

22 January 2024

Peter Newport
Crux

Via email: peter.newport@crux.org.nz

Dear / Tēnā koe Peter

CRUX ENGAGEMENT WITH QLDC AND ITS EMPLOYEES

I am writing to you to express my concern about behaviour being exhibited by some of Crux's staff toward a number of Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) employees including executive, management, and team members.

I have seen communications and I have noted an escalating and consistent tone that does not accord with the way in which QLDC employees communicate with each other, or with other external media outlets, and should not have to experience from third parties. I find this method of communication disrespectful, undermining, accusatory and bullying in its nature.

My concerns centre around the way Crux is now regularly singling out and targeting individual members of staff through direct communications (primarily email). This is also reflected in how staff are negatively portrayed in articles on the Crux website.

These communications are not reflective of the relationship that QLDC and its staff have with other media outlets, locally, nationally, and internationally.

QLDC understands that the media's role is to critique and challenge the decisions and actions of agencies such as QLDC. However, the relationship between Council and the media should always remain objective, respectful, and factual.

Employees in this organisation are dedicated, hard-working, professionals who are also members of this community. It is not appropriate that they should individually be subjected to unjustified and personalised attacks, particularly those that adversely affect their wellbeing or safety.

We respect and support the right of Crux and all media to engage with Council but respectfully invite you to do so by focusing on the questions and avoiding the ongoing invective and intimidating style.

I trust that your organisation will respond positively to this and would note that if there is no change in the approach adopted by Crux the Council will review the way media enquiries by Crux are managed. Please be very clear this is not about limiting the right of Crux to ask questions and probe

Council decision making but it is about ensuring that the organisations can maintain a professional a mutually respectful level of interaction.

Please continue to send your requests via communications@qldc.govt.nz or informationrequest@qldc.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely, Nāku noa nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping initial 'M' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Theelen
Chief Executive