

Wellington Natural Cemetery

Information Guide

WELCOME

Thank you for your choice and interest in the Wellington Natural Cemetery.

This cemetery is the result of a partnership between Wellington City Council and the not-for-profit organisation Natural Burials.

Natural burials return the body to the earth speedily for the benefit of the environment, the will of the person interred, and their families.

The following information has been prepared by Natural Burials 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.

THE CONCEPT

In our view, and we hope yours, the Wellington Natural Cemetery is a beautiful place. The bush and all its inhabitants, including the people buried here, make it a very special environment indeed.

The unique sense of place has been achieved through a clear guiding concept: the central idea is that everything about the cemetery is as 'natural' as possible.

In essence, we will not introduce anything to the cemetery which 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 shrouds or coffins of untreated sustainable wood.

Plots are filled with aerobic, organically active soil, over-planted with a tree native to the area, and the whole cemetery 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 cemetery will become a permanent bush park – a living memorial to those buried there, a home for native flora and fauna, and a beautiful place for family and friends to visit.

THE ESSENTIALS

This is a natural cemetery. Being buried at this site entails acceptance of the central concept and its consequences, and the following essential components.

1. **No embalming:** Bodies buried on this site must not be embalmed. 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.
2. **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 compost to help enrich the soil.
3. **Trees:** A native tree will be planted at the head or base of the plot. You can choose from a dozen nursery plants. 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 in summer.
4. **Caskets:** You must use a casket provided by, or approved by, 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.
5. **Plot markers:** A non-treated wooden post is sunk into the ground at the head or foot of the plot. You or your family can include on the post cap and sides a poker-burnt engraved inscription of your choice. The marker is designed not to be permanent but the plot and details of the person buried there is marked and drawn on a map held by the Council.

OTHER MATTERS

Pre-purchase. When booking a plot for immediate use, you can purchase a second plot alongside for use at a later time. We have assigned a specific area for partnered-plots. Individual plots can not be pre-purchased.

Plot placement. The bush restoration system means we need to start plots from specific areas. New plots will be placed near newly created ones. So it will not be possible to choose isolated plots.

Artificial memorials. The central concept is to create an environment which is as natural as possible. Those buried here wanted a natural memorial. It follows that we do not condone placing artificial memorials or other material on the site. These may be removed by the sexton at our request.

Artifacts buried with bodies. Please refer to the central concept for a guide on what to include or exclude from caskets. In short, anything artificial would contravene the natural goals of the cemetery.

Disinterment is discouraged for three reasons; 1) After some years, it is unlikely that much or anything remains of bodies to recover and move; 2) We will need to uproot trees to access and dig the plot, setting back the restoration progress; 3) The wishes of the deceased to be buried at this specific type of cemetery should be respected.

Ash burials are not possible because the cemetery is for body burial, and ashes contain no nutrients. We invite you to use the existing ash internment at the cemetery and donate to Natural Burials.

Placenta burial. There is currently no provision for placenta burial at the site. This may be changed in the future. Please contact Natural Burials for alternatives.

WHAT IT COSTS

Wellington City Council plot fee: \$2500 (includes GST). Includes native tree.

Natural Burials registration fee: \$175. Includes engraved wooden site marker.

Caskets: Order through Natural Burials or your funeral director.

Funeral and celebrant services: Costs vary. Contact your own funeral director.

OTHER INFORMATION

www.naturalburials.co.nz: the website of the New Zealand Natural Burials organisation.

www.naturaldeath.org: the website of the organisation which started the movement from the UK.

Living Wills. Natural Burials offers a Living Will Pack, with copies of a Living Will, an Alert card for purse or wallet, a guide to writing a living will, and a book on natural death. \$30 inc gst.

A Natural Death. A book to guide you on everything you need to know about natural burial options, what happens to a body after death, and organising your burial and funeral. \$17 inc gst.

WHO TO CONTACT

To use the Natural Burial Cemetery please;

Register and book through Natural Burials by calling 0800 525 500.

Book through your funeral director. Natural Burials has preferred funeral directors.



NATURAL BURIALS

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