

Wellington City Council  
**Kaupapa Here**  
**Whakamahara**  
Commemorative  
Policy

Āpereira April 2024



# Kupu Whakataki

## Introduction

1. People engage in commemorative activities to memorialise or celebrate significant events, such as birth, death, war and others. Commemorative activities can take place in different places in a range of forms.
2. Commemorative activities taking place in public places (owned by or under the control of the Council) need to be appropriately managed to ensure public interests are not unduly impaired. The Commemorative Policy 2024 (the Policy) replaces the Commemorative Policy 2006 after a policy review.
3. Under the Policy, commemorative includes commemorative planting, furniture and plaques, memorials and monuments. But it does not include ash scattering, and interment of ash and other human remains, such as placenta.



# **Te Whāinga o te Kaupapa Here**

## Policy objective

4. The Policy aims to enable the Council to manage commemorative requests in public places in a consistent and effective manner. Therefore, the objective of the Policy is to provide clear guidance for the Council to make decisions in relation to commemorative requests in public places.

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# Ngā mātāpono o te Kaupapa Here

## Policy guiding principles

5. The Policy includes a set of principles to guide decision-making that align with Te Whai Oranga Pōneke - the Open Space and Recreation Strategy. These principles include:
  - a. **Public places are for the public** - Public places belong to the public and should be mainly used for public enjoyment as part of our life. Commemorative activities in public places will be carefully managed, so these, essentially private, activities will not compromise public enjoyment and use of these places.
  - b. **Connection to Wellington City** - Commemorative activities should help tell stories about the shared history, geography, and both indigenous and post-colonial heritage of Wellington. Public spaces will only be made available to requests that have a strong and immediate connection to Wellington City.
  - c. **Community wellbeing** - It is recognised that historical connections are part of or contribute to community wellbeing and social cohesion, including our sense of identities and belonging. Memorials should be representative of the community and tell a multi-faceted history and be inspirational for our future generations.
  - d. **Mana Whenua representation** - The Council recognises the special interests of mana whenua in public places, particularly the importance of nurturing a spiritual connection of all living things by preserving the mana and mauri (life force) of the environment and supporting the natural balance of Te Taiao. Commemorating private events should not undermine mana whenua values and should align with the principles in the Tākai Here agreement, particularly the cultural governance principle. The Council will honour mana whenua views in the decision-making process in relation to commemorative activities.

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# Ngā momo whakamahara me ote whakatau take

## Commemorative categories and decision-making

### Ngā whakatōnga tipu whakamahara Commemorative planting

6. The Council recognises that commemorative planting is a popular way of honouring a particular person or for remembering an event or time. However, commemorative planting needs to be managed effectively to ensure that personal needs of the sponsor will be met without unduly impairing public interest in enjoying public places.
7. Commemorative planting in relation to Royal visits or international relations will be considered according to established international relations policies and practices.
8. The Council encourages commemorative planting to be undertaken as part of the organised and scheduled planting programme in designated areas. This will generally take place in restoration planting sites as part of Council's revegetation programme.
9. Types of trees, locations and time of planting will be decided by Council business teams on a case-by-case basis once the request has been approved. In general,
  - a. A fee may be charged for services by the Council
  - b. Private commemorative planting will not be allowed in the four gardens (Wellington Botanic Garden, Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, Truby King Garden and Bolton Street Cemetery), or other restricted areas specified by the Council
  - c. Public commemorative planting, even with high public interest or exceptional circumstances, will not be considered in any of the gardens.

### Ngā tohu whakamahara ririki Commemorative furniture and plaques

10. The Council recognises that commemorative furniture (with or without plaques) contributes to the city a useful amenity, which is an enhancement of our public places, particularly our parks and reserves.
11. The Council will consider commemorative furniture requests based on the guiding principles and make decisions at its total discretion. Conditions for installing commemorative plaques are outlined below.
  - a. Plaques on commemorative furniture are designed and fitted by the Council.
  - b. The commemorative plaque will be for a 20-year term from the date of installation of the plaque. The plaque will be returned to the sponsor at the expiry of the term if requested.
  - c. The sponsor will be responsible for the cost of the plaque, the cost of attaching the plaque to the furniture and the maintenance cost of the furniture for the whole term of commemoration.
  - d. The Council will not guarantee the continuity or reinstatement of the plaque once the furniture has been removed or damaged for whatever reason, even if the removal and damage of the furniture occurs within the 20-year commemoration term.

12. Generally, plaques, which are not attached to benches, will not be permitted in public places, especially in the Central Business District and other suburban centres. This is to ensure that public places are not unnecessarily cluttered and to limit future maintenance issues. Plaques will be considered on a case-by-case basis if the requests are made:
- a. In recognition of visits by royalty, heads of state and other dignitaries
  - b. In commemoration of international, national and local events and other events of a civic nature which are considered appropriate for formal recognition
  - c. As part of other international relations practices under established policy or reciprocity
  - d. In recognition of an important historical figure or person with a demonstrable strong and immediate connection with the area
  - e. For other significant occurrences.

### **Ngā tohu whakamahara nui Commemorative memorials<sup>2</sup> or monuments<sup>3</sup>**

13. The Council recognises that commemorative memorials or monuments can be erected to honour a particular person or to remember an event or time. New memorials should be of high level of significance, both culturally and societally and that the decision-making should align with the Council's threshold for

managing public land, and with the priorities set-out in Tākai Here Partnership Agreement and Tūpiki Ora Māori Wellbeing Strategy.

14. Commemorative memorials or monuments will be considered on a case-by-case basis if the requests are:
- a. In commemoration of significant international, national and local events and other events of a civic nature
  - b. In recognition of an important historical figure or person with a demonstrable strong and immediate connection with the area or the city.

### **Ngā momo whakamahara kē atu Other commemorative opportunities**

15. The Council encourages commemorative activities to benefit other public projects in Wellington. The Council will work collaboratively with interested parties to explore other opportunities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes to both the sponsor and the project.

### **Te whakataui i ngā tono whakamahara mamanga Decision-making for complex commemorative requests**

16. Many of the commemorative requests are complex in nature and interplay with a range of other policies. An internal panel will review complex commemorative requests on a case-by-case basis under this policy to ensure consistent decision-making.

<sup>2</sup> A memorial means any item that commemorates a person or event. A memorial can be a plaque or a headstone.

<sup>3</sup> A monument means an upright structure for memorial purpose.

## **He mauhanga kōrero o ngā whakamahara katoa**

### **Recording of commemorative memorials**

17. The Council keeps commemorative records as a historical record for the future residents of Wellington, including descendants of those being commemorated. Records are also made for maintenance purposes or other activities. The records will generally include the following information:
  - a. Name and contact details of sponsor
  - b. Type of commemorative memorial
  - c. Location of commemorative (GPS reference or physical measurement)
18. Digital photo with background/landscape elements to assist identification.
19. The Council may develop a searchable database of retired plaques and other memorials. For example, before removing a plaque from bench seat, a photo may be taken and entered into a searchable database (on archives site).

## **Ētehi atu kōrero**

### **Miscellaneous**

20. It is recommended that ash scattering, and interment of ash and other human remains take place in designated cemeteries. Requests for these activities should be made to the Cemeteries Team under the [Cemeteries Management Plan Tawa, Karori and Mākara Cemeteries 2021](#)
21. The Council will outline the options and sites for commemorative activities on its website to guide public expectations.



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**Absolutely Positively**  
**Wellington City Council**

Me Heke Ki Pōneke