



# Cemeteries Management Strategy

November 2020

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|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Type of Strategy                 | Management       |
| Original Strategy Date (adopted) | 19 November 2020 |
| Strategy Review Date             | 2023             |

# Introduction

The Cemetery Management Strategy 2020 sets out the Manawatū District Council's vision, goals and objectives for the eight Council-owned cemeteries within the District for the next 50 years.

The strategy differs from the Cemeteries Asset Management Plan 2021-2031, which has an operational focus. The Asset Management Plan does not set out strategic vision, values, long term goals and objectives for the Council cemeteries, and will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect the Cemetery Management Strategy.

The eight Council-owned cemeteries in the District are located in:

- Feilding
- Halcombe
- Kimbolton
- Pohangina
- Rangiwahia
- Rongotea
- Sandon
- Waituna West



Figure 1: Map of Council-owned Cemeteries in the Manawatū District.

*Details of each cemetery can be found in the Cemeteries Asset Management Plan 2021-2031.*

The Cemetery Management Strategy consists of several key interrelated parts:

- **Vision and values** – These are the key overriding views of where the strategy is directed. All goals, objectives and related matters need to serve the vision and values. They set the direction for the whole strategy.
- **Goals and objectives** - These are more specific interpretations of the vision and values. They provide a level of specificity that allows appropriate actions to be defined and measured.
- **Assumptions** - These provide a framework within which the strategy is described. For example, it is assumed that the legal framework for cemeteries will not change in a significant way.
- **Implementation** - This is a table of specific actions and measures that give effect to the goals and objectives.

## Background

At present, Councils cemeteries are managed on an individual basis according to needs and approved budgets, as reflected in the Cemeteries Asset Management Plan.

The Cemetery Management Strategy reflects the need for a more coordinated and strategic approach to the future of public cemeteries within the District. It reflects not only logistical requirements but also a sensitive response to changing trends and needs in our community.

**In particular the Cemetery Management Strategy:**

- Sets out a vision and values for public cemeteries in the District along with goals, objectives and actions
- Considers population projections and cemetery capacity, and how these will be accommodated
- Takes account of trends in burials and other needs such as cremations
- Considers cultural needs within cemeteries
- Takes account of what other councils have done in this space
- Includes liaison with key stakeholders/focus groups and the wider community.

There are three privately administered cemeteries at Apiti, Kiwitea and Stanway, and many local urupa. These have not been considered or included in this strategy as the Council does not manage these cemeteries. However, if for any reason Council was to assume responsibility for one of these cemeteries, management would be undertaken in-line with the Cemetery Management Strategy.

The Cemeteries Management Strategy has been developed with Manawatū District Council's Community Development Strategy in mind.

The Community Development Strategy embraces the Te Whare Tapa Whā model to explore the wellbeing of the Manawatū District with four key dimensions, which align with the three goals of the Cemeteries Management Strategy as follows:



**Te taha wairua**  
(spiritual wellbeing)



**Te taha whānau**  
(social wellbeing)



**Te taha tinana**  
(physical wellbeing)



**Te taha hinengaro**  
(mental wellbeing)

To respect the  
history of our people



To respond to the needs of the community  
in times of grief and celebration of life



Ensure sustainable provision  
of cemetery services



## Consultation

Community input was integral to the formation of the Cemeteries Management Strategy, and ultimately to the future of our District's cemeteries.

In the course of preparing the draft strategy, meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders. Key findings from this consultation were used to form the proposed vision, goals, objectives and actions. There were also a number of matters raised during stakeholder meetings that were of an operational nature, and these will be considered in day to day procedural protocols as opposed to in the strategy.

During the formal public consultation period on the draft Cemeteries Management Strategy, Council received a total of seven submissions. Submissions largely consisted of requests for providing, upgrading or optimising facilities at Council-owned Cemeteries in the Manawatū District. The decisions of the Council in relation to the formal submissions have been accommodated within the strategy.

The Council would like to acknowledge the input from various individuals and organisations with whom meetings were held in the preparation of the draft strategy. Namely:

- Veterans Affairs New Zealand
- Private Cemetery Service providers, e.g. Funeral Directors, Stone Masons
- Multi-cultural representatives contacted through the Manawatū Multi-cultural Council, and the Feilding Multicultural Group.

# Challenges & Opportunities

## Legislative changes

Amendments to legislation may necessitate a future review of the strategy.

## Celebrating our heritage/history

There is a growing international interest in genealogy, and this provides an opportunity for the Council to consider its role in terms of data collection and cemetery management.

## Meeting demand

This lies at the core of the strategy not only in physical terms, but also in terms of the level and types of service provided.

## Data management

Efficient and effective management and operation of cemetery services is essential, and improvements can always be made to the Council's current data management system as new technology becomes available.



