

# **Cemeteries and Crematoria Assessment**

**Hutt City Council**

**February 2005**





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## **1.0 Executive Summary**

Assessments of cemetery and crematoria services must be made from time to time under Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2002. The primary aim of these assessments is to ensure that public health is adequately protected. Cemeteries and crematoria fall under the definition of Sanitary Services, as provided in Section 25 of the Health Act 1956.

Local Authorities are not legally required to provide public cemeteries and crematoria; however, they are required to ensure that provision is made. Hutt City Council (along with most other Councils) does provide cemeteries for the community. The only other organisations providing cemeteries are churches, the Rununga and the Wellington Tenth Trust. There is no crematorium provided in the territory managed by the Hutt City Council.

Hutt City Council owns and operates one working cemetery, Taita Lawn Cemetery, and one ashes interment facility, Wainuiomata Garden of Remembrance. The Hutt City Council is responsible for the maintenance of three historic cemeteries: St James Churchyard, the Wesleyan Cemetery in Bridge Street and Korokoro Cemetery. This assessment primarily concentrates on the provision of services and plots at Taita Lawn Cemetery.

Council manages its cemeteries to match the policies outlined in Council's Bylaw and Cemetery Business Review, 1997. A Contract is in place for the maintenance, administration and interment services at Council's cemeteries.

This assessment considers issues relating to public health and provision of cemeteries by analysing population, customer satisfaction survey results, requests for service from members of the public, as well as comments from contractors and local funeral directors.

Population is expected to increase until 2006 and then start to decline. The forecast for interments indicates that the number of interments will generally rise between 2005 and 2015. Statistics also predict a change in the balance of ashes interments and burials (body interments) taking place at Taita Lawn Cemetery. It is likely that the number of interments taking place in the form of ashes will increase, while burials will decrease.

The assessment of future demand indicates that Taita Lawn Cemetery will cater for first interments (burial) until approximately 2010 to 2012. The Wainuiomata Garden of Remembrance facility will reach capacity in approximately 2008. There is no practical opportunity for further expansion to provide for additional first interments at Taita Lawn Cemetery. It will be necessary to develop a new cemetery to cope with first interments (burial) at another site. There is scope to expand the Wainuiomata Garden of Remembrance to cope with interments until at least 2024. Investigations into sites where a new cemetery could be developed have been undertaken. Council's current position is to develop land it owns on Akatarawa Road or to provide a joint service with the Upper Hutt City Council at their site on Akatarawa Road.

This Draft Sanitary Services Assessment has not identified any health issues related to the Hutt City Council's provision of cemeteries. Planning for provision of burials at a new site is the most significant cemetery issue Council must deal with in the near future.

# **Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

The Local Government Act 2002 requires all territorial authorities to carry out assessments of Water and Sanitary Services. The primary purpose of an assessment of sanitary services is to ensure that public health is adequately protected.

Assessments of Water and Sanitary Services can be included or summarised in Councils' Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP's) and be the subject of a public consultation process specified in the Act.

## **1.2 Objective**

The objective of this report is to meet specific obligations in Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 (sections 125 -129) that requires:

*an assessment of the provision of cemeteries and crematoria available to communities in the Hutt City Council (HCC) district in order to ensure that appropriate provision is made for burial or cremation of the bodies of persons dying in the district and for the improvement, promotion and protection of public health.*

## **1.3 Scope of assessment**

This assessment considers the adequacy of the provision of cemeteries and crematoria in meeting the district's future demands for disposal of the dead in a controlled, hygienic and dignified manner for the period 2004 - 2016.



## 2.0 Statutory provisions and context

### 2.1 Legislation

The principal statutes covering burial and cremation which are pertinent to this assessment are the Local Government Act 2002, Health Act 1956, Burial and Cremation Act 1964, Resource Management Act 1991, Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and the Crimes Act 1964.

The key requirements of these Acts pertinent to this assessment are set out below.

#### **Local Government Act 2002**

The Local Government (LG) Act 2002 provides a framework and powers that enable local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities. It requires territorial authorities to take a sustainable development approach to decision making. Local authorities are also tasked with identifying key community outcomes with their community and then determine which outcomes the council will assist in promoting and delivering and how it will do so.

A territorial authority is required under part 7 (Sections 124-125, 127-129) of the LG Act 2002 to carry out an assessment of sanitary services within its district. The Act defines sanitary services as having the same meaning as sanitary works in section 25 (1) (a), (b), (c), (d), (h) and (i) of the Health Act 1956. Section 25 (1) (h) of the Health Act includes *Cemeteries* and Section 25 (1) (i) *Crematoria* as a sanitary work.

