

TAIRAWHITI CEMETERIES PLAN

2018





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Cemeteries Plan is one of a suite of plans prepared under the Tairāwhiti Community Facilities Strategy.

The development of the Strategy was guided by a governance group of regional stakeholders including:

- ▶ Eastland Community Trust
- ▶ Gisborne art community
- ▶ Gisborne District Council
- ▶ Hiruharama School
- ▶ Sport Gisborne Tairāwhiti
- ▶ Tairāwhiti Cultural Development Trust
- ▶ Te Runanganui o Ngāti Porou
- ▶ Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa
- ▶ Tolaga Bay Area School

Many other organisations and individuals have generously contributed to the Plan through focus groups, meetings and submissions.

Many thanks to all of these people for the time and energy they volunteered to ensure Tairāwhiti has a clear path for our community facilities.

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PLAN ON A PAGE

The Plan on a Page summaries the key parts of the Cemeteries Plan – the key issues and opportunities, the objectives and actions. Details are in the body of the document.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Cemetery services need to be affordable and financially sustainable
- ▶ Council needs to respond to changing community preferences in burial options
- ▶ Council needs to improve design of cemetery spaces and have consistent standards
- ▶ Council needs to plan for cemetery services in the wake of large scale disasters
- ▶ There is potential to extend cemetery services into heritage and genealogy.

OBJECTIVES

Network planning and provision

By 2030, Tairāwhiti will have a network of public cemetery facilities across the region that is fit-for-purpose, affordable and accessible:

- ▶ meets community needs for a range of options for burial where there is a compelling demand or need
- ▶ is provided in the most cost-effective way
- ▶ meets the needs of the whole region regardless of socio-economic status and ability.

Effective management

Cemetery facilities in Tairāwhiti will be actively managed to balance affordable and practical levels of service for cemeteries with customer demands including:

- ▶ encouraging high levels of use and enjoyment for the community
- ▶ minimising operational and maintenance costs
- ▶ meeting best practice health and safety and requirements.

Key actions	Partners	Costs (est)	Timeframe
1. Improve service experience of crematorium facilities at Taruheru Cemetery	Council / Lessee	>\$50,000	2018/19
2. Complete design masterplan for all cemeteries	Council	\$30,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
3. Review how we fund cemetery services	Council	Nil	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
4. Assess opportunities for eco-burials, natural burials and kahu whakātere	Council	\$20,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
5. Install ash berms in high-use rural cemeteries	Council	>\$40,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
6. Install on-site water sources in rural cemeteries	Council	>\$60,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
7. Complete extension of business continuity plan (disasters and emergencies)	Council	\$20,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
8. Investigate feasibility of a heritage trail between Makaraka and Taruheru Cemeteries	HPT / Council	\$30,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
9. Upgrade office building at Taruheru Cemetery to facilitate customer service	Council	\$50,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
10. Develop digital services to support genealogical research	HPT / Council	>\$100,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
11. Develop user-friendly guidance and info about cemetery services and processes	Council	Nil	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Plan is to enable holistic and innovative thinking around affordable and effective future provision of public cemeteries within the Tairāwhiti-Gisborne region.

SCOPE

The Plan provides the strategic direction for public cemeteries in the Tairāwhiti-Gisborne region for the next 20+ years. It is a tool to assist decisions on planning, funding, managing and operating cemeteries.

For the purposes of this Plan, the term 'cemeteries' means Council-owned cemeteries only. It focuses on the aspects that Council directly manages including:

- ▶ strategic planning and land management
- ▶ cemetery infrastructure (such as plots, berms etc)
- ▶ management of other site assets (such as fences, roads, vegetation etc)
- ▶ provision of Council's cemetery services (such as interments and cemetery records).

There are various other cemeteries provided in Tairāwhiti-Gisborne that are not specifically provided for as a part of this Plan. For example:

- ▶ there are 200+ urupa that are typically managed privately by whānau and hapu
- ▶ there are a range of cemeteries associated with churches in the region that are managed separately.

There are also a range of other services associated with the passing of a loved one (such as funeral services and management) that are not provided for as part of this Plan.

These other cemeteries and services provided by external parties are considered only to the extent that they provide opportunities for collaboration and partnership on the provision of cemetery services across Tairāwhiti-Gisborne.

Scattering of ashes from human remains is not dealt with in this Plan as this typically happens outside of cemetery areas. Policy, protocols and regulations on this matter will be developed with mana whenua.

LIVING DOCUMENT

The Plan has been developed based on current information available. But communities aren't static. The way we view facility provision shouldn't be static either. The Plan needs to be able to 'bend and sway' as information is updated and planning evolves over time. Regular reviews are important.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The document is organised into the following parts:

PART A: Context of cemeteries activities and provision

PART B: Issues and opportunities

PART C: Objectives and policies

PART D: Specific challenges and responses

PART E: Actions

PART F: Appendices

IMPORTANCE OF CEMETERIES

Cemeteries are important for our Tairawhiti-Gisborne community.

- ▶ Cemeteries do not need to only be solemn spaces. They provide a physical place where loved ones are laid to rest peacefully with dignity and respect – they are places of memorial. They are not only a resting place for the deceased but a place for whanau, friends and communities to reflect and to celebrate and remember those who have passed on.
- ▶ Cemeteries provide a mechanism to care for our dead in a safe and healthy way. They have services and standards that protect public health and the environment. There is efficiency in having this so we can protect public health and make sure we set aside the right land in the right locations to cater for our community.
- ▶ Cemeteries are a record of our population – about those who have gone before. They are important for heritage and historical research as primary sources of information. They are also important records of genealogy and help with ancestral research.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS INFLUENCING DEMAND

Population

- ▶ The projected resident population for Gisborne was 47,800 as at 30 June 2016. This represents a 1.7% increase in estimated resident population since 2013 when the last census was conducted. Statistics New Zealand population projection model predicts population growth between 2016 and 2033 of 5.23% (see Figure 1) and a decline between 2033 and 2043 of 0.62%.
- ▶ As per global population trends, we will see a significant increase in the over 65 years population and a significant decrease in the 0-14 years age group. Compounded by both an increasing and ageing population, the demand for cemetery space and services to manage these activities are likely to grow up to 2033 and beyond
- ▶

Age Group	% change 2013-2043
0-14	-16.4%
15-39	-1.4%
40-64	-7.4%
65+	93.8%

Ethnic diversity

- ▶ Tairawhiti has a unique ethnicity profile compared to the rest of New Zealand. By far the vast majority of the population identify as Maori or Pakeha/European. Alongside this, the proportion of Maori is very high relative to the rest of New Zealand at nearly 50% of the population. Based on data from the 2013 Census, 19,683 Maori usually live in Tairawhiti-Gisborne Region. However there are nearly 85,000 Maori who whakapapa to Tairawhiti. Many are not living here but it is likely that a significant proportion of these may choose to be returned here after they pass away. While many will be interred in urupa at marae, some may choose to be interred in public cemeteries.
- ▶ Other ethnic groups are much fewer in number, yet still significant, giving greater diversity for Tairawhiti as a population.

Rural/urban proportions

- ▶ Approximately 74.5% of the Tairawhiti population live in Gisborne urban centre with 25.6% living in rural areas. Projections for changes in the rural/urban split remain proportional to current population. The implication of an urbanised population include decisions by whanau, family and friends to not always travel a body home to rural areas after a death. Further to this, Gisborne provides options such as cremation rather than burial, which is not as readily available in the rural areas.

