

18 July 2024

## **Funeral industry publishes cost guidance in wake of increasing council costs**

Increased council burial and cremation costs, in one case, 48% higher than last year has seen the funeral industry publish guidance to help families better understand the options available to help manage the expense of a funeral.

Funeral Directors Association Chief Executive, Gillian Boyes, says that in addition to increased council costs, her members are faced with growing labour costs, materials cost increases, as well as compliance costs such as health and safety requirements.

“All this ends up increasing the financial burden of a funeral to our families, so we want to support people with information about what typical costs may be and how to have a conversation about options,” says Ms Boyes.

Ms Boyes says families often come to her members concerned about how they will afford a funeral. They may not realise there is not a set price and that the funeral director will work with them to individualise a funeral for their needs.

“What we really want to avoid is people thinking they have to resort to what they often call a ‘box and burn’.

“We know spending time with a loved one, remembering them with special words and even physical gestures such as carrying the casket all help people in managing their grief. But there are lots of ways you can do this in a more affordable but still meaningful way.”

Ms Boyes says key tips for families working with a funeral director include:

- Explain your needs and requirements and let them know of any budget restrictions
- Ask to see an estimate of costs and get advice on alternatives that might be available for each element, for example a cheaper casket, or flowers from your garden
- If you are pre-planning a funeral, ask if there are options in your area such as pre-purchasing a burial or ash plot. This avoids future council price-rises.

She also notes that if ‘shopping around’ families should make sure they are comparing like with like.

“One of our member standards is providing a detailed estimate of costs and services so you can more accurately compare, but non-member firms may not offer this level of detail.”

The guide includes information about the financial support available and Ms Boyes says it is disappointing the support to society's most vulnerable families through Work and Income Funeral Grants remains so low.

“The financial burden for those communities is only being exacerbated by council cost increases which this year seem to be particularly high in lower socio-economic communities such as Wairoa.”

The cost guidance can be found on the Association's website here:

<https://funeraldirectors.co.nz/planning-a-funeral/financial-matters/>

The summary of the latest council burial and cremation cost increases is outlined in the table below.

**ENDS**

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The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand represents funeral directing companies that undertake the majority of funerals in New Zealand. They are a group of caring professionals who are committed to ensuring that the families they serve receive high-quality funeral service. For more information, visit our website: [www.funeraldirectors.co.nz](http://www.funeraldirectors.co.nz)

## Sample council burial, ash burial and cremation costs - 2024

Region	Burial plot fee from 1 July 2024	Interment fee – from 1 July 2024	2024 Total for burials	% Increase from 2023	Ash plot fee 2024	Interment ashes 2024	Total for ash burial	% increase from 2023	Cremation costs - 2024	% increase from 2023
Far North District Council	1,179	1,033	2,212	0%	535	227	762	0%		
Whangarei	3,059	1,002	4,061	5%	747	124	871	10%		
Waikumete	5,068	1,332	6,400	5%	2,590	360	2,950	4%	785	4%
North Shore Memorial Park	5,068	1,332	6,400	5%	1,555	360	1,915	4%	785	4%
Manukau Memorial Gardens	5,068	1,332	6,400	5%	2,590	360	2,950	4%	785	4%
Hamilton City Council	4,040	801	4,841	0%	1,139	168	1,307	0%	630	0%
Waikato District Council	2,712	2,078	4,790	2%	387	346	733	1%		
Tauranga	4,132	1,318	5,450	9%	1,321	152	1,473	9%	950	9%
New Plymouth	4,579	2,628	7,207	0%	1,339	561	1,900	0%	936	5%
Rotorua	2,417	633	3,050	5%	505		505	5%	603	5%
Taupo	830	340	1,170	0%	145	57	202	0%		
Wairoa District Council	2,200	760	2,960	48%	450	180	630	42%		
Napier	2,800	1,124	3,924	7%	700	195	895	22%		
Hastings	4,220		4,220	5%	1,245	195	1,440	5%	935	7%
Palmerston North	2,389	1,160	3,549	7%	766	226	992	7%	730	6%
Marlborough	3,390	2,182	5,572	18%	1,541	430	1,971	18%		
Nelson	3,150	1,373	4,523	5%	957	297	1,253	5%	867	5%
Christchurch	2,009	1,347	3,356	9%	580	269	849	8%		
Dunedin	2,633	1,896	4,529	3%	629	199	829	3%	1,126	3%
Invercargill	985	1,930	2,915	8%	360	460	820	9%	1,130	8%

Note where no cremation cost is shown, this means there is no Council run cremation service in this area.