



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

## **Cemetery Monument Policy**

**2016**



**Prepared August 2016**



## Whanganui District Council Policy

***Originator:***

*Property Manager*

***Contact person for enquiries:***

*Senior Parks Officer*

***Date approved:***

*23 August 2016*

***Date by which a review should be carried out:***

*June 2021*

***Policy Inventory number:***

*297914*



## Table of Contents

<b>WHANGANUI DISTRICT COUNCIL POLICY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>Originator:</i> .....	2
<i>Contact person for enquiries:</i> .....	2
<i>Date approved:</i> .....	2
<i>Date by which a review should be carried out:</i> .....	2
<i>Policy Inventory number:</i> .....	2
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Why we need a policy</i> .....	4
<i>Rationale for a review</i> .....	4
<i>Who it is prepared for</i> .....	4
<i>Exclusions</i> .....	4
<b>POLICY CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>BACKGROUND AND ISSUES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>MONITORING</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>CEMETERY SEARCH</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDICES AND REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>9</b>
INSTALLATION STANDARD .....	10
GENERAL GUIDE FOR INSTALLATION OF MONUMENTS.....	10
APPENDIX 3 .....	13



## Introduction

### *Why we need a policy*

The purpose of the Cemetery Monument Policy (CMP) is to provide the public, the Sexton and Council officers with clear guidelines and expectations in relation to monuments in Council owned cemeteries.

### *Rationale for a review*

The public are now requesting different types of materials, symbols and designs, and even wording that does not align to the current policy. The current policy was developed in 2009, and as issues and trends emerge a policy such as the CMP is required to adapt to these changes to ensure compliance with legislation.

### *Who it is prepared for*

It is the responsibility of the Sexton to adhere to the detailed procedures in this policy. This policy is applied and overseen by Whanganui District Council Property. It is also for the guidance of the general public.

### *Exclusions*

This policy does not apply to private owned cemeteries or Urupas (Maori burial grounds).

### **Policy context**

The vision for Whanganui is **Leading Edge**. The CMP principally contributes to the theme '**Flowing with Richness**' and '**Deeply United**' by looking after our physical infrastructure and recognising that monuments at our cemeteries become a repository for collective memory, and an anchor for family and community values.

The policy complies with the following legislation and strategic documents.

#### **Burial and Cremations Act 1964**


This Act empowers Council to make a bylaw covering conditions to be observed in the operation and maintenance of cemeteries. It also enables Council to expend resources on clearing, cleaning, repairing, and tidying of any closed, disused or derelict cemetery and includes the removal and disposal of tablets, monuments etc. Where monuments present a risk, the Council is able to take appropriate measures.

#### **Burial and Cremation (Removal of Monuments and Tablets) Regulations 1967**

The Regulations empower Council to remove any dilapidated or neglected monument or tablet from a cemetery or burial ground or closed cemetery or closed burial ground, of which it has the control and management.

#### **Whanganui District Council Cemetery Bylaw 2016**

As required by the Burial and Cremations Act 1964, the Whanganui District Council is required to provide a bylaw for the management of cemeteries. The



bylaw provides consistent regulations concerning practices and accepted forms of behaviour in cemeteries.

### **Local Government Act 2002**

The Act requires Council to show that their activities and services achieve good community outcomes and requires Council to provide information on levels of service, performance targets and measures, costs and how expenses are to be met.

### **NZS 4242: 1995 - New Zealand Standard for Headstones and Cemetery Monuments**

This Standard specifies minimum structural design criteria, performance and renovation requirements for cemetery monuments and crematoria memorial gardens above and below the natural ground surface. It does not set out to preclude artistic endeavours, so long as this falls within the parameters of this standard.

### **Health and Safety at Work Act 2015**

The main purpose of this Act is to provide for a balanced framework to secure the health and safety of workers by effective and appropriate compliance. This applies to monuments that are considered unsafe.

## **Background and issues**

Monuments mark the resting place of the deceased. They are an important means by which family and friends commemorate the life of a loved one. The CMP provides direction to the public and staff.

The Council under the Health and Safety at Work Act has an obligation to ensure monuments within Council owned cemeteries are safe so that staff and visitors who visit the cemetery have no undue risk to their health and safety.

