



TE KĀHUI WHAKAMANA  
RUA TEKAU MĀ IWA  
PIKE RIVER  
RECOVERY AGENCY

# Briefing for the Incoming Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry

November 2020

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## The Pike River Recovery Agency

Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa – the Pike River Recovery Agency was established as a stand-alone government department by Order in Council on 31 January 2018.

The Agency will be disestablished once the Pike River Mine site has been rehabilitated and handed over to the Department of Conservation.

### Mana Whenua

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae (Ngāi Tahu) gifted the Agency the Te Reo name Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa, which can be shortened to Te Kāhui Whakamana 29. It is interpreted as 'The Empowering Voice for the Pike 29'. Ngāti Waewae is kaitiaki of Pike River in the Atarau region.

### Our Strategic Objective

The strategic objective of the Agency is to conduct a safe manned re-entry and recovery of the 2.3 kilometre Pike River mine drift (access tunnel), and the network of chambers off the side of the drift in the area known as Pit Bottom in Stone, to:

- Gather evidence to better understand what happened in 2010 with an eye to preventing future tragedies and promoting accountability for this mining tragedy
- Give the Pike River families and victims overdue closure and peace of mind, and
- Recover remains where possible and treat these with dignity and respect

The Agency will then be wound down and formally disestablished.

The Agency has no mandate to explore or enter the main mine workings beyond a major roof fall at the end of the drift. This is where most or all of the remains of the 29 men who died in the mine are expected to lie.

### Our Strategic Partners

The Agency appreciates and draws on the ongoing contribution, support and goodwill of:

- Pike River families and the Family Reference Group
- Ngāti Waewae
- The Technical Experts Group of specialist advisers contracted by the Agency
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)
- New Zealand Police
- New Zealand Defence Force
- WorkSafe New Zealand
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Archives New Zealand
- Department of Conservation

- NZ Mines Rescue Trust
- Minerals sector industry organisations
- National Health and Safety for the New Zealand Mining and Quarrying Industry
- Business Leaders Health and Safety Forum

### Our values and operating principles

The following values and principles underpin and inform all aspects of the Agency's work:

#### *Close partnership with the Pike River families*

We work closely with the families and their representatives in all areas of our work. In particular the families and their expert advisers continue to play a central role in planning for and implementing re-entry and recovery of the drift.

We regularly monitor the satisfaction of the Family Reference Group with the engagement and liaison services we provide and we are committed to acting on the insights gained from this.

#### *Health and safety comes first*

Everyone involved in this project agrees that safety is paramount and non-negotiable. "Zero Harm" is a non-negotiable bottom line that informs and underpins all aspects of our operations.

#### *Transparency and openness*

Re-entry and recovery operations are planned and implemented in a transparent and rigorous way that draws on the best possible expertise.

Our advice to the Minister and our operational decisions are open and unbiased. We go where the facts and the best available information takes us.

Information about our activities and advice is released proactively to the Agency's website and we respond positively to requests for additional information that are made under the Official Information Act 1982 or otherwise.

### The Family Reference Group (the FRG)

The FRG has a mandate to represent most Pike family members. The members of the FRG are:

- Mrs Anna Osborne
- Mrs Sonya Rockhouse
- Mr Rick (Rowdy) Durbridge
- Mr Rob Egan
- Mr Tony Sutorius

The Agency also engages with family members who are not represented by the FRG and keeps them informed.

## NZ Police

NZ Police is responsible for:

- Coordinating and supervising the scene examination of the drift
- Training and advising Agency staff members who are carrying out initial forensic scanning, investigation and recovery operations underground in the drift
- Taking custody of exhibits and potential exhibits recovered from the drift
- Conducting an ongoing criminal investigation into what happened at Pike River

The Agency works closely with the Police on these matters. There is a Police base at the site and Police personnel are on site whenever underground operations are being conducted.

## Health and Safety

There have been no lost time injuries to Agency staff since it was established. This is something to celebrate but not something that can or will be taken for granted.

An effective health and safety management system requires a number of complementary and mutually reinforcing elements:

- top level commitment, leadership and modelling
- a quality regulatory regime
- a supportive and robust organisational culture
- effective worker participation
- sound and effective systems and processes
- good quality internal and external reporting and accountability systems

The Agency takes all of these things seriously and has invested in them accordingly.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy adopted and promulgated by the Management Team provides a high level statement of the Agency's commitment to 'zero harm' and the action that will be taken to ensure and achieve this.

The Agency is the holder of a tier 1 mining permit under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 and is a PCBU for the purposes of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. It is subject to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2016, Schedule 3 to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and the Mines Rescue Act 2013. It is subject to regulation by WorkSafe New Zealand including scheduled and unscheduled inspection visits.

We welcome this oversight. We aim to comply fully with the spirit and the letter of all applicable requirements and to build a positive, transparent and constructive working relationship with WorkSafe as the regulator of underground coal mining operations.

A real living culture of 'safety first', deliberate and meticulous planning, well developed operating plans and procedures, realistic training and rehearsals, and 'conditions-based operations' is fundamental to the safe and successful conduct of our work. There is a lot that we still do not know and we will not know until we encounter actual conditions underground. We will need to have and demonstrate agile thinking, and the willingness to reassess, reset and re-plan when required.