The information requirements and process for sanitary assessments is set out in section 127 and 128 of the LG Act 2002. In order to meet these requirements this sanitary services assessment includes:

- a) A description of the cemeteries and crematoria provided;
- b) A forecast of future demands;
- c) A statement of options available to meet forecast demand;
- d) An assessment of the suitability of each option;
- e) A statement of HCC's intended role in meeting the forecast demands;
- f) A statement of HCC's proposals to meet forecast demand including proposals for new or replacement infrastructure;
- g) A statement about the extent to which the proposals will ensure that public health is adequately protected;
- h) A summary of consultation undertaken with the Medical Officer of Health, Wellington Regional Council, other stakeholders and the community as part of the assessment process.

It should be noted that the assessment only briefly canvases the matters covered in (e) and (f) above as these are only required in the event that the assessment identified that the existing service is not satisfactory to meet demand and /or public health will not continue to be adequately protected.

The LG Act 2002 in section 129 provides a level of discretion to the territorial authority in the extent of information included in the assessment including the significance of the information, the costs of and difficulty in obtaining the information and resources of the local authority but requires a statement to be made as to whether any of these factors have had a material impact on the completeness of the assessment. It also requires a Council to use its best endeavours to make a full and balanced assessment.

In addition the Council is required in Section 125 of the LG Act 2002 to review its assessment from time to time. Either a summary of the assessment or the assessment itself is required to be included in the long term council community plan from 2006. The first assessment is required to be completed by 30 June 2005.

### **Health Act 1956**

The Health Act 1956 places a duty on every local authority in Section 23 to, improve, promote and protect public health within its district. This involves identifying potential health risks and ensuring that these risks are managed to within acceptable levels.

It also in Section 25 requires a local authority to provide cemeteries and crematoria (and other sanitary services such as public toilets, water supply, drainage works, waste disposal) for the benefit of its district.

Section 29 provides for the control of nuisances including any matters considered to be offensive or likely to be injurious to health. In relation to crematoria discharges of smoke from chimneys where offensive, injurious to health or in a manner contrary to any regulation is also included.

Section 86 in Part 3 of the Act, which covers infectious and notifiable diseases, provides for burial or cremation within a nominated time period if a body is considered by the Medical Officer of Health as being dangerous to health.

### **Burial and Cremation Act 1964**

The Burial and Cremation Act 1964 sets out the broad range of statutory roles and responsibilities that territorial authorities have in relation to burial and cremation activities. Aspects of relevance to this assessment include in Section 4 a duty to ensure sufficient provision is made “*for the burial of the bodies of persons dying within its district, to establish and maintain a suitable cemetery*” and in Section 38 to make provision for cremation.

It provides for the sale of exclusive rights of burial and the setting aside of burial grounds for religious denominations and defence force personnel.

Provision is also made for the establishment of bylaws to regulate burial practices, such as depth and position of graves, timing of burials and to control the erection of monuments and other memorials.

Regulations relating to cremation are covered under Cremation Regulations 1973.

Bylaws made under the provisions of the Burials and Cremations Act regulating activities and operations of Lower Hutt cemeteries and crematoria have been adopted and are contained in The Hutt City Council Bylaw 1997, Part 3 – Cemeteries.

#### **Crimes Act 1964**

The Crimes Act 1964 in section 150 places prohibition on the interference with human remains, which could conceivably pose a health risk to those involved.

#### **Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002**

This Act covers the role and responsibilities of local government and other government agencies such as the police in the event of a civil defence emergency. Section 85 (1) (g) assigns the responsibility for the recovery and identification of human remains to the Police. The Police may liaise closely with territorial authorities who have powers to undertake the emergency disposal of the dead.

#### **Resource Management Act 1991**

The Resource Management Act 1991 sets the parameters for management of the use, development and protection of natural resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety. It requires the adverse effects of activities to be avoided, mitigated or remedied and compliance with planning documents such as regional and district plans.

Issues to consider may include the possible contamination of the water table. Air discharges from crematoria are also considered under this legislation.

#### **Other Legislation**

Other legislation relevant to the management and operation of cemeteries and crematoria but which do not materially impact on the completion of this assessment include:

- Birth, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act 1995
- Building Act 1991
- Coroners Act 1988
- Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992
- Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
- Human Tissue Act 1964
- Injury, Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2001

## **2.2 Council role**

The Local Government Act 2002 has changed the focus of territorial authorities from being primarily focussed on Council services and activities to coordinating the achievement of total community outcomes.