# Assumptions and Trends

A number of assumptions and trends have been adopted for the purpose of the strategy as follows:

- Local Authorities will continue to have a statutory obligation to provide cemetery services in the long term. Changes to legislation will be of a conservative nature, that is, the current legal frameworks will not radically change.
- The private sector will continue to have a role in the provision of funeral services and burials.
- There will be an increasing expectation to recognise cultural and ethnic needs in the community in the design of cemeteries and the provision of cemetery services.
- The demand for diversity of service options is expected to increase and the Council may need to respond to those needs (e.g. natural burials, tree planting options).
- There will be growing engagement from the community in our cemeteries, their history, their management and their future. That will be manifested in the growth of on-line data bases that will engage with community groups, families and individuals.
- Council policies in relation to civil obligations and rights will equally apply to all of its cemeteries.
- Provision will need to be made for Civil Defence Emergency Management requirements.
- The Council may need to consider assuming responsibility for a non-local authority cemetery if for any reason it can no longer be administered privately.



# Cemetery Management Strategy

**Vision:** Manawatū District Council cemeteries are responsive to the current and future needs of our community, while respecting and preserving the history of our district.

**Value Key:** ● Respect ● Sensitivity ● Sustainability ● Innovation

| Goal              | 1. To respect the history of our people |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| <b>Objectives</b> | 1.1                                     | To engage with key organisations on the history of Manawatū cemeteries, and to ensure that recognition is given to key historic features of interest within our cemeteries. <span style="float: right;">● ●</span> |
|                   | 1.2                                     | To engage with interest groups, iwi and individuals of all ethnicities and cultures who wish to preserve the history within Council-owned cemeteries. <span style="float: right;">● ● ●</span>                     |
|                   | 1.3                                     | To investigate and instigate methods of collecting, storing and sharing stories, having regard to the desire for that information to be publicly accessible. <span style="float: right;">● ●</span>                |

| Goal              | 2. To respond to the needs of the community in times of grief and celebration of life |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>Objectives</b> | 2.1   | Maintain and, where possible, improve the reliability of the database of records in relation to all public cemeteries. <span style="float: right;">● ● ●</span> |
|                   | 2.2   | To establish and maintain a database of operational procedures relating to the management of all public cemeteries. <span style="float: right;">●</span>        |
|                   | 2.3   | To ensure all options for funding of public cemeteries are considered. <span style="float: right;">● ●</span>   |
|                   | 2.4   | To provide, upgrade or optimise facilities at cemeteries in response to the needs of users. <span style="float: right;">● ● ●</span>                            |

| Goal              | 3. Ensure sustainable provision of cemetery services |   |
|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>Objectives</b> | 3.1  | To continue to develop Feilding Cemetery to a level consistent with it being the main cemetery for the District. <span style="float: right;">●</span> |
|                   | 3.2  | To review the long term spatial requirements of the seven other public cemeteries in the District. <span style="float: right;">●</span>               |
|                   | 3.3  | To explore opportunities for partnerships in the provision of cemetery services. <span style="float: right;">● ●</span>                               |

The Cemetery Management Strategy is reflected in the vision statement which sets the direction for the accompanying goals, objectives, policies and actions.

The vision for the strategy is:

*Manawatū District Council Cemeteries are responsive to the current and future needs of our community, while respecting and preserving the history of our district.*

The vision is reflected by the adoption of four values:

● Respect    ● Sensitivity    ● Sustainability    ● Innovation

The vision and values take a long-term view of the provision of public cemetery services for the next 50 years. They also aim to recognise a growing interest in the past as information becomes more easily accessed, shared and stored electronically.

At the same time, the needs of our community are changing as we become more diverse and sensitive to the wide range of cultural and ethnic practises. This will require ongoing community engagement by Council, as well as ongoing opportunities for individuals and groups to engage with the Council in the design and provision of cemetery services.

Cemetery services should evolve to meet the changing needs of the community as trends such as natural burials potentially become more common. These likely changes require continuing engagement, as well as the flexibility to adapt when the need arises.

To give effect to the vision and values there are three goals of equal priority, each with its own objectives and recommended actions. These components of the strategy were derived from stakeholder consultation, research and the expertise of Council officers.

Actions arising from the Cemetery Management Strategy will require the involvement of the community, and the commitment of the Council. Actions will follow on from the adoption of this strategy.

## Goals

The Cemetery Management Strategy is founded on three goals which reflect the Council’s response to the vision.

### Goal 1: To respect the history of our people

Embedded within the public cemeteries of the Manawatū District is an extensive and largely undocumented history of the people of the District. History is partially celebrated through the provision of various monuments, such as those in the Service Area of Feilding Cemetery<sup>1</sup>. A visitor to a cemetery can also find some history on headstones on individual and family burial sites.

However, within each Cemetery, there are many untold stories. Many of these stories may be of value to the District and the Nation, and they deserve the opportunity to be recorded if that is the wish of families and descendants.

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<sup>1</sup> Those ex-service personnel who have had overseas war service, or services, or service that is defined as equivalent to war service, and their spouses/partners may be buried in a Services Cemetery at Feilding Cemetery.

The aim of this goal is to provide opportunities for individuals and groups to add information to and explore the history within our cemeteries.