The trend of the current policy is to provide uniformity of monument design in order to reduce long-term maintenance costs. However, as more requests are being received for other types of monuments a change in Council's policy is required.


The Council may, from time to time, receive requests for other forms of memorials such as seats or trees. If there is a need for other forms of memorials within the cemeteries, then the Property Manager will determine whether the offer can be accepted.

Businesses are also experiencing demand for different designs and are challenged with providing different materials. The CMP is able to satisfy customer demands and provide information.

## **Definitions**

**Assessment of Durability** – An assessment of the predicted service life of monuments as set out in NZS424:1995 S2.3.2 (a)-(c)





**Beam** means a concrete strip that marks plot row and number and in which a headstone or plaque is placed.

**Council** means the governing body of the Whanganui District Council or any person delegated to act on its behalf.

**Exclusive Right of Burial** means a right that may be purchased from the Council which grants the purchaser, and his or her assignee, the exclusive right of burial in a designated burial plot for a specified number of years; and

- (a) does not create an ownership interest over the designated plot; and
- (b) lapses in accordance with section 10 of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964.

**Memorial/Memorabilia** means any item/s left at a gravesite as a tribute to the deceased (e.g. photos, floral arrangements/tributes, books or other such personal items).

**Monument** means any structure, plaque, tombstone, headstone, memorial, marker, kerbing or other erection placed over in or around the grave site. (*Often referred to as headstone or plaques*)

**NZS 4242: 1995** means the New Zealand Standard for Headstones and Cemetery Monuments.

**Offence** refers to a proposed monument's design, wording or marks that are capable of wounding feelings or arousing anger, resentment, disgust or outrage in the mind of a reasonable person (where that reasonable person visits a cemetery).

**Sexton** means the on-site manager appointed by the Council.


## Objectives and policies

The objective of the policy is to provide standards and certainty in relation to monuments, and memorabilia at Council owned cemeteries.

The following policies will apply:

### 1. Monuments are to be of a specified standard

- 1.1 Before monumental work commences a drawing and specification of any proposed monument shall be submitted to the Council.
- 1.2 No person shall erect a monument or other structure in or on any plot in any Council owned cemetery unless:
  - a) the purchaser has Exclusive Right of Burial as set out in the Whanganui District Council Cemeteries and Crematoria Bylaw.
  - b) payment of the fee set by the Council for monuments has been paid.
- 1.3 No permit will be issued unless the design conforms to Council standards and conditions set out in this policy.
- 1.4 Enduring materials are to be used for monuments with granite as the preferred material.
- 1.5 Where there is doubt as to the enduring nature of the material, the Applicant is to pay the cost for professional testing of the material.
- 1.6 All monuments shall be installed, to a professional finish, assessed for durability and any other provisions in accordance with the New Zealand Standards 4242:1995.

- 
- 1.7 No person shall deface, damage or interfere with any monument.
  - 1.8 All monuments shall be kept in proper order and repair by the owner of the plot or his or her representatives.
  - 1.9 Any person that requires a new or replacement monument that varies from this policy shall make application to the Chief Executive for consideration and approval.
  - 1.10 Flower receptacles can be incorporated into the base of monuments.
  - 1.11 No monuments are to be erected on the indigent person's grave or ash plot as the Exclusive Right of Burial has not been purchased and still belongs to the Council.
  - 1.12 No stainless steel, schist, sandstone, limestone, wood (except in the natural burials area) fibreglass, ceramic, plastic, glass or other unsuitable material as determined by the Council is allowed.
  - 1.13 No individual monument shall cause offence or unfairly overwhelm adjacent areas with design, wording or other marks.
  - 1.14 Non-ferrous metal installations such as bronze plaques used in the Veterans Affairs section for RSA interments and used for granite monument inscription and adornment purposes are permitted.
  - 1.15 In the Rose Garden, there are to be no more than three small monuments or one large monument per one site.
  - 1.16 Removal of any monument must be approved by the Council siting the relevant prescribed forms and accompanied by proof of Exclusive Right of Burial for that plot.
  - 1.17 All memorial installations shall conform to NZS 4242 and any final decision is made by the Council.

