



# Arboricultural Inspection Report

**Location:** Sand Flat Road area, near Cromwell, Central Otago

**Species:** *Pinus* spp. (exact species to be confirmed)

**Inspection Type:** Visual tree health and structural assessment

**Date:** 03/03/2026

**Inspector:** Mathew Olsen

**Arboricultural Contractor – Over 10 years' practical experience in tree assessment and management**

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## 1. Purpose of Inspection

An inspection was undertaken following claims that the pine stand is diseased and approaching the end of its life expectancy. The site is currently used as an off-leash dog exercise area, with proposed development works (solar installation) planned along the eastern boundary.

The purpose of this inspection was to assess overall tree health, structural condition, and any potential public safety risks.

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## 2. Site Description

The stand appears to have been originally established at approximately 2 m × 3 m spacing. Historical thinning has occurred; however, the stand remains relatively dense in places.

**Soil conditions are dry and arid, consistent with inland Central Otago environments. Trees are generally tall and slender, typical of plantation-grown pines subjected to competitive growth conditions.**

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### **3. General Health Observations**

**No evidence of widespread disease was observed.**

**Specifically:**

- **No resin cankers present**
- **No fungal fruiting bodies observed at buttress roots or stem bases**
- **No indicators of Ganoderma-type decay identified**
- **No abnormal needle discoloration**
- **No patterned canopy decline**
- **No top dieback in dominant or co-dominant stems**

**Observed mortality is limited to:**

- **Suppressed or subdominant stems**
- **Individuals located on elevated or more exposed ground, likely affected by drought stress**
- **Trees that have lost competition for light and moisture**

**This pattern of mortality is consistent with natural competition-related suppression within a maturing plantation stand and does not indicate pathogenic decline.**

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## **4. Structural Condition**

The stand has recently been exposed to significant wind events affecting much of the country. No evidence of the following was observed:

- **Root plate movement**
- **Windthrow**
- **Stem failure**
- **Recent lean development**
- **Soil heave**

The absence of wind-related damage suggests good structural integrity and stable root systems among dominant and co-dominant stems.

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## **5. Age and Life Expectancy**

The exact age of the stand is yet to be confirmed (pending information from the original planter). However, based on observed structure and form, the trees are estimated to be approximately 35–45 years old.

For *Pinus* species, this age range does not represent end-of-life in an amenity or semi-natural context, particularly where dominant stems remain vigorous and structurally sound.

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## **6. Conclusions**

- **No visual evidence of systemic disease was identified**
- **Observed mortality aligns with competition and drought-related suppression**
- **Dominant and co-dominant stems are structurally stable**
- **The stand is functioning as expected for its age and density**

**The claim that the stand is diseased or in broad decline is not supported by observations made at the time of inspection.**

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## **7. Recommendations**

**To maintain public safety within the off-leash area, the following management actions are recommended:**

- **Remove dead and suppressed stems within falling distance of high-use areas and access routes**
- **Selectively remove structurally weak co-dominant stems (e.g. those with included bark or poor unions)**
- **Undertake minor pruning to remove significant deadwood over high-use areas**
- **Retain dominant, structurally sound stems**
- **Reassess the stand on a 3–5 year monitoring cycle**