

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position:	Associate Counsel - Corporate
Department:	Finance Legal and Regulatory
Location:	Queenstown
Reports to:	General Counsel
Date:	September 2021

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 40,750 which is projected to increase to 53,510 by 2031¹. The Queenstown Lakes District is also a premier tourist destination making a significant contribution to the national economy. In recent years, the district has undergone significant and sustained growth in both resident population and in international and domestic visitor numbers. On a peak day in 2018, visitor numbers totalled 79,300 which is projected to reach 91,270 on a peak day in 2031². The overall growth pressures the district is experiencing has led to the draft 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 decade³.

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:



¹ QLDC demand projections, July 2020

² QLDC demand projections, July 2020

³ Draft 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 400 FTE in January 2021, 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 Associate Counsel is a senior lawyer who provides strong legal advice in one of the key areas of legal risk for Council and provides management and leadership support to the General Counsel. The Associate Counsel is responsible for managing the Legal Counsel. Together these lawyers will comprise the Corporate legal team.

The areas of expertise of the Associate Counsel will include Corporate and Commercial law. The Associate Counsel will be responsible for legal matters falling within the following areas:

- Civil Disputes
- Commercial/ Strategic Property
- Development agreements

- Commercial negotiations
- LGOIMA and Privacy Compliance
- CCTO/CCO matters
- Reserves Act
- Council Assets

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

The Associate 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 Associate Counsel is also a member of the wider legal team that will function as a single service delivery unit and will therefore have the opportunity to work on other legal matters as they arise.

KEY TASKS

Within the identified area of expertise, the key responsibilities of the Associate Counsel are described below:

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
Develop and manage a highly effective team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build and enhance the capability of the Legal Services team through leadership of Senior Legal Counsel and Junior Legal Counsel. ▪ Create and maintain a culture of high performance where excellence, work life balance and personal development is valued. ▪ Maintain high levels of staff motivation and team work with a focus on service standards, value for money and continuous improvement. ▪ Develop plans for the work of the team, measure progress and report to the General Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff feel valued and have a good understanding of how their role is aligned with the organisations strategic objectives ▪ Targeted performance agreements in place for all staff that are supported with regular reviews ▪ Satisfied internal and external customers who view the team as professional, customer focused and high performing
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate leadership competencies ▪ Participate willingly and positively in the orientation and training of new staff in specific areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collegiality ▪ Development of lawyers in the team

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentor and coach more junior members of the Legal team, notwithstanding that they are not direct reports ▪ Behave consistently with Council's values and behaviors 	
Legal advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide timely, high quality and fit for purpose legal services to Council staff with a focus on high risk or complex matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing general legal advice in a variety of contexts which is well reasoned and high quality to enable pragmatic recommendations and decisions to be made ▪ Advising on, reviewing or preparing relevant agreements and memoranda on behalf of Council ▪ Developing and ensuring staff have access to appropriate legal templates and associated documentation ▪ Advising on issues relevant to relevant Acts, regulations and rules ▪ Advising on matters of general legal education, including assisting with seminars to staff. ▪ Instruct and manage external lawyers as appropriate in accordance with Council policy and procedures and utilising systems developed for this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advice is well reasoned and high quality ▪ Pragmatic and well reasoned recommendations are made, which facilitate good decision-making practice ▪ Advice is proactive, timely and legally sound ▪ Advice is provided within appropriate legal and ethical standards and boundaries, and preserves the integrity of the independent in-house role ▪ Staff are educated and provided with templates and other tools to complete appropriate transactions ▪ External lawyers are providing value to the organisation, are managed appropriately and perform as strategic partners to the organisation.
Strategic direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide strategic advice to the organisation to facilitate good decision making, and robust decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robust decisions are made by Council, in which the community can have confidence

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervise the outsourcing of legal services, with a focus on value for money, enduring solutions and continuous improvement ▪ Keep the General Counsel briefed on upcoming legal costs and risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well managed external legal services budget
File management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage information and records in a professional manner ▪ Manage jobs in accordance with the team workflow system. ▪ Record time accurately and comprehensively ▪ Ensure all members of the team complete their file management work to a high standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge capture, protection of institutionalised knowledge ▪ Comprehensive data about the value the team adds to the organisation ▪ Facilitation of an ongoing discussion with our ELT about resourcing, the way we spend our time and how we add value
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 ▪ Maintain confidentiality at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive customer relationships exist to support the delivery of legal services
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a contribution to or participate in projects or initiatives within the Directorate or organisation where the opportunity arises ▪ Participate in initiatives and contribute suggestions as to improvements and/or efficiencies to enable ongoing quality improvement ▪ Fully participate as a member of the team undertaking all tasks maintaining positive working relationships with other staff members and internal / external customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff orientation includes relevant legal content ▪ Positive team culture is promoted

Key Responsibilities	To achieve this you will need to:	As a result we will see:
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct any financial activity in accordance with current policy and procedures Working within budget guidelines and delegations Manage, or ensure that staff 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and other policies and procedures are followed at all times External advice is documented, provided within scopes/estimates and monitored in line with policies, procedures and systems
Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on continuous learning and professional development Pursue appropriate professional development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual CPD requirements are met
Relationship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain effective relationships with staff and other stakeholders Ensure the Council is positively represented to external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships are built, managed and maintained with stakeholders (internal/ external)
Corporate Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build commitment to QLDC's vision, values and services. Willingly undertake any duty required within the context of the position. Manage own personal health and safety and takes appropriate action to deal with workplace hazards, accidents and incidents. Comply with legislative requirements. Adhere to QLDC's Code of Conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and healthy workplace where wellbeing is maintained.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:

- General Counsel
- 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.

