

Taupo District Public Cemetery Management Policy

2006



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Definitions

Cemetery	Any land that is purchased or vested in Council, or under control of the Council and held, taken, acquired, set apart, dedicated or reserved, under the provisions of any Act or before the commencement of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964, exclusively for the burial of the dead generally, and where the context so permits, includes a closed cemetery within the meaning of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 or any other act. This excludes identified Urupa.
Lawn Cemetery	A cemetery which presents a park like appearance and is laid out in grass with concrete headstone berms.
Exclusive Right of Burial	A purchased burial plot for the exclusive right to the owner to inter human remains in a burial space. There is no ownership of "real estate" as such.
Unveiling Ceremony	A ceremony to celebrate a memorial to a person.
Monument	Any structure, plaque, headstone, masonry, metal work, casting or item placed over, in or around a burial right
Authorised Person	A person to who the burial warrant has been issued
Out of District	Refers to a person who has resided outside Taupo District for over five years
Service person	A person who has been on operational service in Her Majesty's Forces pursuant to Section 15 (a)(i) of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964
Service cemetery	Means any cemetery or part of a cemetery that has been set aside permanently by a local authority for the burial of bodies of persons who have been on operational service in Her Majesty's Forces and the wives or husbands of, or persons who have lived in a relationship in the nature of marriage with, a person who has been on operational service in Her Majesty's Forces pursuant to Section 15 (a) of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964.
Headstone permit	A permit to allow the erection of a headstone, received from Taupo District Council, following application on prescribed form and receipt of the correct fees and charges.
Burial warrant	A warrant to allow burial, received from Taupo District Council, following application on prescribed form and receipt of the correct fees and charges
Urupa	Maori burial ground or cemetery

Taupo District Public Cemeteries Management Policy

Objectives

- To ensure a consistent approach to the management of cemeteries across the District
- To ensure the cemeteries allow remembrance of next of kin in the best possible surroundings.
- To effectively manage the growth of cemeteries.
- To be a source of local history of the District.

1. Management of information

Under the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 there is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to maintain a record of burials within cemeteries. Taupo District Council also recognises that it has a role in preserving local and national history and that death and burial records are a major source of this information.

Information Integrity

Due to the nature and sensitivity of the information held, it must not only be secure but accurate. Council makes every effort to ensure that the information received is accurate and that regular cross reference of records against grave details occurs.

Information Access

Presently, records are maintained in both written and electronic formats and all records are available to the general public by either direct contact with Council or via the web. There is a move to make this information more freely available to the general public and the development of web based information systems is a key mid-term goal.

Policy (1)

Accurate and up to date cemetery records are maintained by Taupo District Council.

To help achieve this:

- a) The burial is registered as per the requirements of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1995
- b) A register of reservations or pre-death requirements is maintained for those with exclusive rights to burial. At present this will be maintained in both a hard register copy and electronic format.
- c) Each burial is recorded from the date of issuing the Burial Warrant and the register is reviewed regularly for accuracy and amended accordingly.
- d) Procedures and processes will be in place to address data accuracy.

2. Liaison

It is the desire of the Taupo District Council (TDC) that there is ongoing discussion and development of cemetery services to meet various community needs.

Policy (2)

Liaison with organised groups, individuals and interested parties is maintained and encouraged.

To help achieve this council will ensure:

- a) Regular joint inspections of the reserved burial areas by Council staff and representatives of the Veterans Association.
- b) Maintenance of information literature about the cemeteries.
- c) Development of an up-to-date web site outlining the services.
- d) Provision of formal means to comment on the service.

3. Recognition of religious requirements

Taupo District Council recognises the diversity of the district's community and in particular differing requirements of rites of burial. In recognising these requirements and those prescribed within the Burial and Cremations Act 1964, there is scope where requested, to permanently set aside sections of each cemetery for the use of different recognised religious denominations.

Policy (3)

TDC recognises the differing needs and burial requirements of religious denominations within the Taupo district.

To help achieve this:

- a) Following an official approach from the governing body of a recognised religious denomination [not an individual] and space permitting, TDC will set aside a designated area of each cemetery for the use of different religious denominations.
- b) The religious denomination may [at their own expense and in line with the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 Act and **with express permission from Taupo District Council**] fence off the area and introduce signage which conforms to the bylaws requirements.
- c) Allow the area set aside to be consecrated by the religious denomination according to the rites of that denomination.
- d) Have these areas placed within the existing design of the cemetery.

4. Exclusive Rights of Burial

Council has an ongoing policy of selling for perpetuity, rights of burial in specified plots, when full payment in line with the schedule of fees and charges is received.

Policy (4)

Taupo District Council will offer burial plots for pre-purchase.

Policy (5)

Taupo District Council reserves the right to lapse exclusive rights should burial not take place within sixty years of the reservation date.

Policy (6)

TDC reserves the right, with the proper consultation, agreement and reparation, to rescind the exclusive right of burial.

Policy (7)

There will be an allowance for family plots which are within the defined areas only.

To help achieve this:

- a) TDC will issue the owner a certificate of exclusive right of burial.
- b) TDC will regularly check for the accuracy of records in this respect.
- c) Allow pre-purchase of up to four adjacent plots within the grids as space permits.

5. Her Majesty's Service Personnel

Taupo District Council has an area in each of its cemeteries designated for the burial of former and current service personnel. These areas in Taupo and Turangi are maintained by Veterans Affairs New Zealand. In Mangakino TDC maintains this area.

Policy (8)

Council is committed to the remembrance of its Service Personnel.

To help achieve this council will:

- a) Set aside areas of lawn berm specifically for the burial of deceased service personnel.
 - b) Liaise closely with service organisations to ensure [wherever possible] that Veteran Affairs policy is recognised in the management of the section within the public cemetery dedicated to service personnel.
 - c) Maintain information about each burial and make those records secure and freely available.
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6. Public Use

Public use of the cemetery is covered by the Taupo District Public Cemetery Bylaw. This allows Council to control the activities within the cemetery boundary.

Policy (9)

Council will ensure users of the cemetery conduct themselves in a manner respectful of their surroundings.

To help achieve this:

- a) Activities within the cemeteries will be controlled by the Bylaw applying to this area.
 - b) Activities detrimental to the value or detracting from the passive and contemplative nature of the cemetery will not be permitted and the relevant action will be taken by Council Officers under the Bylaw and related Statute.
 - c) Taupo District Council accepts no responsibility for the effects of vandalism and intentional (wilful) damage to assets under Council ownership
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7. Cemetery Standards

Council aims for all cemeteries within the district to be of a high quality and reflect the community's standards. Council also has duties under statute with regard to public health and these are recognised within the standards.

Policy (10)

Council will manage cemeteries in line with the requirements of the Bylaw.

To help achieve this council will:

- a. Develop and maintain an asset management plan for each cemetery.
 - b. Maintain its obligation for safe and reasonable access to burial sites.
 - c. Maintain the surrounds to be attractive and representative of its nature.
 - d. Ensure plots purchased are maintained to acceptable standards in line with the Levels of Service for Cemeteries.
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8. Fees and Charges

It is important that in the future Council is able to manage all cemeteries to the service levels determined. In order to do this it is intended that the fee structure is based on aspiring to 90% user pays.

Policy (11)

Cemetery services will be provided on a user pays basis.

To help achieve this council will:

- a. Determine a fee structure that is transparent.
- b. Subsidise fee rates for children under six years of age