



Research First

Invercargill City Council

2013 Service Level Survey:
Parks, Reserves and Cemeteries Report

Wednesday, 11 December 2013



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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Context

In 2013 Invercargill City Council (ICC) contracted Research First to conduct a survey of Invercargill residents. The purpose of this survey is to provide ICC with a measure of how satisfied residents are with seven key areas:

1. Roading;
2. Parks and reserves;
3. Cemeteries and crematorium;
4. Stormwater;
5. Water supply;
6. Sewerage; and
7. Solid waste.

1.2 Research Design

The 2013 research involved a mixed-method multi-phase design, which combined qualitative and quantitative research.

1.2.1 The Qualitative Phase

The qualitative part of this research comprised:

1. Interviews with key members of the ICC staff; and
2. Seven focus groups, held among people identified as being informed and relevant to each of the service areas.

The focus groups involved between five and seven participants who were recruited by ICC to reflect the range of views held in the community regarding each issue. The discussion groups were held at ICC's Council Chambers, during August 2013.

1.2.2 The Quantitative Phase

The survey of residents was completed between late August and mid October 2013. The data collection period was an extended one because the survey used a mixed-method design. In other words the 'survey' was actually two surveys - one completed online and one completed by conventional mail return. The process used was:

- A randomised sample was generated from the electoral roll, including both Māori and general rolls;
- A letter was sent to all those randomised into the sample, asking them to participate. The letter was sent out on ICC letterhead and invited participation by accessing the survey website (i.e., an online survey);



**This report
presents the
parks and
reserves and
cemeteries
results from the
2013 survey of
Invercargill
residents**

- A follow-up postcard was sent two weeks later, reminding people that they were still welcome to participate, and could do so by the online survey or by telephone if necessary; and
- Two weeks after the postcard was sent, a further follow-up was sent to all non-respondents which included a hard copy of the survey and a reply paid envelope (i.e., a mail survey).

Of the 2,500 invitations sent out, 354 residents responded to the mail survey and 315 residents replied to the online questionnaire*. This means the results reported here are based on 669 responses.

This document combines the qualitative insights from the focus groups and the results from the survey in regard to **parks, reserves and cemeteries** in Invercargill.

* Note that due to the self-completion nature of the on-line survey, there are some questions that were answered by smaller numbers of respondents. Where there were less than 15 responses to a question these results have not been included.

2 Parks and Reserves Service Levels: The Focus Group Insights

2.1 Use of Parks and Reserves

The participants in the parks and reserves' focus group were very happy with the number of parks and reserves available across Invercargill. One participant talked about 'the amazing number' of parks in the city. However, because there were so many parks, some participants thought that some of these parks were underused. Only some parks had sufficient lighting to use them after dark, but the participants in this focus group did not see this as a problem.

When looking at facilities for specific sports, the 'big' sports (e.g., rugby, netball, cricket, football) were seen as being well catered for. However, while the Council provided these facilities, they did not go the 'extra mile' to provide high quality facilities.

Participants felt that there was an opportunity for the Council to incorporate facilities for 'newer' sports into parks, such as basketball hoops or exercise/fitness equipment. Participants noted that there were a few tennis courts around, but these were generally owned privately, often by schools. The hockey park was regarded as a good facility.

A new skate park is being built in the city, due for completion in 2014. There was a general sense among participants that this will be a great asset for the youth of Invercargill. The skate park will be accessible 24 hours a day and will be well lit. Other than the provision of the new skate park, participants felt that teenagers were not well catered for, and some work could be done to improve this.

Participants felt that the Council could provide facilities for activities that have minimal cost for residents to participate in. Examples of possible activities included freestyle sports, Frisbee golf, skating, scootering and cart surfing.

2.2 Top of Mind Concerns

While the facilities provided by the Council were seen as being a good asset, some issues were identified by participants. Participants noted that it was sometimes difficult to communicate with the Council when trying to book a park. Participants also identified difficulties when trying to allocate or schedule space for new groups to operate from. For example, the Rugby League club wanted to lease grounds from the Rugby club but were not allowed to as it would break lease agreements between the Rugby club and the Council. In this instance, the Council was seen as not being particularly helpful.

Another area where there was concern was in relation to weather. Given the weather conditions that sometimes exist in Invercargill, a

multi-purpose facility (perhaps artificial) was seen as a possible solution, helping to ensure different sports could be played in more 'challenging' conditions. While participants appreciated the concept of a multi-purpose facility, they noted that most sports teams would play outside in the winter, irrespective of the conditions.

One issue that had arisen for netball players was the question of available facilities, given the collapse of the roof at Stadium Southland. Parents have stopped children from playing as it was too cold and/or dangerous for them to play on concrete, outside. This was felt to be a temporary issue as the stadium is undergoing repairs.

Indoor sports facilities were felt to be a good investment in Invercargill. Multi-purpose grounds would be most suitable, such as a venue that could cater for cricket, rugby and football. One respondent did note that indoor cricket could be played at the velodrome, but that there was limited knowledge of this in the community.

Participants thought it would be good if parks were on bus routes to provide easier access. The Council also needs to consider the needs of disabled residents and ensure they have easy access to local parks and reserves.

Participants were concerned about maintenance. Participants felt that parks in the outlying parts of city area such as Bluff and Sandy Point do not receive as much attention as the larger and possibly more prestigious parks in town such as Queen's Park. Improvements that could be made included:

- drainage;
- field markings on sports fields;
- more rubbish bins to reduce litter;
- more public toilets;
- improved park toilet maintenance (e.g., lack of toilet paper, cleanliness); and
- Seating.

