

Proposed Fees and Charges

Cemeteries and Crematorium

Frequently asked questions



What fees are changing?

Self-Backfill for Burials

A new fee of \$250 is proposed when a family chooses to backfill a grave themselves after a burial.

After a self-backfill, Council staff are still required to:

- Check that the grave has been safely and correctly backfilled
- Tidy and reinstate the site

The fee reflects this additional staff time and also contributes to ongoing maintenance and material costs, such as replacing grave mats.

Family-led cremations

A new fee of \$500 is proposed for cremation services organised directly by families, rather than through a funeral director.

Family-led cremations require significantly more staff time, as Council staff take on tasks that would usually be managed by a funeral director.

Oversized Casket fee for Cremations

A new fee of \$250 is proposed for cremations involving oversized caskets.

Oversized caskets take considerably longer to cremate and result in higher running costs for the cremator. In some cases, additional staff are also required to assist with the process. The proposed fee helps cover these additional costs.

Natural Burial Plots

An increase is proposed for natural burial plots at Hillcrest Cemetery, bringing the price to \$2,807.

Natural burial plots are a unique offering and this change helps bring Council's pricing closer to national averages. According to Natural Burials NZ, the average cost of a natural burial in New Zealand is \$4,070.

Standard interment fees will still apply for natural burials.



What does the family-led cremation fee cover?

While Council staff are not funeral directors, we recognise that some families may choose, or need, to arrange cremation services themselves.

Family-led cremations involve a significant amount of additional work by Council staff, including:

- Meeting with families and explaining the process
- Answering questions
- Checking that documentation is complete and complies with legal requirements
- Ensuring nothing is placed in the casket that cannot be safely cremated.

These tasks would normally be carried out by a funeral director. The proposed fee reflects the additional staff time involved.

When does the oversized casket fee apply?

This fee applies for any casket that is size 16 or larger.

If residents already pay rates, why is there still a fee?

Rates help fund general cemetery costs such as land development and grounds maintenance.

Fees and charges apply to cremations and interments so that ratepayers who don't currently need these services are not subsidising individual burial and cremation costs.

What do other Councils charge?

Whakatāne District Council's fees and charges are considered fair and reasonable when compared with neighbouring and similar councils that provide the same services.

Find out more

