

A close-up photograph of several vibrant green leaves, likely from a coastal plant, with small water droplets resting on their surfaces. The leaves are heart-shaped with prominent veins. The background is dark and out of focus.

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Wellington City Council's cemeteries

A guide for Māori

Ko tō ngākau ki ngā taonga a ō tūpuna.

In your heart lay the treasures of your ancestors

Recognising your culture and beliefs

Wellington City Council released its new management plan for Tawa, Karori and Mākara Cemeteries in July 2021.

The plan is based on recognising people's different views and beliefs. We talked to many religious and cultural groups during the consultation process.

We talked to representatives from Māori communities and heard about things which are important to you. We wanted to let you know how the management plan deals with these things.

The plan recognises tikanga Māori as a key value in the way our cemeteries are managed and undertakes to work in partnership with mana whenua.

The Ngā Iwi o Te Motu Urupā at Mākara Cemetery is available for burial of people of Māori whakapapa (descent), partners and whāngai, or any person who has an affinity with the Māori culture.

Taranaki Whānui own and manage the Opau Urupā, which is on Mākara Road, beyond the village. The Council assists the whānui on its management.

Options for new grave plots

We will continue to offer graves in perpetuity (forever) to purchase.

We will also look at offering non-perpetual graves in a designated area as one of several options for new plots in the future.

If we decide to offer the non-perpetual option, people could choose to use a grave for an agreed time period. At the end of that time, the family would have the option to give back the plot or to continue for a further agreed period of time by paying a fee.

We know many of you feel re-using graves is never appropriate, and want to put your mind at rest on two things. First, existing graves that were purchased in perpetuity will remain and won't be re-used. Second, no-one will be forced to purchase non-perpetual graves – it would be strictly a matter of choice.

Memorials

People often like to design memorials to reflect the personality of their loved ones. You are welcome to have a personal design, as long as it meets cemetery guidelines around size and materials. All memorials must be put in by a monumental mason.

Care and maintenance of graves, and decorations

Looking after graves is an important way for people to pay their respects and remember their loved ones. The family is responsible for the grave, while the Council is responsible for the cemetery grounds (for example mowing the lawns).

You are welcome to put decorations on headstones and the concrete base, as long as they are securely attached. If decorations blow away, they can create rubbish and pollute nearby streams.

Items placed on lawns will be removed as they make maintenance and access difficult. Our staff will hold removed items for a period, and try to contact families so they can reclaim them.

We'll be preparing a brochure which tells you how to care for your loved ones' graves, and about decorations.

Refurbishment of large chapel

We have refurbished the large chapel at Karori Cemetery, which accommodates larger groups. The courtyard upgrade and interior and exterior painting are complete.

We will make other improvements over time. The toilet facilities will be upgraded, and we will be installing a kitchenette, which will be helpful for a cup of tea after funerals and for those with young children.

Help and support

Some parts of our cemeteries are a bit steep and some visitors may find it difficult to get around. Our cemetery staff are available to help you if needed.

We are also happy to help with any other questions or concerns you may have. Please feel free to come and see us at the office at Karori Cemetery, 76 Old Karori Road, or call us on 04 476 6109 or email: cemeteries@wcc.govt.nz

Information about our cemeteries and the choices available can also be found at: www.wellington.govt.nz/cemeteries