2.3 Cycle Ways

Cycling was viewed as being a significant sport in the Southland area. Given this, it was felt that there could be more facilities in the Invercargill city area for cyclists. Participants in the group suggested that currently there are no such available cycle facilities. Outside of the built-up area of Invercargill, Bluff Hill and Sandy Point were identified as having exceptional bike facilities.

Bluff Hill was viewed as being the best cross country facility in Australasia. At present it receives little (if any) support from the Council. Participants felt that some support from the council for building infrastructure would be beneficial to the whole community. Similarly, the mountain bike club receives little help from the

Council. They conducted all development and maintenance on their tracks, as well as maintenance of their building. While the club bore the cost, anyone was able to use the track, and benefit from the club's investment of time and money in maintaining this facility. Some groups displayed animosity over the perceived help, or lack thereof, from the Council.

Note was also made of the beginnings of a 30km round trip cycleway to Bluff. Work had begun on this track, but this was described as being 'many years' until this would be completed.

2.4 Playgrounds

Participants understood that the Council had an objective that all residents should live within 500m of a playground. Most agreed that this was the case for where they were living, with lots of small playgrounds around the city. Most playgrounds appeared to be well used, although there was a perceived discrepancy in the level of maintenance between playgrounds. Queens Park playground was well maintained and modern, while other smaller playgrounds were not. A key issue that arose was a lack of fencing around some playgrounds. It was also felt that some of the smaller playgrounds needed modernising.

Participants believed that the Council needed to think about the facilities offered at playgrounds. Participants felt that the Council should be providing areas with trees for residents, particularly trees that children can climb. It was noted that a tree in Queens Park is currently being developed to allow children to play on. Participants felt the Council needs to consult more with the community regarding their preferred facilities. For example, one playground had a BMX track, which was well used.

Two areas of concern were raised by participants. The first was concern regarding the use of motorbikes in park areas, affecting public safety. Another area of concern was older children (possibly teenagers) playing on playground equipment at night, resulting in vandalism of the equipment and leaving rubbish behind.

2.5 Use of the Town Belt

Participants were aware of the Town Belt, and the allocation of space to ensure the city has a surrounding green area. They noted a skate park is under development within the town belt. Football is currently played within the town belt, but participants believed that rugby is not allowed to be played there. Participants noted that ACC does not recognise the Town Belt as a sports field, and therefore if an injury occurred while playing sports, ACC would not provide insurance cover. Therefore, sports teams are reluctant to use the Belt.

Participants were aware that it is possible to walk and/or cycle around the town belt. However, due to signage being limited, participants believed many residents were unaware of the track. Participants suggested the track should be wide enough to allow at least two people to walk side by side.

2.6 Linkages

Participants were aware of some linkages in place for both walking and cycling tracks within Invercargill. The town belt (discussed previously) was one linkage identified.

The rail track from Invercargill to Bluff was currently being developed as a cycleway. Participants estimated there was an additional 20Km to be completed, which they understood would be done in the next 15 to 20 years. The majority of participants felt this would be a good link when completed and perhaps should be pushed for completion in a shorter timeframe. Some felt that the emphasis should be put on developing the Bluff end of the track to meet current development in the middle, rather than leaving the Bluff part until the end. Currently there were few safe places in Bluff for people to walk around the harbour. As a result, people were walking on the train tracks.

Participants suggested a track leading out to Sandy Point would be an advantage to the community. One participant suggested linking the reserves together. This would allow cyclists and walkers to get off the road, and make it easier for people to move between reserves. This would also give people the opportunity to traverse the city. It was noted that in some places, some parks had been linked up, but work was needed to continue to complete it. Residents also needed to be made more aware of the linkages that currently exist, as participants felt this knowledge was lacking.

2.7 Dog Parks

Participants felt that dog parks would be more suited to those who lived in the city. Other residents would be more likely to travel to a beach or open space to exercise their dogs. Some participants understood that there was a dog park in the South City area (on the town belt), which was fenced and provided jumps and exercise areas for dogs.

Many residents took their dogs to Queens Park and allowed them to exercise there. While it was noted that dogs are supposed to be kept on leashes in Queens Park, participants thought that this was not well enforced (although it was not seen as an issue as the space was big enough for everyone). Dog owners exercised their dogs in other areas such as Sandy Point and Bluff Hill.

Participants felt there were enough dog parks. One suggestion was to use some of the less exposed public parks as dog parks if the need arose in the future.

2.8 Other Messages

Participants felt that in general there were not enough rubbish bins in parks. More bins needed to be provided, especially in places where people sat and ate their lunch. Similarly, there were not enough public toilets provided in parks.

In Bluff the Council paid for the grass verges to be mowed. Questions were raised as to whether this was a good use of the Council's money. The thought was that residents should be doing the mowing themselves. It was also noted that even with the Council undertaking this mowing; they are not doing a particularly good job at it. For example, the Council has sown some grass but rocks were left in the soil and were then incorporated into the grass, which causes problems for home owners.

The Council also sprayed the weeds on the curbs in the city and Bluff areas. Participants felt that this was not a necessity for the Council to be undertaking. It left a mess with dead weeds, and the money could be spent better in other areas.

The work currently being undertaken on the estuary was seen as being a positive initiative. The initiative needed to be continued, to make the accessible area longer and larger in the future.

Overall, participants felt there was room for improvement in the relationship between the Council and community groups who used the parks and reserves. More engagement was necessary from both the Council and community groups.

