

9 November 2023

Tēnā koutou katoa

Thanks for your patience as we worked on this latest progress update.

Activities are well underway in the Queenstown Cemetery, but before we get to that we would like to take a moment to share some of the photos and a video from the Whakawātea Ceremony that took place last Friday, 3 November.

With Parks Manager Dave Winterburn MCing, over 100 community members came together to acknowledge the works beginning on site. This event was also a way to welcome the contractors from Mike Hurring Contracting who are undertaking the restoration works in the cemetery. Paulette Tamati-Elliffe from Kāi Tahu led the karakia. This was followed by lovely words from Councillor Craig Ferguson as well as benedictions from Ian Guy with the Wakatipu Community Presbyterian Church and Michael Godfrey with the Anglican Parish of Wakatipu. Our Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim faith representatives were also invited to speak but were unfortunately unable to attend. I too, as Parks Officer for Cemeteries, added a few words on behalf of the impacted families who I have been in touch with. The ceremony concluded with waiata. A copy of the ceremony programme is attached to this email if you would like to view the event proceedings.

The full ceremony is available to view here: <https://youtu.be/xmD156HhwP0>. We sincerely apologise that the very beginning of Dave Winterburn's mihi was missed as we got the ceremony underway just a bit early!



*Over 100 people attended the service at Upper Brecon Street just outside the cemetery (above).*



*Ceremony MC and QLDC Parks Manager Dave Winterburn (above).*



*Paulette Tamati-Elliffe from Kāi Tahu led the karakia and waiata (above).*





*Councillor Craig Ferguson (above).*



*Ian Guy from Wakatipu Community Presbyterian Church (above).*



*Michael Godfrey from Anglican Parish of Wakatipu (above).*



*Parks Officer for Cemeteries Tarsy Koentges (above).*



We are now onto 'Stage 5 – Do The Work' of our [Plan for the Queenstown Cemetery Restoration](#). Since Friday, 3 November, the Mike Hurring Contracting Team have been hard at work clearing the debris from the cemetery. The crew of about 20 have been shovelling and hand filling large bags with silt and smaller branches, which will then be lifted off site by a large crane that is due to arrive next week. An estimated 300 tons of material has been bagged and another 170 tons of larger logs have been cut down and removed from site so far.

Progress has been quicker than expected. The team is doing an excellent job collecting displaced grave items which are being carefully catalogued and stored safely till we are ready to have them identified and claimed by families. Only two headstones have been displaced from their bases and the families of both have been informed.

We cannot thank the Mike Hurring Contracting Team enough for the delicate care they have shown working around the cemetery. The entire team have been communicating every item they find and have consulted with us every step of the way to make sure the graves and grave features are all uncovered in a safe and sensitive manner.

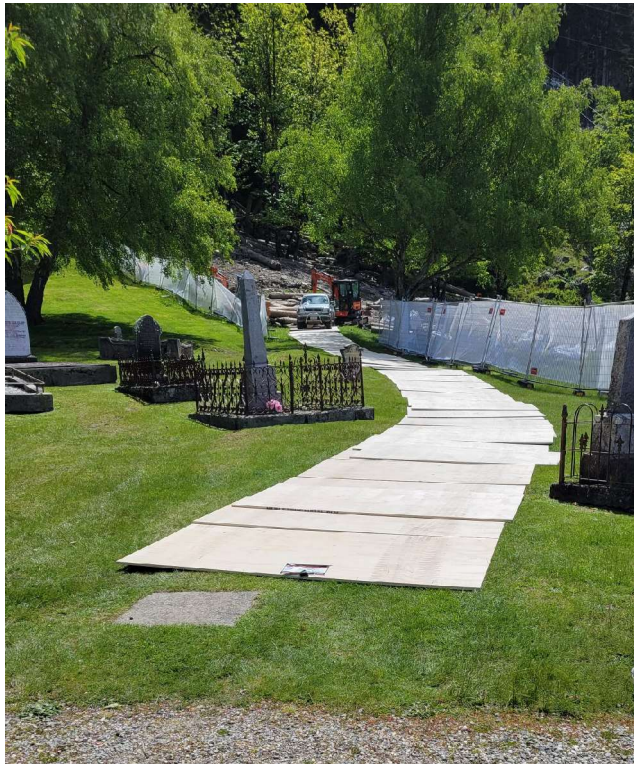
I am still working on setting up an online meeting for those who would like to ask questions in a live format. I appreciate your patience while I organise as I have been onsite at the cemetery since works started. I will be sure to send round an invite to this online catch up once I have it in the calendar.

As always, if anyone has questions or concerns, I am just an email or phone call away so please get in touch anytime!

Ngā mihi nui!



*1200kg bags are being mostly hand-filled with material and will then be craned offsite (above).*



*Surface protection has been put into place to safeguard unmarked graves (above).*

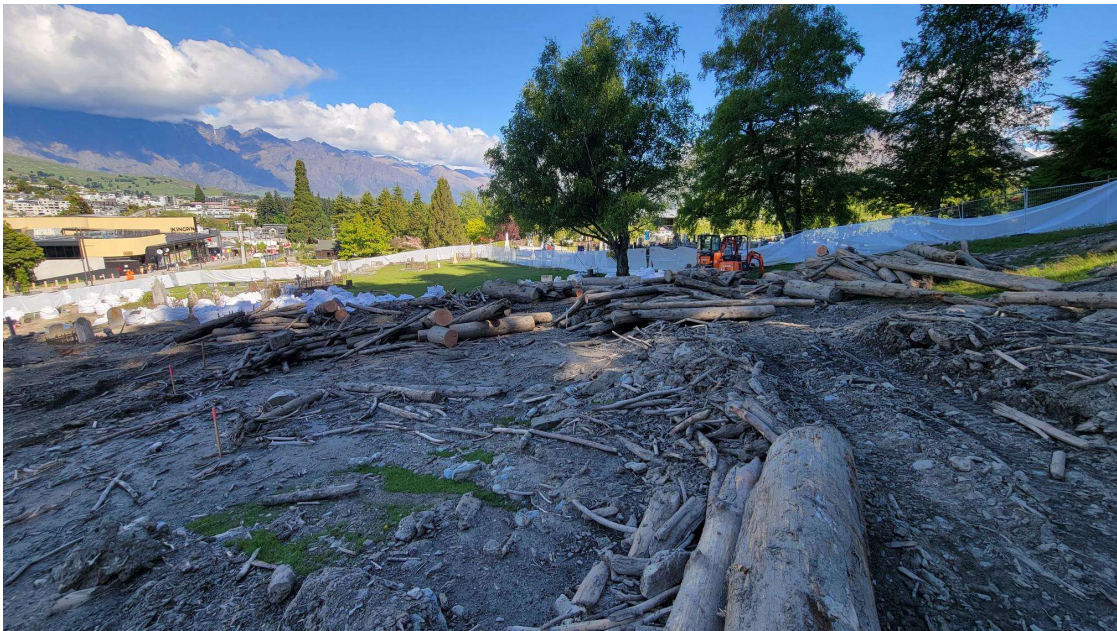


*Grave features are very carefully being excavated by hand/shovel (above).*





*Hand-filled bags being lined up, ready to be craned offsite (above)*



*Two smaller diggers have been accessing the area up above the main graves to cut down and remove the larger logs (above).*