

From: [Official Information](#)
To: [Official Information](#)
Cc: [Official Information](#)
Subject: Final response - LGDPA 423992 - [\[REDACTED\]](#) - Burial Fees - Unpaid
Date: Monday, 30 September 2024 2:16:08 pm
Attachments: [Outlook-Hamilton.C.jpg](#)
[Outlook-szmlj1a.jpg](#)
[Outlook-3wv8b2a.jpg](#)

Kia ora,

We refer to your information request, Hamilton City Council provides the following response:

Your request:

I'm hoping you can help.

I'm keen to collate stats about burial fees and cremation fees owed to councils across the country to see if there's a potential story.

Do you have these figures owed to the Hamilton City Council and is there any sort of break down you can provide?

Here's what I'm thinking:

Unpaid burials fees by year

Unpaid cremation fees by year.

Total amount owed.

Separating who owes the fees into categories ie loved ones, funeral directors.

How many burials you carry out each year.

How many cremations you carry out each year.

Whether you've used debt collectors to recoup money? If so, in how many cases, when and was the debt resolved?

Maybe some commentary around this topic would be helpful too if a big amount is owed.

Are there any other stats it might be worth requesting on this topic?

Our response:

Burial and cremation stats are below:

23/24 cremations: 1587	burials: 219
22/23 cremations: 1580	burials: 248
21/22 cremations: 1409	burials: 216
20/21 cremations: 1304	burials: 227
19/20 cremations: 1306	burials: 214

Please note that the figures below represent a snapshot in time at each 30 June year end only.

Balances shown are retrospective and do not represent the status of accounts as at today.

Figures include GST.

A financial year runs from 1 July – 30 June.

Financial Year - 2023/24

Cremations: 1,587

Burials: 219

Approximately \$2.15m of cemetery related invoices were issued during the 2023/24 financial year.

The total value of all unpaid invoices on **30 June 2024** was \$189,934 - These included invoices raised in June 2024, and prior.

Of this amount, \$74,967 represents invoices raised prior to June 2024.

The \$74,967 comprised 61 separate debtor accounts. Of these:

- 56 individuals
- 5 Funeral directors.
- 9 accounts previously passed to an external debt collection agency, where the remaining 52 were being followed up by Council staff at that time.

Financial Year - 2022/23

Cremations: 1,580

Burials: 248

Approximately \$2.03m of cemetery related invoices were issued during the 2022/23 financial year.

The total value of unpaid invoices on **30 June 2023** was \$222,576 - These included invoices raised in June 2023, and prior.

Of this amount, \$87,736 represents invoices raised prior to June 2023.

The \$87,736 comprised 54 separate debtor accounts. Of these:

- 48 individuals
- 6 Funeral directors.
- 5 accounts previously passed to an external debt collection agency, where the remaining 49 were being followed up by Council staff at that time.
 - Of the 5 accounts with an external debt collection agency, 4 had active payment arrangements at that time.

Financial Year - 2021/22

Cremations: 1,409

Burials: 216

Approximately \$1.92m of cemetery related invoices were issued during the 2021/22 financial year.

The total value of unpaid invoices on **30 June 2022** was \$210,783 - These included invoices raised in June 2022, and prior.

Of this amount, \$82,681 represents invoices raised prior to June 2022.

The \$82,681 comprised 71 separate debtor accounts. Of these:

- 66 individuals
- 5 Funeral directors.
- 18 accounts previously passed to an external debt collection agency, where the remaining 53 were being followed up by Council staff at that time.
 - Of the 18 accounts with an external debt collection agency, 2 had active payment arrangements at that time.

Financial Year - 2020/21

Cremations: 1,304

Burials: 227

Approximately \$1.85m of cemetery related invoices were issued during the 2020/21 financial year.

The total value of unpaid invoices on **30 June 2021** was \$260,403 - These included invoices raised in June 2021, and prior.

Of this amount, \$90,127 represents invoices raised prior to June 2021.

The \$90,127 comprised 82 separate debtor accounts. Of these:

- 75 individuals
- 7 Funeral directors.
- 17 accounts previously passed to an external debt collection agency, where the remaining 65 were being followed up by Council staff at that time.
 - Of the 17 accounts with an external debt collection agency, 2 had active payment arrangements at that time.

Financial Year - 2019/20

Cremations: 1306

Burials: 214

Approximately \$1.71m of cemetery related invoices were issued during the 2019/20 financial year.

The total value of unpaid invoices on **30 June 2020** was \$168,386 - These included invoices raised in June 2020, and prior.

Of this amount, \$70,741 represents invoices raised prior to June 2020.

The \$70,741 comprised 74 separate debtor accounts. Of these:

- 68 individuals
- 6 Funeral directors.
- 19 accounts previously passed to an external debt collection agency, where the remaining 55 were being followed up by Council staff at that time.
 - Of the 19 accounts with an external debt collection agency, 3 had active payment arrangements at that time.

Unfortunately, we are unable to easily extract burial vs cremation charges. This would require manually reviewing every invoice and would take significant time.

This is also the case with outcomes for specific debts.

Debt recovery process:

Council staff will follow-up with the debtor where the invoice remains unpaid after the due date.

Given the circumstances, cemetery related invoices often require an empathic approach and staff will do their best to work with the debtor to ensure payment, this may include payment arrangements.

Where Council is unsuccessful in recovering the debt, it will be passed to an external collection agency who will initiate their own process for recovery.

Timing of when a debt is resolved via a collection agency is highly variable given the nature of debt recovery and creation of payment arrangements.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602

Ngaa mihi

Charlotte Mitchell

Governance & Assurance Graduate

Partnerships, Communication & Maaori | Governance & Assurance Unit

DDL:079740567 Email: Charlotte.Mitchell@hcc.govt.nz



Hamilton City Council | 260 Anglesea St | Hamilton 3240 | www.hamilton.govt.nz

[Like us on Facebook](#) [Follow us on Instagram](#)

This email and any attachments are strictly confidential and may contain privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient please delete the message and notify the sender. You should not read, copy, use, change, alter, disclose or deal in any manner whatsoever with this email or its attachments without written authorisation from the originating sender. Hamilton City Council does not accept any liability whatsoever in connection with this email and any attachments including in connection with computer viruses, data corruption, delay, interruption, unauthorised access or unauthorised amendment. Unless expressly stated to the contrary the content of this email, or any attachment, shall not be considered as creating any binding legal obligation upon Hamilton City Council. Any views expressed in this message are those of the individual sender and may not necessarily reflect the views of Hamilton City Council.