Strategies need to be put in place to ensure areas are kept for recreation and continue to meet the needs of residents. Bluff residents felt there was a need for a focus to be put on the development of parks and reserves in Bluff. While volunteers were trying to revitalise the area, assistance would be well received. Sandy Point was also identified as one area of importance and one that should be focussed on.

The final area raised by participants was around the removal of firewood. The Council had recently cut down a number of trees. The cut wood was in general left where it had been felled, and residents were not allowed to come and collect it. Participants saw it as a health and safety issue. They felt residents should be allowed to come and remove the wood, or else the areas would be un-usable for years. To ensure the areas were not too disrupted, participants suggested restricting access by issuing consents for collecting this wood.

3 Parks and Reserves Service Levels: The Survey Results

Respondents read the following preamble about Parks and Reserves' service levels:

There are over 150 parks and reserves covering 3000 hectares of land in the Invercargill area. The City's parks and reserves offer a wide range of venues and facilities for sporting and recreational needs. Costs are covered by rates (50% - 70%) and fees/ charges (30% - 50%).



The park or reserve visited most often inside and outside the resident's immediate area was Queens Park/ Otakaro Park

3.1 Frequency of Use

Respondents were asked how many days a month they used the parks and reserves in the Invercargill area and which parks or reserves they visited most often inside and outside their immediate neighbourhood. Table 3.1 shows that parks and reserves were used most frequently for recreational reasons. The results also show:

- When travelling to work or the shops, 50% did not pass through a park or reserve, but 29% did use them one to four days a month.
- For the purposes of sport, 39% did not use a park or reserve, however 30% did use them one to four days a month and a further 11% used parks and reserves five to eight days a month.
- Only 13% did not use parks and reserves on a monthly basis. Nearly half (43%) of residents used them one to four days a month, while a further 27% used them five to twelve days a month.

Table 3.1: Frequency of Using Parks and Reserves

	Never	1 - 4 days	5 - 8 days	9 - 12 days	13 - 16 days	17 - 20 days	21+ days
Travelling to work or shops	50%	29%	8%	5%	2%	1%	6%
Sports or play	39%	30%	11%	9%	3%	3%	6%
Recreation or inspiration	13%	43%	16%	11%	5%	5%	7%

The park or reserve visited most often inside and outside their immediate area was Queens Park/ Otakaro Park (40% and 42% respectively). Table 3.2 shows the list of parks visited.

Table 3.2: Park or Reserve Visited Most Often

	Immediate Neighbourhood	Outside Neighbourhood
Queens Park/ Otakaro Park	40%	42%
Russell Square/ Green Belt	6%	3%
Donovan Park	4%	3%
Otepuni Park/ River/ Gardens	3%	2%
Elizabeth Park	3%	1%
Thompsons Bush	2%	3%
Sandy Point Reserve	2%	8%
Anderson Park	2%	6%
Waihopai Park	2%	1%
Turnbull Thomson Park	2%	2%
Otatara Reserve	2%	1%
Fosbender Park	1%	2%
Other	18%	8%

3.2 Importance of Features of Parks and Reserves

Respondents were asked to rate the following services in terms of their importance. This was done by rating the importance of each service on a 5-point Likert scale.

To make these results easier to interpret, a composite 'more than important' (MTI) score was calculated. This simply combines the number of respondents who rated the service as 'important' or 'very important'.

The most important features of parks and reserves were to feel safe and secure, to have provision of amenities (toilets, seating, tables and rubbish bins), and ease of access (90% to 91% MTI).

Of least importance was suitability for dogs (52% MTI).



The most important features of parks and reserves were to feel safe and secure, to have provision of amenities

Table 3.3: Importance of Features of Parks and Reserves

Features	MTI	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Feeling safe and secure	91%	61%	30%	7%	0%	2%
Provision of toilets, seating, tables, rubbish bins	91%	52%	39%	6%	0%	2%
Ease of access within parks reserves	90%	34%	56%	8%	0%	2%
Maintenance of garden areas and facilities	89%	33%	55%	9%	1%	2%
Ease of access to parks reserves	88%	35%	53%	9%	0%	2%
Walking tracks and conservation areas	87%	38%	48%	11%	0%	2%
Features for recreation sports and play	84%	29%	54%	13%	1%	2%
Opportunities to support socialising and relaxation	78%	25%	53%	19%	1%	2%
Street trees and amenity plantings	75%	20%	55%	21%	2%	2%
Suitability for dogs	52%	19%	33%	31%	8%	9%

3.3 Premier Parks and Gardens

Respondents were asked to rate Invercargill's premier parks and gardens (Queens Park, Andersons Park, and Otepunu Gardens) in each of the following areas. This was done by rating each service on a simple 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very poor, 3 = average, and 5 = very good.

To make these results easier to interpret, a composite 'more than good' (MTG) score was calculated. This simply combines the number of respondents who rated the service as 'good' or 'very good'.

Premier parks were rated highest for the maintenance of garden areas and facilities, ease of access within and to the reserve and walking tracks and conservation areas (90% - 96% MTG).

Premier parks were rated lowest for the provision of amenities (toilets, seating, tables and rubbish bins) and their suitability for dogs (52% - 63% MTG).