**Objective 1.1: To engage with key organisations on the history of Manawatū cemeteries, and to ensure that recognition is given to key historic features of interest within our cemeteries.**

This objective is about ensuring that our cemeteries are properly recognised in a national and regional context. It is possible that certain burial sites may be of unrecognised national significance and the Council should seek certainty in that regard.

In the event that such sites are located, the appropriate response will need to be designed around the particular circumstances of that site.

**Objective 1.2: To engage with interest groups, iwi and individuals of all ethnicities and cultures who wish to preserve the history within Council-owned cemeteries.**

It is recognised that there are certain interest groups who may wish to engage with Council in order to preserve history within cemeteries. This extends in particular, but not only, to Returned Service Associations and genealogical organisations.

**Objective 1.3: To investigate and instigate methods of collecting, storing and sharing stories, having regard to the desire for that information to be publicly accessible.**

Council have an existing cemetery data search function online. What is needed is engagement with the community on how to access this function, and how information of interest can be discovered on this database. Development of a way for individuals to share their stories alongside formal Council records should also be explored.

**Goal 2: To respond to the needs of the community in times of grief and celebration of life.**

It is Council's responsibility to not just meet its legal obligations, but to be empathetic and sensitive to the needs of all of the community.

The objectives and actions arising from this goal aim to provide the highest possible agreed levels of service.

**Objective 2.1: Maintain and, where possible, improve the reliability of the database of records in relation to all public cemeteries.**

It is important to have and maintain a high level of confidence of where burial sites are located, and this may extend to areas of unrecorded and unmarked graves.

It is also important to have an up to date, reliable and publicly accessible data management system. Council currently operates a data management system that is not fully integrated or automated. It relies on separate software packages and periodic manual updates. Continuous improvement of the operations system is critical to the successful management of Council-owned Cemeteries.

**Objective 2.2: To establish and maintain a database of operational procedures relating to the management of all public cemeteries.**

The increasingly diverse and changing needs of the community, and the need to keep up to date with statutory obligations, should be captured in a policy and operations document.

Present trends reflect changing societal views on how we respond to ethnic, cultural and wider community needs. Council needs to be aware of trends, and plan for arising needs in advance.

The policy document should:

- address those challenges that cannot be simply met
- reflect present levels of service and community expectations
- reflect the needs of the wider community.

The policy document should be responsive to changing community needs and national standards for burial sites.

**Objective 2.3: To ensure all options for funding of public cemeteries are considered.**

The establishment, maintenance and operation of cemeteries needs to be reviewed to ascertain if costs are apportioned equitably. The Council needs to ensure that the widest practical range of options are available within its cemeteries.

**Objective 2.4: To provide, upgrade or optimise facilities at cemeteries in response to the needs of users.**

Facilities available within the public cemeteries can vary considerably in relation to location and size of the Cemetery, and services available nearby. A facilities review is recommended, which is further detailed in the implementation section of the strategy.

Consideration will be given to:

- Provision of covered spaces
- Parking facilities
- Accessibility
- Water supply and washing needs
- Entrance ways and landscaping
- Drainage
- Suitability for natural burials
- Provision of specified areas where individuals can plant a memorial plant
- Public conveniences
- Waste/rubbish facilities.

**Goal 3: Ensure sustainable provision of cemetery services.**

Council has sufficient space for the continued provision of cemetery services well beyond the 50 year timeframe of this strategy.

**Objective 3.1: To continue to develop Feilding Cemetery to a level consistent with it being the main cemetery for the District.**

The Feilding cemetery is situated in a central location and in relatively close proximity to Feilding and surrounding areas where the majority of the Districts population live. Currently 74% of the annual interments districtwide are undertaken at this cemetery. It has extensive capacity for expansion and has a high amenity value.

A detailed Feilding structure/design plan is considered an important requirement in order to plan for and meet the growing demand and increasingly diversified needs of the community.

**Objective 3.2: To review the long term spatial requirements of the seven other public cemeteries in the District.**

At current interment rates, there is a significantly large capacity available at these seven Council-owned Cemeteries. Details are available in Tables 3 and 4 of Appendix 3.

This objective recognizes the excessive capacity available at these cemeteries, and seeks to investigate and optimise the return to Council from these assets. Cemetery specific investigation will be undertaken by formation of spatial plans for each site (excluding Feilding Cemetery).

**Objective 3.3: To explore opportunities for partnerships in the provision of cemetery services.**

In the interests of improving levels of service levels for the community, Council should remain open to exploring public and private partnerships in the management of cemeteries and cemetery services.

Whilst the demand for crematorium services in the District at present is limited, and is met by the facilities in Palmerston North, the Council should consider the desirability of planning in the longer term for a crematorium in the District as either a public or private facility.

Under this objective, Council will also explore any potential benefits from partnership with neighbouring Councils in the development of a regional cemetery.



# Implementation

The Cemetery Management Strategy requires commitment by Council to ensure its successful implementation.

Due to influencing factors such as changes to legislative requirements and changes to higher level documents such as Council's 10 Year Plan, periodic review of the strategy and its implementation plan should be undertaken every three years.