Figure 1: Projected population for the Gisborne Region

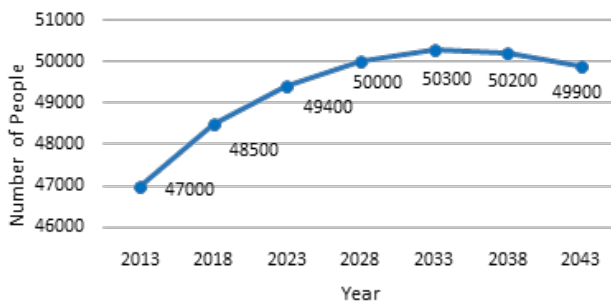


Figure 2: Projected population by broad age group

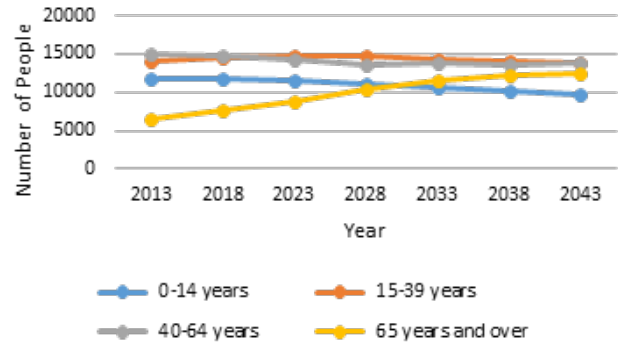


Figure 3: Population by ethnicity in Gisborne region (2013)

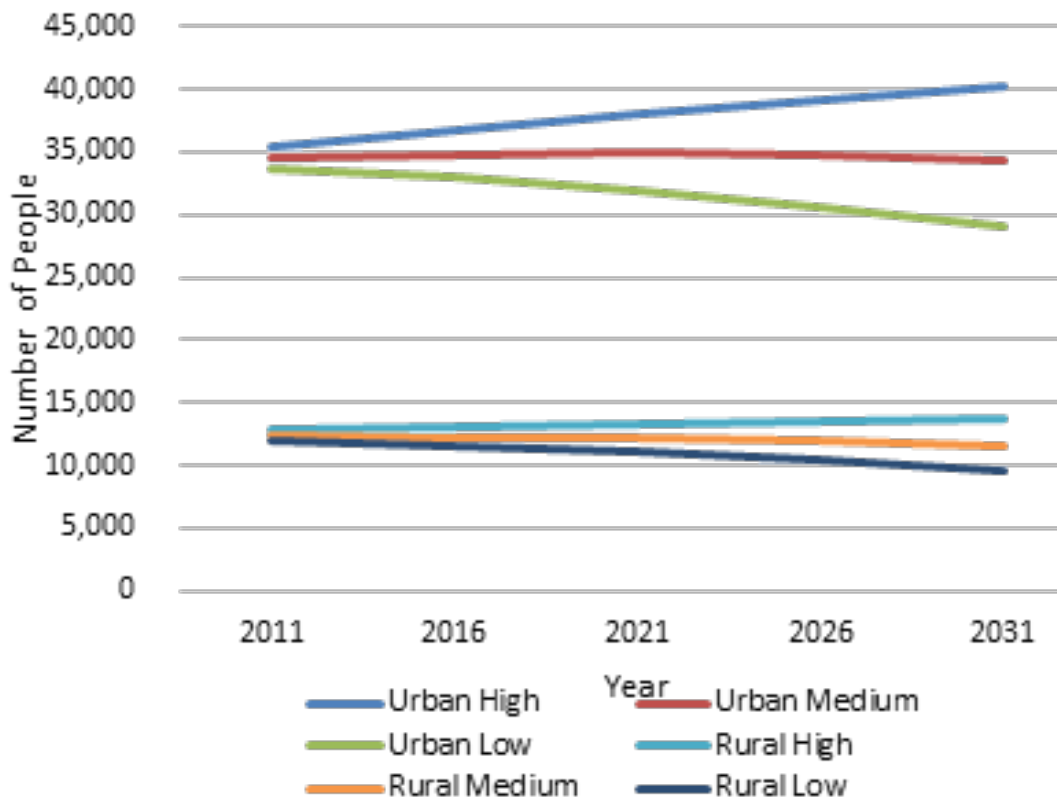
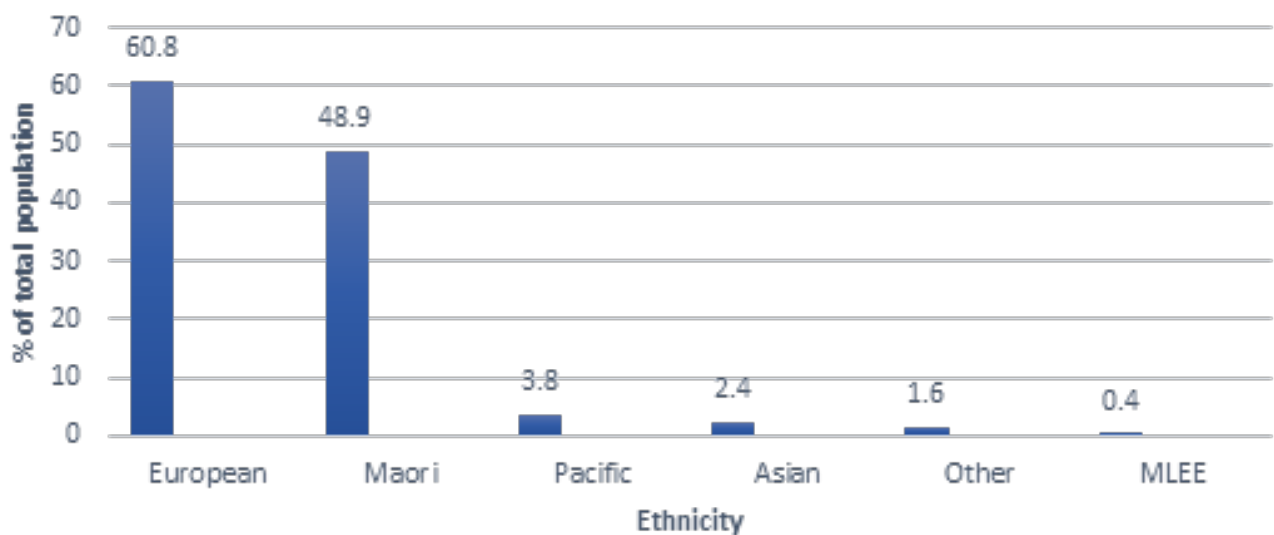


Figure 4: Proportion of urban vs rural people Gisborne region (2013)



Religious affiliation

- In Tairāwhiti, nearly 67% of people affiliate with Christian religions. However nearly 32% of people identify with no religion at all. The number of people who indicated they have no religious affiliation is increasing as is the number of people who affiliate to Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religions.

Table 1: Religion of Tairāwhiti residents

	Gisborne %	NZ	Gisborne total
Christian (not including Maori Christian)	66.8	58.0	31,930
No religion	31.9	37.1	15,248
Maori Christian	13.1	1.9	6,261
Other religions	0.8	0.7	3,824
Spiritualism and new age religions	0.5	0.6	2,390
Buddhist	0.4	1.5	1,912
Hindu	0.3	1.8	1,434
Islam/Muslim	0.2	1.0	956
Judaism/Jewish	0.1	0.2	478

Death rates in Tairāwhiti

- Since 2010 the annual rate of death for the District has remained between 350 and 400. Of these figures roughly 45-50% were cremated. A few will have been taken outside of the District and even more will be buried at local urupa on Maori reserve land. There was a record low number of deaths in 2015 at 352. The number of deaths in the region influences how much time will be spent by staff on burial procedures. Figures are presented in Figure 5.
- Burial statistics at Council's public cemeteries are shown in Table 2 below. Taruheru has, by far, the largest rate of use with Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay respectively the second and third busiest sites for burials. See Table 3 for details.