Table 3.4: Facilities of Premier Parks and Gardens

Aspect of Premier Parks and Gardens	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Maintenance of garden areas and facilities	96%	65%	31%	4%	0%	0%
Ease of access within parks reserves	92%	50%	42%	7%	1%	0%
Ease of access to parks reserves	90%	51%	39%	9%	1%	0%
Walking tracks and conservation areas	90%	43%	47%	10%	0%	1%
Features for recreation sports and play	88%	44%	44%	11%	1%	0%
Opportunities to support socialising and relaxation	87%	42%	45%	12%	1%	0%
Maintenance and condition of summer sports fields	84%	34%	51%	14%	1%	1%
Street trees and amenity plantings	81%	40%	41%	18%	1%	1%
Feeling of safety and security	80%	31%	49%	18%	1%	0%
Maintenance and condition of winter sports fields	79%	30%	49%	17%	2%	1%
Provision of toilets, seating, tables, rubbish bins	63%	21%	42%	29%	6%	1%
Suitability for dogs	52%	16%	36%	33%	11%	4%

The following graph shows the importance (MTI) of parks and reserves relative to their quality (MTG) rating. Figure 3.1 demonstrates that for most aspects of parks and reserves rated, the perceived quality matched the perceived importance.

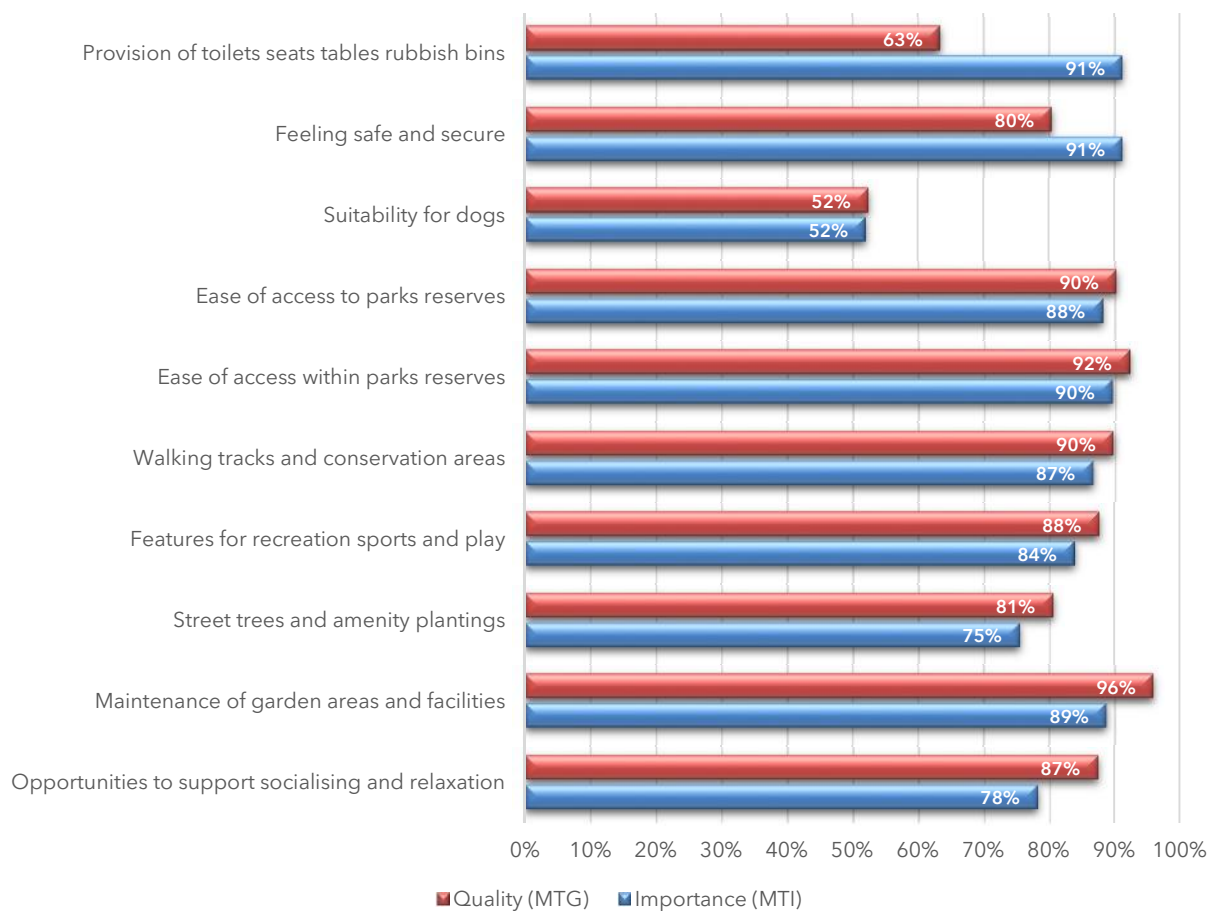
The areas where needs were more than met with regard to parks and reserves were:

- The maintenance of garden areas and facilities (96% quality vs. 89% importance); and
- Opportunities to support socialising and relaxation (87% quality vs. 78% importance).

Two areas were rated higher in terms of importance than quality which suggests that these are the areas that ICC needs to improve. These areas were:

- The provision of amenities including toilets, seating, tables and rubbish bins (91% importance vs. 63% quality); and
- Feeling safe and secure (91% importance vs. 80% quality).

Figure 3:1: Importance vs. Quality of Parks and Reserves



3.4 Perception of Parks and Reserves in Area

Using the same scale as previously (1 = very poor, 3 = average, and 5 = very good), respondents were asked to rate neighbourhood playgrounds, Sandy Point's parks and reserves, other parks and reserves and the ICC's parks and reserves service on a number of attributes.

3.4.1 Playgrounds

Neighbourhood playgrounds were rated highest for their ease of access within and to them (87% to 88% MTG). In contrast, neighbourhood playgrounds were rated the lowest for the maintenance of the play equipment (69% MTG).