HCC has several roles with respect to sanitary services in the city. The first of these is to coordinate the setting of Community Outcomes to which all activities in the city are expected to contribute and to monitor progress towards the achievement of these outcomes. HCC is one of several organisations contributing to the achievement of community outcomes (there are three

privately owned cemeteries in the district and crematoria services are provided by private and public facilities operating outside the district).

The second role of Council with respect to sanitary services in the City is as a service provider/funder, which typically involves the construction and maintenance of facilities.

Under Section 23 of the Health Act 1956 every local authority has a general responsibility “to improve, promote and protect public health within its district”. This involves identifying potential health risks and ensuring that these risks are managed to within acceptable levels. The Act allows the Minister to require any local authority to provide for sanitary works to rectify identified risks.

### **2.3 Key relationships**

The Ministry of Health has statutory responsibility for public health issues in New Zealand including health related aspects of sanitary services. The Act specifically requires consultation with the Medical Officer of Health over the content of Sanitary Services Assessments.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council has an environmental regulatory and monitoring role under the Resource Management Act that includes the management of effects related to discharges to the air and groundwater from cemeteries and crematoria.

Hutt city adjoins areas administered by Wellington, Upper Hutt and Porirua City Councils. Cross boundary issues relating to sanitary services are primarily with Upper Hutt, where crematoria services for the HCC district are currently based and where HCC may develop cemeteries when the Taita Cemetery is full.

Cemeteries are provided in all the adjoining territorial authority districts. Although out of district burials have the potential to shorten the life of the Taita Cemetery, this impact is not considered to be significant at present.

Council recognises local funeral directors and stone masons as the key cemetery clients.

Excell Corporation Limited is responsible for the day to day management and maintenance of Council's cemetery sites under a negotiated contract.

### **3.0 Definition of Communities**

The assessment is required to be carried out for each community within the district. Some discretion is provided in determining the community.

Cemeteries and crematoria are provided for the convenience of the community as a whole and the provision of this activity does not significantly alter based on the geography or demographic profile of different parts of a community. HCC's cemetery services are currently focused on a single site (Taita), and Council owns land at Akatarawa for a future cemetery when the Taita cemetery is full. Accordingly there are no localised communities around specific sites and the 'community' defined for the purpose of this assessment is taken to be the city as a whole.

Similarly no defined catchments could be determined for crematoria services, which are provided by facilities outside of the district, and the assessment considers the entire district of Lower Hutt as a single community for cremation services.



## 4.0 Cemetery and Crematoria Services in Hutt City

### 4.1 Hutt City

Hutt City is located at the southern end of the North Island of New Zealand. It is the second largest city in the Wellington Region and the tenth largest city in New Zealand with a population of approximately 100,000.

Hutt City is made up of the area bounded by the coast between Korokoro and Windy Point (Palliser Bay), by the western hills of the Hutt Valley, the ridge of the Rimutaka Ranges and ending just beyond the Taita Gorge.

Hutt City is known for its family oriented lifestyle, its bush clad hills, safe swimming beaches and cultural and recreational facilities. In recent years there has been a focus on economic development in the city which has led to an increase in the number of businesses and in employment.

The majority of Hutt City is urban in nature although there are rural areas containing lifestyle blocks and reserves on the outskirts of Wainuiomata, the Western Hills of the Hutt Valley and at the southern end of Eastbourne.



Figure 1 – Map of Lower Hutt City Area

### 4.2 Community outcomes

The Local Government Act 2002 sets out that the primary focus of territorial authorities is coordinating the achievement of total community outcomes. Community outcomes for Hutt City are set out in the Hutt City Long Term Council Community Plan for 2004 – 2014. The 10 Community Outcomes (with those supported by Cemetery services shown in bold) are:

1. Clean air water and land.
2. **Everyone has affordable access to services that improve health.**
3. **A city that is safe, friendly and welcoming, where people experience a sense of belonging**
4. **Affordable access to excellent educational services**
5. **A quality standard of affordable housing**
6. **A local economy that is attractive to both business and residents**
7. **Affordable access to community facilities that include arts, cultural and recreational options.**
8. A diverse natural environment that is accessible, enjoyable and safe.
9. A healthy balance between natural and built environments.
10. A built environment that is attractive, safe and healthy.

The Council is one of a number of organisations that contribute to the achievement of community outcomes. How the Council plans to contribute towards the achievement of these outcomes is set out in the Hutt City Council strategic goals, as set out below.