Table 2: Burials in Council cemeteries 2014-2018

Cemeteries	Total burials	Full burials	Ash interment
East Coast	36	22	14
Gisborne city	771	356	415
West region	18	12	6
TOTAL	825	390	435

Figure 5: Deaths in Gisborne region 2010-2018

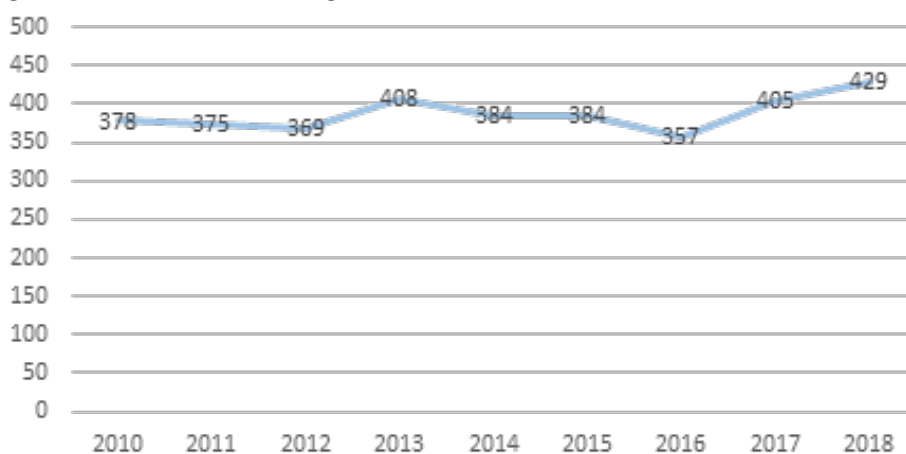
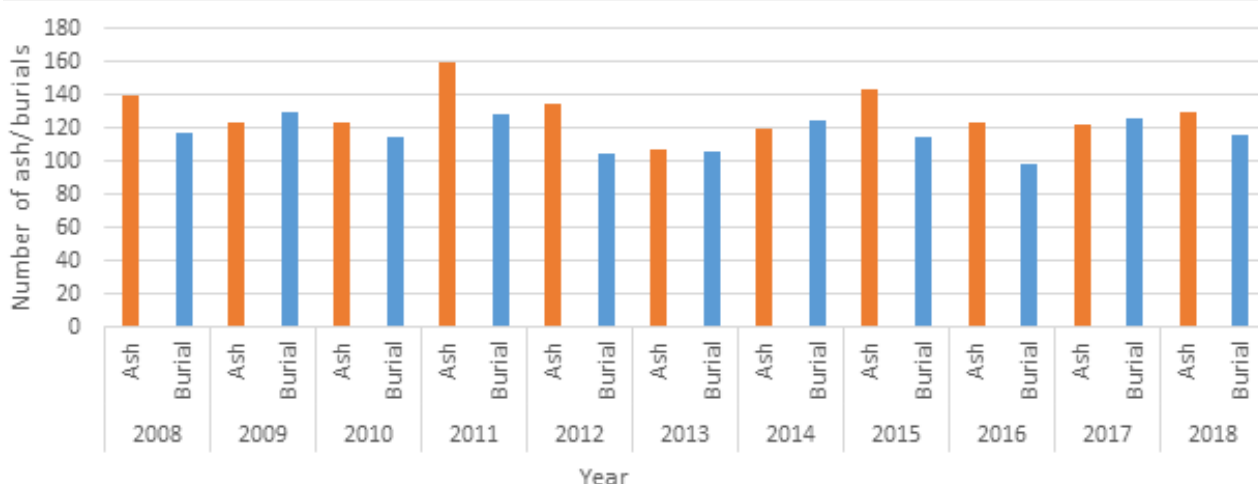


Figure 6: Ash interments versus full burials at Council cemeteries 2004 - 2014



OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING DEMAND

Cremation

- ▶ The national trend for cremation is currently at 70%. Council data for public cemeteries shows ash interments over the past 10 years steady at roughly 50% of total burials.
- ▶ With the national trends in mind we expect demand for cremation to continue to rise. There are several reasons for this trend:
 - Ash plots and interments are cheaper than full burials.
 - It is cheaper to transport ashes than a body from overseas for interment.
 - Ash plots and gardens provide an attractive and affordable option for individuals and families.
 - Ash interment can be delayed relieving time and financial pressures.

DIY funerals

- ▶ People want to have more control over the grieving process. This means there are more people planning their own funeral to the last detail or families doing the same for a loved one. Reasons range from cost to social and cultural beliefs:
 - More home-based funeral services.
 - Growing interest in and uptake of alternative burial options.
 - More use of private transport means for the deceased.
 - More informal and personalised funeral services.
 - More secular funeral services.

Natural and eco burials

- ▶ There is growing interest nationally in natural and eco burial options.
- ▶ More people are choosing to leave the world with the least impact on the environment including choosing:
 - No or light embalming instead of full process.
 - Caskets made from untreated pine or recycled cardboard with no toxic chemicals.
 - Minimising land use by burying up to 2-3 people in one plot.

Incorporating traditional practices

- ▶ More Maori families are wanting to incorporate traditional practices into modern day grieving and funeral processes. Kahu Whakatere or Hahunga are ancient Maori traditions being revived around the country. Practice may involve natural methods to preserve the body during the grieving process and the use of flax mats for wrapping the body among other things.

Returned service men and women

- ▶ Veterans who have returned from war or operational service are entitled to a plot in specifically reserved areas of our cemeteries. These are free of charge for those who qualify under the Veteran's Affairs cemeteries and memorial services programme. There are over 2,200 RSA plots in Taruheru and Tolaga Bay cemeteries. Extra depth plots are available for the spouse of a returned service person to be interred with them when the time arrives.
- ▶ Maintenance of the RSA plots is funded by the Ministry of Veteran's affairs and carried out by a local contractor and are managed as part of Council's role with an annual grant to support some costs from Veteran Affairs.

Gisborne's record of cemeteries for research

- ▶ The Gisborne branch of the NZ Society of Genealogist undertook a project in the 1980s to visit all public cemeteries; transcribe headstone inscriptions; describe each cemetery, its location and the controlling authority. Together with other relevant records this provides a valuable body of historical information.
- ▶ The Cemeteries Team Leader receives a regular number of 'walk-ins' from people looking for ancestors and related information. The Taruheru office has suitable space for customers to carry out online cemetery searches and obtain directions for further information from the library or museum for example. Memorials and headstones are valued as social documents and historical records.
- ▶ This growth area (nationally) puts more expectation on Council to maintain cemetery records and provide easy access to them. Council has the information and technological resources to grow this service arm through better service integration.

SUPPLY OF CEMETERY SERVICES

- ▶ Gisborne District Council maintains 13 gazetted public cemeteries across the region occupying 51 hectares. The cemeteries are either serviced, un-serviced or closed:
 - The Taruheru cemetery on the outskirts of Gisborne city is home to 22,230 interments and has the highest rates of interment. This cemetery has full amenities and the facilities to cater for on-site cremation.
 - Cemeteries at Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay experience the next highest rates of burials.
 - The Cemetery at Patutahi was originally planned as over-flow for the Taruheru cemetery. Along with the Ormond Cemetery it currently experiences small rates of burials.
 - Cemeteries at Te Araroa (2), Ruatoria, Te Puia, Rakauaroa, and Motu have low to no burials.
 - The closed cemetery at Makaraka is maintained as an historic cemetery site (it still requires maintenance). It can still accommodate some ash burials into existing plots as these do not affect capacity.
 - The cemetery at Matahiia has been partially washed away and is completely closed – it no longer exists. Those that were buried there have been reinterred at other cemeteries at Te Puia Springs, Taruheru and some whanau urupa.
 - Council is the owner of a crematorium building that is leased to a commercial entity who operates its own cremator.
- ▶ Further to this, there are 200+ urupa and other cemeteries. This includes the cemetery at Hirini Street which has a wealth of historical information. However these are beyond the scope of the plan, but relevant due to providing supply of options for burial.
- ▶ Over the past five years a total of 579 burials and 637 ash burials have taken place across all 13 cemeteries which total 1,216 altogether.
- ▶ Burial data shows many of the rural cemeteries are under-used. Table 3 shows most activity occurs in only two of the 12 open cemeteries. Some have had no burials in five years. The busiest and largest sites are closer to towns. Outlying cemeteries are smaller and less frequently used for interments and receive fewer visitors.
- ▶ It is difficult to pinpoint why some cemeteries are used more than others. Some the possibilities are:
 - Most people in the region live in or close to Gisborne where Taruheru Cemetery is.
 - Many but not all Maori use whanau urupa instead of public cemeteries.
 - Some rural cemeteries may be less accessible or attractive to locals.
 - Convenience and cost of full funeral service for those distant from Gisborne.
- ▶ Cost of Council plots does not appear to be the main driver – at the time of drafting the Plan, the busier cemeteries were more expensive to purchase plots at than the outlying cemeteries.
- ▶ Despite rates of usage it is important to remember that public cemeteries are established in perpetuity and even when closed Council must continue to maintain and preserve them. While rates of interment at rural cemeteries is low, feedback shows that people with loved ones buried at these sites feel a sense of connection and care about the future of that cemetery.

