

# Kōwhai Programme

## Support for whānau & carers

### Funeral Planning

Arranging a funeral can be an intensely emotional time. One option, which can take some of this pressure away, is to plan the funeral in advance.

The following information has been gathered to assist you with your planning:

Most people get assistance from a local funeral director to arrange a funeral and provide assistance with registration of death. The website [www.fdanz.co.nz](http://www.fdanz.co.nz) can help you find a local funeral director

It is possible to arrange a funeral yourself, as long as the legal requirements are complied with. The family-and-whānau section of the government website [www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz) has information about these requirements. Another useful government site is [www.endoflife.services.govt.nz](http://www.endoflife.services.govt.nz) which can also guide you through leaving a funeral plan in advance if you wish.

There is no fee for death registration, but there is a small fee for the death certificate. It may be useful to get two or three copies at the time as registered copies are needed for some places such as lawyers and banks.

It is a good idea to get quotes from different funeral directors, and compare services and fees. This can be done in advance.

#### Funeral Director Services

A funeral director can guide you through any of the following. You can choose what you want to do yourself and what you want the funeral director to do.

- registration of death
- transport of the body
- meeting the legal requirements for burial or cremation (including bookings for a cemetery or crematorium, and completing the necessary forms for cremation)
- the embalming, care and presentation of the deceased's body
- placement of death notices and/or funeral notices in the paper
- the funeral service
- recommending and arranging a minister or celebrant and music
- flowers
- catering and facilities for after the funeral
- support services for bereaved families and friends
- applications to government agencies for funeral grants

The average cost of a funeral in New Zealand is around \$10,000 to \$14,000 for burial and around \$5,000 for direct cremation.

#### Things to Consider

**Clothing for the person after death?** Includes underwear and shoes. What about jewellery i.e. wedding ring? Is this to stay on or be removed?

**Washing, dressing and caring for the person**, including placing in the casket. This can be done by family at home or by funeral director.

**Embalming** – This is not essential but may be wanted. It might be needed for a reason such as delays before the funeral. Depending on circumstances, the body can be packed with ice, kept refrigerated at the funeral home, kept in a cool room with air-conditioning on.

**Where will the person stay after death?** At home? Funeral directors?

**Choice of casket** – a wide range is available online that may give you further options, especially price wise, but some may need to be bought in advance. Or you can make your own. Information can be found online.

**Burial or cremation.** Cremations are less expensive than burial because of the cost of burial plots. Ashes plots, if wanted, are smaller and therefore less expensive.

**Cremation** – with service or straight to crematorium.

**Burial site**– is there a plot already chosen, for burial or for ashes?

**Ashes** – Is there a place for them to be buried? Is there a place chosen to scatter? (There may be rules determining where you can or can't scatter ashes.) There are ways of storing ashes in a variety of containers, or jewellery or keepsakes. This doesn't have to be decided in advance, unless you need to keep some for that purpose.

**Natural burial** – certain requirements individual to each natural cemetery, or can be chosen as a way of burial within a standard cemetery.

**Donated to Science** – there are formalities that need to be completed in advance if this is wanted. Info is available at [www.otago.ac.nz/anatomy/bequests/](http://www.otago.ac.nz/anatomy/bequests/)

**Funeral Service** – You can choose to not have a service, or to have it elsewhere e.g. home, hall, somewhere outside.

**Funeral director** – Has someone already been arranged? Is there a particular company you want to use? Or do you want to do most/all of this yourself? (There are NZ based websites and books available to help).

**Celebrant** – Do you want to guide the ceremony yourself? Is there someone that would be good for this role? Do you have a celebrant in mind? How much do you want them to do?

**Funeral Notice** – newspaper, online, memorial – your choice if you want to do anything or not

Will there be a funeral procession, between home and service or service and burial/cremation?

**Transporting the casket before and after ceremony?**  
You can use a vehicle of your choice as long as the casket is secured.

## Ceremony

**Where**

**When**

**Content:** theme, favourite quote, poem, song, reading?

**Eulogy**

**Pallbearers**

**Music** – background, opening, during reflection.

**Readings**

**Who to speak?** Open floor or chosen people?

**Service sheets** – yes/no, or an alternative such as a bookmark? Can you make these yourself, or someone in the family?

**Photos** – slideshow? Or a display? Choose the photos that best reflect the real person (this can take some time to go through as many memories and stories come up. Doing it, or starting it, in advance can help).

**Memorial booklet for people to sign?** Or consider sheets asking for stories and comments about the person?

**Film the ceremony?** Or Live stream for someone overseas? Can a friend do this for you?

**Flowers or something else for on the casket?**

Can be anything – garden flowers, vegetables, a simple branch, tools, something that reflects the person's unique character.

**Donations or collection for a favourite charity?**

**Do you want to request people to dress in a certain way?**  
To wear colour? To bring anything?

## Post funeral gathering

**Venue** – if different from funeral.

**Catering** – bring a plate / funeral directors to supply / cater yourselves? Consider a local group, especially if connected with you, might do the catering.

## Considering Doing It Yourself?

More people are choosing this option than in the past. It is able to be done but there are a number of factors to consider and it is wise to begin arrangements in advance.

**Caring for the body** – who would take care of this after death?

Legal requirements and certificates that need to be completed. If no funeral director who will take care of this?

## Arranging the cremation

Organising the burial or ashes plot if required.

Recommended sources if you would like to do this:

Better Send Off – [www.bettersendoff.co.nz](http://www.bettersendoff.co.nz)

DIY Funeral – [www.diyfuneral.co.nz](http://www.diyfuneral.co.nz)

## Other Things to Consider

**Dealing with online accounts** – who knows the passwords? Emails; Social media such as facebook, Instagram, twitter, LinkedIn; online banking etc.

**Be aware of visitors arriving unannounced.** As before your loved ones death, you do not have to allow people in. Perhaps someone can help 'gatekeep' for you, or consider a notice on the door asking for privacy. Endless visitors, some of whom may be very draining, are exhausting. This time can be difficult and you are allowed to, and should, look after yourself.

Remember a funeral is about the person who died but it is not for them. It is for their families to come together and mourn, remember and celebrate the life of the person. Think carefully before deciding that you don't want a funeral. You may be depriving your family of a very special, and very healing, experience.

## ENDING LIFE WELL

A podcast series for carers

<https://otagohospice.co.nz/patient-services/kowhai-programme/carers-podcast/>

You might like to listen to this topic on the Ending Life Well Podcast available on most podcast sites and on the Otago Community Hospice webpage.

