

**Community & Services Committee**

21 September 2023

**Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [1]**

**Department: Community Services**

**Title | Taitara : Tree Replacement Programme for entrance to Arrowtown on Centennial Avenue**

**Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko**

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The purpose of this report is to consider the staged removal and replacement of wilding trees along Centennial Avenue in Arrowtown.

**Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka**

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That Community & Services Committee:

- **Note** the contents of this report; and
- **Approve** the three-year staged plan for the removal and replacement of wilding trees for the entrance to Arrowtown along Centennial Avenue; and
- **Agree** that the final species selection will be made by Parks Officers.

**Prepared by:**



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**Title:** Parks & Open Spaces Planning Manager  
25 August 2023

**Reviewed and Authorised by:**



**Name:** Kenneth Bailey  
**Title:** Community Services General Manager  
11 September 2023

## Context | Horopaki

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1. Council received an application from the Arrowtown Golf Club (AGC), in conjunction with the Whakatipu Wilding Control Group (WCG), to remove all wilding conifer trees within the Arrowtown Golf Course lease area. It also included the removal of mature wilding trees along the Centennial Avenue Road Reserve in Arrowtown.
2. The request was considered at the Community & Services Committee meeting in April 2023. The application was approved but excluded the removal of trees along the Centennial Avenue Road Reserve. The Community & Services Committee (the Committee) requested a staged plan for the removal and subsequent replacement of the trees along Centennial Avenue be developed and brought back to the Committee for consideration.
3. The tree removal application has been processed in accordance with the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Tree Policy 2022. The application has been assessed against the policy by the Council's Arborist and reviewed by the Parks Manager.
4. The application does not include Protected Trees under QLDC's District Plan, trees listed for potential protection in the Proposed District Plan, or Notable Trees from the NZ Tree Register.

## Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

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### Tree removal application

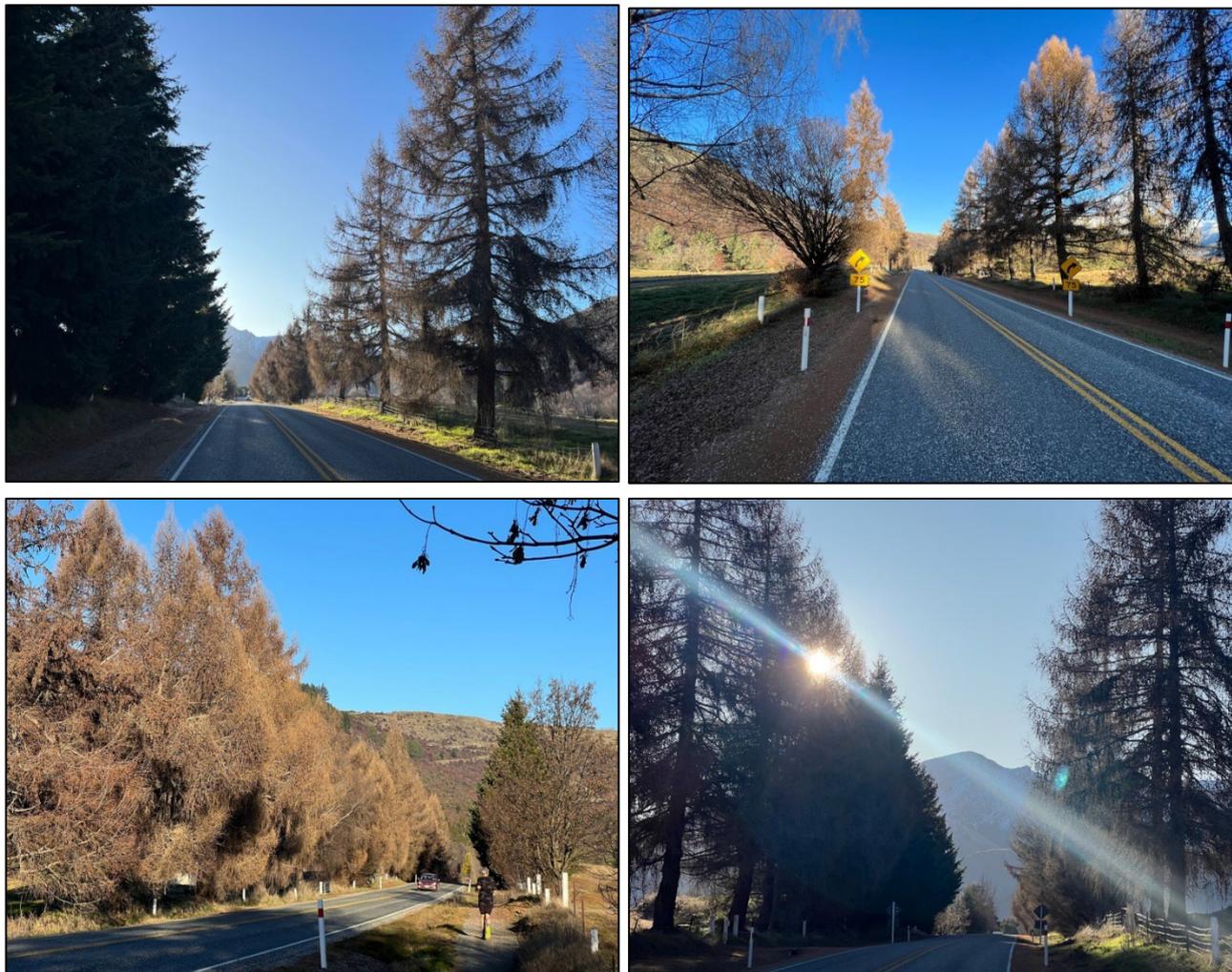
5. The following relevant tree removal policy guidelines were considered when assessing the application:
  - 4.7. *Council approval for tree removal to facilitate projects on Council land will consider the value of the project to the community, including public health and/or the local environment, in conjunction with the benefits of retaining existing trees compared with their loss and proposed replacement planting.*
  - 4.10. *Healthy and structurally sound trees may be removed to manage or prevent the spread of pests and diseases. This includes the removal of pest trees where they are deemed a threat to indigenous flora and fauna and non-pest species.*
  - 4.11. *Wilding noxious or pest trees may be strategically removed where they are determined to be a threat as a pest species or cause a nuisance in a particular location, to manage or prevent the spread of pests and diseases. This includes the removal or poisoning of pest trees. Requirement for replacement planting will be determined by any amenity values the trees provided.*
6. The application seeks approval for the staged removal of 49 wilding conifers (39 Larch and 10 Douglas Fir) along Centennial Avenue, and their replacement with avenue appropriate species. Note that 47 trees will remain. A total summary of avenue trees is:

Tree Species	Total Trees	Status
Larix decidua - Larch	39	Wilding to remove
Pseudotsuga menziesii - Douglas Fir	10	Wilding to remove
Betula pendula - Silver Birch	13	Retain
Other Mixed Exotics	34	Retain
<b>Total Avenue trees</b>	<b>96</b>	

7. The area of proposed tree removals is identified below in Figure 1, while overview photos of the avenue are identified in Figure 2.



Figure 1: Avenue of trees on Centennial Avenue  
 Yellow dot = Larch  
 Red dot = Douglas Fir



*Figure 2: Overview images of avenue of trees*

### **Consultation with stakeholders**

8. Despite being predominantly comprised of wilding species, particularly Larch, the trees along Centennial Avenue are believed to have been purposefully planted and have since become a valued community asset generating a distinctive sense of arrival into Arrowtown. They contribute significantly to the unique character of the town.
9. The relevant stakeholders, including the Arrowtown Village Association (AVA), AGC, WCG and Arrowtown Planning Advisory Group (APAG) agree with the removal of the wilding conifers. However, their opinions vary on the timeframe for the staged removal, ranging from 1 to 5 years. QLDC is proposing a balanced approach by supporting a three-year removal process considering the preferences and concerns of all involved parties.
10. The APAG highlighted key considerations that should be acknowledged as part of the application and staged removals:

- *If the larches are removed, existing hornbeams should be saved.*
- *Do not use natives as avenue trees. They are often unruly without good form and will shade the road and golf course and are hard to establish.*
- *Consideration is given to a greater variety of deciduous trees in the avenue extension.*
- *Consideration is given as to where power lines are and what the long-term implication is of planting too close to infrastructure.*

### **Staged plan for removal and replanting of trees along Centennial Avenue**

11. The following staged plan is recommended:

- Trees are removed in three stages spread over a three-year period.
- Tree replacement commences immediately following each removal stage to preserve the aesthetic continuity of the avenue.
- Planting of larger-grade trees (80-120 litre) for immediate visual impact and to expedite the avenue's rejuvenation.
- Watering and aftercare to ensure successful establishment and growth of newly planted trees.
- 2-for-1 tree replacement policy applies for each tree removed, contributing to an enhanced and iconic tree-lined avenue in the future. This will mean a total of 98 trees will require replanting along the avenue and surrounding area.