Staffing

- ▶ The service includes one full-time Cemeteries Team Leader and a Cemeteries Officer based at Taruheru in Gisborne, to maintain cemeteries and provide burial services. The community caretakers on the East Coast maintain Tokomaru Bay and Tolaga Bay cemeteries and are called on to provide cemeteries duties from time to time. Casual support is used for general maintenance and cemeteries duties at rural cemeteries if required.
- ▶ A casual Chaplain is available to provide spiritual guidance and advice to staff and customers if required.
- ▶ Council's website offers information, online searching and a cemetery booking service for the public.

Financials

- ▶ Council currently spends \$250,000 per annum on cemetery services. The total asset value is in the order of \$2.9 million. Table 4 shows a cost comparison of basic fees and charges for cemetery services between Tairāwhiti and seven other councils in New Zealand.
- ▶ There is very little difference in operating costs between an open and closed cemetery. The key difference is in the provision of burial services which is largely paid for by users. There is no significant financial benefit to ratepayers in closing a cemetery facility.
- ▶ The cost of operating Council's public cemeteries is intended to be met by fees and charges 80% (user-pays) and rates 20% (Uniform Annual General Charge). This allocation of cost is on the basis that while the main beneficiaries of cemetery services are those who have passed and their families, there remains elements of public benefit in cemetery services as well. They are places of commemoration and reflection for all and they are an important historical and genealogical record of our community.

Other costs to users

- ▶ Council only controls some aspects of costs associated with a loved one passing:
 - maintenance of the public cemetery facilities
 - cost of burial plots
 - cost of interment services associated with Council staff involvement.
- ▶ Currently, if a family of a deceased person cannot afford a burial plot Council may grant a burial plot and interment service with delayed payment (as discussed above). For those with no financial capacity or support, there are 'paupers graves' located within the rows amongst general cemetery areas.
- ▶ There are a wide range of other, more significant costs associated with funerals that are controlled by the private sector.



Cremation

- ▶ Cremation is increasing regionally, which is consistent with the national trend. It is important to note that the costs of cremation services in Gisborne are comparatively higher than in other similar cities. Table 3 shows the bare minimum cost of a cremation and interment in ash plot for cremation services provided by a range of councils. In all cases the costs are full user pays which impacts the financial sustainability of the Council when people take the option to cremate.

Capacity

- ▶ There is sufficient overall capacity at all open cemeteries for the next 200+ years based on the current death rate.
- ▶ Whether a cemetery is at capacity can be greatly affected by:
 - the type of burial and areas required for a full burial versus an ash interment.
 - reservation of plots for future burials effectively tying up land into the future.
- ▶ The trend in increase in demand for cremation means that the current ash interment areas at Taruheru Cemetery could be at capacity within five years.
- ▶ There are currently 7,260 plots for full burial available at Taruheru Cemetery sufficient for the next 65 years at current full burial rates. However around 1,500 of these are reserved for future use. By law, if Council allows people to reserve a plot with some deposit, then that plot must remain available to that person for up to 60 years. The implication is that we will have to open the new part of the Taruheru Cemetery many years before the existing part of the cemetery is physically full. Opening the new part of the cemetery will create additional maintenance costs for the new area so represents an inefficient use of space and resources.

Resident satisfaction survey results

- ▶ The results for the Annual Residents Surveys between 2014 and 2016 showed that most respondents who visited cemeteries were satisfied or fairly satisfied with the maintenance and presentation of cemeteries. Taruheru received the most visits (78%) from respondents with only 31% visiting the other 12 sites across the district. Reasons for dissatisfaction included not enough attention to gardening or too much rubbish (Taruheru and Tolaga Bay).

Figure 7: Cemetery locations

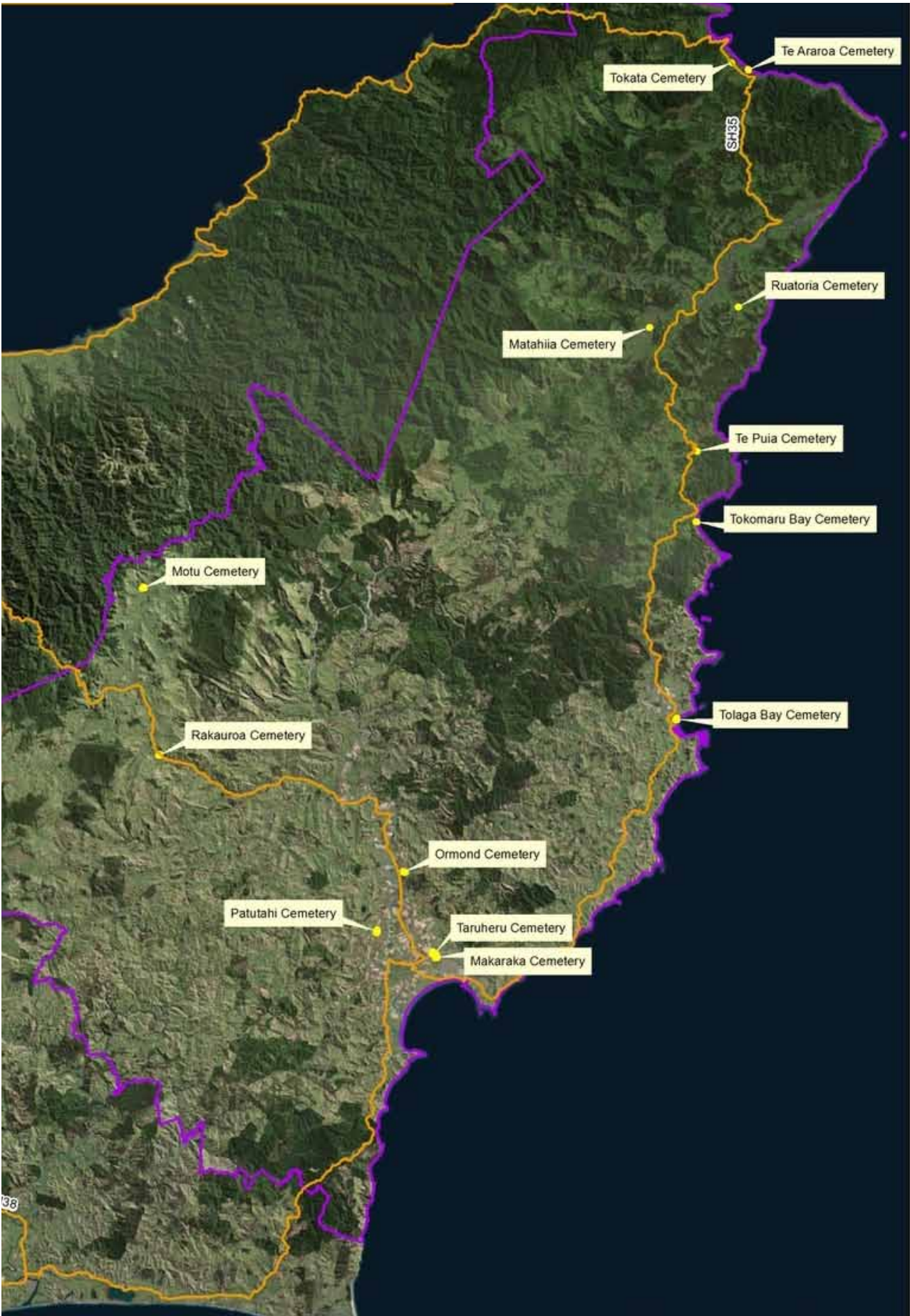


Table 3: Number of ash interments versus full burials for all council cemeteries 2014 - 2018