The table below shows specific actions that give effect to the goals and objectives of the strategy. Alongside these actions are measures to describe the steps the Council will take towards achieving the actions from June 2020 to June 2025.

Table 1: Cemeteries Management Strategy Implementation Table

| Action   | Measure   |
|--|---|
| <b>Goal 1 - To engage with key organisations on the history of Manawatū</b>  |   |
| <b>Objective 1.1: To engage with key organisations on the history of Manawatū cemeteries, and to ensure that recognition is given to key historic features of interest within our cemeteries.</b>          |   |
| Engage with Heritage New Zealand to identify whether there are any heritage locations of significance and what measures might be appropriate for that purpose.   | Develop a documented list of current locations of significance by June 2023.  |
| Invite Archives Central to examine their records and those of the Council for the collation of information of relevance.   | Stories about the history of Manawatū District cemeteries are shared publicly in an engaging way by June 2023.  |
| <b>Objective 1.2: To engage with interest groups, iwi and individuals of all ethnicities and cultures who wish to preserve the history within Council-owned cemeteries.</b>                                |   |
| Continue to enable the RSA to provide training on the cleaning of headstones in the Feilding Cemetery Services Area; and to allow individuals to undertake this work under the supervision of Army cadets. | Written agreement with RSA to enable them to achieve this action in Feilding Cemetery Services Area by June 2021. The written agreement should permit the cleaning of headstones only – not of plaques. |
| Form relationships with genealogical organisations to optimise Council databases for genealogical use.   | Contact made with genealogical organisations and options explored by June 2022.   |
| <b>Objective 1.3: To investigate and instigate methods of collecting, storing and sharing stories, having regard to the desire for that information to be publicly accessible.</b>                         |   |
| Explore opportunities for the community to publicly share and store stories of those who rest in Council-owned cemeteries.   | The utilisation of a publicly accessible platform for sharing stories by June 2022.   |
| Public education and communications on how to enter and access Cemetery data.  | Annual communication schedule with interested parties and the community on how to enter and access Cemetery data by June 2021.  |

## Goal 2 – To respond to the needs of the community in times of grief and celebration of life

**Objective 2.1: Maintain and, where possible, improve the reliability of the database of records in relation to all public cemeteries.**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Undertake a survey of vacant areas in Council-owned cemeteries to identify unmarked graves.   | Spatial plans to have specific regard to the identification of areas of unmarked graves and to develop management strategies for these areas by June 2024. |
| Undertake a proactive programme of reserved plot measuring and site identification to ensure there is sufficient space for future interments. | Undertake reserve plot measurements in preparation of cemetery spatial plans by June 2024.   |
| Conduct review of Council's current online data management system, for the purpose of ensuring a fully integrated workflow system.            | Complete review of Cemetery Data Management System by June 2022.   |

**Objective 2.2: To establish and maintain a database of operational procedures relating to the management of all public cemeteries.**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Create and maintain a cemetery policy including agreed maintenance standards and operational procedures related to Council-owned cemeteries. | The adoption of a Cemetery Policy subject to forthcoming requirements of the Burial and Cremation Act by June 2023.               |
| Continue to input Cemetery operational procedures into Council's internal process management software to ensure continuity of operations.    | Updates to Council's internal process management software (Promap) included in KPIs of Cemetery Administration role by June 2021. |

**Objective 2.3: To ensure all options for funding of public cemeteries are considered.**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ensure that financial planning documents such as the 10 Year Plan, the Annual Plan and the Revenue and Financing Policy have due regard to the objectives of the Cemetery Management Strategy. | Ensure Cemeteries Management Strategy is included in the environmental/strategic stocktake of each planning cycle. |
| Utilise the review of Council's Revenue and Financing Policy to explore potential funding sources and mechanisms for cemeteries.   | Funding options considered in the review of the Revenue & Financing Policy during each 10 year planning cycle.     |

**Objective 2.4: To provide, upgrade or optimise facilities at cemeteries in response to the needs of users.**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Undertake a facilities review at all cemeteries to ensure adequacy of the facilities.  | Undertake this assessment in preparation of cemetery spatial plans by June 2023, as well as during each 10 year and Annual Planning cycle.   |
| Increase provision of shade options in Feilding Cemetery. e.g. shade structures or tree planting.  | Undertake this assessment in preparation of the Feilding Cemetery structure/design plan by June 2021.  |
| Provide a Feilding Cemetery Ashes Wall.  | Incorporate an ashes wall in the preparation of a structure/design plan for the Feilding Cemetery, and install ashes wall by June 2021.  |
| Provide one set of interment equipment (one lowering device and one set of grave mats) to be available for hire within Council-owned Cemeteries. | One lowering device and one set of grave mats purchased and made available for hire by June 2022.<br>Cemeteries Fees and Charges updated to accommodate interment equipment hire fee by June 2022. |

## Goal 3 – Ensure sustainable provision of cemetery services

**Objective 3.1:** To continue to develop Feilding Cemetery to a level consistent with it being the main cemetery for the District.

