

Tēnā koutou katoa

Exciting news to share this week! While the mitigation works that were taking place above the cemetery were extended a bit from their original target completion date, we now have a date set for when restoration works are expected to begin.

Next Thursday 2 November, QLDC has organised an orientation for the contractors undertaking the restoration works. Site access, protocols, methodologies, health and safety, and cultural observances, among much more, will be covered in this preparation session. Then, on Friday 3 November there will be a Whakawatea celebration (more details to follow below) and the works will begin that day.

The overall timeline for the restoration project remains *mostly* the same as that shared prior, but again, please note that this timeline may be adjusted further due to any weather-impacted works or if any unexpected difficulties are encountered once activities get underway:

- Late Oct. to Early November: Planned risk mitigation above cemetery – NOW COMPLETE
- Early November to Mid-November: Larger debris preparation and removal
- Mid November to Early December: Further silt and smaller debris excavation
- Early December to Late December (into January): Detailed cleaning & monument restoration
- January: *Current* target completion for restoration of cemetery

Early next week, preparations for the upcoming works will begin around the cemetery in order to get the site ready. A site office will be put into place along Cemetery Road at the main entrance, and water access points will be organised to allow for required cultural observances:



The main entrance to the cemetery is going to be the primary access point for contractors, so a temporary pedestrian accessway has been created towards the 'back' (southwestern) corner of the cemetery. We will try to keep public access available to the currently open portion of the cemetery, but we kindly request that everyone respect the work that is taking place on site by not entering the active work area, and we thank you in advance for your patience if the remainder of the cemetery needs to be closed for safety reasons during certain restoration operations. We will notify everyone if this needs to happen at any point.

One aspect of the planned works we needed to adjust is that the crane will not arrive on site till a little later, and rather than delaying works, next week the contractors will begin preparing the large debris for removal. This will be done by cutting down the largest debris and stacking it in designated areas, while moderate-sized debris and some of the silt will be scooped into large bags for removal. All material will be sifted through as it is removed to collect any displaced grave items.

We have allowed for the use of a smaller digger (similar to the size used by our sexton team for plot preparations) to facilitate this large debris removal preparation process, but machine access as well as use of the digger has been restricted to specific areas where graves and grave features will not be negatively impacted. If you have any questions or concerns about the above information, please do reach out via cemeteries@qldc.govt.nz.

As a key part of the restoration works beginning, Ngāi Tahu, in partnership with the Queenstown Lakes District Council and Skyline Enterprises, has organise a **Whakawatea Ceremony on Friday, 3 November from 9am to 10am** prior to the works commencing. The ceremony location will be at upper Brecon Street, next to the Queenstown Cemetery:



Ngāi Tahu have chosen the name—Whakawatea—for the celebration as it is used to cleanse, free, dislodge, shift and move energy, to make way for renewed energy and empowerment as we now move into the stage of acting and carrying out our work. The Whakawatea will be an acknowledgement of those present on the day, the whānau directly affected by the inundation, the people who are interred in the urupā, Mana Whenua present, Council, Skyline management & staff, and the contractors who are undertaking the works.

It is an opportunity to bring all peoples together to acknowledge the common goal of clearing and cleansing the urupā. This event is open to the public and communications to the wider community about the event will going out early next week. For those families/plot holders with impacted plots, this event will again be photographed and videorecorded so we can share that media with anyone who is not able to attend in person.

Before signing off, I want to take a moment and thank you all once again for your patience and kindness towards myself (as Parks Officer for Cemeteries) and the wider teams working on this restoration project. We know it has been difficult to wait till we could begin work in the cemetery, and we are incredibly grateful to everyone for your willingness to walk alongside us as we progress towards restoring the cemetery!

Nga mihi nui