12. The proposed staged plan takes into account operational constraints, budget availability, community sentiment and wilding tree strategies.

13. Figure 3 shows the staged removal zones.

14. Following tree removal, the branches will be mulched for putting around planting and the wood will be sold to offset the cost of removal.

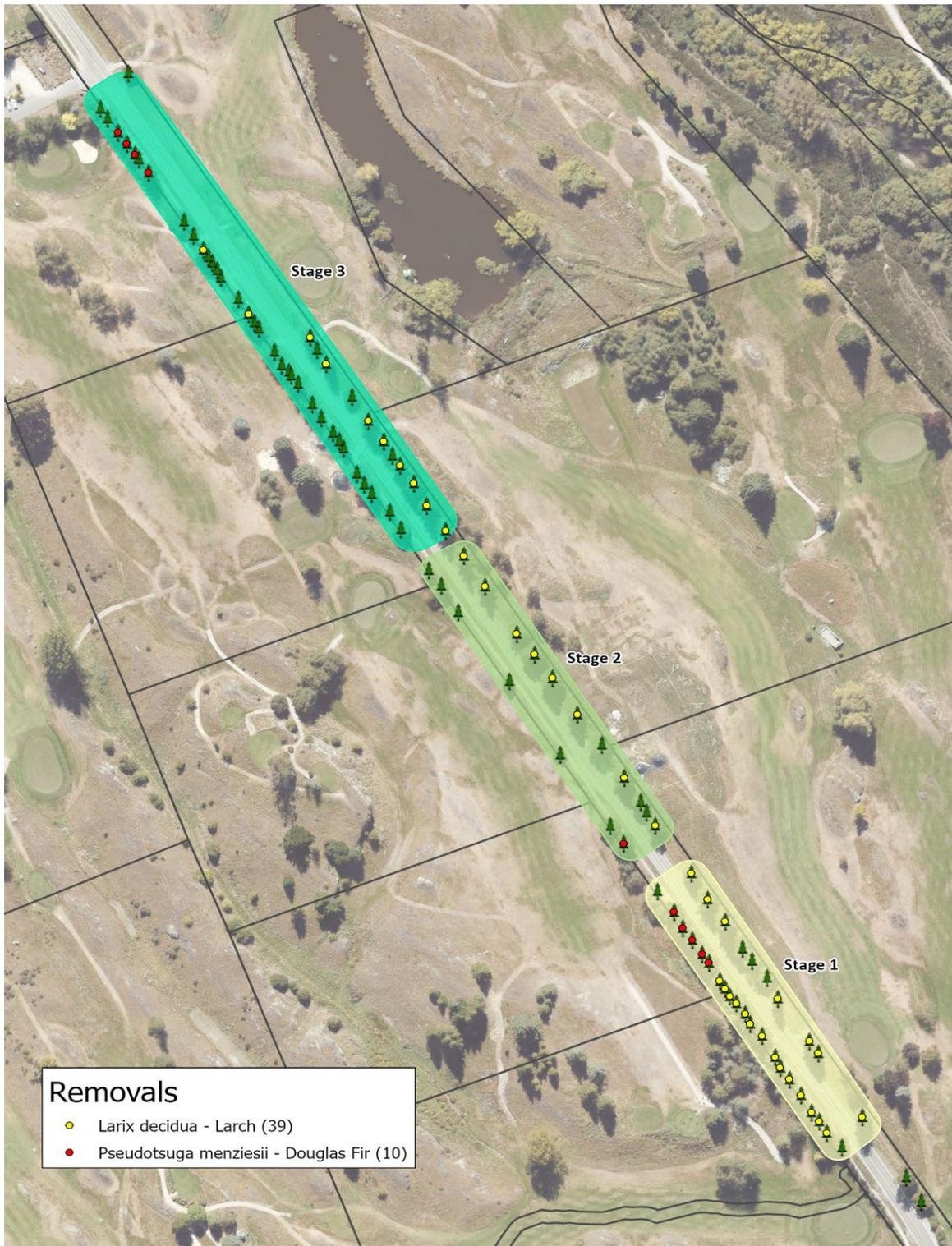


Figure 3: Staged Removals

15. To accommodate the space needed for trees at maturity, it has been determined that 70 to 80 trees are suitable for replanting along the avenue. It has been agreed by the AGC that any additional trees will be strategically planted within the Arrowtown Golf Course to fulfil the 2-for-1 replacement requirement.

