

## Item 2: Wildfire program update 2026

**SESSION TYPE:** Briefing

### **PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:**

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To update Council on the current status of the Wildfire Program and the proposed direction for the 2027–2037 Long Term Plan (LTP).

While wildfire risk to three Council reserves remains high, Queenstown Lakes District Council's understanding of that risk and how it can be effectively managed has evolved since the indicative business case was developed in 2023.

Significant mitigation actions have already been implemented, new technology and partnerships are in place, and FENZ is now playing a more active role in shaping and supporting wildfire prevention and reserve closure decisions.

With first-year capital funding approaching in 2026/27, it is critical that investment decisions are based on current risk profiles, proven interventions, and clear delivery partnerships to ensure the program is proportionate, targeted, and delivers the greatest possible reduction in risk to life and property.

### **DATE/START TIME:**

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Tuesday, 24 March 2026 at 10:15AM

### **TIME BREAKDOWN:**

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Presentation: 15 mins

Questions: 30mins

### **PRESENTERS:**

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Briana Pringle - Parks and Open Spaces Planning Manager

Dave Winterburn - Parks Manager

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#### **Prepared by:**



**Name:** Briana Pringle  
**Title:** Parks and Open Spaces Planning  
Manager  
11 March 2026

#### **Reviewed and Authorised by:**



**Name:** Dave Winterburn  
**Title:** Acting Community Services General  
Manager  
16 March 2026

**ATTACHMENTS:**

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A	Wildfire program update 2026 presentation
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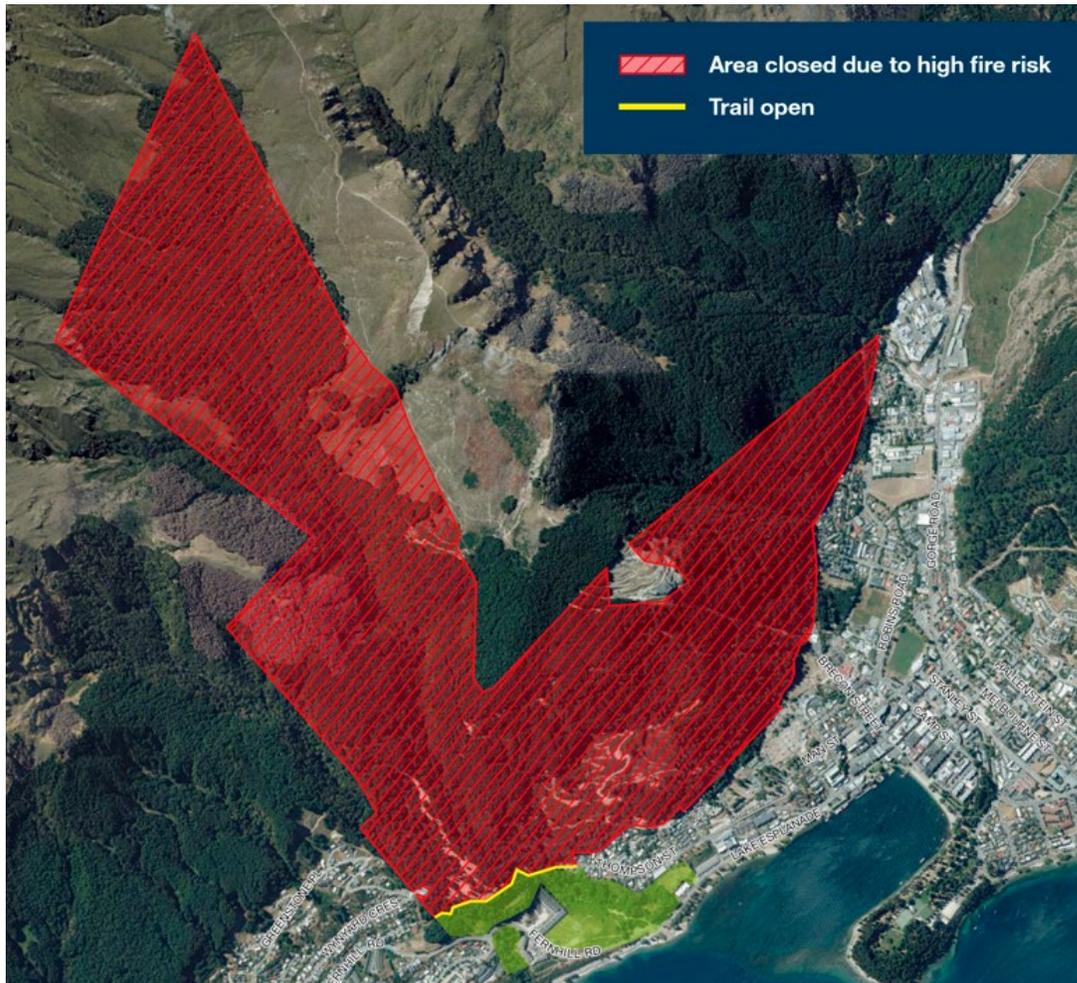
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# QLDC WILDFIRE PROGRAM - UPDATE

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MARCH 2026 PRESENTATION

# Background: Wildfire Risk



- > Wildfire Threat Assessment Report 2022
- > 19 reserves identified with threat of wildfire: medium to extreme risk
- > Priority – three nationally recognised high-risk Reserves:
  - > Ben Lomond,
  - > Queenstown Hill,
  - > Mt Iron
- > Risk to life, property and ecological values
- > Wildfire Prevention Programme formed

# Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)

- > Local councils acted as Rural Fire Authorities under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977
- > Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) was established under the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017
- > Relationship strengthened significantly in late 2024
- > FENZ now actively supports reserve closures and wildfire decision-making
- > Endorses QLDC triggers, procedures and commercial area arrangements



# Long Term Plan (LTP)

- > Wildfire programme funded through the 2024–2034 LTP
- > First year of capital funding scheduled for 2026/27
- > Indicative business case developed in 2023 is now being reviewed
- > Updated approach reflects changed risk understanding and partnerships



# Wildfire: Implemented Initiatives

- > Total fire bans across Ben Lomond, Queenstown Hill and Mount Iron
- > Improved signage, gates and public education
- > Wildfire Closure Plan implemented
- > Environmental sensor network installed for real-time monitoring



# Ben Lomond: Risk Reduction

- > High consequence risk due to visitor numbers and built infrastructure
- > Stakeholder-led Wildfire Readiness Plan endorsed by FENZ
- > Skyline and Ziptrek have implemented significant fuel reduction and asset protection
- > Focus on protecting people and infrastructure at points of exposure



# Proposed Way Forward



- > FENZ as an active delivery partner
- > Focus on consequence reduction, not reserve-wide firebreaks
- > Targeted, top-down fuel reduction and revegetation
- > Transition to low-flammability vegetation
- > Investment directed to proven, value-for-money actions
- > Partnered tree removal and replanting

# Questions?

