



We Love Wakatipu Inc – Protect Queenstown

Official complaint to CEO Mike Theelen, Sunday, June 27, 2021.

Dear Mike,

For the third time in three years, you and Corporate Services GM Meaghan Miller have furnished Queenstown Lakes District Councillors with false and misleading information in your agenda item regarding Queenstown Airport Corporation's Statement of Intent (SOI).

Each year, I have raised this issue both through communications with you and through public forum submissions.

This year, I am making an official complaint. I also request that the Council executive team finally correct the most egregious of these - the deliberate and ongoing misstatement of the purpose of local government - to your Councillors, on your website, at Wednesday's meeting and within official council minutes.

Since May 14, 2019, the purpose of local government under the Local Government Act 2002 has been:

a/ to enable democratic local decision-making and actions by, and on behalf of, communities; and

b/ to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

And yet your and Ms Miller's agenda item again claims the Act instead requires councils to "meet the current and future needs of community for good quality local infrastructure in the most cost-effective way for householders and businesses."

This has not been council's legally mandated purpose for over two years. Moreover, by failing to accurately quote Section 10, you subvert the Legislature's intention when amending the Act in 2019.

This fundamental and seemingly deliberate mistruth – reiterated year after year by two senior and long-serving executive team members who must surely by now know the purpose of local government – is disingenuous and anti-democratic.

Even QAC's Statement of Intent acknowledges that community well-being rather than provision of infrastructure is the council's purpose which, as a council-controlled trading organisation, it must serve.

This continued agenda myth-making by QLDC appears to be an attempt to lead Councillors down a pro-growth path, against both planks of the actual purpose of local government:

- Councillors commissioned the MartinJenkins socio-economic report on airport options to remove this contentious issue from the election hustings, promising to be guided by its feedback. The feedback was very clear - the community did not want air noise boundary expansion. This result was consistent with 2018 QAC consultation, with over 90% of respondents against ANB expansion. Both reports have been ignored by Councillors and the executive team. This is not “enabling democratic local decision-making and actions by, and on behalf of, communities.”
- The above consultation also made clear that mooted expansion of the ANB did not promote community well-being.

Instead, your misrepresentation of local government’s purpose allows QAC to continue with its false narrative of needing to push for continued growth, meeting airline demand and providing a dividend to shareholders.

None of these meets the two mandated purposes of local government and none of them is a legal requirement of QAC as a CCTO.

By continuing to omit Councillors’ responsibility “to enable democratic local decision-making and actions by, and on behalf of, communities”, you also lead them to believe they have the right to ignore their community’s strong and consistent opposition to ANB expansion in favour of falsely claimed requirements of QAC in the SOI.

In terms of rectifying this continued attempt to prevent Councillors from meeting their mandated roles and responsibility, We Love Wakatipu Inc asks that you:

- Acknowledge to Councillors by email by Monday, 5:00 p.m. that their purpose and role in local government is not as was stated in the SOI agenda item.
- Clearly state for them the purpose as specified in section 10 of the LGA since May 14, 2019.
- Make this correction clear by Monday 5pm on your website, and to those on your agenda mailout list, so that the public and media do not continue to be misinformed.
- Publicly acknowledge the correction at the council meeting before public forum, so that submitters know this has been corrected before making their submissions.
- Confirm by return email that these actions will be undertaken.

I look forward to a positive response to the above and seeing that in future, your executive team and Councillors are focused on your two fundamental purposes as our council – enabling democracy and promoting community well-being.

Ngā mihi nui,

Cath Gilmour, We Love Wakatipu Inc chair