



TE KĀHUI WHAKAMANA
RUA TEKAU MĀ IWA
PIKE RIVER
RECOVERY AGENCY



One of the concrete cutting contractors drilling into the 800mm seal 30m into the Pike River Mine drift.

It's been a while since you've heard from us

We've been firmly focused on re-entry for the past few weeks, and just haven't been able to update the website much. But as preparations continue and we're getting closer, we thought an update might be useful.

On Thursday 2 May, we had to pull the pin on the re-entry of the Pike River Mine drift planned for Friday 3 May. What happened was one of the tubes that runs from the mine base up to borehole 51 then down into the mine (some tube lines go for 4.5km) was leaking and oxygen was being sucked into the tube. These tubes sample the various gases that might be present in parts of the mine - so we can understand what's going on atmosphere-wise.

At our gas monitoring base, what was showing up as a result of the leaking tube was oxygen in borehole 51 which sits right above the roof fall at the end of the 2.3km drift access tunnel. We've been pumping nitrogen into the mine since December to replace the methane we vented out as we needed to maintain an inert environment underground. Pumping nitrogen creates a positive pressure inside the mine which prevents oxygen

coming in.

To allow drilling to commence so we could remove the concrete covering the doors 30 metres into the mine drift (access tunnel), we had to lower the pressure as you can't drill into a pressurised area - to do this we had to stop pumping nitrogen. The other thing we had to do was bring fresh air into the drift up to 180m as we can't drill into a nitrogen environment as well. After two and a half hours of drilling we encountered the unexplained oxygen reading at borehole 51.

As we don't want oxygen getting into the roof fall area we have plans in place that tell us what action to take if this happens, which included stopping drilling and putting nitrogen back down borehole 51. We did that, but we also needed to find the cause.

On Friday 3 May we still held a gathering of families, the Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry Hon Andrew Little, MP for West Coast Tasman Damien O'Connor, and Opposition spokesman on Pike River Mark Mitchell, along with other dignitaries and media representatives. We celebrated the impending re-entry and it was clear there was relief at being so close.

Since then, we have confirmed it was a faulty tube and replaced this, tested all the other gas monitoring lines that run up over the hill and in through the portal, we have resumed concrete cutting and started removing parts of the seal, and we have been sorting out some other jobs that need to happen before we re-enter.

The occasional lightning storm stalls us, but otherwise there's been some great progress. We're not yet at the point where we can confirm re-entry, but it might not be too long now.

Check out the [photos](#) from Friday 3 May on our website, along with the [Weekly Technical Schedule](#) which provides an insight into what's planned and completed each week.

Our [documents](#) are available on the Te Kāhui Whakamana Rua Tekau mā Iwa—Pike River Recovery Agency website.

If you have any questions, you can email us at info@pikeriverrecovery.govt.nz. Please direct any media queries to media@pikeriverrecovery.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi

The Pike River Recovery Agency team



Family Reference Group members Anna Osborne, Rowdy Durbridge and Sonya Rockhouse with Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Minister Responsible for Pike

River Re-entry Hon Andrew Little, at the 3 May event.



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