Prepare a structure plan/design for Feilding Cemetery including the following design principles:

- A requirement to accommodate a wide range of options for Cemetery users, e.g. burial, cremation, natural burial
- Proper and adequate facilities to be provided
- Adequate parking
- Identification and design of areas suitable for all cultural and ethnic needs
- Designation of garden areas for public use, areas to plant a selection of memorial trees, and provision of other amenities identified through consultation with the community.

Completion of a structure/design plan that incorporates community feedback and direction given by the Cemeteries Management Strategy by June 2021.

Undertake financial planning for the implementation of the Feilding Cemetery structure plan/design.

Ensure adequate funding is provided in the appropriate planning cycle.

**Objective 3.2:** To review the long term spatial requirements of the seven other public cemeteries in the District.

Develop a spatial plan for each Council-owned Cemetery (excluding Feilding Cemetery).

The adoption of individual spatial plans for each of these cemeteries by June 2024.

To prepare a land utilisation plan for each Council-owned Cemetery (excluding Feilding Cemetery).

The adoption of land utilisation plans for each of these cemeteries by June 2025.

**Objective 3.3:** To explore opportunities for partnerships in the provision of cemetery services.

Investigate community and sector desirability of a crematorium being established within the District.

Ensure the provision of a crematorium is considered in preparation of the structure/design plan for the Feilding Cemetery by June 2021.

Convene a forum at officer level to discuss the potential of a regional Cemetery with neighbouring Councils.

Initiate discussions amongst Council officers of neighbouring territorial authorities by June 2025.



## Appendix 1 - Population Information

The estimated resident population of the Manawatū District as at 30 June 2019 was 31,712. The proportion of the total population that was resident in Feilding (consisting of the Maewa, Feilding North, Feilding West, Feilding Central, Feilding East, Rakiraki and Oroua Bridge Area Units) was estimated as 17,296, or 54.5% of the total District population.

The District's population is forecast to have increased to 32,496 people by 2021 and 36,226 by 2031 (the period of the 10 Year plan). These forecasts assume that the population will grow in line with the Statistics New Zealand high projections. Updated estimates and projections released from the 2018 census will provide a clearer picture of current population and future projections.

The proportion of total residents living within Feilding is forecast to decrease slightly over time from 54.5% in 2021 to 54.3% by 2031 and 54.3% by 2051. This is not consistent with what our Council anticipates based on current development trends.

The total population of the Manawatū District (based on Statistics New Zealand high projections) is forecast to increase to 42,144 people by 2051 (an increase of 32.9% over the 32 years from 2019 to 2051).

As at 30 June 2019, it was estimated that 5,757 residents were aged 65+ (18.1% of the total resident population). By 2051 the number of residents aged 65+ is forecast to increase to 13,189 residents, which is equivalent to 30.9% of the total resident population in the Manawatū District.

Also of interest is the projected increase in the percentage of residents aged 85+ from 1.9% (597 residents) as at 30 June 2019 to 6.4% (2,722 residents) by 2051.

In terms of ethnicity the following table gives a breakdown in change in ethnic profile between the 2013 and 2018 census.

Table 2: Change in ethnic profile 2013 to 2018 by location

| Location             | District |       | Feilding |       | Northern & Eastern Rural |       | Southern & Western Rural |       | New Zealand |       |
|----------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------------|-------|
|                      | 2013     | 2018  | 2013     | 2018  | 2013                     | 2018  | 2013                     | 2018  | 2013        | 2018  |
| European             | 86.4%    | 89.2% | 83.6%    | 87.0% | 90.6%                    | 93.2% | 88.7%                    | 91.4% | 70.0%       | 70.2% |
| Māori                | 14.3%    | 16.5% | 17.8%    | 19.4% | 9.2%                     | 11.5% | 10.6%                    | 14.1% | 14.1%       | 16.5% |
| Pacific Peoples      | 1.8%     | 2.6%  | 2.1%     | 2.5%  | 0.8%                     | 1.4%  | 0.9%                     | 1.3%  | 7.0%        | 8.1%  |
| Asian                | 1.8%     | 2.6%  | 2.4%     | 3.2%  | 0.8%                     | 1.3%  | 1.2%                     | 2.1%  | 11.1%       | 15.1% |
| Middle Eastern Latin | 0.3%     | 0.3%  | 0.2%     | 0.3%  | 0.2%                     | 0.2%  | 0.5%                     | 0.5%  | 1.1%        | 1.5%  |
| Other                | 2.6%     | 1.7%  | 2.3%     | 1.4%  | 2.7%                     | 1.8%  | 2.9%                     | 1.9%  | 1.6%        | 1.2%  |

Please note that individuals can identify with more than one ethnicity, therefore the totals calculate to over 100%.

### What Does This Population Data Tell Us?

- The aging of the population profile will lead to a growing demand for cemetery space above that of the projected population growth.
- The demand for specialised burial facilities will remain relatively low given the ethnic profile of the District, which is shown not to have increased dramatically between the 2013 and 2018 years.

## Appendix 2 - Information on Council-owned Cemeteries

Set out below is information on each of the Councils cemeteries, including information taken from the MDC Cemeteries Asset Management Plan 2018-2028.

