

# Wellington Natural Cemetery

## Information Guide



### Welcome

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

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In our view, and we hope yours, the Wellington Natural Cemetery is a beautiful place. The peaceful native bush, and 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 be regenerative bush - 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

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**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 wooden post is placed at the plot, with a wooden plaque with the name of the deceased inscribed. 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

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**Plot placement.** Plots are used consecutively. Its not possible to choose plots. This is necessary to avoid disturbing the growth of establishing trees and bush.

**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 will be removed by the cemetery team.

**Ash burials** are not possible because the cemetery is for body burial. Ashes do not break down into the earth.

## What it costs

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**Wellington City Council plot fee:** The plot fee includes a tree. Please contact Karori Cemetery Office for further information. 04 476 6109 or [cemeteries@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:cemeteries@wcc.govt.nz)

**Natural Burials registration fee:** Refer to the How to get a natural burial guide:

<http://www.naturalburials.co.nz/how-to-get-a-natural-burial/>

**Caskets:** Order through Natural Burials or your funeral director.

## Other information

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**[www.naturalburials.co.nz](http://www.naturalburials.co.nz)** the website of the New Zealand Natural Burials organisation.

**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

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To use the Mākara Cemetery Natural Burial Cemetery please;

### **Call Karori Cemetery Office**

04 476 6109 or email [cemeteries@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:cemeteries@wcc.govt.nz)

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

### **Book through your funeral director.**

Natural Burials has preferred funeral directors.

### **Natural Burials**

Burials and Caskets: 0800 525 500

Email: [mark@naturalburials.co.nz](mailto:mark@naturalburials.co.nz)

Web: [www.naturalburials.co.nz](http://www.naturalburials.co.nz)