	<b>Strategic Goal</b>
PEOPLE	<b>Cultural</b> A vibrant and diverse City <b>Leisure</b> Accessible and quality leisure activities and facilities <b>Community</b> Support a connected, safe and healthy community
UTILITY SERVICES	Affordable, sustainable, accessible and high quality services
ENVIRONMENT	A clean, healthy, attractive and sustainable environment
ECONOMY	A strong enterprising and diverse economy
ORGANISATION	A best practice organisation that provides value for money and prudent management An organisation that values its customers and staff.

Cemetery service issues may impact on the achievement of these Strategic Goals (and therefore the Community Outcomes). These issues are considered in the assessments of public convenience services. Possible issues relating to cemeteries are set out below.

<b>Strategic Goal</b>	<b>What this means for Public Convenience Services</b>	<b>Issues Arising</b>
<b>Leisure:</b> Accessible and quality leisure activities and facilities	That cemeteries are accessible to the public and visitors to the city	Signage of cemeteries Wheelchair access to cemeteries.
<b>Community:</b> A connected safe and healthy community.	Cemetery services that are safe and which meet health requirements are available to the entire community	Security aspects in and around cemeteries. Health and safety issues associated with cemetery management.
Affordable, sustainable, accessible and high quality services.	The provision of cemetery services are cost effective, maintainable and of a quality acceptable to the general public.	Cost effectiveness of cemeteries. Availability of cemetery services to the community (is there sufficient quantity to meet current & future demand)
An organisation that values its customers and staff.	That the requirements of customers are determined, customer approval measured and customer issues are promptly and effectively managed	Identification of customer requirements Customer satisfaction surveys (NRB Communitrak results)
A clean, healthy, attractive and sustainable environment.	That cemetery services which meet health requirements are available to the entire community	Cemeteries are regularly maintained to a standard acceptable to the community Graffiti & vandalism management.

### **4.3 Existing cemetery services**

Cemetery services in the district are provided by HCC and other service providers, particularly for crematoria. Brief details for the provision of cemetery and crematoria and of the relationships with other agencies are outlined in this section.

#### **Hutt City Cemeteries**

HCC manages 2 cemeteries in the district.

- Taita cemetery, developed progressively since 1982, offers a full range of burial services.
- Wainuiomata Garden of Remembrance, initially developed in 2004, offers ash burial services.

On average, 206 internments took place each year between 2001 and 2004 at the Taita cemetery. Approximately 45% of these burials were in an existing plot (second internments).

Over the same period there was an average of 125 ash plot burials at Taita and, in 2004, 19 ash plot burials in the new Wainuiomata Garden of Remembrance.

#### **Other cemetery providers**

There are two cemeteries owned and operated by Maori organisations:

- The Tenth Trust Urupa located at Te Puni Street, Petone.
- The Owhitu Urupa located at Seaview Road, Seaview and operated by Te Rununganui o Taranaki kite Upoko o te Ika a Maui

In addition a number of churches also have burial grounds to provide for burial of members of their denomination, although it is understood that these areas are non-operational except for one church which has an occasional burial in a reserved plot or second burials.

#### **Crematoria providers**

HCC does not own or operate any crematoria. Cremation services within the Hutt City district are predominantly provided by a private company, Gee and Hickton, located at Upper Hutt.

### **4.4 Level of service**

The LTCCP sets out a number of service levels for Council activities. The level of service related to cemeteries is:

*The percentage of Hutt City residents that are satisfied with cemeteries is above the Council peer group average (current performance 93% compared with peer group average of 88%).*

The Cemeteries Asset Management Plan describes levels of service. This is due to be updated during the 2005/06 year. Additional levels of service are set in Councils operations and maintenance contract.

## **4.5 Cemetery management**

### **Regulation**

The management and operation of HCC cemeteries is carried out in accordance with legislative requirements. The operation of cemeteries is covered under a bylaw, the "*Hutt City Bylaw 1997, Part 3 - Cemeteries*". The bylaw regulates activities such as sale of plots, provisions applying to interments, behaviour in cemeteries and memorialisation.

### **Monitoring**

Council officers monitor customer satisfaction as measured by the NRB Communitrak survey results. This information is used to assess service issues that need to be addressed.

### **Maintenance**

Cemetery operational (client liaison, provision of graves, collection of records) and maintenance services are provided by way of contract. The contract between Council and Excell Corporation Limited will be renegotiated in 2005.

### **Response to health nuisances and infectious disease complaints**

Public health and safety issues that fall under the Health Act 1956, which include "any nuisance, or any condition likely to be injurious to health or offensive", are prioritised according to urgency and investigated within 5 working days by the Council Environmental Health officers or the contractor (under the conditions of the contract). Potential public health nuisances reported to Council are attended to within five days, or earlier depending on the urgency of the issue.

