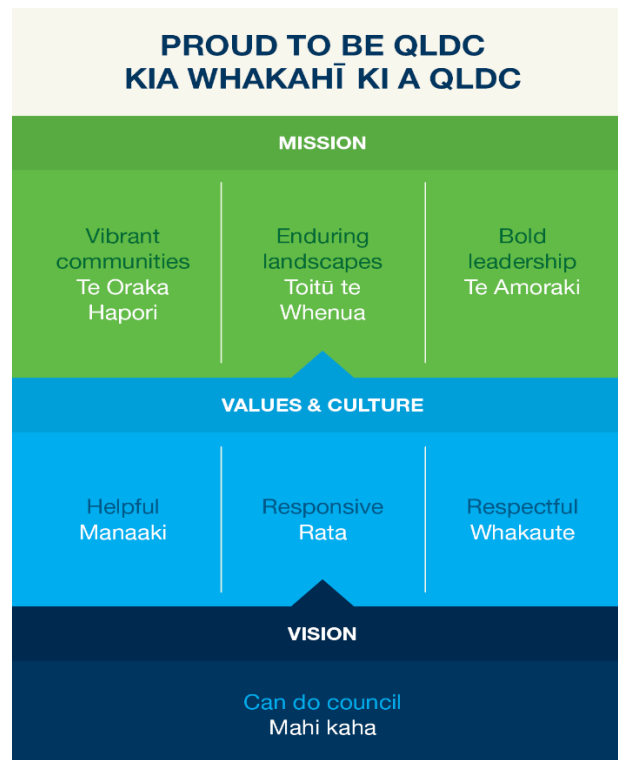
<sup>2</sup> [QLDC demand projections, March 2022](#)

<sup>3</sup> [QLDC Ten Year Plan 2021 - 2031](#)

## VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

We're proud to be QLDC, and in response to the growth the district has experienced over recent years the QLDC organisation has itself experienced substantial growth. With an employed workforce of approximately 550 in July 2022, and a range of partner organisations delivering services on behalf of Council, QLDC is also a significant employer in the district. The range and types of work carried out at QLDC are extensive, and complex; becoming increasingly so as the district continues to grow.

Our culture is an important part of who we are. The vision, mission and values set out below are the foundation for our organisational culture; how and why we go about things:



## PURPOSE

The Senior Legal Counsel Corporate is an experienced lawyer who provides strong legal advice and representation in one of the key areas of legal risk for Council.

The Senior Legal Counsel provides legal advice to the Council in Corporate matters, including carrying out commercial negotiations, and supporting the delivery of infrastructure and property projects. The Senior Legal Counsel will also be responsible for managing a range of disputes and legal proceedings pertaining to Council's corporate functions.

The Senior Legal Counsel Corporate will be responsible for providing timely, high quality and fit for purpose legal services with a focus on the following subject matter areas:

- Commercial contracting and procurement
- Property and reserves - advice and oversight on transactions and management issues
- Development agreements for infrastructure delivery
- Local government – applicable legislation and functions
- LGOIMA and Privacy Compliance
- CCTO/CCO matters

- Civil Disputes and litigation (including supervision of external legal representation)

The Senior Legal Counsel will report to and work with the Associate Counsel responsible for the Corporate legal team.

The Senior Legal Counsel will be expected to manage files in an autonomous way, and keep the Associate Counsel briefed of key risks and developments in their matters.

The Senior Legal Counsel will have a lot of interaction with external legal providers and will be expected to foster strong working relationships with these external parties, and actively manage the cost of their work.

The Senior Legal Counsel is also a member of the wider legal team that will function as a single service delivery unit and will therefore be expected to take opportunities to work on other legal matters as they arise.

## KEY TASKS

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
Be a key member of a highly effective team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build and enhance the capability of the Legal Services team through leadership of junior members of the legal team.</li> <li>▪ Contribute to a culture of high performance where excellence, work life balance and personal development is valued.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All team members feel valued and have a good understanding of how their role is aligned with the organisations strategic objectives</li> <li>▪ Satisfied internal and external customers who view the team as professional, customer focused and high performing</li> </ul>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate willingly and positively in the orientation and support of new staff in specific areas</li> <li>▪ Mentor and coach more junior members of the Legal team, notwithstanding that they are not direct reports</li> <li>▪ Behave consistently with Council's values and behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collegiality</li> <li>▪ Development of lawyers in the team</li> </ul>
Legal advice and representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide timely, high quality and fit for purpose legal services to Council staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing legal advice in a variety of contexts which is well reasoned and high quality to enable pragmatic recommendations and decisions to be made.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advice is well reasoned and high quality</li> <li>▪ Pragmatic and well-reasoned recommendations are made, which facilitate good decision-making practice</li> <li>▪ Advice is proactive, timely and legally sound</li> </ul>