Table 3.5: Facilities of Playgrounds

Aspect of Playgrounds	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Ease of access within parks reserves	88%	36%	52%	12%	0%	0%
Ease of access to parks reserves	87%	37%	50%	12%	1%	0%
Features for recreation sports and play	78%	25%	52%	18%	4%	1%
Maintenance of garden areas and facilities	75%	30%	45%	20%	4%	1%
Opportunities to support socialising and relaxation	73%	25%	48%	23%	4%	0%
Street trees and amenity plantings	72%	22%	50%	23%	3%	2%
Feeling of safety and security	71%	22%	49%	24%	5%	1%
Maintenance and condition of play equipment	69%	23%	46%	24%	5%	1%

3.4.2 Parks and Reserves

Respondents were asked how good the parks and reserves in their location were compared with parks and reserves in other areas of the city. Parks and reserves were seen as being better ('a little better' and 'much better' combined) in Invercargill (44%), than in Otatara (38%).

Table 3.6: Parks and Reserves in Area Compared with Parks and Reserves in Other Areas

	Invercargill	Bluff	Otatara	Total
Much better	22%	*	18%	21%
A little better	22%	*	20%	22%
Same	46%	*	57%	46%
A little worse	9%	*	4%	9%
Much worse	2%	*	-	2%

3.5 Perception of Other Parks and Reserves

3.5.1 Sandy Point

Respondents were asked to rate Sandy Point's parks and reserves in the following areas. Sandy Point was rated highest for its walking tracks and conservation areas, ease of access within and to the parks, opportunities to support socialising and relaxation and features for recreation sport and play (82% to 90% MTG). Sandy point was rated lowest for the provision of amenities such as toilets, seating, tables and rubbish bins (36% MTG).

Table 3.7: Facilities of Sandy Point

Aspect of Sandy Point	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Walking tracks and conservation areas	90%	48%	42%	10%	1%	0%
Ease of access to Sandy Point	86%	38%	48%	12%	2%	0%
Opportunities to support socialising and relaxation	84%	34%	50%	13%	1%	1%
Features for recreation sports and play	83%	36%	47%	14%	2%	0%
Ease of access within Sandy Point	82%	30%	52%	16%	2%	0%
Suitability for dogs	78%	29%	49%	18%	3%	1%

* Fewer than 15 responses

Aspect of Sandy Point	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Maintenance of garden areas and facilities	69%	20%	49%	27%	2%	1%
Feeling of safety and security	54%	13%	41%	38%	7%	1%
Provision of toilets, seating, tables, rubbish bins	36%	8%	27%	42%	18%	4%

3.5.2 Other Parks and Reserves

Using the same scale as previously, respondents were asked to rate other parks and reserves. Other parks and reserves were rated highly for most attributes, but highest for ease of access within and to the parks (88% to 89% MTG), and lowest for the feeling of safety and security, suitability for dogs and provision of amenities like toilets, seating, tables and rubbish bins (51% to 65% MTG, Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Other Parks and Reserves

Aspect of Other Parks and Reserves	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Ease of access within parks reserves	89%	30%	59%	10%	0%	0%
Ease of access to parks reserves	88%	32%	55%	12%	0%	0%
Walking tracks and conservation areas	86%	33%	54%	13%	0%	0%
Maintenance of garden areas and facilities	83%	31%	53%	15%	1%	1%
Maintenance and condition of summer sports fields	83%	27%	56%	15%	1%	0%
Features for recreation sports and play	82%	26%	56%	16%	1%	1%
Maintenance and condition of winter sports fields	80%	27%	54%	18%	2%	0%
Street trees and amenity plantings	80%	28%	52%	18%	2%	1%
Opportunities to support socialising and relaxation	80%	30%	50%	19%	0%	1%
Feeling of safety and security	65%	18%	47%	32%	2%	1%
Suitability for dogs	60%	21%	40%	28%	9%	3%
Provision of toilets, seating, tables, rubbish bins	51%	14%	37%	35%	11%	3%

3.6 Invercargill City Council's Parks and Reserves Service

The ICC's parks and reserves service was rated highest for overall improvement of the parks and reserves in the last three years (73% MTG) coupled with the value for money of the service (72% MTG). The service was rated lowest for consultation with residents (33% MTG).

Table 3.9: Performance of ICC's Parks and Reserves Service

ICC's Parks and Reserves Service	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Overall improvement of parks reserves in the last three years	73%	23%	50%	23%	3%	1%
Value for money for parks reserves service (average residential rate per year \$245)	72%	31%	41%	22%	5%	1%
Responsiveness to complaints (answer only if complained in the last year)	64%	26%	38%	26%	7%	3%
Consultation with residents about parks reserves	33%	8%	25%	40%	19%	7%

3.7 Dog Park

Respondents were informed that Invercargill was opening a dog park and asked how often they would anticipate using such a park per month. Around a fifth of residents would use a dog park. Of those, half (9% of respondents overall) would use it relatively infrequently, one to four times a month. A further 4% would use it five to eight times a month.

Table 3.10: Frequency of Using Dog Park

Frequency	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Never	499	81%
1 to 4 times per month	58	9%
5 to 8 times per month	24	4%
9 to 12 times per month	10	2%
13 to 16 times per month	6	1%
17 to 20 times per month	6	1%
21+ times per month	11	2%

Respondents were asked where they would like the dog park opened. Table 3.11 (overleaf) shows suggestions regarding where

the dog park should be. A wide variety of potential dog park locations were mentioned, with North Invercargill, Sandy Point and South Invercargill receiving the most mentions.