Infectious disease outbreaks reported to Council Officers are prioritised according to risk, with high risk investigations being dealt with in 2 days and low risk within 4 days, in accordance with Regional Public Health protocol.

## 5.0 Assessment of Cemeteries

### 5.1 Identification of issues

To identify current and potential future public health issues relating to the provision and maintenance of cemeteries the following actions have been taken:

- Study of cemetery usage and burial trends.
- Study of annual Council resident survey on the quality of cemetery services.
- Reviewing public service requests.
- Interviews with Council Parks and Property staff with knowledge of cemeteries.

### 5.2 Capacity and Future Demand

#### 5.2.1 Demand forecast

A detailed study of historic and projected interment levels was undertaken in association with the 1997 Cemetery Business Review, the results of which are shown in the Figure below. The focus of the analysis was on the number of burial plots required as ash plots have minimal space requirements and can be accommodated to a much greater extent.

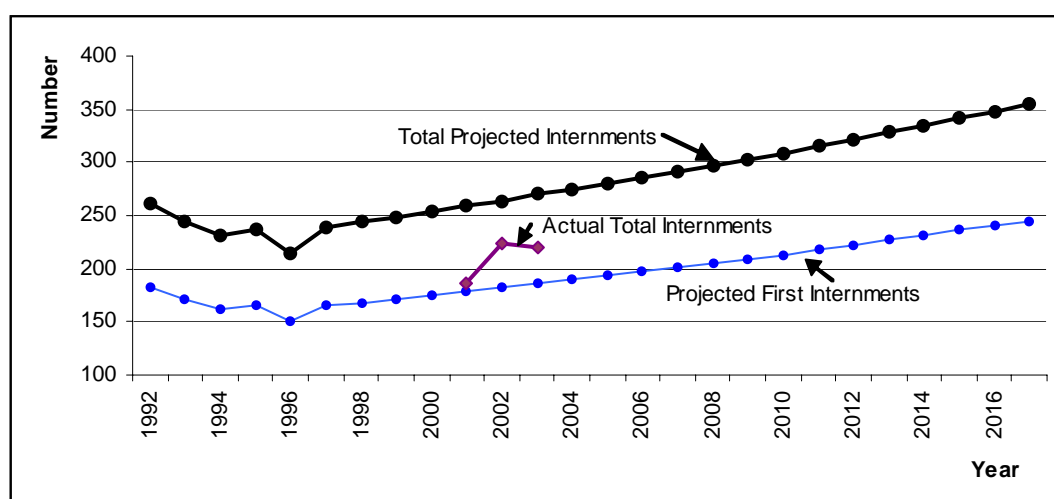


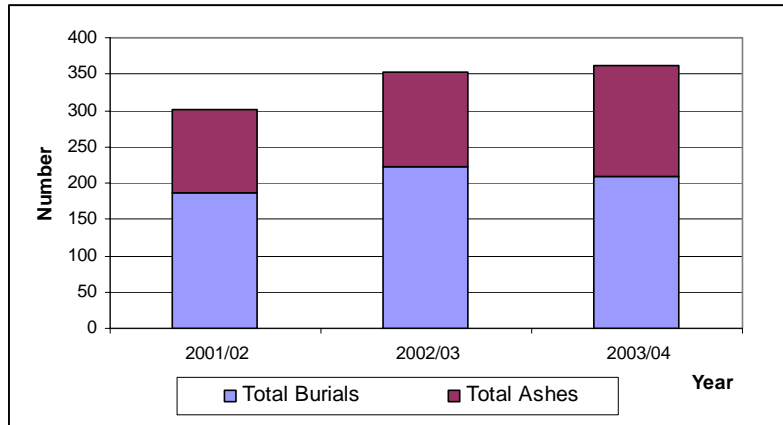
Figure 2 – Historical and Projected Burials

The projected increase in the total number of internments over the period 2005 to 2015 is 25%. The analysis also shows that approximately 30% of burials are second internments on an existing plot, and it is the number of first internments that has been used to assess the area required for burials. The number of non-resident burials, although increasing, is considered insignificant for the purposes of the analysis.