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apply effective litigation strategy in managing the Council's civil litigation;</li> <li>▪ Draft quality correspondence and documentation;</li> <li>▪ Conduct commercial negotiations, and provide support for the delivery of property/infrastructure projects;</li> <li>▪ Appear in Court representing the Council</li> <li>▪ Advising on issues relevant to relevant Acts, regulations and rules</li> <li>▪ Keep the Associate Counsel and General Counsel briefed on key legal risks, and developments.</li> <li>▪ Advising on matters of general legal education, including assisting with seminars to staff.</li> <li>▪ Instruct and manage external lawyers as appropriate in accordance with Council policy and procedures and utilising systems developed for this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advice is provided within appropriate legal and ethical standards and boundaries, and preserves the integrity of the independent in-house role</li> <li>▪ Staff are educated and provided with templates and other tools to complete appropriate transactions</li> <li>▪ External lawyers are providing value to the organisation, are managed appropriately and perform as strategic partners to the organisation.</li> </ul>
Strategic direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist with the provision of strategic advice to the organisation to facilitate good decision making, and robust decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Robust decisions are made by Council, in which the community can have confidence</li> </ul>
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supervise the outsourcing of legal services, with a focus on value for money, enduring solutions and continuous improvement</li> <li>▪ Keep the Associate Counsel briefed on upcoming legal costs and risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well managed external legal services budget</li> </ul>
File management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manage information and records in a professional manner</li> <li>▪ Manage matters in accordance with the team workflow system</li> <li>▪ Record time accurately and comprehensively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge capture, protection of institutionalised knowledge</li> </ul>
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a professional, courteous and helpful attitude to all customers (internal and external) ensuring communication is accurate, succinct and in a manner which promotes customer service excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive customer relationships exist to support the delivery of legal services</li> </ul>

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain confidentiality at all times</li> </ul>	
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a contribution to or participate in projects or initiatives within the Directorate or organisation where the opportunity arises</li> <li>▪ Participate in initiatives and contribute suggestions as to improvements and/or efficiencies to enable ongoing quality improvement</li> <li>▪ Fully participate as a member of the team undertaking all tasks maintaining positive working relationships with other staff members and internal / external customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive team culture is promoted</li> </ul>
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct any financial activity in accordance with current policy and procedures</li> <li>▪ Working within budget guidelines and delegations</li> <li>▪ Manage external legal service provider engagements in a way that is documented, managed and monitored in accordance with policy in order to deliver efficient and effective legal services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial and other policies and procedures are followed at all times</li> <li>▪ External advice is documented, provided within scopes/estimates and monitored in line with policies, procedures and systems</li> </ul>
Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus on continuous learning and professional development</li> <li>▪ Pursue appropriate professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual CPD requirements are met</li> </ul>
Relationship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and maintain effective relationships with staff and other stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Ensure the Council is positively represented to external stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationships are built, managed and maintained with stakeholders (internal/ external)</li> </ul>
Corporate Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build commitment to QLDC's vision, values and services.</li> <li>▪ Willingly undertake any duty required within the context of the position.</li> <li>▪ Manage own personal health and safety and takes appropriate action to deal with workplace hazards, accidents and incidents.</li> <li>▪ Comply with all legislative requirements.</li> <li>▪ Adhere to QLDC's Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe and healthy workplace where wellbeing is maintained.</li> </ul>

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

### Internal:

- General Counsel
- Associate Counsel Corporate
- All legal team members
- Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team
- Other QLDC Managers
- Councillors
- Other QLDC staff

### External:

- Legal services providers
- Central government agencies

## ACCOUNTABILITIES AND DELEGATIONS

No financial delegations held.

No direct reports.

No contractual authority.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Education

- Tertiary bachelor qualification in law
- Holds, or is able to obtain for the role, a New Zealand practising certificate.