Table 3.11: Location of Dog Park

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Anywhere/ No particular area	16	7%
North Invercargill	30	13%
Sandy Point	27	12%
South Invercargill	21	9%
Outside the urban area	17	7%
Away from current parks/ family areas	11	5%
Queens Park	11	5%
Current site acceptable	10	4%
Waikiwi	10	4%
Centrally located	10	4%
Thompson's Bush	7	3%
Bluff	6	3%
Donavan Park	6	3%
Elles Rd	6	3%
Otatara	6	3%
Windsor	4	2%
Glengarry	3	1%
Oreti Beach	3	1%
Fosbender Park	2	1%
Elizabeth Park	2	1%
Other	23	10%

Respondents were asked whether they had any additional comments regarding the ICC parks and reserves service. The total list of comments are reported in Table 3.12 (overleaf). A third of respondents (36%) mentioned ICC was doing a good job. Other comments ranged from doing regular maintenance (14%), more rubbish bins (5%), additional playgrounds (4%) and issues with vandalism or security (4%).

Table 3.12: Additional Comments Regarding the ICC parks and reserves service

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Doing a good job	53	36%
Regular maintenance	20	14%
More rubbish bins in parks	7	5%
Additional playgrounds in parks	6	4%
Issues with vandalism/ security	6	4%
Dog friendly parks	5	3%
Dog free parks needed	4	3%
Too costly to maintain parks/ gardens	4	3%
More signage	4	3%
More public toilets	3	2%
Seating in parks	3	2%
Reduce size and number of parks	3	2%
Improve accessibility for prams/ wheelchairs	3	2%
Uneven distribution of quality parks	3	2%
More plantings on verges	2	1%
Smaller park areas to be used for community gardens	2	1%
Security/ lighting to combat vandalism	2	1%
More on-site toilets needed	2	1%
Other	16	11%

4 Cemeteries and Crematorium Service Levels: The Focus Group Insights

4.1 Front-of-Mind Concerns

When asked whether the two current cemeteries meet the city's short and long term needs, participants in the Cemeteries and Crematorium focus group felt that the current (Eastern) cemetery had the ability to cater for the needs of the city for many years to come. In the near future there was no issue with space.

Participants were aware that there was another active cemetery in Bluff, and that there were 'closed' cemeteries at various locations. It was also noted that there was an Urupa (Māori Cemetery) located on Mason Road which is managed by the local Iwi Management Group, Te Ao Marama

4.2 Space Allocation for Specific Populations

Participants were asked to consider space allocation for specific populations within Invercargill, and whether needs were being met both now and in the future. Several issues were identified. One was the question of family plots. Participants believed that the Council needs to be pre-informed when allocating plots so that space can be allocated for larger family areas as *'family members are filling in the graves'*.

Participants noted that Invercargill has gone from a bi-cultural city to a multi-cultural city. The traditional Maori and Pacific Island cultures have assimilated into European practices so the demand for specific space for these groups has lessened (although there is still a designated urupa (Māori Cemetery) located on Mason Road). While there has clearly been a bicultural history in the function of the cemeteries, there were concerns that Bluff Cemetery did not meet a specific Māori need, of having access to running water. At the time of Māori burial, there was a need to have running water for cleansing. Participants noted running water needs to be available at Bluff.

There was a small section in the Eastern Cemetery for the Jewish community. It was felt this space was adequate. When asked about a potential need among the Muslim community, respondents felt that there was a need for consultation between Muslim community leaders and the Council regarding their needs. One participant noted that in Invercargill, Filipinos comprise 6% of the population. While no specific needs were identified for Filipinos, it was noted that there were several instances when bodies had been returned to the Philippines rather than being buried in Invercargill.

The space allocated for Returned Servicemen and Servicewomen was discussed. There were currently issues for spouses or other family members who wish to be buried with their returned service

people. Two areas in different parts of the Eastern Cemetery for returned service people were identified. Historically, only those who had seen active service could be buried in the space allocated for service personnel. This was now changing, and there was a growing list of qualifying criteria that will allow service personnel to be buried in the returned services area of the cemetery. Therefore, participants suggested that there was a need to ensure a generous provision for space in the future.

Participants discussed the need for special consideration for babies and stillborn children in the cemetery. There was a section for stillborn children, but participants questioned whether there was enough space in this plot to meet future needs. There were also concern that the size of the plots were too small. However, many visitors to the cemeteries took up the opportunity of leaving tokens and memorial gifts such as toys on the plots. The number of items left in this manner frequently meant that there were items spreading across multiple plots.

One further consideration was the change in the national average BMI, with people getting larger and need more space per plot. Participants were concerned that there may be a risk to the stability of soil between plots, as larger holes are required for future burials. Participants felt that this should be considered in future planning by the Council.

4.3 Maintenance

Participants identified that maintenance of cemeteries was an issue. Participants were clear that any maintenance being undertaken needs to respect the deceased and ensure the safety of visitors. Three areas of concern were raised with regard to maintenance. These were:

1. Overall maintenance;
2. Vandalism; and
3. Rowdy behaviour.

Some of the older plots were suffering from age issues, with the concrete covers breaking up. This was particularly noticeable in the Eastern Cemetery. Participants felt that for safety, broken covers should be replaced. In theory this should be at the cost of those who are interred. However, in reality this was felt to be impractical, as in many instances there was no simple way of identifying or making contact with the descendants. Another issue was the maintenance of plots where no head stone had been put in place at the time of burial. In these circumstances, it was identified that the Council's policy was to install a small wooden cross. However, many of these crosses were now missing.