The 1997 projection is likely to be excessive given that;

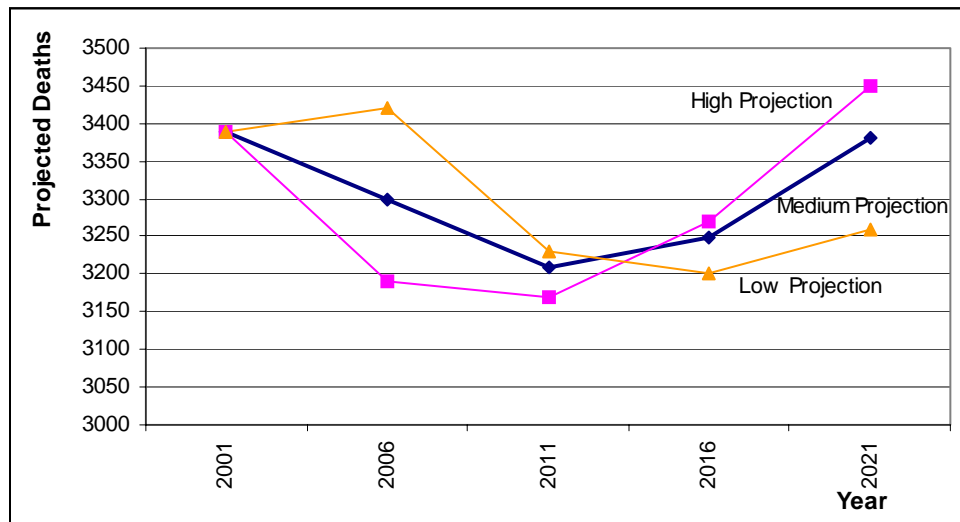
- a) The ratio of ash burials to internments is increasing, tending to reduce demand for burial plots. Figure 3 shows the percentage of ash burials has increased by 4% over the past 3 years to 42%, a trend consistent in New Zealand and Australia. The proportion is

comparable with Christchurch (46%, but remains low compared to the average number choosing cremation in Australia (58%) and in Australian capital cities (70%).



**Figure 3 – Comparison of Ash Burials and Internments**

- b) The Statistics New Zealand medium case scenario projection for Lower Hutt (refer Figure 4) shows an initial decline in the number of deaths over the period to 2011, then an increasing trend back to the 2001 level by 2021. The resident population of Lower Hutt is also projected to drop from 99,100 in 2001 to 97,700 in 2021 (assuming medium fertility, mortality and migration), a decrease of 1.4% over the 20 year period. However, the actual population of Lower Hutt City for the year ended 30 June 2004 was 100,400, significantly above the estimated medium case projected population, and the high growth scenario may be more appropriate for planning purposes.



**Figure 4 – Lower Hutt Death Projections 2006 – 2021**

- c) The actual number of internments over the period 2001 to 2003 is significantly lower than the 1997 projections (refer Figure 2).

### **5.2.2 Capacity of cemeteries**

The 1997 assessment of demand and capacity predicted a 15 year residual life for the Taita cemetery. HCC adopted the recommendations of the Cemetery Business Review to consolidate burial internment services at Akatarawa. The Hutt City Council owns 56.36 hectares of land on Akatarawa Road, adjacent to the Upper Hutt City Council's cemetery. It was predicted that serious planning for the development of Akatarawa would need to start in 2005, with the first internment anticipated to occur in approximately 2010 to 2012. Earlier this year Council resolved that none of its other sites were suitable to develop as a cemetery. This decision followed an investigation for alternative cemetery sites initiated because there was strong community support for a cemetery to be developed inside the City's boundary. Council also requested that officers continue to consider new local sites that may arise as a result of land sales or subdivision.

There are no constraints on the capacity of the Wainuiomata Garden of Remembrance until at least 2024. Although the existing developed area will reach capacity in approximately 2008, adjacent land is available and provision has been made for extensions.

Both urupa sites cater for a very low rate of internments, and there are no capacity constraints at the Owhitu Urupa (in Seaview) at this time. The Tenths Trust urupa in Te Puni Street, Petone is near capacity.

## **5.3 Public health issues**

Public Health issues relating to cemeteries need to be considered as part of the assessment process. There are no crematoria operated within the district and issues related to these services are not considered further. Public health issues in cemeteries include work around graves, potential environmental effects from cemeteries and the ability of cemeteries and crematoria to cope with large numbers of dead following a natural disaster or pan-epidemic.

### **Health and Safety**

Grave digging and protection of the public from misadventure around open graves is a health and safety issue. The Contractor has appropriate health and safety protection measures in place for gravediggers and persons involved in the burial process including funeral directors and mourners. Standard operating procedures are documented in a Health and Safety Plan.

