

## 26. NEW CEMETERY SPECIAL MAINTENANCE FEE

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Corporate Plan Output: Fee changes 9.4.vi 2000/01	

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to introduce a new cemetery special maintenance fee to assist in upgrading the city's operating cemeteries, as proposed in the 2000/01 Annual Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

Reports in 1990 indicated that cemetery maintenance standards needed to be improved to meet park standards and customer expectations and that the capital improvement programme also needed to reflect the fact that cemeteries were filling up and extra areas were required along with more landscaping.

Over the last ten years additional capital funding has been injected into the city's cemeteries with many improvements made.

However, we are conscious of the fact that major maintenance items are being only gradually improved and an injection of more special maintenance funding is required to further improve our cemeteries.

### **NEED TO BOOST OF MAINTENANCE STANDARDS**

We believe there is sufficient funding for general maintenance such as lawn mowing and garden care. However, additional funds are required for items such as extra irrigation, levelling of lawns, planting more trees and gardens and the rectification of vandalism, that require additional funds.

Our Capital Programme is restricted to around \$130,000 per annum. This means that the funds are spread fairly thinly over the nine operating cemeteries, let alone the older heritage cemeteries.

Currently plot fees and burial fees cover around 58% of cemetery costs in the 1999/2000 year with costs of \$826,931 and expected revenue of \$483,918 from fees. The remaining 42% of costs are borne by the general rates.

This ratio is proposed to continue at around the 60/40 mark.

The proposed extra fee is to upgrade and further develop our nine operating cemeteries.

### **NATIONAL BENCHMARKING OF CEMETERY FEES**

Work undertaken by Nelson City Council indicate that our current plot fees are lower than most other cities and our interment or burial fees about average of other cities.

Included in many other cities plot fees is an extra charge for grounds maintenance.

## CEMETERY BENCHMARKING SURVEY 1 JULY 1999

<b>Council</b>	<b>Adult Burial Plot</b>	<b>Ash Plots</b>	<b>Adult Burial Services</b>
Auckland CC	702	160	347
Christchurch CC	502	178	436 (single) 563 (double)
Dunedin CC	735	86	844
Hamilton CC	436	387	1,058
Hutt CC	958	315	422
Invercargill CC	520	160	812
Manukau CC	760	560	288
Nelson CC	662	240	511
North Shore CC	1,289	378	489
Palmerston North CC	1,000	272	361
Tasman DC	550	209	412
Tauranga DC	695	189	450
Waitakerere CC	1,089	240	440

### FUTURE MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

The maintenance of cemeteries has been charged directly to the Parks budget over the least eight years, but recently Belfast, Addington, Sydenham and Yaldhurst cemeteries have been included in the Parks Area Contracts.

It is proposed that with CanRoad now maintaining all cemeteries that they will be included in a priced area parks contract. Sextons duties will be separated from grounds maintenance. We will be specifying a higher standard of grounds maintenance and believe the funding available will meet these standards.

However, the extra works to improve the landscape and future cemetery growth will need to be funded from the proposed special maintenance development fee proposed.

It is proposed to add \$100 to full burial plots and \$30 for ashes plots. This based on our interment number of 900 per annum will add an extra \$30,000 for additional work. This will still place Christchurch with a lower fee than most other main centres.

Funds will be spent where the need is greatest and bear a relation to the number of burials taking place. These development funds may need to be collected to a special account and spent the following year.

### Officer's

- Recommendation:**
1. That the suggested special maintenance fee be levied on cemetery plot purchases as outlined in the Annual Plan fee schedule.
  2. That these funds be placed in a separate account to be used for cemetery special maintenance works to further upgrade Council cemeteries.