Cemetery	Full burial	Ash interment	Total
Makaraka	0	3	3
Matahiia	0	0	0
Motu	0	0	0
Ormond	2	1	3
Patutahi	4	2	6
Rakauroa	6	0	6
Ruatoria	0	0	0
Tarewapia (Te Araroa)	0	0	0
Taruheru	356	415	771
Te Puia	0	0	0
Tokata (Te Araroa)	0	0	0
Tokomaru	2	0	2
Tolaga Bay	20	14	34
Total burials	390	435	825

Table 4: Cemetery services fees and charges New Zealand Councils 2018

Council	Full burial plot (adult)	Full burial (adult)	Ash plot (adult)	Ash interment (adult)
Buller	\$370	\$629	\$64	\$115.50
Christchurch	\$1,640	\$1,100	\$475	\$220
Gisborne	\$283 - \$1,021	\$492	\$210 - \$419	\$64
Napier	\$2,250	\$575	\$300 - \$580	\$95
New Plymouth	\$3,552	\$1,910	\$1,142	\$478
Whakatane	\$1,995	\$700	\$300	\$250
Whanganui	\$1,312	\$784	\$653	\$261
Whangarei	\$2,800	\$900 - \$1,400	\$650	\$68 - \$118
AVERAGE	\$1,988	\$978	\$529	\$216

Table 5: Cost comparisons for cremation and interment

Council	Cost of cremation (adult)	Interment (cost of plot and burial)	Professional services	TOTAL
Tauranga	\$510 - \$840	\$295 - \$690	*	\$805 - \$1,530
Whakatane	\$470	\$215	*	\$685
Palmerston North	\$552 - \$701	\$671 - \$803	*	\$1,223 - \$1,504
Rotorua Lakes	\$495	\$120 - \$415		\$615 - \$910
Hamilton	\$605	\$145 - \$1,120	*	\$750 - \$1,725
Invercargill City	\$765	\$480 - \$710	*	\$1,245 - \$1,475
Wellington	\$685	\$688 - \$1,104		
Dunedin	\$881	\$370 - \$700	*	\$1,251 - \$1,581
Gisborne	\$795	\$274 - \$419	\$950	\$2,019 - \$2,184

* professional services included in cost of cremation and interment

PART B: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of issues around cemeteries that if addressed, present an opportunity to future proof the way that cemeteries are managed and maintained. Many of the issues are common across sites as identified below, which can be addressed through policy and guidance provided in this plan. Each cemetery has its own set of unique features and issues to address that will require tailored responses. Site-specific issues are discussed in Part Three – Specific Challenges and Responses.

AFFORDABLE AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

Expenditure exceeds user charges revenue

- ▶ Figure 8 shows, expenditure on cemetery services is consistently double the revenue received from user charges. This is inconsistent with Council's funding policy that users of the services should fund 80% of the costs of these services.

Relatively low fees and charges

- ▶ Council's current fees and charges for the cemetery services it provides are amongst the lowest in New Zealand. Council has already implemented several findings from a 2015 service review to improve the efficiency of the service it provides. So it could be argued that Council is under-investing in these services relative to other New Zealand Councils.

Fees and charges versus actual costs

- ▶ Council has set charges for its cemetery services with some price differentiation between urban and rural cemeteries. However a range of factors affect

the costs of providing cemetery services at different locations particularly the level of soil compaction (in some instances a digger may be required to achieve a certain depth) and the geographic location and travel time and cost for staff. The fees charged currently do not reflect the actual costs of service delivery at the different cemetery locations.

Ability to pay

- ▶ A large proportion of the Tairāwhiti population sit at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Our fee structure and service delivery model needs to reflect our community's ability to pay for cemetery services.

Expansion and cost increase

- ▶ There is sufficient overall capacity at all the open cemeteries for several decades. There are currently 7,260 plots for full burial available at Taruheru Cemetery sufficient for the next 65 years at current full burial rates. However we may need to open the new part of the cemetery in the near future at some near point in the future. With the opening of the new part of the cemetery will come capital expense of set-up and additional maintenance costs for the new area which will need to be provided for in Council budgets.

Figure 8: Council cemetery revenue and expenditure 2013 - 2017



Table 6: Comparison of Gisborne cemetery fees and charges with other councils

Council	Full burial plot (adult)	Full burial (adult)	Ash plot (adult)	Ash interment (adult)
Gisborne	\$283 - \$1,021	\$492	\$210 - \$419	\$64
NZ Average	\$1,988	\$978	\$529	\$216



RESPOND TO CHANGING COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

Diversification in funeral preferences

- There has been a shift in how death is celebrated and personalised. How people celebrate death and engage with the grieving process is changing and continues to become more diverse particularly in relation to ethnic and spiritual/religious factors, as well as a trend to seeking more affordable funerals. For example more Maori families are wanting to incorporate traditional practices, such as Kahu Whakaterere or Hahunga into modern day grieving and funeral processes.

Demand for cremation

- Overall, relatively high numbers of people in Tairāwhiti are choosing cremation with cost, convenience and travel distances being major factors for this decision. One of the key benefits of cremation is the reduced space needed for interment – this extends the longevity and capacity of our existing cemeteries footprint. The demand for cremation is likely to increase given national trends. This means that the current ash interment areas at Taruheru Cemetery could be at capacity within five years. There is also limited provision for ash interment at rural cemeteries with Tolaga Bay the only site that offers this service.

Increasing demand for self-organised funerals

- 'Do it yourself' (DIY) funerals are a growing trend nationally and regionally as people seek more control over the grieving process, the planning for social and cultural benefits and in response to the high costs of some aspects of funerals. There is a lack of understanding amongst the public as to what the correct processes are once the body or ashes reach the cemetery. There is also a lack of information and communication around what is expected both of the Council and the customer around the process of making arrangements.

Increasing demand for natural and eco-burials

- A shift towards choosing a more natural, environmental burial option is becoming increasingly popular for people nationwide, however, there has been very little interest regionally in recent years. Council needs to remain aware of this national trend and plan for the entirety of the concept now in anticipation for its future demand. The opportunity to select an appropriate site which cater to the type of setting and principals behind eco burials or traditional cultural methods need to be produced through guidance from this plan.

IMPROVE DESIGN AND AMENITY

Improved design

- Visiting any of the public cemeteries should be easy and inviting and reflect the purpose of the spaces. There is a chance to improve the quality of all cemetery spaces (including amenity, way-finding through these spaces and access for all abilities) and provide some consistent standards around cemetery facility provision. Currently, there are no consistent planning and design principles for cemetery spaces so the visitor experience varies across cemeteries.

Maintenance of amenity

- A theme coming through from service requests for cemeteries is complaints about amenity of cemetery facilities and assets that are currently offered. The majority of feedback received is in relation to the layout, garden landscaping, general appearance and maintenance of public cemeteries. People expect a high standard of maintenance and care of gravesites and grounds.

NOTE: Council has recently changed its maintenance contract and services for cemeteries to standardise their care in response to community concerns raised during the early stages of development of this Plan.

DISASTER PLANNING AND RECOVERY

Disaster plan in emergencies

- ▶ Council currently has very little capacity to deal with the devastating reality of multiple deaths following natural disasters and civil defence emergencies such as an earthquake. The logistical measures for temporarily holding bodies, post mortem or call out services need to be planned for and guidance provided for a range of scenarios, their consequences and appropriate responses, ideally in a coordinated and collaborative manner.