### **Unstable Structures**

Unstable grave structures and headstones have been identified through the assessment process as a possible source of public risk. The maintenance contract provides for the reporting of damage to headstones and laying headstones on graves where they are obstructing maintenance. Where headstones are unstable Council will arrange for them to be safely secured, intention to carry out this work will be advertised by public notice. The permit process for the erection of monuments requires certification by monumental masons that their work has been completed in accordance with *NZS 4242:1995 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments*.

### **Environmental Effects**

There have been a number of studies internationally relating to the potential environmental threat posed by cemeteries to try and identify and quantify actual risks. Potential sources of threat include the risk of transfer of disease and viruses through soils, survival of bacteria in soil and groundwater, pollution of groundwater from embalming fluids, radioactivity of dead bodies (following radiotherapy) and other organic pollution. The findings from the studies show that evidence of water pollution is confined primarily to situations of shallow water tables and high burial rates. There are few published papers and little raw data detailing cases of pollution from cemeteries. In summary it would appear that the environmental threat from cemeteries can be minimised by appropriate burial and management practices, providing a buffer zone of planting at cemetery boundaries using deep rooted trees and shrubs and restricting burial depth to at least one metre above any permanent water table. Taita Cemetery has substantial plantings around its perimeter and this practice will be followed for the development of the Akatarawa cemetery site. Permanent groundwater tables are estimated to be at least 2 metres below burial depths at Taita Cemetery.

The Akatarawa cemetery site may be subject to resource consent processes to ensure protection of both groundwater and surface water from contamination.

### **Natural Disasters**

The role of a cemetery in reducing the risk of the spread of infectious disease by being able to handle a large number of burials following a natural disaster or pan-epidemic has been considered. The issue in these situations relates more to the time involved in the identification of remains and storage during this process. A large number of burials could be handled in a short period under the supervision of cemetery staff and there is adequate capacity to handle a higher level of deaths than forecast albeit that the remaining life of the cemetery would be reduced.

### 5.3.1 Community feedback – resident surveys

Residents' and visitor satisfaction with cemeteries is measured through the NRB Community survey. This survey measures public perceptions and interpretations of Council services. The Survey compares satisfaction for Hutt City Council against its peer Councils. The levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction collected over the last 10 years are set out in the following table. The survey results and interpretation of the responses are discussed below (including “don't know” responses).

#### a) Residents satisfaction with cemeteries:

Year	Very/ Fairly Satisfied	Change from previous year	Change from 1995		Not Very Satisfied	Change from previous year	Change from 1995
1995	49%				3%		
1996	50%	+1	+1		4%	+1	+1
1997	50%	0	+1		4%	0	+1
1998	40%	-10	-9		4%	0	+1
1999	50%	+10	+1		5%	+1	+2
2000	49%	-1	0		4%	-1	+1
2001	51%	+2	+2		4%	0	+1
2002	49%	-2	0		6%	+2	+3
2003	50%	+1	+1		5%	-1	+2
2004	47%	+3	-2		4%	-1	+1

Table 1 – Resident Satisfaction Survey

#### b) Visitor satisfaction with cemeteries:

(Results from those surveyed who indicated that they had visited a Council cemetery in the 12 months prior to the survey)

Year	Very/ Fairly Satisfied	Change from previous year	Change from 1995		Not Very Satisfied	Change from previous year	Change from 1995
1995	82%				6%		
1996	85%	+3	+3		8%	+2	+2
1997	80%	-5	+2		6%	-2	0
1998	77%	-3	-5		8%	+2	+2
1999	81%	+4	-1		8%	0	+2
2000	83%	+2	+1		7%	-1	+1
2001	82%	-1	0		9%	-2	+3
2002	77%	-5	-5		14%	+5	+8
2003	86%	+9	+4		6%	-8	0
2004	84%	-2	+2		5%	-1	-1

Table 2 - Cemetery User Satisfaction Survey

In 2004, excluding the “don't know” responses, 93% of residents were very/fairly satisfied and 7% were not very satisfied with cemeteries. This is above the peer group (urban) average of 88% very/fairly satisfied and 12% not very satisfied.

Assessing the detailed survey feedback highlights the following issues raised by respondents, and the percentage of respondents identifying each issue, over the past 10 years.