Closed cemeteries in particular were identified as having vandalism issues. It was felt that these closed cemeteries should be maintained

in the same manner, and to the same level as open cemeteries. While all cemeteries were subjected to some degree of vandalism, open cemeteries were now gated at sunset, and access to grass areas was restricted in an attempt to minimise the problem.

Participants felt that rowdy behaviour in the cemeteries was another issue to be addressed. It was agreed that there needs to be a deterrent for desecration occurring in the cemeteries. It was hoped that by having a sensible deterrent the behaviour may cease. The condition of the access roads was also identified as an issue. It was suggested that patrols could be instigated at the cemeteries to deter vandalism. Educating the population about correct behaviour at cemeteries could also be a means to reduce vandalism.

4.4 Safety & Access

Safety in the cemeteries was discussed with participants. Overall, it was felt that the cemeteries in Invercargill were fairly safe. As identified previously under 'space allocation', some participants noted that there were an increasing number of larger people requiring burial. This meant that pall-bearers were having to lift large and heavy caskets, creating a risk to personal safety. Funeral directors were having to become more practical in such situations. It was felt that remedial action could be taken, such as adding more handles on a casket for more people to help carry it.

Some participants identified that theft from gravesites was an issue. Flowers and *'anything that can be lifted'* are being taken from gravesites. Participants were concerned that this was disrespectful to the deceased and their families. Another concern was that people had been observed driving their cars over gravesites.

In some of the older parts of the Eastern Cemetery access was difficult. The concern raised was that it was difficult to place the casket in the ground as the auto devices cannot gain access. Access ways needed to be wide enough for cars to fit down. It was observed that some cars do drive down these narrow access ways. At present some cars may hit headstones if they attempted to drive down some access ways.

Participants felt that within ten years, the public may be seeking to have funerals conducted on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. This could lead to concerns regarding the perception that Sunday is 'sacred'. The Council may need to be prepared to change scheduling, if public demand was for services to be conducted at these times.

When asked how the Council could address some of these concerns, one suggestion was to have a directory onsite identifying where specific graves were, and providing a clear path to the burial site. This would help visitors avoid driving/walking through the cemetery

unnecessarily. The online map of plots that the Council provides was well praised by participants.

4.5 The Crematorium

In Invercargill 55% of funerals are followed by cremations, while the remaining 45% are buried. Nationally, it can be as high as 80% cremated. Participants felt that plot size was something that needed investigation. While people in the group knew of the national trend towards cremation over burial, specific numbers were not presented in the group. Participants anticipated that the number of cremations were likely to increase.

Concerns were raised regarding the crematorium. Participants felt that the crematorium needed to be upgraded, and ideally the upgrade should take place soon and certainly within the next ten years. The existing crematorium had no facility for supply of even simple things such as drinking water, nor did it have a facility for viewing. Participants noted that a crematorium in Christchurch was an example of a crematorium with good viewing facilities. Participants knew of instances of people choosing to travel to other cities for cremation, to allow the viewing of a cremation.

With the numbers of people choosing cremation over burial, it was felt there should be more time allocation for cremations in Invercargill. The current facility may not meet demand in the future. Similarly, funerals were felt to be modernising, and that the crematorium would need to be updated to allow for this. Examples of modernisation included the provision of slideshows or similar technology, to add personal touches to a service.

As noted previously, in time there may be a demand for funeral services to be held on weekends. At present there was nowhere to store bodies at the crematorium. This was an issue as cremation does not occur until a Monday. Improvements to the crematorium would need to include storage facilities to cater for these requirements. Alternatively, cremation could be allowed during the weekends.

When asked to consider what facilities would be ideal in a crematorium, three areas were discussed: the burner, chapel and grounds. The burner needed to be modern and well designed. The current chapel was outdated, and possibly as a result there were very few 'full services' occurring there. Participants felt that the public perceived the chapel in a negative light. It had a poor décor, was unclean, the carpet was worn, and in general the maintenance level was low. There was a perception that staff were frustrated, and the overall ambience of the chapel was cold. Participants felt a good effort had been made on the landscaping of the grounds.

4.6 Natural Burials

Participants did not have strong views on natural burials, and many needed some indication regarding what was specifically meant by 'natural burial'. Simply put, natural burials had no casket, with the body wrapped in cloth and buried. There was a feeling that there may be a societal/cultural change towards such burials. It was felt that there might be more of a need for such approaches in Maori culture.

5 Cemeteries and Crematorium Service Levels: The Survey Results

Respondents read the following preamble about Cemeteries and Crematorium’s service levels and frequency of use:

ICC manages four cemeteries and one crematorium. They provide for burials and cremations in a sensitive and safe manner. The costs are covered by a mixture of rates and user charges.



The Eastern Cemetery was the most commonly used among survey respondents

5.1 Use of Crematoria and Cemeteries

Respondents were asked which of the following facilities they had visited in the last three years.

Table 5.1 shows that Eastern and to a lesser extent Southland Crematorium were most used for attending a funeral, contemplation, remembrance and prayer, placing tributes on gravesites and walking through. Eastern cemetery was most used for genealogy research.

Table 5.1: Use of Crematoria and Cemeteries

	Attending a funeral	Contemplation, remembrance, prayer	Placing tributes on grave	Walking, travelling through	Genealogy research
Eastern Cemetery	61%	33%	46%	32%	14%
Southland Crematorium	35%	11%	12%	8%	1%
Green Point Cemetery	6%	3%	4%	5%	2%
St Johns Cemetery	1%	3%	2%	4%	2%
Bluff Cemetery	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Never used	29%	60%	47%	62%	83%
Number of Replies	563	502	535	508	490

5.2 Importance of Features of Cemeteries and Crematoria

Respondents were asked to rate the following cemeteries/crematorium services in terms of their importance. This was done by rating the importance of each service on a 5-point Likert scale.