As an agency we need to know when to call it 'quits' if that is what needs to be done. As staff of the Agency all of us need to be willing and able to say STOP if we are concerned about any aspect of health, safety or wellbeing.

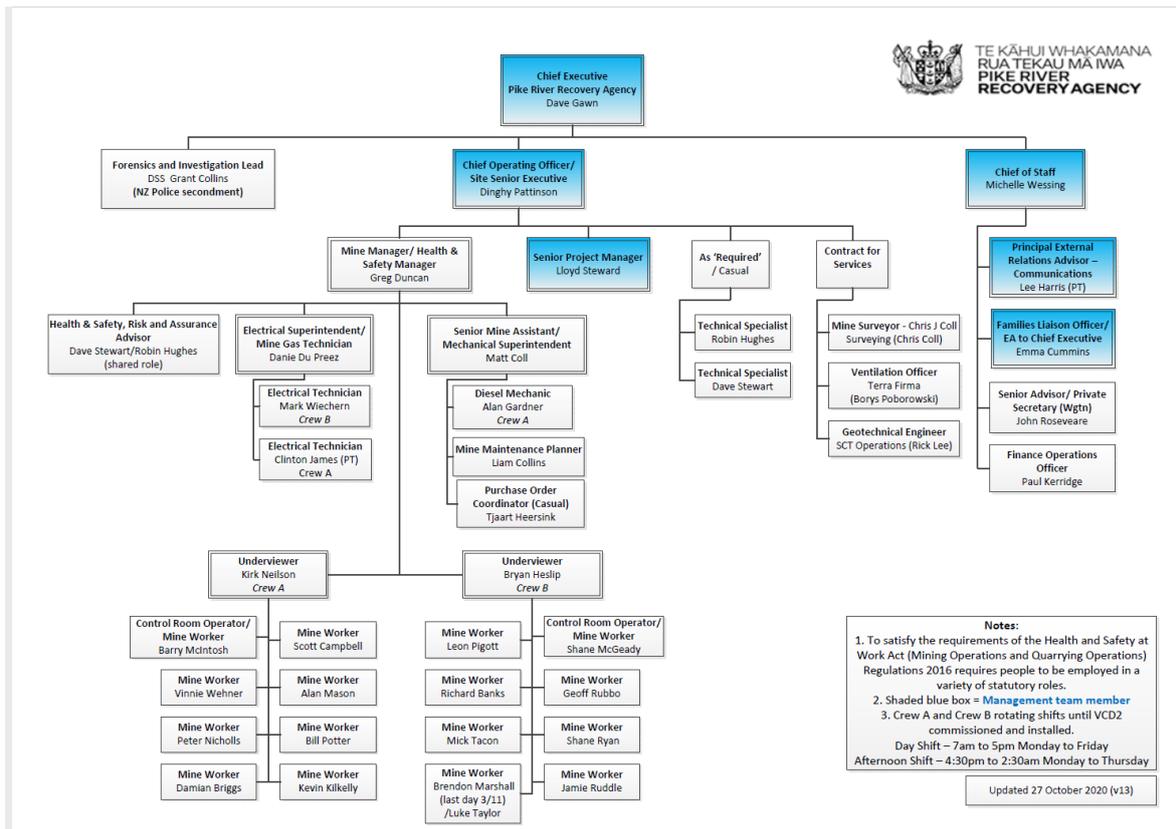
Comprehensive 'fit for purpose' systems and processes have been developed and implemented, and rigorous risk assessment and control is a core element of the operating plans that have been and are being developed.

The organisational commitment to health and safety is supported by:

- An active operational health and safety committee for the mine site that meets weekly
- A high level Health and Safety Steering Committee that provides supervision and direction on health and safety matters and priorities across the Agency
- Regular discussion between the chief executive and staff in statutory and non-statutory mining roles
- Scheduled consideration by the Agency management team of health and safety matters – including reports on the work of the health and safety committees
- Agency self-funding Group Medical and Personal Insurance cover for employees
- Co-designed health and safety policies and procedures that discuss how a safe and healthy workplace for all staff, contractors and visitors will be maintained, and what procedures will be implemented in order to achieve this.
- Staff having access to the Employee Assistance Programme - a confidential workplace service that the Agency funds.
- A range of internal and external reporting and accountability mechanisms – including the four health and safety related performance measures that have been included in the operating expense appropriation that funds the work of the Agency.

### [Our Organisational Structure](#)

Most of the Agency team is based at the mine site. There is also an office in Greymouth where the remaining staff are based (apart from one Senior Advisor/Ministerial Private Secretary based in Wellington).



**Figure One: PRRA Organisation Chart as at 27 October 2020**

Recovery teams are currently working two shifts per day, 90 hours per fortnight.

### Independent Advice to the Minister

Mr Robert (Rob) Fyfe was appointed in January 2018 as an independent advisor on Pike River matters to the Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry. Mr Fyfe's appointment expires on 31 December 2020.