- Improve maintenance/ appearance/ tidy up/ neglected (2-3% per year).
- Poor drainage 1% per year or less
- Vandalism/ need security/ caretaker 2% per year or less
- Should be allowed to decorate graves 1% per year or less
- Need one in Wainuiomata/ need more cemeteries/ over crowded/ cluttered 2% per year or less

### 5.3.2 Requests for service

From September 2000 to October 2004 Council received 12 requests for service (there may be more than one issue per request) in relation to Council cemeteries. The nature of these requests is set out in the following table:

Issue	Number
Standard of grounds maintenance (weeds/ mowing)	3
Tree trimming/ removal	3
Vandalism	1
Maintenance of memorials	2
Congestion in cemetery	1
Disabled/ elderly access	2
Security (installation of cameras)	1
Removal of flowers by staff	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table 3 – Breakdown of service requests**

### 5.3.3 Public consultation

Consultation was undertaken in 1996/97 with the public, pacific island groups, tangata whenua, companies in the industry and religious and ethnic groups. Issues raised relate to:

- Decoration of graves.
- Amenities in the cemetery.
- Maintenance costs and responsibilities.
- Recycling of plots.
- Family involvement with grave digging and filling.
- Activities such as picnics and games in cemeteries.
- Burial hours.
- The desire for a cemetery or memorial area in Wainuiomata (since provided) and Eastbourne.
- The Muslim community requested a separate burial area, a request which has been met at the Taita cemetery. Although the number of Muslim burials to date has been minimal (one since 1996/97), the community is growing and aging and suitable space will be provided at the new Akatarawa cemetery.

## **6.0 Role of Council**

### **Service provider**

Council will continue to act as a service provider with respect to Council controlled public cemeteries.

### **Service funder**

HCC does not fund or subsidise the operation of any non-HCC cemeteries or the crematorium. Council provides ground maintenance services at three historic cemetery sites.

### **Advocate / facilitator**

Council will act cooperatively with private cemetery operators.



## **7.0 Protection of Public Health**

The capacity of the existing and planned cemeteries has been shown to meet future demand for at least the period of the next LTCCP (2006-2016). Neither HCC, the Medical Officer of Health or the Wellington Regional Council are aware of any cemetery discharges or other information that demonstrate a risk to public health.

The level of public satisfaction with cemetery services is high, and no public health issues have been identified in resident surveys, consultation undertaken in association with the 1997 Cemetery Business Review or a review of public service requests.

Based on the above, HCC considers that the provision of cemetery services in the district is adequate to protect public health.



## **8.0 Adequacy of assessment**

### **8.1 Assessment process**

This assessment of cemeteries and crematoria in the Hutt City has been completed in accordance with the requirements of Part 7 Subpart 1 of the Local Government Act 2002 relating to the assessment of sanitary services.

The process followed for the assessment involved:

- Collection of information relating to the operation and performance of operational cemeteries and crematoria.
- Seeking comments from the Medical Officer of Health as to issues to be considered during the assessment and the identification of any concerns related to either the level of provision or any identifiable health risks. In addition comprehensive stakeholder consultation on cemetery services was undertaken in association with the Cemetery Business review.
- Assessment of current capacity and demand for burial and cremation.
- Development of a forecast of future demands.
- Consideration of options to address demand and HCC's role in meeting that demand.
- Statement on the extent to which public health is adequately protected.
- Development of assessment report.
- Adoption of assessment by HCC.
- Community input using the special consultative procedure.
- Hearing of submissions and final adoption of assessment.

#### **8.1.1 Stakeholder consultation**

Stakeholder consultation will be undertaken with the Medical Officer of Health, Wellington Regional Council, The Wellington Tenth Trust, Te Rununganui O Taranaki kite Upoko o te Ika A Maui, Religious Groups, Ethnic Communities and local Funeral Directors prior to producing a final version of the Sanitary Services Assessment for Cemeteries and Crematoria.

Information gathered and issues identified as part of this consultation process will be considered as part of the assessment.

#### **8.1.2 Community consultation**

General community input to the assessment will primarily be achieved using the special consultative procedure as required under the Local Government Act 2002. Consultation will include an opportunity for submissions and awareness raising through the print media, on Council's website and in public meetings.

## **8.2 Adequacy statement**

This draft assessment is considered to fully meet the requirements for a sanitary services assessment as set out in Part 7 Subpart 1 of the Local Government Act 2002.

The information used in this draft assessment is considered to be adequate to provide an informed view about the adequacy of cemeteries services and facilities in the Lower Hutt district. In preparing the assessment a number of assumptions have been made relating to death rates, the ratio of burials to cremations, and the number of out of district burials. The information used in calculating future demand is based on statistical information provided by the Department of Statistics and burial and cremation records held by HCC.

## **References**

HCC Cemetery Business Review, October 1997

Cemeteries Asset Management Plan

HCC Community Plan- Vision and Planning 2004 – 2014

HCC Annual Report 2004

Nation Research Bureau 'Communitrak Customer Survey 2004