EXTEND CEMETERY SERVICES INTO HERITAGE AND GENEALOGY

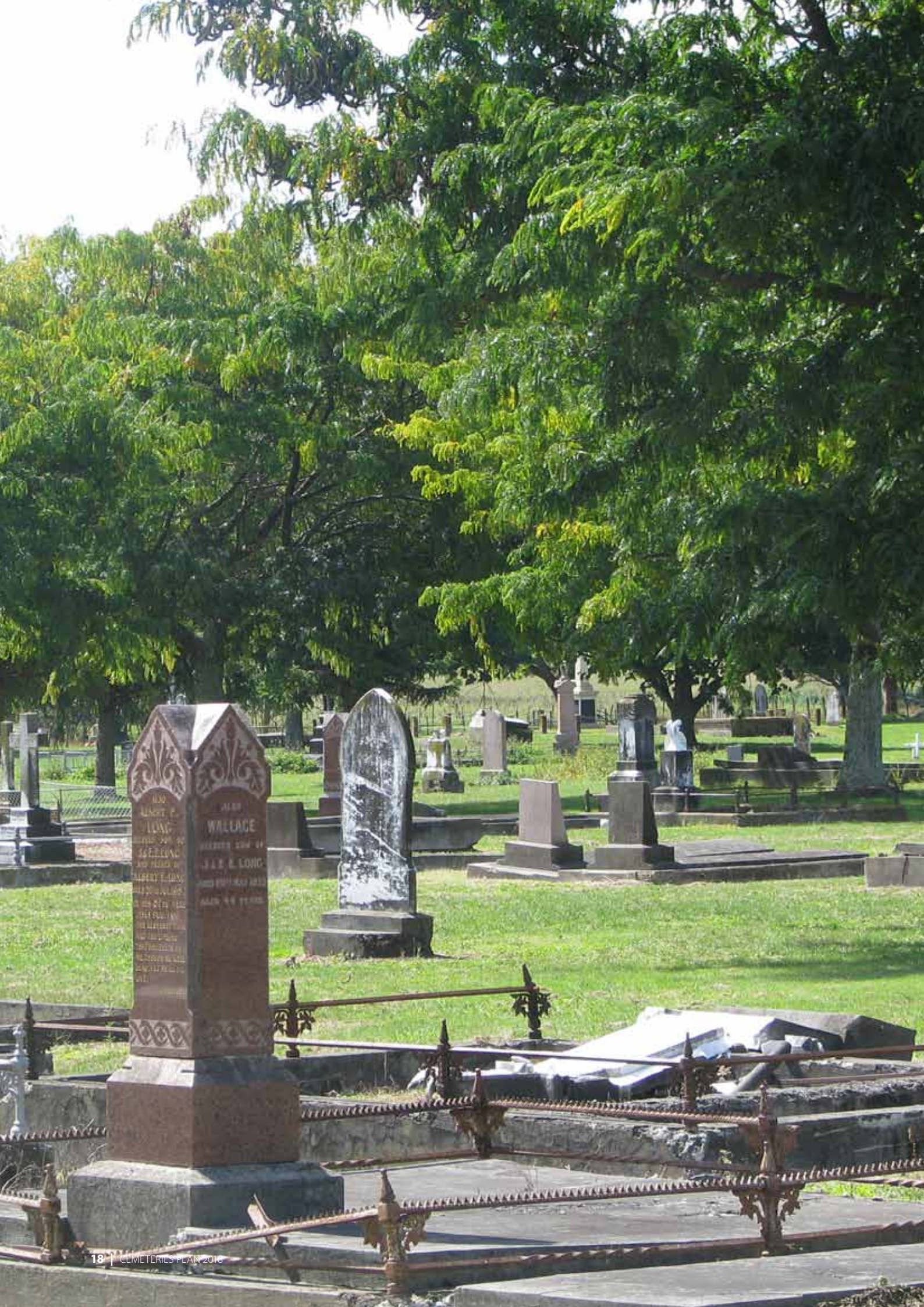
Cemeteries for research

- ▶ There is growing interest in the use of cemeteries and cemetery records for research particularly genealogy. Technology opens up opportunities for Tairāwhiti to operate better in this space so that people can research local ancestors and cemetery records online from anywhere in the world. A small proportion of these people enquire about ancestors from overseas before making a trip to New Zealand so they can visit the actual site while in the area. There are opportunities to link the stories of those buried in the cemeteries to the Council cemetery search function.

Cemeteries as part of heritage fabric

- ▶ Cemeteries are part of the heritage fabric of Tairāwhiti. There are opportunities to make better use of the historic and heritage values at our cemeteries. Other cities in New Zealand such as Christchurch, offer cemetery tours for people interested in local history. Heritage tours of Makaraka Cemetery are already offered by Historic Places Tairāwhiti. There is an opportunity to create a heritage trail through and between the Makaraka and Taruheru Cemeteries through light infrastructure and technological development





NETWORK PLANNING AND PROVISION

OBJECTIVE

By 2030, Tairāwhiti will have a network of public cemetery facilities across the region that is fit-for-purpose, affordable and accessible:

- ▶ The network will provide for community needs for a range of options for burial and commemoration of loved ones who have passed where there is a compelling demand or need
- ▶ The network will be provided in the most cost-effective way, considering the whole-of-life costs of cemetery facilities and ensuring optimal use, so it is financially sustainable for the community and operators.
- ▶ The network will meet the needs of the whole region, be available to the community regardless of socio-economic status, provide healthy and safe space and be suitable for all physical and intellectual abilities.

POLICIES

Public cemetery facility network

- ▶ Facility network planning is based on compelling and robust evidence and considers, first and foremost, the current and potential community needs and the resulting appropriate level of investment.
- ▶ Provision of cemetery facilities will be based on two tiers:
 - one regional level facility at Taruheru Cemetery
 - several local level facilities across the region.
- ▶ The nature of provision for both tiers will take into account the community to be serviced, the needs to be met and costs of provision. Levels of service for the two tiers of facilities will be identified in a Cemeteries Masterplan.
- ▶ Council will monitor capacity at cemeteries to guarantee space is available. Council will consider extension of cemetery spaces well in advance of the need for them manifesting.

Development of facilities

- ▶ Decisions on redevelopment of existing facilities and development of new facilities will be based on compelling and robust evidence and projects will be assessed according to the community facilities investment principles and criteria. Projects will be required to follow the community facilities strategy investment process.

- ▶ Requests for Council resources (including land) to develop cemetery services and assistance with maintenance will be required to follow the investment process outlined in the Community Facilities Strategy.
- ▶ Before considering investment in redeveloping facilities or developing new facilities, there will be careful consideration of alternative options including:
 - if changing governance or management practices would address issues
 - if changes to rules and regulations would address issues
 - if better use can be encouraged through changes to pricing
 - if minor capital works can be made to the facility to address the issues
 - if multiple or shared use of the facility or another facility would address the issues
 - if the facility is actually needed at all.
- ▶ Council will adopt due diligence and consideration of land use planning best practice in decisions around new cemetery locations to avoid unreasonable adverse amenity impacts on adjacent property owners and users, while ensuring the reasonable needs of cemetery users can be met.
- ▶ Decisions on the transfer of community assets to Council will need to be consistent with all of the following criteria:
 - there is a clear and justifiable community need for the asset that cannot be filled by other facilities or activities
 - there is strong evidence that the asset can meet the relevant level of service requirements outlined in this Plan
 - the ongoing operation costs are able to be covered by user fees to the same level as outlined in Council's Revenue and Financing Policy
 - the ongoing maintenance and repair costs are able to be covered by user fees to the same level as outlined in Council's Revenue and Financing Policy
 - the individual or group transferring the asset agrees that once the asset is transferred, Council has sole discretion over the upgrade, maintenance and eventual disposal of the asset with no ongoing obligation to the previous asset owner.

