

Statement to be read at the Full Council Meeting QLDC

Tuesday 25 February 2025

Health Action Wānaka is a community-led advocacy group.

Our purpose is to ensure that the people of the Upper Clutha have equitable access to health services.

We are pleased to see health services included in the proposed regional deal for Otago Central Lakes.

Our region is seeing very high growth, and there is no doubt that we need many more publicly funded health services to meet growing demand.

However, we also know that the Upper Clutha is projected to see higher growth than Queenstown.

As such, we believe that a regional hospital delivering publicly funded services must be built in a location that offers the most direct access for the most people in our region.

A regional hospital in Queenstown could mean that people living in the Upper Clutha would have to travel further — and through more difficult terrain and traffic conditions — to access services they can currently access at Dunstan Hospital.

Our concern with the proposed Otago Central Lakes Hospital in Queenstown is that a private investor is dictating where the regional hospital for *our people* should be located.

Furthermore, what happens if down the track, this private investor ‘flips’ our regional hospital and sells it to international investors?

Have our councillors considered the implications of this?

To ensure the best possible outcome for our region, we believe that other models for delivery of health services should be considered.

Models using capital investment from the likes of ACC, ethical super funds, or iwi would more likely see *our* regional hospital built in the most equitable location for our people.

Our expectation is that an important decision about the healthcare of the people of our region requires a transparent and competitive process that sees all potential models explored.

Further, meaningful community consultation about our healthcare must comply with the code of expectations required by the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 which outlines how health entities must work with consumers, whānau and communities in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of health services.

So, our question to the council is: **Have all potential opportunities for the location of our regional hospital been explored, or does the proposed Otago Central Lakes Hospital in Queenstown reflect the ambitions of a private investor over and above the needs of the community?**

The location of *our* regional hospital should be decided as a result of strategic-level planning that puts the community's needs at the centre of decision making.

This proposal locks our community into a regional hospital solution that is not the most equitable outcome for our people.

We call on councillors to give serious consideration to what is being proposed here, and to ask themselves, 'Can we do better than this?'

Steering Committee, Health Action Wānaka

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