



Preparing for a Natural Burial

Burial Booking – It's preferable that we get at least three working days notice of any burial or service and an "Application to inter" form must be completed. If you are not using a funeral director to take care of arrangements please let us know as soon as possible as there are some important guidelines we can advise you on.

Pre-purchase of Burial Rights – The right to inter within the area may be pre-purchased but the actual location of the plot will be allocated on a next available basis at time of interment. Contact us if you are interested in purchasing Rights to Burial.

This is to ensure adequate access to prepare plots for burial and that native planting restoration work can continue on site.

Only one burial may take place in a plot.

Artificial Memorials – Artificial memorials are not allowed as they go against the principles of natural burial.

Disinterment – Is discouraged for the following reasons;

- 1) After some years, it is unlikely that much or anything would remain of the body to recover and move.
- 2) Plants would need to be dug up to access the plot, setting back the vegetation restoration process.
- 3) The wishes of the deceased to be buried at this specific area should be respected.

Ash Burials and the scattering of loved ones' ashes – Are not possible.

Costs – Refer to our website fees and charges page for our current plot and interment costs.
tcdc.govt.nz/cemeteryfees

Other helpful information

naturalburials.co.nz

– website of the New Zealand Natural Burials Organisation

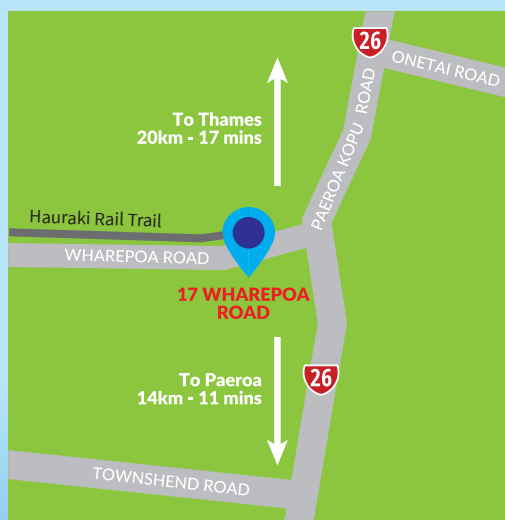
naturaldeath.org

– website for the organisation which started the Natural Burial movement in the UK

The Thames Natural Burial Interest Group can help with inquiries and can be contacted through our Council

naturalburials@tcdc.govt.nz

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For all enquiries call our friendly Customer Services Team they'll be happy to hear from you

Phone 07 868 0200



Omahu Cemetery

Natural Burial Garden



Why have a natural burial?

Thank you for your interest in the Natural Burial Garden at Omaha Cemetery.

The area is the result of a working relationship between our Council and the Thames Natural Burial Group which started in 2015 after the desire to have an alternative option to conventional burials was expressed.

Many people who have tried to live with respect for the earth would like their remains to enrich the soil. The same people want to restore natural ecosystems and aim to create beautiful surroundings for their families and friends to enjoy when they come to pay their respects.

The area set aside for natural burials is in its infancy and the growth and development for the area will be a long-term project.

Natural burials are an increasingly popular option for people and families who hold strong environmental beliefs and philosophies and many cemeteries around New Zealand and the world now have this option available.

Proximity to the Hauraki Rail Trail makes it possible to transport caskets using carbon neutral methods like bikes or e-bikes.

Natural burials return the body to the earth speedily for the benefit of the environment, and according to the will of the deceased, and the wishes of their families.

The following information has been prepared to guide you with your choice to use this area.

What is a natural burial?

The essentials

1. No embalming:

Bodies buried at this area are not to be embalmed. This is to hasten the natural processes of returning the body and its nutrients to the soil, and to reduce the amount of chemicals introduced to the soil.

2. Single depth burials only:

Graves are dug within the living topsoil layer to the depth of the casket with an additional coverage of soil and organic material

3. Caskets are to be made from biodegradable untreated materials:

Casket linings and fittings are also to be biodegradable. All items or contents in the casket (including clothing) are to be made of biodegradable material.

4. Shrouds are to be made from natural fibres:

If the deceased is to be buried in a shroud, rather than a casket, fasten to a solid board wider than the body for lowering purposes. The board is to be made from biodegradable untreated timber.

5. Unembalmed bodies must be:

Kept cold and in absorbent materials until burial.

A body must be disposed of within a reasonable time as set out in Section 46E of the Burials and Cremation Act 1964.

6. Infectious diseases:

If a person dies from an infectious disease, the funeral director must notify the Medical Officer of Health (s.85 Health Act 1956) and take advice, cemetery staff must be informed.

In the absence of a funeral director family will assume this responsibility.

A person who has passed away due to an infectious disease is to be buried in an eco-casket with appropriate protection against leakage.

7. Tributes are limited:

Natural cut flowers only (no plastic flowers) and if placed in a vase are to be removed within a week of the burial.

8. Unobtrusive grave markers:

Markers up to 200mm x 80mm made from natural stone or untreated wood are acceptable. These will be installed at ground level at the head of the grave.

9. There will be an overall landscape design:

Appropriate native trees and shrubs will part of the landscape design.

10. Preparation of the body:

If at any time a family is unsure of any procedures to prepare the body for a natural burial, it is advised that family contact a funeral home or other suitably qualified organisation for guidance.

The Vision

That the area set aside for natural burials becomes a very special environment with the central idea that everything about the area is as "natural" as possible without anything introduced that would interfere with, or pollute, the environment.

All of the nutrients from the body will be gradually absorbed for the benefit of the surrounding soil and plants.

It is intended that the area will be transformed into a permanent woodland setting and act as a living memorial to those buried there, be a home for flora and fauna, and become a beautiful space for reflection and remembrance of loved ones.

This area also offers opportunities for people to share in the planting and ongoing care of native species that fit within the landscape design, or to donate towards suitable plants.