### Experience

- Substantial legal experience (5+ years) in the areas of local government, public, corporate/commercial, construction, litigation and/or resource management law.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a demonstrated commitment to working collaboratively and in a customer centric manner with a range of people within and outside the organisation
- Legal risk management skills.
- Successful track record of delivering customer-focused solutions that address underlying needs.
- Demonstrate sound analytical and decision-making skills.
- Ability to work unsupervised.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with internal customers and legal service providers.
- Demonstrated professional ethics, integrity and reliability at all times
- Demonstrated successful communication skills, both written and oral
- Demonstrated commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and an awareness of Maori perspectives and issues relevant to Maori



## COMPETENCIES

Core competencies for all employees of QLDC:

<b>Integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Represents QLDC in an honest, ethical and professional way, supporting a culture of integrity and professionalism</li> <li>▶ Acts on QLDC's vision, mission and values even when it is uncomfortable or difficult to do so</li> <li>▶ Follows through on agreements; can be relied on to complete tasks and meet commitments</li> <li>▶ Champions safety and wellbeing by role modelling safe and healthy work practices</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering Quality Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Emphasises progress over perfection, taking action and initiative to resolve issues within established process and procedure</li> <li>▶ Identifies key tasks needed to achieve objectives, establishing timelines and milestones to reach future state</li> <li>▶ Shows commitment to completing work activities effectively</li> <li>▶ Has a can do, will do attitude – taking on new challenges, making the most of every opportunity</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Adjusts your plan and approach as the situation changes to deliver the best outcome</li> <li>▶ Adapts pace of work to meet organisational demands</li> <li>▶ Is open to new ideas and is willing to try new ways of doing things</li> <li>▶ Aware of your impact on others and adjusts approach accordingly</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is dedicated to meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers</li> <li>▶ Ensures actions, processes and decisions deliver sustainable customer satisfaction and support QLDC's interests</li> <li>▶ Communicates effectively with customers and stakeholders to identify their needs and requirements</li> <li>▶ Knows and understands the customer's position and looks for opportunities to add value and create a great customer experience</li> </ul>
<b>Managing Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establishes and maintains effective relationships with stakeholders and gains their trust and respect</li> <li>▶ Listens carefully with an open mind and is receptive to others' ideas</li> <li>▶ Is aware of and responsive to cultural differences when engaging with people and groups</li> <li>▶ Ensures actions, processes and decisions deliver sustainable relationships and support QLDC's interests</li> </ul>
<b>Valuing Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Displays an open-minded, non-judgmental attitude towards others</li> <li>▶ Continues to listen and attend to others when they are being unclear or 'difficult'</li> <li>▶ Actively seeks input from others who may have different perspectives and views</li> <li>▶ Role models respect and sensitivity to diversity and difference to ensure an inclusive team environment</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Applies an understanding of QLDC's culture and values to their activities</li> <li>▶ Knows how QLDC works – both the formal and informal channels to use 'to get things done'</li> <li>▶ Adapts quickly to change and uncertainty, approaching change positively and as an opportunity for learning and growth</li> </ul>



Competencies specific to the role:

<b>Problem Solving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identifies potential problems, barriers, and risks and takes action to resolve them</li> <li>▶ Seeks input and the perspectives of others to support efficient and effective problem solving</li> <li>▶ Exercises judgement and makes good decisions</li> <li>▶ Tries different approaches to overcome current obstacles and persists with efforts until an effective solution is found</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Demonstrates resilience by remaining composed and persevering through difficult or stressful situations</li> <li>▶ Role models patience and tolerance when dealing with inconveniences and difficulties</li> <li>▶ Recovers quickly from setbacks and adverse events</li> <li>▶ Takes personal responsibility for decisions, actions, and mistakes</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing and Negotiating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Considers how you will influence over time and adopts a number of deliberate strategies to influence and communicate with others</li> <li>▶ Achieves effective solutions and outcomes within challenging relationships, or when dealing with ambiguous and conflicting positions</li> <li>▶ Picks up on people's social cues and reactions, and adjusts your approach accordingly</li> <li>▶ Encourages others to talk, share and debate ideas to achieve consensus</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Accepts and supports team decisions, is a 'good team player', do your share of the work</li> <li>▶ Willingly shares information, knowledge and experiences with others</li> <li>▶ Seeks out and works with others, regardless of team, function, business unit, geography, professional boundaries</li> <li>▶ Fosters open dialogue and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Inspiring, Direction and Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Champions QLDC's vision and strategy and communicates the way forward generating enthusiasm and commitment to goals</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensures that day-to-day activities are aligned with and meet QLDC's longer term business objectives</li> <li>▶ Utilises networks and market information to gather multiple perspectives and insights into customer needs and perceptions</li> </ul>
<b>Change and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Drives continuous improvement and identifies opportunities to enhance processes and practices</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Agility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Engages in critical questioning, looking for underlying causes and seeks to address those rather than make a "quick fix"</li> <li>▶ Uses an in-depth understanding of local business and cultural practices to complete negotiations, resolve problems, and / or create business / community opportunities</li> <li>▶ Uses analytical techniques to identify several solutions and weighs the value of each</li> <li>▶ Anticipates and assesses the impact of changes to work-plans and initiatives such as changing political / economic conditions and responds appropriately</li> </ul>