Staff Authority

- One direct report.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Education

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

Experience

- Substantial legal experience (7+ years) in the areas of corporate and commercial law. Experience in local government, public, litigation and/or resource management law will also be helpful.
- 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.
- Demonstrated 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 ability to lead and manage staff.
- Demonstrated professional ethics, integrity and reliability at all times
- Demonstrated highly successful communication skills, both written and oral
- Demonstrated commitment to the principles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and an awareness of Māori perspectives and issues relevant to Māori

COMPETENCIES

Core competencies for all employees of QLDC:

Customer focus	Is dedicated to meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers; Gets first hand customer information and uses it for improvements in products and services; Acts with customers in mind; establishes and maintains effective relationships with customers and gains their trust and respect.
Action Oriented	Enjoys working hard; is action oriented and full of energy for the things he/she sees as challenging; not fearful of acting with a minimum of planning; seizes more opportunities than others.
Drive for results	Can be counted on to exceed goals successfully; is constantly and consistently one of the top performers; very bottom line oriented; steadfastly pushes self and others for results.
Integrity & Trust	Is widely trusted; is seen as a direct, truthful individual; can present the unvarnished truth in an appropriate and helpful manner; keeps confidences; admits mistakes; doesn't misrepresent him/herself for personal gain.
Relationship Management & Teamworking	Relates well to all kinds of people, up, down, sideways, inside and outside of the organisation; Builds appropriate rapport quickly; Builds constructive and effective relationships; Uses diplomacy and tact; Can defuse high tension situations comfortably.
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures compliance to all legal/statutory and company requirements for Health and Safety • Adheres to all QLDC's Health & Safety policies and procedures • Is actively involved in QLDC's health and safety systems • Wears relevant personal protective clothing and equipment as and when required* Use only for roles where PPE may be required • Reports any pain, discomfort or other health & safety concerns as soon as possible • Ensures all accidents, incidents and hazards are reported using QLDC's Health & Safety reporting procedures

Competencies specific to the role: (choose from the following list)

Problem Solving	Uses rigorous logic and methods to solve difficult problems; probes all fruitful sources for answers; can see hidden problems; is excellent at honest analysis; looks beyond the obvious and doesn't stop at the first answers.
Timely Decision Making	Makes decisions in a timely manner, sometimes with incomplete information under tight deadlines and pressure; able to make a quick decision.
Decision quality	Makes good decisions based upon a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience and judgement; most solutions and

	suggestions turn out to be correct and accurate when judged over time; sought out by others for advice and solutions.
Negotiating	Can negotiate skilfully in tough situations with both internal and external groups; Can settle differences with minimum noise; Can win concessions without damaging relationships; Can be direct and forceful as well as diplomatic; Gains trust quickly of other parties to the negotiations; Has a good sense of timing.
Planning	Accurately scopes out length and difficulty of tasks and projects; sets objectives and goals; breaks down work into the process steps; develops schedules and task/people assignments; anticipates and adjusts for problems and roadblocks; measures performance against goals; evaluates results.
Political savvy	Can manoeuvre through complex political situations effectively and quietly; Is sensitive to how people and organisations function; Anticipates where the land mines are and plans his/her approach accordingly; Views politics as a necessary part of local government life and works to adjust to that reality.
Developing Direct Reports and Others	Provides challenging and stretching tasks and assignments; holds frequent development discussions; is aware of each person's career goals; constructs compelling development plans and executes them; will take on those who need help and further development; is a people builder; encourages people to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
Informing	Provides the information people need to know to do their jobs; Provides individuals with information so that they can make accurate decisions and give appropriate advice to others; is timely with information.
Managing through Systems	Can design practices, processes and procedures which allow managing from a distance; is comfortable letting things manage themselves without intervening; can make things work through other without being there; can impact people and results remotely.
Organising	Can marshal resources (people, funding, material, support) to get things done; can orchestrate multiple activities at once to accomplish a goal; uses resources effectively and efficiently; arranges files and information in a useful manner.
Strategic Agility	Sees ahead clearly; can anticipate future consequences and trends accurately; Has broad knowledge and perspective; is future oriented; Can articulately paint credible pictures and visions of possibilities and likelihoods; can create competitive and breakthrough strategies and plans.
Articulate and Persuasive	Coherently and succinctly communicate the essence of the story adapted for Councillors, key organisations critical to the success of the district, and the general public. Understanding the audience so we can relate to their perspective and tell a reasoned and compelling story to align others to our point of view.
Challenging	Leading the conversation to on occasion question the status quo and think of innovative new ways to deliver on customer

	expectations. Looking across the organisation to provide the Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team with an “alternative line of sight” that gives confidence as to how the organisation is progressing towards the vision, and advising on the best way to address strategic issues.
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------