**2. No monuments are to be erected in the stillborn area**

- 2.1 No monuments are to be erected in the designated stillborn area, however a plaque may be placed on the memorial wall erected for this purpose. The family may purchase a plot in the children's area and erect a monument with appropriate fees paid.

**3. One marker per burial plot will be permitted in the natural burials area**

- 3.1 The Council will supply all markers with one marker per burial plot permitted.

**4. The installation and size of monuments will be to a specified standard**

- 4.1 All installations of monuments shall be installed according to the burial and beam and monument measures set out in the General Guide for Installation of Monuments. (Attachment 2).
- 4.2 Only approved qualified monumental masons, who comply with the Council's Health and Safety requirements, and preferably a member of the New Zealand Master Monumental Masons Association, may install a monument.
- 4.3 Installations that do not meet a satisfactory standard or compromise the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the Burial and Cremation Act 1964, and the Removal of Monuments and Tablets Regulations 1967, will be removed or consist of laying the headstone face down on the ground of the grave by the Council. This method preserves the inscription.



## **5. Placing of memorabilia will meet the set standards**

- 5.1 All memorabilia must be placed on the concrete beam away from the grass and mowing strip.
- 5.2 No glass, pottery, structures or other breakable items are to be placed on monuments, its base, and the beam or lawn areas.
- 5.3 Permanite or any other similar material can be used as an adornment on granite as approved by the Sexton.

## **6. Placing of floral tributes will meet set standards**

- 6.1 Families continue to add floral tributes to the grassed area on or near the grave for long periods and this interferes with mowing and ground maintenance. Floral tributes may be placed on the soil of a plot following a burial within the lawn cemetery, but shall be removed within the two month period following burial.
- 6.2 In all other cases floral tributes will be restricted to containers that can be housed on the monument.
- 6.3 Non-complying vases such as glass jars or glass vases or planters or neglected, unsafe or broken containers may be removed by Council staff.
- 6.4 The Sexton in his or her sole discretion, at any time, may remove dead flowers, inappropriate plants, statues, non-approved structures, foliage or any other items.
- 6.5 No person shall unlawfully or improperly interfere with any plant holder, wreath, plant, flower, or any other thing placed on or about a grave.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring allows the Council to examine the impact the CMP has on the community. Policy impact can include measuring the implementation of policy. To measure the effectiveness of the CMP the following evaluation is to be undertaken:

- review the reduction in the number of written complaints the Sexton receives
- review the number of applications for other types of monuments.

The results from evaluating the policy can support improved implementation of the CMP.

## **Accessibility**

This Policy and Council's Fees and Charges are available on Council's website [www.whanganui.govt.nz](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz).

On request by the public, hard copies of the CMP are available at the Council's Municipal Building, 101 Guyton Street, Whanganui 4500.

## **Cemetery Search**

The Council cemetery database is located on the Council website: <http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/our-services/cemeteries-and-crematorium/Pages/Cemetery-Search.aspx>





## Appendices and References

1. Appendix 1 General Guide for Installation of Monuments (as at November 2015)
2. Appendix 2 Monument Specifications
3. Appendix 3 List of Council owned cemeteries
4. Appendix 4 Map of Main Cemetery Aramoho



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

### Installation Standard

#### General Guide for Installation of Monuments


The obtaining of a permit from the Sexton for installation of new monument work is required. This assists with inspection procedures and with conforming to Council bylaws. The permit should contain accurate measurements of the monument work and not measurements that simply fit in with permitted limits.

Checks will be made by the Sexton and, where monument work has been installed that exceeds the stipulated limits of height, width, etc., the monument work will be required to be removed without any notification.

A Notice of Intended Work is required and is to be approved by the Sexton for any additional monument work being undertaken on an existing monument.

#### Explanation

- Concrete beam shall mean the beam for setting the monument and bases on.
  - Upright headstone shall mean erected vertically on base.
  - A base is placed for upright monuments. It may be of plastered concrete, granite (which is the preferred material) or marble. A sub base of plastered concrete is used on sloping or uneven beams for levelling up purposes.
  - The New Zealand Standard 4242 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments is to apply to all erection of monument work.
- 
1. All structural materials used in the cemetery monument shall exhibit high atmospheric corrosion resistant properties and have a minimum predicted service life of 50 years.
  2. All monument headstones or plaques shall be erected level and plumb in both directions in accordance with standard trade practice.
  3. All monument bases shall line up in adjacent rows horizontally in accordance with the layout.
  4. Where a concrete base is installed for a monument it should be poured or set on the beam with nib access cut in the beam or dowelled to prevent side or end movement, particularly where the beam is laid on a sloping lawn.
  5. Where a granite plinth is installed, it shall be pinned to the beam or to the concrete sub base.
  6. All upright monuments and bases are to be securely pinned or dowelled to avoid tipping by accident or vandalism. The requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act must not be comprised.

