

Preface

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the heavy reliance that the Queenstown Lakes District places on the visitor economy, and the need to build additional sectors that can reduce its future vulnerability to external shocks.

Responding to this need, Whakatipu Hangarau was formed during the pandemic as a not-for-profit trust aimed at catalysing the growth of the technology sector in this stunning region.

In 2022 Whakatipu Hangarau partnered with MBIE, QLDC and the University of Otago to answer the question ‘what would it take to create a step change in the economic contribution of the technology sector in the District, in synch with the environmental qualities that make this such a special place?’

Following foundational research by Ron Clink (a Principal Policy Analyst seconded from MBIE) and Michaela Blacklock (a Senior Researcher engaged by the University), Accenture was engaged in 2023 to provide economic analysis and advice.

This White Paper presents the economic fundamentals underpinning Whakatipu Hangarau’s thesis that a world-class technology sector, making a meaningful economic contribution, can be built here over time.

There is already a vibrant, emerging tech industry in the Queenstown Lakes District generating \$100m in annual GDP. Many critical ecosystem actors and enablers are already in place including education, infrastructure, high growth companies, cultural assets and a cohort of talent that includes remote workers and experienced entrepreneurs. Our mission is to build on their achievements.

Whakatipu Hangarau wishes to acknowledge and thank Accenture for the significant investment of time and resource the company has committed, pro bono, to this project. Success will be in no small measure due to the commitment of Accenture, QLDC, MBIE, the University of Otago, Ron Clink, Michaela Blacklock and a host of private citizens who believe that this is the right path forward.



Roger Sharp
Chair
Whakatipu Hangarau Trust



*“If there is no vision,
the people will be lost”*

Sir Apirana Ngata

*“Ki te kāhore he
whakakitenga, ka ngaro
te iwi”*

Sir Apirana Ngata