

6.14 Urenui Cemetery

Description

Location:	Junction of Ngapapa and Totara Streets, Urenui
Legal description:	Section 10 Urenui Town Belt, Block III, Waitara District
Size:	1.46 hectares
Reserve status:	Subject to Reserves Act 1977
Reserve classification:	Local purpose (cemetery) reserve



Physical description

The burial area of the cemetery is flat land which then slopes steeply down to the Te Haoko Stream, the remainder of the cemetery reserve is covered in trees and shrubs and makes up part of the Noel Nairn Walkway.

Tangata whenua interests

This reserve is within the tribal rohe and of historic and cultural significance to Ngati Mutunga Iwi.

Land status and acquisition history

In 1881 James Prendergast, Chief Justice of the Colony of New Zealand, under the 'Special Powers and Contracts Act 1881', changed Town Belt No. 3 (3 acres, 2 roods more or less) of the map of Urenui Township from an educational reserve to a public cemetery reserve, recorded by gazette notice October 1881 (page 1308).

The appellation for this land was changed from Town Belt 3 to Section 10 on Survey Office Plan 8002, dated 29 October 1942.

Governor-General C.L.N. Newall pursuant to section four of the Cemeteries Act 1908 delegated the Clifton County Council the powers to appoint and remove trustees in respect of the Urenui Cemetery, recorded by gazette notice dated 10 December 1942 (page 2866).

In 1982, the cemetery was classified as a local purpose (cemetery) reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 by R Lancaster the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands, recorded by gazette notice November 1982 (page 4184).

In a gazette notice dated 6 October 1983 (page 3332), R. Lancaster the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977, vests the reserve in the Clifton County Council in trust for local purpose (cemetery), being Section 10 Urenui Town Belt (1.4164 hectares more or less).

An easement in gross exists on Part Section 3 Urenui Town Belt (part of Urenui School), as a right of way in favour of the New Plymouth District Council.

Underlying land ownership is with the Crown, the reserve is vested in the Council as its administering body.

History and cultural values

The earliest recorded burial at the cemetery is in 1882.

Trustees managing the cemetery

Trustees controlled and managed the cemetery for the first century of its existence. Initially the trustees were appointed by the Crown and in 1942, this power was delegated to the Council.

Complaints were received at various times during the 1900s about the cemetery grounds condition. The cemetery Trustees tried various ways of gaining funds to assist with the cost of maintaining the grounds. A letter dated April 1927, from the National Employment Service to the Council (assumably acting on behalf of the Trustees) declined a request for subsidised labour to help clear the gorse and blackberry at the cemetery. In 1960, an idea for plot holders to make regular contribution to the Trustees to assist with the ground maintenance was mooted.

In August 1942, the Department of Health wrote to the Clifton County Council advising the Council that the Trustees of the Urenui Cemetery had tendered their resignation and that the Director-General of Health formerly enquires if the Council would undertake the responsibility of appointing and removing trustees. The Council accepted that request in a letter to the Ministry of Health on 6 October 1942 (gazette notice referred to in the 'land status' section, was issued on 10 December 1942).

The Clifton County Council records from 1 October 1955 note that the Trustees had fallen to two and that the Council were controlling the cemetery and had in the past years been undertaking work to keep the grounds in fair order. The trustees assumed control and management of the cemetery at some time after this.

On 29 June 1992, the Council resolved to transfer funds held (by the Urenui Cemetery Trustee's) for the Urenui Cemetery to the Council's Cemetery Perpetual Maintenance

Fund. The Council also resolved to accept the request made by the Clifton Community Board to consider Urenui Cemetery's inclusion as part of Council's cemetery operations, and be subject to Council's policies for cemeteries. This action indicates the disestablishment of the Trustees and the Council assuming control and management of the cemetery.

The files do not indicate a direct appointment being made by the Governor-General; however a letter from the Ministry of Health in 1994 assumes that Council would automatically assume control and management of the cemetery¹, pursuant to section 22(3) of the Burials and Cremations Act 1964.

A further letter from the Audit New Zealand office, dated 8 November 1994, transferred the trustee funds to the Council on the basis that: as the Trustees were no longer functioning and the Council has title to the land, pursuant to section 5(1)(a) and 22(3)) of the Burials and Cremations Act 1964².

Access to the cemetery through Urenui School land

A letter to the Council in June 1984 gave approval from the Taranaki Education Board to establish a metalled walkway across the northern boundary of the Urenui School to facilitate access to the cemetery from Totara/Ngapapa Streets. This was on condition that no cost was incurred to the Board or School Committee. The walkway access was already in existence in 1984.

On November 2003 the Ministry of Education informed the Council that it was intended that the school land would be transferred from the Crown to Ngati Mutunga as part of their treaty settlement, and then leased back under a perpetually renewable lease to Her Majesty the Queen, for education purposes. The informal access to the cemetery has continued for many years across part of this land, but with the imminent transfer advised that the Council may wish to formalise by way of right of easement, the existing access way.

The access was formalised in a right of way (in gross) registered on a Certificate of Title 203516, dated 24 February 2005, in favour of the Council.

Archway at entrance

An archway was installed in 1987 at the Totara/Ngapapa Street entrance to the cemetery, it involved a bequest from George and Grace Liddall and voluntary labour.

QEII covenant for the bush area of the cemetery

Between 1992 and 1994 the National Trust considered a Queen Elizabeth II Trust, Open Space Covenant on the native bush part of the cemetery. The covenant was not finalised as little was to be gained in placing a covenant over land already protected under the Reserves Act 1977.

Existing improvements

A brick and concrete archway is located at the entrance on Totara/Ngapapa Streets with a plaque inscription "This archway and entrance provided by the kind generosity

¹ DM 1231700

² DM 1097913

of the late George and Grace Liddal". There are five signs located around the cemetery including an entrance sign on State Highway 3. Three outdoor taps are provided at the cemetery.

Management and administration

Cemetery capacity and future development

A submission was received by the Council to the 2008/2009 Annual Plan, requesting more cemetery land at Urenui as the Urenui Cemetery nears capacity. The Council resolution on 26 June 2008 was to consider the matter in the Cemetery Capacity Report.

The Cemetery Capacity Report considered by the Council on 10 March 2009, proposed an extension of the existing burial area at Urenui Cemetery by converting some of the planted ground to the east and north of the existing burial area within the cemetery, into burial areas. East of the existing burial area is a line of flaxes on a two metre strip of flat ground which could easily be converted, beyond that the terrain drops steeply, covered in native bush and is no longer practical as a burial area. To the north, some large totara trees would need to be removed with associated ground recontouring and retaining walls to extend the burial area of the cemetery.

This proposed development work has been programmed in the 2009-2019 Community Plan, with the development along the eastern fringe of the burial area set for 2012/2013 and the work on the northern fringe programmed for 2019/2020.

The advent of the new District Cemetery which is anticipated to take all burials once existing cemeteries reach capacity, received some opposition from Urenui residents. Their area along with Tongaporutu and Okato is the worst affected in terms of travel time to the new District Cemetery.

Management objectives and specific policies

- This cemetery is managed as an open cemetery.
- Extension of the cemetery burial area has been planned through the removal of flaxes on the eastern margin of the developed cemetery and through the removal of some totara trees with the installation of retaining walls, at the northern part of the developed cemetery. These expansion projects have been programmed in the 2009-19 Community Plan for 2012/13 and 2019/20 respectively.

Highlighted areas indicate the areas of pre 1900 development at the cemetery, constituting an archaeological area under the Historic Places Act 1993.