### Operating and Capital Budget

The budget for Vote: Pike River Re-entry was reviewed and approved by Cabinet in March 2020.

The approved funding over the full life of the project is:

- \$50.495 million for departmental operating expenditure (in a multi-year appropriation that will expire on 30 June 2021 – including \$4.195 million of contingency funding)
- \$0.075 in non-departmental operating expenditure (in another multi-year appropriation) to meet the costs of independent advice to the responsible Minister
- Up to \$1.125 million in capital expenditure (including Agency set up and equipment purchase costs)

Actual expenditure to 30 September 2020 was:

- \$40.016 million in departmental operating costs
- \$0.059 million in non-departmental operating costs
- \$0.904 million in capital costs

#### Legislation

The Agency is not responsible for the administration of any legislation.

The Agency is the holder of a tier 1 mining permit under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 and is a PCBU (person conducting a business or undertaking) for the purposes of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

As the operator of an underground mining operation the Agency is subject to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2015, Schedule 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and the Mines Rescue Act 2013.

## Current progress with the recovery operation

In progress so far:

- An Entry and Exit plan (together with the very substantial supporting documentation, policies and processes required) was developed, risk assessed with input from world-leading experts and accepted by WorkSafe New Zealand.
- WorkSafe approved an application for a regulatory exemption to allow the safest and best approach to be used for ventilating the drift
- The existing seal near the entrance to the drift was breached in December 2019
- Since then there have been two safe operational pauses (one during Covid 19 Alert Levels Four and Three, and one while effective control measures were developed to manage the risk of exposure to harmful products of combustion which were detected in samples taken from the drift).
- Otherwise underground teams have:
  - moved up the drift carrying out re-support work as required and forensic examination work in each section, and then moving up services including communications, monitoring, ventilation and safety equipment before moving on to the next section
  - carried out the initial inspection and hazard assessment and initial forensic assessment of all the roadways in Pit Bottom in Stone and closed them off except for required weekly inspections

As of Friday 6 November the 2,127 metre mark in the main drift has been reached. The current plan from here is that:

- Recovery of the drift will continue up to an existing Rocsil ventilation control plug at 2,240 metres. This is requiring extensive re-support work and the removal of a debris field and will take some time yet
- A rated ventilation control device (VCD) will then be constructed on the mine portal/entrance side of the Rocsil plug which is very close to the large roof fall at the end of the drift
- The Rocsil plug will then be breached and the remaining area beyond it up to the start of the roof fall will be explored in breathing apparatus
- Once this has been done all of the Pit Bottom in Stone roadways will be fully recovered and detailed forensic examination of the various items of interest there will be carried out with the assistance of NZ Police technical experts

Work is well underway too on the rehabilitation activities required before the site is handed over to the Department of Conservation

It is currently expected that it will be possible to:

- Substantially complete the re-entry and recovery aspects of the project by the end of 2020
- Carry out required residual work in the first quarter of 2021 including:
  - Dismantling and retrieving underground equipment/infrastructure as recommended and agreed with the NZ Police technical experts
  - Withdrawing from the drift and sealing the portal and boreholes

- Complete rehabilitation work and hand the site over to the Department of Conservation by April/May 2021
- Wind down and disestablish the Agency after that

#### Possible additional drilling programme

NZ Police is conducting a feasibility study on drilling some additional boreholes that could provide additional information on mine infrastructure and conditions, and on the location of other evidence.

If a decision is made to go ahead and drill such boreholes the work will be done by contractors after the mine drift has been recovered, and would be part of the ongoing Police investigation.

## Key Agency Contacts

Dave Gawn  
Chief Executive



Kevin (Dinghy) Pattinson  
Site Senior Executive  
Chief Operating Officer



Michelle Wessing  
Chief of Staff



## Some Background Reference Documents

Report of the Royal Commission on the Pike River Tragedy

Cabinet Paper and Minute - Further Progress Report on the Re-entry, Recovery and Examination of the Pike River Mine Drift, March 2020

(Draft) Annual Report of the Agency for the year ended 30 June 2020

Recent weekly reports to the Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry

# The Pike 29

## The Pike River 29

Pike River Mine, Atarau, Greymouth, NZ

■ Pike River Coal    
 ■ Sub Tech Contracting    
 ■ Valley Longwall Drilling  
■ Boyd Kireilly Builders    
 ■ Pizzati Contracting    
 ■ Chris Yotts Builders

 David Adams Pike River Coal	 Michael Longwell Sub Tech Contracting	 Brett Jones Valley Longwall Drilling	 Steve Brown Valley Longwall Drilling	 Christopher Williams Pizzati Contracting
 Nathan Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Sarah Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Michael Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Peter Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 William Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders
 David Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Peter Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Michael Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Peter Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Steve Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders

 David Adams Pike River Coal	 Steve Adams Sub Tech Contracting	 Peter Adams Sub Tech Contracting	 Michael Adams Sub Tech Contracting	 Christopher Adams Sub Tech Contracting
 Nathan Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Sarah Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Michael Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 Peter Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders	 William Adams Boyd Kireilly Builders
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