There are eight cemeteries in the District being:

- Feilding Cemetery
- Halcombe Cemetery
- Kimbolton Cemetery
- Pohangina Cemetery
- Rangiwahia Cemetery
- Rongotea Cemetery
- Sandon (Sanson) Cemetery
- Waituna West Cemetery.

### Feilding Cemetery

Feilding cemetery has a total land area of 14.4ha including 9.3ha of bare land for future expansion, although this includes areas of bush. The developed portion of the cemetery is nearing capacity and it is estimated that the additional land available will allow capacity for another 100 years.

It is estimated that the existing developed portion of the cemetery has capacity for about 10 years. Current figures show 113 burials and 136 ashes interments between 2017-2019.

No provision has been made for natural burials.

Issues/threats to the cemetery have been identified as:

- Management of stormwater within the cemetery
- Additional provision for expansion land for strategic purposes.
- The provision of water on site.
- The development of further car parking space as the cemetery is developed

A concept development plan was prepared for Feilding Cemetery in 2013. Aspects of this plan will be useful to inform the proposed action under Objective 3.1: to prepare a structure plan/design for Feilding Cemetery.

### Halcombe Cemetery

The cemetery is located east of Halcombe and is 6.18ha in extent, of which about 8,500m<sup>2</sup> is used for the cemetery. The undeveloped area is being leased out for grazing.

Current figures show six burials and five ashes interments between 2017 and 2019. It is estimated to have sufficient space for another 600 years.

Key issues identified relate to the access and traffic hazards associated with its use.

In addition to the above, there is a known area of unmarked graves within Halcombe Cemetery, however more information and investigation is required.

### Kimbolton Cemetery

The cemetery is located north of Kimbolton on a site of 4.35ha in extent, of which about 3,500m<sup>2</sup> is used for the cemetery itself.

Current figures show one burial and one ashes interment between 2017 and 2019. It is estimated to have capacity within the existing cemetery for another 20 years and up to 500 years for the total site.

Identified issues include access to the cemetery when wet and the condition of elm trees in the northeast corner of the cemetery.

### Pohangina Cemetery

This cemetery is located on the edge of the village on a site of 4.06ha, of which about 3,700m<sup>2</sup> is used for the cemetery. The undeveloped land is leased out for grazing.

Current figures show seven burials and one ashes interment between 2017-2019, and it is estimated that there is capacity within the existing cemetery for another 20 years and up to 600 years for the total site.

The key issue identified relates to a private water supply to the cemetery.

### Rangiwahia Cemetery

This is a small cemetery on a site of 7,200m<sup>2</sup> on the edge of the township. The cemetery occupies an area of about 2,600m<sup>2</sup>.

Current figures show three burial and four ashes interments between 2017 and 2019, with an estimated capacity within the cemetery for another 20 years. There is capacity in the undeveloped area of the Cemetery for another 500 years.

No specific issues have been identified for this cemetery.

### Rongotea Cemetery

Rongotea cemetery is located on a site of just under 2ha, with the cemetery itself occupying an area of about 1.3ha.

Current figures show 29 burials and 14 ashes interments between 2017 and 2019. It is estimated that there is capacity over the whole site for about 20 to 30 years of demand.

Identified issues include;

- land capacity for the long term and associated demand management issues
- integrity issues with cemetery data
- drainage issues within the cemetery which is waterlogged at times
- Vehicle parking and traffic safety issues.

### Sandon (Sanson) Cemetery

This cemetery is located on a site of just over 8ha, with the cemetery itself being approximately 1.3ha in extent.

Current figures show eight burials and ten ashes interments between 2017 and 2019. It is estimated that there is sufficient capacity within the cemetery for the next 20 years.

No specific issues have been identified for this cemetery.

## Waituna West Cemetery

The Waituna West Cemetery is located on a site of just over 1ha, although the cemetery occupies an area of about 2,300m<sup>2</sup> at the eastern end of the site.

Current figures show three burials and four ashes between 2017 and 2019, and it is estimated that there is sufficient capacity within the cemetery for the next 20 years.

No specific issues have been identified for this cemetery.



## Appendix 3 - Projected Life to Capacity

The Cemetery Asset Management Plan (2018 – 2028) provides a broad assessment of the capacity within the developed areas of the Council’s cemeteries. The assessment below is a more detailed analysis of that capacity, and is split between the developed and undeveloped land that forms part of each cemetery.

### Currently available capacity

This capacity includes available space both within existing beams and within the fenced developed area of each cemetery. Currently available capacity is set out in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary of Currently Available Cemetery Capacity (as at 7 March 2020)

| Cemetery     | Current Available Burial Plots | Current Available Ashes Plots | Potential New Plots (within existing cemetery area) | Average Annual Interments | Currently Available Capacity (years) |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Feilding     | 638                            | 391                           | B28-A64   | 81                        | B16-A11                              |
| Rongotea     | 172                            | 42                            | B58-A120  | 13                        | B35-A24                              |
| Sandon       | 152                            | 15                            | B60-A40   | 5                         | B84-A22                              |
| Halcombe     | 95                             | 13                            | B0-A20  | 3                         | B63-A22                              |
| Pohangina    | 75                             | 12                            | B36-A60   | 3                         | B74-A48                              |
| Kimbolton    | 74                             | 18                            | B12-A20   | 2                         | B86-A38                              |
| Waituna West | 25                             | 9                             | B0-A10  | 1                         | B25-A19                              |
| Rangiwahia   | 62                             | 12                            | B0-A10  | 1                         | B62-A22                              |

Notes to Table 3:

1. A= Ashes: B = Burials
2. These figures include reserved plots.
3. Current burials and ashes interment trends are 50/50 in the Manawatū District.



