

# Kia ora Welcome

**Thank you for your choice and interest in the Hillcrest Natural Burial Grove. The grove is the result of a partnership between Whakatāne District Council and the not-for-profit organisation, New Zealand Natural Burials. The following information has been prepared to guide you on use of the cemetery. It is required reading for those wishing to be buried here and/or their family or friends.**

## Burial booking, plot location and preparation *Ngā whakaritenga*

The cemetery requires at least eight working hours' notice prior to a burial. A burial warrant request must be completed prior to the burial; funeral directors will generally take care of the warrant for families.

Please advise the cemetery immediately if your family intends to make their own funeral arrangements without a funeral director, there are some important guidelines we can advise you on.

Plots cannot be pre-purchased, plots are allocated on a 'next available' basis at time of interment. This is to ensure the cemetery staff have adequate access to prepare plots and to continue the native planting restoration work.

## What it costs *He aha te utu?*

Refer to the our website for Council's current natural burial fee [whakatane.govt.nz/natural-burials](http://whakatane.govt.nz/natural-burials)

### FURTHER INFORMATION

New Zealand Natural Burials [naturalburials.co.nz](http://naturalburials.co.nz)

The organisation that started the Natural Burial movement in the UK [naturaldeath.org](http://naturaldeath.org)

This brochure is published by the Whakatāne District Council and is intended to provide general information only. It is not intended as a legal document and may not be applicable to all circumstances.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your arrangements, please contact the Whakatāne District Council Cemeteries team

**P** 07 306 0500 **E** [cemeteries@whakatane.govt.nz](mailto:cemeteries@whakatane.govt.nz)

### INFORMATION GUIDE

# Whakatāne Natural Burials

## *Ngā Nehunga Mākohā i Whakatāne*



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# Natural Burial Principles and Concept *Ngā Mātāpono Nehunga Mākoha*

## Central principle *Mātāpono matua*

Natural burials return the body to the earth through speedy decomposition for the benefit of the environment with minimal introduction of man-made materials and toxins.

## Concept *Te huatau*

The Natural Burial Grove is a beautiful forest located within Hillcrest Cemetery. The bush, stream and all its inhabitants, including the people buried here, make it a very special environment.

The unique sense of place has been achieved through a clear guiding concept: the central idea is that everything about the grove is as 'natural' as possible. In essence, we will not introduce anything to the grove that would interfere with, or pollute, environmental processes. For example, to help natural processes, plots are dug only into the active soil layer, the deceased are not embalmed and are buried in biodegradable shrouds or coffins. Plots are filled with aerobic, organically active soil, overplanted with a tree native to the area, and the whole grove is gradually restored to native bush.

All of the body nutrients and matter will be gradually absorbed by the surrounding soil and plants. It is intended that the grove will eventually become a living memorial to those buried there, a home for native flora and fauna, and a beautiful place for family and friends to visit.

## Essential components

### *Tikanga matua*

The main principle of a natural burial is that the body is returned to the earth for the benefit of the environment. Being buried in this method means acceptance of the main principle and its consequences, and these points:

#### **No chemical embalming**

Bodies buried naturally must not be chemically embalmed. Only natural or plant-based products, approved by New Zealand Natural Burials, may be used and must not contain any aldehyde. This is to speed up the natural processes of returning the body and its nutrients to the soil, and to reduce the amount of artificial and toxic chemicals and materials we introduce to the soil.

#### **Burial in the upper soil layers**

Bodies will be buried as close to, or within, the active soil layer as possible. Depth will vary according to the soil conditions. Plots will be part refilled with a special compost mix to help enrich the soil.

#### **Trees**

A native tree will be planted at the head or base of the plot. These trees are the basic building blocks of a native habitat restoration programme. Over time, other trees will be planted over and around the plot. To improve survival, trees for plots will not be planted by the Council during the summer months\*.

#### **Caskets**

You must use a casket provided by, or approved by, New Zealand Natural Burials. These caskets will be made from sustainably grown and harvested woods, with no chemicals or artificial compounds used in treatment of the wood or manufacture of the casket or its accessories.

#### **Shrouds**

Shrouds must be made of natural fibre; wool, silk or calico is permitted. Shrouds must be fastened to a solid board wider than the body for lowering purposes. The board must be made of biodegradable untreated timber.

#### **Plot markers**

A wooden post may be placed in the ground at the head or foot of the plot. The post must be made of untreated timber. The marker may be engraved with a poker-burnt inscription on the cap and sides of the post; this can be arranged through your funeral director or with a local Natural Burials NZ. The marker is designed to be non-permanent, but the plot and details of the person buried there will be GPS-located and marked on a map held by Council.

## Other matters *Tikanga kē*

**Single depth burials only** - Bodies will be buried as close to, or within, the active soil layer as possible, with an additional coverage of soil and organic material.

**How to store un-embalmed bodies** - Un-embalmed bodies must be kept cold and in absorbent materials until burial. A body must be disposed of within a reasonable time as set out in Section 46e of the Burials and Cremation Act 1964.

**Infectious diseases** - If a person dies from an infectious disease, the funeral director must notify the medical officer of health (s.85 Health Act 1956) and take advice; cemetery staff must also be informed. In the absence of a funeral director, the family will assume this responsibility. A person who has passed away due to an infectious disease must be buried in an eco-casket with appropriate protection against leakage.

**Memorials** - The main principle is to create an environment that is as natural as possible; therefore, artificial memorials or other materials on site are not allowed. Temporary biodegradable markers can be arranged by the funeral director or directly with a signwriter. A cemetery tracking system will be used to find burial plots once the area has returned to native vegetation. Tributes must be limited to natural cut flowers only. No containers of any kind are permitted on or near graves.

\* or at Council's discretion

