

Burial verses Cremation

While burials have been traditional in New Zealand the number of cremations has increased rapidly over the past few years. This is largely due to the scarcity of land, particularly around our major cities, and consequently the high cost of burial plots.

The most environmentally friendly option is burial in a wilderness area where the body returns to the earth to break down under natural processes. However this option is not yet available in the Waikato. We do not have any 'living legacy' burial grounds that are growing in popularity overseas. In these, burials are carefully placed within a natural environment and trees are planted to provide park like surroundings for all to enjoy.

Our local council is interested in environmentally friendly burials and has an environmentally friendly option available.

Cremation

The cremation process requires combustion provided by an electric arc over natural gas. Fans are used to ensure that oxygen is fed into the unit at the correct rate to ensure efficient burning takes place. The process takes approximately 3 hours and only one person is cremated at a time. As each cremation is completed, heat is retained in the bricks of the cremator. Therefore the more cremations that take place in a day, the more efficient the cremator becomes.

Our crematorium is one of the most environmentally friendly in the world. It uses a process where all exhaust gases are re-ignited to ensure that the discharges to the atmosphere are kept to a minimum. All embalming chemicals are completely destroyed by the cremation process.

Cremation does use scarce energy resources and contributes to the production of greenhouse gases. However modern, properly operated crematoria do minimise this impact.

Ashes will be returned to you in a radiata pine urn or a cardboard box wrapped in recycled paper.

Burial

The burial process uses a large area of land. This can be reduced if other members of the family are buried in the same plot, but this option is no longer available in the Matamata Piako District Council Cemeteries.

All embalming chemicals will break down due to natural processes in the soil. They do not remain as formaldehyde in the ground.

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Discretion and Confidentiality Assured

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Caring Funeral Professionals

Environmentally Friendly Options for Funerals



Environmentally friendly options

Our own funeral marks the end of our call on the earth's resources and, just as in life, involves a number of choices with more or less impact on the environment. These include whether or not to embalm, the type of casket used and finally, burial or cremation.

About embalming and formaldehyde

Our embalming fluids use formaldehyde as a preservative. Formaldehyde is the simplest aldehyde with the chemical formula HCHO. Formalin is a solution of formaldehyde in water, usually with a small amount of methanol added. It is widely used as an antiseptic, disinfectant and preservative for biological materials.

Care must be taken with the use of embalming fluids in the mortuary as formaldehyde is a known irritant. We follow the FDANZ code of practice for the use of chemicals in our mortuary and ensure minimum waste and discharge.

Modern formaldehyde based embalming fluids are much kinder to the environment than those used in previous years. Historically, arsenic has been a serious contaminant associated with cemeteries. Formaldehyde does build up in the environment but breaks down due to natural processes in the soil.

The decision on whether to request embalming is entirely up to you. We are able to offer embalming at different levels.

1. No Embalming

The body will be bathed in an eco friendly solution. The mouth and eyes will be cleaned and closed. Finally the hair is washed, brushed and styled as it was in life.

When no embalming is carried out, you need to consider that the body will decompose. This process can only be slowed down by refrigeration, and this needs to be done as soon as possible after death.

You may take the body home but need to be aware of the risk of odour and fluids discharging. Closing the casket will not stop this process and some caskets will not offer complete water-proofing.

The funeral should take place as soon as possible.

2. Light Embalming

The body will be bathed in an eco friendly solution. The mouth and eyes will be cleaned and closed. Finally the hair is washed, brushed and styled as it was in life.

There will be no arterial embalming, but a low index formaldehyde solution will be placed into the abdominal cavity region to slow down bacterial growth.

The light embalming option may allow a deceased to be at home for a limited amount of time. However each body is different and therefore no guarantees may be made as to how long the body will be in a satisfactory condition.

3. Low Index Embalming Option

The low index option will mean that the body is arterially embalmed with low index formaldehyde based fluids. The abdominal region will also be treated with the lowest index embalming fluid.

The body will be washed in an eco friendly solution, the mouth and eyes will be cleaned and closed. Finally the hair is washed, brushed and styled as it was in life.

The body will be in a suitable condition for it to be returned home without fear of unacceptable odour, or body fluid discharges. While each body is different, the light embalming option will generally allow up to three days of viewing before the casket should be closed.

The eco friendly casket

The most popular caskets in New Zealand are made of custom-wood (used in 95% cases). The production process for custom-wood requires

many chemicals and a large amount of energy. The custom-wood product may be cheap and easily obtainable but at a high price to the environment.

Our Eco friendly caskets have the minimum amount of glue, and are lined with untreated calico. All products are sourced from suppliers who are aware of our company policy to ensure that service is delivered in a way that protects the environment for future generations.

We wish to offer you the following casket options:

Radiata Pine

The untreated radiata pine caskets come from a renewable resource supporting the local economy. In Manawatu, the caskets are milled and produced on site. No chemicals have been used on their property.



Essence Eco-casket

Made of Plywood, lightweight but strong, the Essence is easy to carry.

The handles are integral to the base and the sides form a strong band for containment. The casket has been tested with a 137kg volunteer. There is no faux-metal or faux-timber and the Essence comes complete with a bio-plastic lining, wool fleece mattress and pillow.