## Undeveloped Capacity

In addition to the available capacity within the fenced area of each cemetery, there are undeveloped areas of cemetery land potentially available for future expansion of the cemeteries.

An analysis of Subs 4 and 7 at the Feilding Cemetery shows a burial plot density of 1,777 and 1,207 plots respectively per hectare. These figures can be used to estimate a future burial plot density for the purpose of estimating available capacity within the undeveloped portions of each of the public cemeteries.

For that purpose, the strategy has adopted a figure of 1,400 burial plots per hectare. Using the above 'undeveloped area' figures, available capacity for burial plots alone are as follows:

Table 4: Total Undeveloped Area Burial Capacity

| Site         | Undeveloped Area | Total burial capacity<br>(at 1400/ha) | Average Annual interment rate<br>(2008-2019) | Total Years capacity |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Feilding     | 9.3ha            | 13020                                 | 81   | 161                  |
| Rongotea     | 0.7ha            | 980                                   | 13   | 75                   |
| Sandon       | 6.79ha           | 9506                                  | 5  | 1901                 |
| Halcombe     | 5.33ha           | 7462                                  | 3  | 2487                 |
| Pohangina    | 3.30ha           | 4620                                  | 3  | 1540                 |
| Kimbolton    | 4.0ha            | 5600                                  | 2  | 2800                 |
| Waituna West | 0.86ha           | 644                                   | 1  | 644                  |
| Rangiwahia   | 0.46ha           | 1204                                  | 1  | 1204                 |

Notes to Table 4:

1. The capacity does not include capacity within the existing developed areas of the cemeteries.
2. Of the undeveloped area burial capacity, 30% is at the Feilding cemetery.
3. The above figures make no provision for ash burials which nationally account for 70% of all burials.

On the basis of the above, the District's Council-owned cemeteries have substantial available capacity. Taking into account ashes interments, increasing life expectancy and decreasing mortality rates, the capacity would increase significantly.

## Capacity Conclusion

It is evident from the above figures, that capacity is not a factor for concern over the timeframe of this strategy. The strategy therefore needs to focus not on the sufficiency of the land resource, but rather on how to best manage the land.

## Appendix 4 - Statutory Context

Generally, in a long-term strategic document, the statutory context is considered to be of limited relevance for two reasons;

- The statutes are likely to change over time to reflect prevailing values and trends. Any strategy needs to be flexible to adapt to those changes.
- The existing Burial and Cremation Act is dated, and is currently under review.

However, reference to the statutes is necessary as they are relevant to shorter term objectives.

It is assumed that local authorities will remain responsible for cemeteries as set out in the legislation.

### A. Burial and Cremation Act 1964

This Act makes it the responsibility of local authorities to make provision for public cemeteries and this document is focussed on those cemeteries only. It does not extend to various other types of burial grounds that the statutes provide for.

The Act sets out that public cemeteries are to be open to the public and sets out powers for the management of cemeteries (Section 8) including the rights to make bylaws in respect of cemeteries. The act includes provisions in relation to;

- Powers as to vaults and monuments.
- Exclusive rights of burial.
- Portions for different denominations.
- Burial of members of the services.
- Cremations and crematoria.
- Record keeping.

There is no requirement in the Act to provide for crematoria and nor is there any provision in the Act for natural burials.

The Ministry of Health has recently released proposals for the review of the Act. The proposals cover five areas of review being;

- Section A: Death certification and auditing.
- Section B: Regulation of the funeral services sector.
- Section C: Burial and cemetery management.
- Section D: Cremation regulations and the medical referee system.
- Section E: New methods of body disposal.

Sections C to E are particularly relevant to the Council.

## Section C: Burial and cemetery management

This section lists issues with the current system including;

- A confused framework for burial
- Misaligned with modern legislation
- Lack of clarity and detail in legislation (e.g. a lack of guidance on how to establish separate areas within a cemetery for particular denominations)
- Generally archaic provisions
- Lack of recognition of diverse ethnic, cultural and religious needs.

The report seeks comments on three options ranging from no change to a range of proposals based on some or all of the Law Commission's recommendations.

## Section E: New methods of body disposal

The only issue listed in this section is that the Legislation does not provide for new methods of body disposal.

There are two options under this section being retain the status quo or to allow for approved disposal methods (as may be approved by regulation).

It is assumed to be all but inevitable that the review will make provision for new disposal methods and the strategy should reference that possibility (noting that natural burials are already being carried out in some public cemeteries).