- ▶ So that cemetery facilities continue to meet changing community needs we will:
 - design facilities to easily and cost-effectively adapt to future potential needs, preferences and the potential for an expanded range of uses
 - monitor demand for and use of facilities annually so we understand community needs and can take timely action.

Collaboration and partnerships

- ▶ Council will consider partnering with others to deliver cemetery facilities where:
 - there is compelling evidence of community need
 - public access is assured
 - health and safety standards are assured
 - the facility is unlikely to be available to the public without Council support
 - the location of the facility supports geographic accessibility by ensuring a spread of the network across the district
 - the facility owner demonstrates the facility continues to meet community needs.
- ▶ Partnerships for facility provision across providers will be underpinned by strong relationships, regular engagement and robust formal agreements.

Facility design

- ▶ Regardless of whether they are active or inactive, all cemeteries will be provided in a way that showcases thoughtful design recognising them as places of dignity, with associated amenity.
- ▶ When considering upgrades to existing cemetery facilities or future development of new facilities, key design considerations (alongside best practice) will be:
 - meeting environmental regulations and standards as per best practice
 - the health and safety of users, operators and the surrounding community
 - whether the location and surrounding environment is appropriate for provision of cemetery services of different types
 - the useability, comfort and accessibility of facilities for all ages, stages and abilities
 - the whole of life costs of operating and maintaining the facility
 - the consistency with best practice urban design particularly around accessibility and reflecting local character and identity
 - the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to promote health and safety and personal security



- way-finding to and through the cemetery.
- ▶ Council will offer a range of types of burial options in response to ethnic, religious, cultural and environmental preferences. Provision of these options at different locations will rely on:
 - there being a demonstrated significant community need
 - the ability to provide the services in a cost-effective way that the community can afford
 - there being minimal cost implications for ongoing maintenance.



EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE

Cemetery facilities in Tairāwhiti will be actively managed to balance affordable and practical levels of service for cemeteries with customer demands including:

- ▶ encouraging high levels of use and enjoyment for the community
- ▶ minimising operational and maintenance costs
- ▶ meeting best practice health and safety and requirements.

POLICIES

Demand management

- ▶ Fees and charges for cemetery services will reflect the following:
 - the actual costs of service delivery at different sites and across the region
 - the contribution of specific cemetery services to meeting wider Council strategic priorities such as improving freshwater quality and biodiversity corridors
 - the amount of public versus private good that specific cemetery services accrue
 - the ability of the Tairāwhiti community to pay for cemetery services.

- ▶ Council will consider targeted pricing strategies that will enable all residents to access facilities with prices reflecting the cost of service provision.
- ▶ Healthy and whānau-friendly use of cemetery facilities will be encouraged including appropriate controls on tobacco, alcohol, psychoactive substances and behaviour.
- ▶ Council will commit to providing clear information that is readily accessible about all of its cemetery services (including DIY funerals) to make it easy for users.

Asset management

- ▶ Decisions on asset management of cemetery facilities consider the whole-of-life costs. This includes identifying the appropriate timing for upgrades and redevelopment of facilities so ongoing maintenance costs do not start to soar as facilities age.
- ▶ The safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability of cemetery facilities are important. Technologies and practices that minimise water use and waste and that maximise the use of energy will be considered where they prove affordable over the life of the facility. Innovation in these areas is strongly encouraged.
- ▶ Council will maintain, and frequently review, a comprehensive asset management plan for the cemeteries it administers. Council will report regularly on the performance of cemeteries activity and in achieving the intent outlines in this Plan.



Leases and exclusive use

- ▶ Council supports public and non-exclusive use of public lands. Leases of Council land for cemetery facilities (new or renewals) will only be considered under the following conditions:
 - the exclusive use of part of the area is needed to support cemetery activities
 - the activity is complementary to the purpose and function of the space
 - there are no other facilities or spaces that would adequately meet needs
 - there is a clearly demonstrated need and the activity will provide for the cemetery needs of a wide range of community members
 - the lessee is responsible for the maintenance of the leased area consistent with Council's standards and an appropriate level of insurance as defined in the lease agreement
 - the purpose of the lease would be the most appropriate use of that site
 - the lease promotes equitable support and provision for all of the community
 - the lease is the most cost-effective way to meet community needs for cemetery facilities
 - Council's satisfaction with the lessee's past performance.

- ▶ Council supports retaining public lands for maximum public use. Long-term exclusive use for activities such as buildings related to cemetery services will only be considered where:
 - it is legal to do so under relevant statutes
 - there is a clearly demonstrated need and the activity will provide for the needs of a wide range of community members
 - the activity contributes directly to enhancing use and enjoyment of the space
 - the new building would be multi-use and have an element of public access
 - there are no other facilities that would adequately meet needs
 - any buildings are consistent with Council's design standards, best practice urban design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.
- ▶ Leases, licenses and permits will be subject to charges. Council will regularly review its charging regime.

Health and safety

- ▶ Best practice health and safety standards are adhered to all times. New Zealand Standards will be met for all facilities across Tairāwhiti.



PART D: SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

CREMATORIUM

CHALLENGES

There is a growing demand for cremation and this facility needs upgrading and support services provided to cope. More hands-on funeral planning means more direct contact between the public and cemetery staff to make arrangements. This may be driven by cultural, social beliefs or financial pressures. Greater flexibility and responsiveness is required by Council to meet this expectation.

At the time of drafting of this Plan, one private operator had a monopoly on provision of local crematoria services using Council land and property. This created high cremation prices relative to the rest of New Zealand.

This was concerning given the socio-demographic profile of the Tairāwhiti population and their ability to pay.

RESPONSE

Council has since investigated the efficiency and effectiveness of continuing with a private cremation services supplier at Taruheru cemetery versus Council directly providing these services. The factors considered were:

- ▶ capital costs for purchase of cremator
- ▶ local maintenance capacity by specialist providers
- ▶ staff training for operation of the cremator
- ▶ ongoing servicing costs.

Council decided to retain the existing approach to service provision and to influence provision costs and services through contractual arrangements and relationships.

Table 7: Cost comparisons for cremation and interment

Council	Cost of cremation (adult)	Interment (cost of plot and burial)	Professional services	TOTAL
Tauranga	\$510 - \$840	\$295 - \$690	*	\$805 - \$1,530
Whakatane	\$470	\$215	*	\$685
Palmerston North	\$552 - \$701	\$671 - \$803	*	\$1,223 - \$1,504
Rotorua Lakes	\$495	\$120 - \$415		\$615 - \$910
Hamilton	\$605	\$145 - \$1,120	*	\$750 - \$1,725
Invercargill City	\$765	\$480 - \$710	*	\$1,245 - \$1,475
Wellington	\$685	\$688 - \$1,104		
Dunedin	\$881	\$370 - \$700	*	\$1,251 - \$1,581
Gisborne	\$795	\$274 - \$419	\$950	\$2,019 - \$2,184

* professional services included in cost of cremation and interment

CEMETERIES

TARUHERU CEMETERY

Status	Open	
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full burials • ash interment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSA plots • children's plots
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prone to flooding in parts • winter burials affected by high water tables • potential for heritage trail linking to Makaraka cemetery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growth in genealogical research • overdue infrastructure and facility upgrades • cemetery not classified as parks and reserves land
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Plan for cemetery including: layout, service and infrastructure provision, alternative burial areas, design specifications, landscaping, etc • feasibility study for cemetery / genealogy heritage trail • change policy to prevent plot reservation • extension of ash interment areas within five years • decide approach to addressing capacity issues within 20 years • establish eco / natural burial area • provide a search facility for enquiries when staff are not present • provide family ash plots for multiple interments with full sized headstone • establish protocols to support ground slumping and grave settlement issues • classify cemetery as parks and reserves land • complete upgrades including: (re-) sealing of roadways; formalising carparking areas, expanding water 	



