

Kapiti Coast District Council Natural Burial Policy 2008

1 TITLE, COMMENCEMENT AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This Bylaw may be cited as the Kapiti Coast District Council Natural Burial Policy 2008 and shall come into force on 08 February 2008.
- 1.2 This policy applies to the Kapiti Coast District.

2 NATURAL BURIAL POLICY 2008 VALIDATION

- 2.1 The Kapiti Coast Council Natural Burial Policy 2008 was approved at a meeting of the Kapiti Coast District Council held on 07 February 2008 after completion of the Special Consultation Procedure.
- 2.2 The Common seal of the Kapiti Coast District Council was affixed hereto, pursuant to a resolution of Council on 08 February 2008 in the presence of:



.....
Jenny Rowan QSO, JP
Mayor
Kapiti Coast District



.....
Kevin Jefferies
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Kapiti Coast District Council
NATURAL BURIAL POLICY 2008

1 **Objectives of the Policy**

1.1 To provide people with a choice of an alternative burial type.

The deceased is lowered into a shroud or casket of untreated sustainably grown wood. Their body is lowered into the ground and will quickly return its nutrients to the earth. Kapiti Coast District Council staff or family under staff supervision fill the plot with organically active soil and a native tree or flora is planted on the site.

1.2 To reduce the impact of conventional burial and cremations on the environment.

There is no embalming of the body. Rapid biodegradable non-pollutant caskets are used, and burial sites are planted with native trees or other native flora. Burial depth will meet legislative requirements but where possible bodies are buried in the active soil layer, rather than the conventional 1.8m depth. The shallower depth helps to facilitate the breakdown of the body. This enables natural processes to take place, returning the body's nutrients to the ecosystem rapidly.

1.3 To maintain or enhance the quality of the natural environment.

A green field site is required. Graves will be laid out in the same way as a conventional cemetery but planting is used instead of plot memorials. Other flora are grown around the plot to create a green or natural setting that in the future provides a haven for fauna. Graves are not re-used because the objective is to turn the land into a natural area. Grave sites are recorded using GIS technology.

1.4 To achieve rapid and real return of the body to the earth.

Being buried naturally means facilitating nature's own processes to do their work, returning the body to the soil completely and only in a matter of years rather than anything up to 100 years for conventional burials. A natural burial cemetery in Kapiti will contribute to a sustainable environment for future generations.

1.5 To provide a more affordable alternative to conventional burial.

With cremation, bodies can take up to three hours to burn in a cremator, using up large quantities of fuels like diesel or gas. Natural burials will reduce energy costs and do not require expensive caskets. More marginal rural land can be used, as grave sites do not need to be on flat or gentle gradients and can be placed in a more informal layout to use up all available space.

1.6 To ensure low ongoing maintenance requirements.

Far less maintenance is required for natural cemeteries because they reduce the need for operations such as headstone upkeep and keeping plots manicured. A high level of service is required with traditional burials to keep the cemetery well manicured. Natural cemeteries do not need to be mown and only require minimal upkeep such as initial watering or tending of juvenile trees and some weed control.

2 **Conditions for natural burials**

2.1 The Council Sexton must be contacted at least eight working hours prior to any burial taking place. This is a normal requirement for all burials and takes into account other funerals happening in the cemetery.

2.2	A cemetery plan for natural burial grave/plot locations will be available from the Kapiti Coast District Council Sexton.
2.3	<p>Burial Certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This document will be provided by the funeral director, or person responsible for conducting the funeral, prior to the interment. If families are not using a funeral director then this document can be obtained from the cemetery sexton at the Kapiti Coast District Council and must be completed and returned the day prior to the funeral.
2.4	<p>Cemetery Fees/Payment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees for natural burials can be obtained either from the Council Sexton or a funeral director. All Council's costs are invoiced by the Council.
2.5	<p>Conditions of Burial/Plot Sales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainably grown timber caskets are preferred. Caskets made of customwood glued together with non toxic PVA glue are acceptable. Handles can be made of natural materials or natural rope. Casket lining must be of bio-degradable material eg. Cotton.
2.5.1	<p>Materials that cannot be used are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any types of plastic or metal fittings (exclusive of nails or screws). Treated timber varnish, toxic glues or plastic sheeting inside the casket. Non bio-degradable material inside or outside the casket.
2.6	<p>Acceptable Shrouds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woollen shrouds with a solid base are acceptable. The solid base which assists in lowering into the ground can be of natural timber and contained within the shroud. Contents of shrouds must be fastened to a solid base to prevent movement to one side. Shroud preparation and burial procedures involving shrouds must comply with Council Bylaw requirements.
2.7	<p>Unacceptable Casket/Coffin/Shroud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cardboard caskets. Caskets with varnish, plastic fittings etc. Caskets leaking fluids. Caskets having an obnoxious smell.
2.8	<p>Acceptable Clothing and Casket Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The deceased should be dressed in natural fibre clothing, with no undue additional synthetic substances.
2.9	<p>Chemicals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural burials are 'natural' and therefore, chemicals and embalming fluids etc. are not permitted.
2.10	<p>Communicable Diseases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the deceased died from or with a communicable disease then they must be transferred to the gravesite and buried in a leak proof eco-casket.
2.11	<p>Natural Burial Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural burials can only take place in Council approved cemeteries and in pre-determined natural burial lots allocated within the cemetery. All plots will be allocated by the Council and in sequence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plots will be recorded using GIS technology.• Plots cannot be reserved• Secondary interment is not permitted• Due to health and safety regulations, the digging of the graves will only be undertaken by Council staff.• Bodies are buried 1m below the surface to the top of the coffin or shroud.• The top and sides of a grave must be reinforced with timber when a body is buried in a shroud• Families are able to help cover the grave.
<p>2.12 Families will be made aware of memorial restrictions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A native tree is planted in lieu of a headstone. A list of tree or shrub options will be provided by the Council.• The cost and maintenance of any shrub or tree is included in the plot purchase price. Council will be responsible for staking trees but is not responsible if the tree should die.• No memorials or additional planting are permitted on burial plots without Council permission.• Council will manage maintenance and re-grassing of burial plots to avoid soil erosion.• Council will replace dead or damaged memorial trees at the family's request and for an additional charge.
<p>3 <u>Legal Requirements</u></p> <p>The Natural Burials Policy meets the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Burial and Cremations Act 1964• Resource Management Act 1991 and District Plan Provisions• Health (Burial) Regulation 1946 and Cremations Regulations 1973• Kapiti Coast District Council Bylaws relating to burial.
<p>4 <u>Adoption of Policy</u></p> <p>The Natural Burials Policy was adopted by the Council on 07 February 2008, and at the appropriate time the Council will set the fees and charges for natural burials.</p>
<p>5 <u>Implementation of Policy</u></p> <p>The Natural Burial Policy will be implemented when the Council finds a suitable natural burial location.</p>
<p>6 <u>Review of the Policy</u></p> <p>This Policy will be reviewed with any changes to the Burial and Cremations Act 1964 and any other periodic review undertaken by the Kapiti Coast District Council.</p>