## Assessment

None of the options are likely to undermine the strategic nature of the Cemetery Management Strategy. It is assumed that the fundamental provisions of the Act will not change for the purpose of this strategy. That is, local authorities will continue to have the responsibilities and powers that they currently have and possible additional roles.

## B. Burial and Cremation Amendment Act 2000

Technical amendments to the parent Statute.

## C. Burial and Cremation Bylaw 2019

The Manawatū District Council has recently adopted a Cemeteries Bylaw (October 2019).

The purpose of the bylaw is to provide for the efficient management and maintenance of cemeteries under the Councils control. It does not extend to private cemeteries or Urupa.

The Bylaw is largely of an operational nature and of limited relevance to strategic matters. It does however provide for exclusive right of burial and the sale thereof.

## Assessment

The Bylaw is of very limited relevance to strategic objectives and may even require amendment as a consequence of strategic objectives.

## D. Other Statutes

### The Reserves Act 1977

This Act is of no relevance as none of the eight public cemeteries in the District are classified as Reserves.

### The Health Act 1956

The Act provides for Councils to improve, promote and protect public health and to appoint environmental health officers for that purpose. It is considered to be of limited relevance for strategic purposes.

### The Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 provides for the sustainable management of the environment. In the local context this is given effect to by the provisions of the District Plan.

Under the Operative Manawatū District Plan, none of the eight cemeteries are specifically designated for that purpose and consequently their use defaults to the underlying zoning, that is, "Rural".

Under the Rural zone cemeteries and crematoria are permitted activities except if sited in an Air Noise Area.

The provision of any crematoria in the District will trigger provisions of the RMA in that a resource consent from the Regional Council is likely to be required for a discharge to air. Depending on the location, it may also trigger a resource consent requirement under the District Plan as well.

### The Local Government Act 2002

This Act is given effect to through the Manawatū District Council's Long Term Plan.

### Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

A search of the Heritage New Zealand website and the District Plan does not show any heritage buildings or locations within the public cemeteries in the District.

## Other

To the extent that they may be relevant these would include;

- The Department of Internal Affairs (in terms of War Graves and Servicemen's Cemeteries).
- The Burial and Cremation (Removal of Monuments and Tablets) Regulations 1967
- The Cremation Regulations 1973
- Health (Burial) Regulations 1946
- The Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act.

## Appendix 5 - Regional Context

### A. Palmerston North City Council

As a potentially key strategic neighbour/partner it is important to consider the nature of cemetery provision within Palmerston North City. The information below has been taken from their Parks and Recreation Asset Management Plan 2017.

There are four cemeteries within the city being;

1. Terrace End Cemetery - For all intents and purposes this cemetery is full, although is not 'closed' in the legal sense.
2. Ashhurst Cemetery - The cemetery has recently been extended and it is estimated that burial space within the defined cemetery could be full by 2025-2030.
3. Kelvin Grove Cemetery and Crematorium - The cemetery is estimated to have capacity for the next 60 – 80 years. The crematorium was upgraded in 2001, although the crematorium is assessed as earthquake prone (this is being attended to). There is an average of 143 burials and 434 cremations per year at Kelvin Grove.
4. Bunnythorpe Cemetery - There is an average of four burials per year at Bunnythorpe.

Notes of Interest:

- The cemeteries are available for the burial of all people although there is an "out of district" surcharge of 30% on all services except Chapel and Cremation.
- The Council has sufficient land to provide for a minimum of 200 burials per annum for the next 75 years.
- The Kelvin Grove Crematorium has a capacity of up to 1000 cremations per annum with 482 in 2017. That figure is a decrease from previous figures in 2003, when a private crematorium was constructed in the city.
- There is a general trend towards an increasing proportion of cremations, although the Council crematorium will provide for projected demand for 25 years.
- There is also provision for ash burial with various options available.
- The Council is working towards the establishment of a natural cemetery.
- Disposal of land at Whakarongo cemetery.

### B. Whanganui District Council

Whanganui does not have a cemetery management Strategy in place, although it has a cemetery operations manual written in 2001. There is also a monuments policy and a Cemeteries and Crematoria Bylaw.

In addition, there is a Heads Road Cemetery Management Plan which has been prepared given the special history of the Heads Road Cemetery which has been registered as a Category I site of significance. The document provides some useful guidelines in relation to incorporating the historic value of cemeteries into a strategic document.

### C. Rangitikei District Council

From the information on their website, Rangitikei District Council has six public cemeteries being in Bulls, Marton, Ratana, Turakina, Taihape and Mangaweka. It also administers the Rangatira (Huntermville) Cemetery.

The website also has an Administration Manual available.

## D. Horowhenua District Council

Horowhenua District Council manages seven cemeteries in the District being; Avenue, Foxton, Ihakara, Koputaroa, Manakau, Old Levin and Shannon cemeteries. Ihakara and Old Levin cemeteries are closed.

There is some information on the website on each cemetery, but no information on management or strategic development.

There is also a private crematorium next to the Avenue Cemetery.





|                           |   |                      |
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