- 
7. Dowelling must consist of metal resistant to atmospheric corrosion such as copper alloy or stainless steel. Mild steel rod or galvanised rod is not permitted. Refer to NZ Standards 4242 (Headstone and Cemetery Monuments). Fibre Rod described as high tensile FRP rod 12.75mm in diameter is also acceptable.
  8. For monuments up to 900mm high, dowelling shall be not less than 10mm in diameter and 140mm in length with dowel penetration being of equal part with each structural element. For sizes 900-1200mm in height dowelling shall be not less than 12mm in diameter and not less than 200mm in length.
  9. All concrete work shall be performed to sound construction practice and consist of not less than five (5) parts of clean shingle and sand to one (1) part cement.
  10. All plaster shall be applied uniformly and smoothed with a steel or wooden float finish or sponge texture. The finish shall be even with no trowel or float marks visible.
  11. All corners and checks shall be washed or wiped clean of surplus plaster residue. Joins shall be finished true and even with the memorial and flushed level with ground beam.
  12. Where the beam has been constructed for some time it is to be cleaned off before memorial installation and plaster finish is undertaken to promote good adhesion. Standard cleaning methods include wire brush scrubbing, water blasting or chemical cleaning.
  13. All work sites shall be left clean and tidy and free of surplus construction residue. All construction residue shall be removed from the cemetery grounds.

## Appendix 2

**Monument Specifications** - In areas of cemeteries laid out as lawn cemeteries the following provisions shall apply:

Cemetery Area	Specifications
<b>New Lawn Area</b>	1000mm x 600mm aside
Bases - Single	820mm x 450mm x 100 to 130mm
Bases single For two piece monuments where 820mm is not sufficient width.	900mm
Double	1820mm x 450mm x 100 to 130mm
<b>Monument</b>	760mm wide and not higher than 1300mm
Single	
Double	1760mm wide and not higher than 1300mm
<b>Children's Lawn Beam</b>	900mm x 600mm aside
Bases - Single	750mm x 450mm x 100 to 130mm
Monument Single	700mm x not higher than 650mm
<b>RSA Lawn –</b> All bases are poured as doubles back to back finished in white plaster	480mm x 220mm high x 450mm deep back to back
Concrete beam	900mm x 600mm aside concrete
Bronze plaques	225mm x 375mm (do vary)
<b>Cremation Lawn Beams</b>	600mm x 380mm aside
Bases – single	600mm x 230mm x 100mm
Double	1200mm x 230mm x 100mm
Monument single	450mm wide x 350mm high x 75mm thick
Monument double	900mm wide x 350mm high x 75mm thick
<b>Rose block</b>	250mm wide x 200mm high
Small	
Large	300mm wide x 250mm high
Bases standard	500mm x 200mm x 75mm high
<b>Memorial Wall</b>	220mm wide x 220mm high

As at August 2016

(These specifications may be updated any time as the Council may see fit).



## Appendix 3

### Whanganui District Council owned Cemeteries

Cemetery Name	Street Address*	First Burial	Open or Closed
Aramoho Cemetery	Somme Parade	1915	Open
Brunswick Cemetery	Brunswick Road	1865	Open
Matarawa Presbyterian Cemetery	No. 2 Line Road	1863	
Maxwell Cemetery	State Highway 3	1916	Open
Whanganui General Cemetery (also known as Heads Road Cemetery)	Heads Road	1846	Closed
Whanganui Catholic Cemetery	Heads Road	1859	Closed
Whanganui Jewish Cemetery	Heads Road	1870	Closed

\*The Street Address shown is the main entranceway into the cemetery



Aramoho Cemetery & Crematoria Whanganui as at November 2015