16. This report recommends selection of one of the following species to create a unified and visually appealing avenue. Options discussed with the AVA and AGC are included below. It is proposed that the final species selection will be made by QLDC Parks Officers and will be dependent on availability of stock at the time of ordering.

- *Platanus orientalis* 'Autumn Glory' - Oriental Plane
- *Fraxinus oxycarpa* 'Raywoodii' – Claret Ash
- *Tilia cordata* – Small-leaved Lime
- *Acer platanoides* var. – Norway Maple
- *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' – Sweetgum

17. Figure 4 shows the proposed replanting sites along the avenue.



Figure 4: Avenue Planting Locations

18. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002:

19. **Option 1** Approve the three-year staged removal plan of wilding conifers along Centennial Avenue.

Advantages:

- By using a staged approach, the visual amenity will be preserved for a longer period compared to complete removal. No more than one third of all trees will be taken out at any one time.
- Removal of wilding conifers and their replacement with more suitable tree species will address the issue of invasive pests, improve local biodiversity, and create a more iconic tree-lined avenue in the future.
- The objectives in the Arrowtown Wilding Strategy and of the Whakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group will be advanced by reducing the spread and removing seed sources.
- All existing non-wilding species situated along the avenue will be preserved.
- Compared to the current species, the proposed replacements are aesthetically pleasing and more suitable for fostering a tree-lined avenue, leaving a lasting legacy and bold entrance into Arrowtown.

Disadvantages:

- Loss of an established tree avenue and visual amenity along the gateway into Arrowtown, until the replacement trees have matured.
- Progress may be restricted if funding cannot be found in subsequent years/stages, compared to complete removal within a shorter timeframe.
- Loss of further habitat and carbon sink until further trees can re-establish within the area.

20. **Option 2** Decline the staged removal plan of wilding conifers along Centennial Avenue.

Advantages:

- Habitat and amenity value within the Avenue will be retained.

Disadvantages:

- Missed opportunity to remove wilding species with operational and budgetary support from the WCG.

21. This report recommends Option 1 as it strikes a critical balance between maintaining the aesthetic appeal of Arrowtown's gateway and fulfilling our ecological responsibilities.

## Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

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### Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

22. This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the [Council's Significance and Engagement Policy](#) because it involves trees which have a high level of community interest. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are the residents and ratepayers of the Whakapitu community, visitors to Whakatipu, and members of the Arrowtown Golf Club.
23. The Council has consulted with the Arrowtown Golf Club, Arrowtown Village Association, Arrowtown Planning Advisory Group and the Wilding Control Group. This consultation has informed the development of the staged plan and is outlined in sections 10-12 of this report.

### Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

24. The Council has not undertaken any consultation with Iwi.

## Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

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25. This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. RISK00009 It is associated with ineffective management of community assets within the [QLDC Risk Register](#). This risk has been assessed as having a high inherent risk rating.

The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing us to retain the risk at its current level. This shall be achieved by removing a pest species and providing replacement species that are aesthetically pleasing and more suitable for fostering a tree-lined avenue.

## Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

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26. The timeline for the programme, including stage removals and planting, is dependent on the WCG budget to begin the work. Delays may occur if the budget is restricted or not fully available.
27. The costs for tree removal will be covered by the WCG, while the contribution of the planting, watering and aftercare will be supported by the AGC.
28. QLDC will fund the tree supply, contribute to planting costs, and conduct essential formative pruning maintenance as part of a scheduled 5-year maintenance program. Where necessary, stump removal costs will also be covered by QLDC.

29. The approximate cost of replanting for each stage of the programme for QLDC will be \$14,000, with a total cost of approximately \$42,000. Annual maintenance costs will be covered by existing budgets.

#### Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

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30. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- ‘Deafening Dawn Chorus’ Vision Beyond 2050: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
- QLDC Tree Policy 2022
- QLDC Climate & Biodiversity Action Plan 2022
- Otago Regional Council Pest Management Plan 2019
- Parks and Open Space Strategy 2021
- Wildlife Act 1953

31. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies above.

32. QLDC’s contribution to this matter is included in the Ten Year Plan in the Street Tree Replacement Programme.

#### Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

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33. The recommended option:

- Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.
  - Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
  - Is consistent with the Council’s plans and policies; and
  - Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.
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