RURAL CEMETERIES

MAKARAKA

Status	Closed
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> occasional ash burial in existing plots
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buried headstones potential for heritage trail within Makaraka Cemetery linking to Taruheru growth in genealogical research
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resolve buried headstones issues feasibility study for cemetery / genealogy heritage trail including: reinstating the bridge between Makaraka and Taruheru; development of digital technology; and noticeboards and pamphlets



MATAHIIA

Status	Closed
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part washed away in 2015 due to erosion • remains were disinterred and moved to Tuparoa
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil



MOTU

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • irregular maintenance • prone to flooding in winter • broken fence
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • maintenance • fence repair



ORMOND

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rocky and difficult to dig –digger required
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • re-instate driveway and improve drainage to prevent rutting



PATUTAHI

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • irregular maintenance • prone to flooding in winter • broken fence
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • provide for ash interment • provide on-site water • provide an ash berm



RAKAUROA

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor site access in winter due to track over grassland • safety issues with access from SH35
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • provide an ash berm • upgrade site access from SH35 • create proper site access • provide on-site water



RUATORIA

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wet soil • rubbish
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • provide for ash interment • provide on-site water



TAREWAPIA (TE ARAROA)

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • graves inside and outside of boundary fence • cemetery not classified as reserve land
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • provide for ash interment • provide on-site water • classify cemetery as reserve land



TE PUIA

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steep sloping and undulating site • significant land movement
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • improve accessibility • provide on-site water • investigate extent of land slippage and effect on used grave spaces



TOKATA (TE ARAROA)

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • provide on-site water



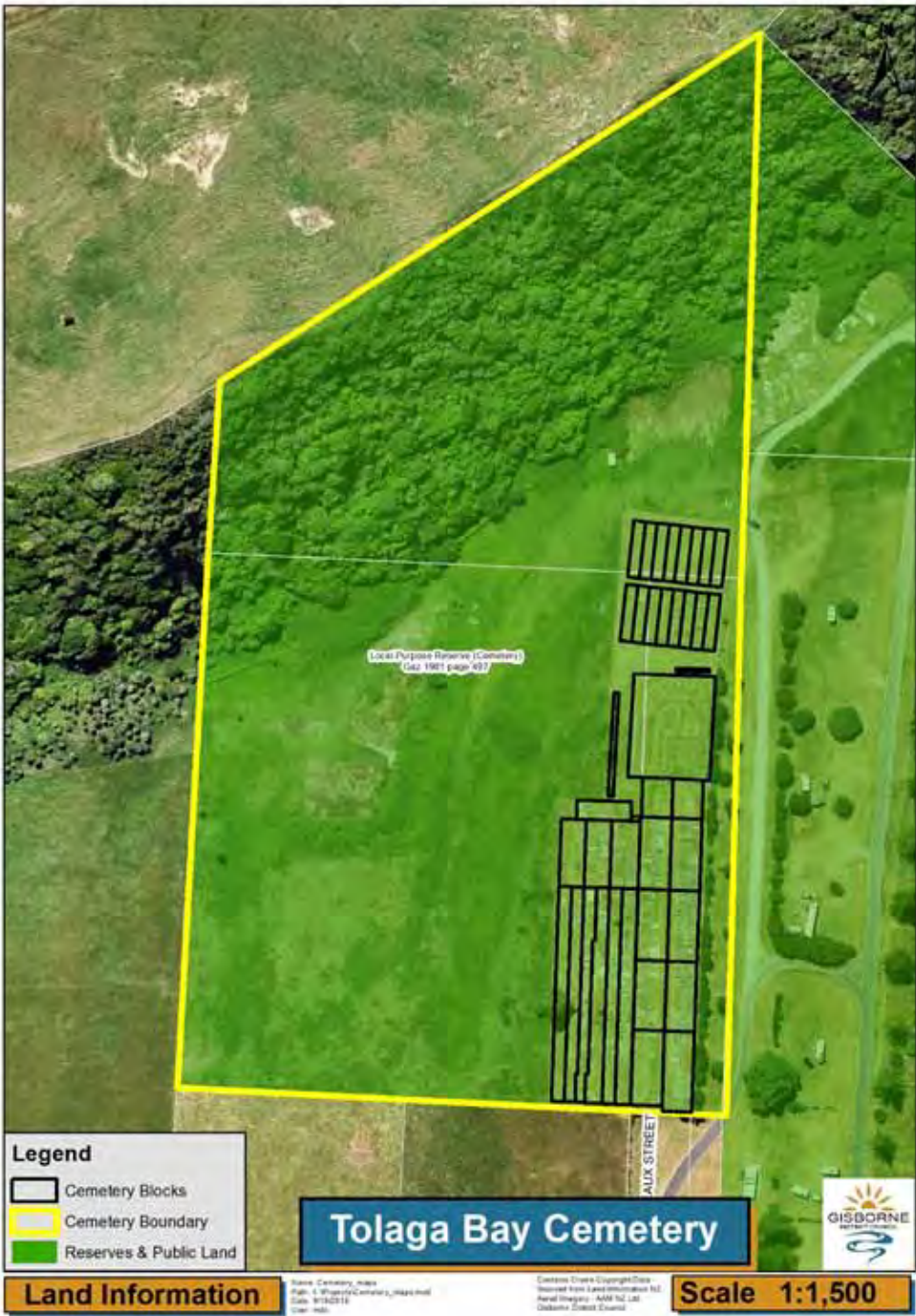
TOKOMARU BAY

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full burial
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fencing • cemetery not classified as reserve land
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • fencing • provide on-site water • classify cemetery as reserve land



TOLAGA BAY

Status	Open
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full burial • ash interment
Issues and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fencing • land drainage
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design specification for rural cemeteries • fencing • provide on-site water



PART E: ACTIONS

ACTIONS

The table below outlines the priority actions for the medium term to implement the Cemeteries Plan. Council will be reviewing its Long Term Plan to take effect from 1 July 2021. We're targeting this process as the key way that we will get funding to deliver the majority of the actions in this Plan.

Table 8: Priority actions in the Cemeteries Plan

Key actions	Partners	Cost (est)	Timeframe
Improve service experience of crematorium facilities at Taruheru Cemetery. Council to upgrade the crematorium building. Lessee to consider other upgrades to provide services	Council / Lessee	\$50,000 (Council)	2018/19
Complete design masterplan for all cemeteries with key aspects to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision for new specific burial services eg ashplots/ashwalls; natural burial; children's and premature babies sanctuary; returned services etc provision of furniture and amenity including: water; seating and shade; art works; waste bins landscaping and planting efficient use of space over time way-finding to and through the cemetery accessibility for all 	Council	\$30,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Review how we fund cemetery services (Revenue and Financing Policy) and amend fees and charges for different cemetery services and locations based more equitably on user pays share of cost	Council	Nil	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Undertake an assessment of opportunities for eco-burials, natural burials and kahu whakare (Maori traditional practices) in consultation with community	Council	\$20,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Install ash berms in high-use rural cemeteries other than Tolaga Bay, i.e. Patutahi, Rakauroa, Ormond, Tokomaru Bay (the remaining six to follow if needed)	Council	>\$40,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Install on-site water sources in rural cemeteries prioritised as followed by current burial rates: Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay, Patutahi, Ormond	Council	>\$60,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Complete extension of business continuity plan in times of disaster and emergency	Council	\$20,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Investigate the feasibility of a heritage trail (including cycle and walkways and interpretation tools) between Makaraka and Taruheru Cemeteries	Historic Places Tairāwhiti / Council	\$30,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Develop digital services to support genealogical research	Historic Places Tairāwhiti / Council	>\$100,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Upgrade office building at Taruheru Cemetery to facilitate customer service	Council	\$50,000	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan
Develop user-friendly guidance and information about cemetery services and processes to support those making decisions at a difficult time	Council	Nil	For 2021-31 Long Term Plan