To make these results easier to interpret, a composite 'more than important' (MTI) score was calculated. This simply combines the number of respondents who rated the service as 'important' or 'very important'.

The most important features of cemeteries and crematoria were the design and maintenance of graves and gardens, provision of rubbish bins and water, and the quietness and areas of contemplation (83% to 86% MTI). Genealogy research facilities were rated lowest in terms of importance (58% MTI).

Table 5.2: Importance of Features of Cemeteries and Crematoria

Features	MTI	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Design and maintenance of graves and gardens	86%	35%	52%	12%	1%	1%
Provision of rubbish bins and water	83%	27%	57%	15%	1%	1%
Quietness and areas of contemplation/remembrance	83%	31%	52%	16%	0%	1%
Crematorium chapel	79%	28%	51%	19%	1%	1%
Convenience infrastructure	73%	21%	52%	25%	1%	0%
Provision of facilities for groups with different cultural values	67%	25%	41%	28%	3%	2%
Genealogy research	58%	20%	38%	39%	2%	1%

5.3 Cemeteries

Using the same scale as previously (1 = very poor, 3 = average, and 5 = very good), respondents were asked to rate the quality of cemeteries and crematoria.

Cemetery services were rated highest for access hours, design and maintenance of graves/ gardens, quietness, and areas of contemplation/ remembrance (75% to 79% MTG; Table 5.3 overleaf). Cemetery services were rated least well for their provision of infrastructure such as toilets and seating (34% MTG).

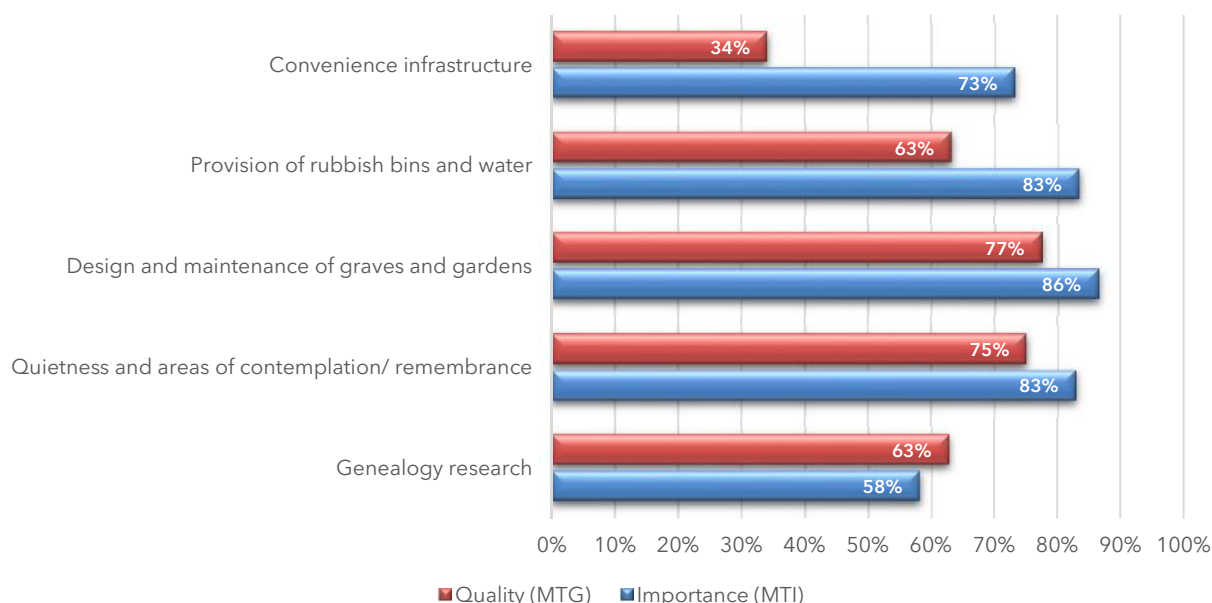
Table 4.3: Quality of Cemetery Services

Aspect of Cemeteries	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Access hours for visiting	79%	23%	56%	20%	1%	0%
Design and maintenance of graves and gardens	77%	25%	53%	20%	2%	0%
Quietness and areas of contemplation/ remembrance	75%	28%	47%	22%	2%	1%
Access hours for services	75%	20%	55%	24%	1%	0%
Provision of rubbish bins and water	63%	16%	47%	28%	8%	1%
Genealogy research	63%	24%	39%	35%	1%	1%
Convenience infrastructure (toilets, seating)	34%	10%	24%	40%	22%	4%

Figure 5.1 (overleaf) shows the importance (MTI) of cemeteries relative to their quality (MTG) rating. Figure 5.1 demonstrates that, in general, cemetery services were rated higher in terms of importance than quality suggesting that ICC could improve the provision of these services. The greatest differences between perceived importance and delivery of service in cemeteries were:

- The provision of infrastructure such as toilets and seating (73% importance vs. 34% quality); and
- The provision of rubbish bins and water (83% importance vs. 63% quality).

Figure 4:1: Importance vs. Quality of Cemetery Services



5.4 Crematoria

In general, services were rated higher for crematoria than for cemeteries. The crematorium services rated the highest were the quietness and areas of contemplation and remembrance (85% MTG), and the design and maintenance of the graves and gardens (84% MTG). The convenience of infrastructure such as toilets and seating was rated lowest (67% MTG).

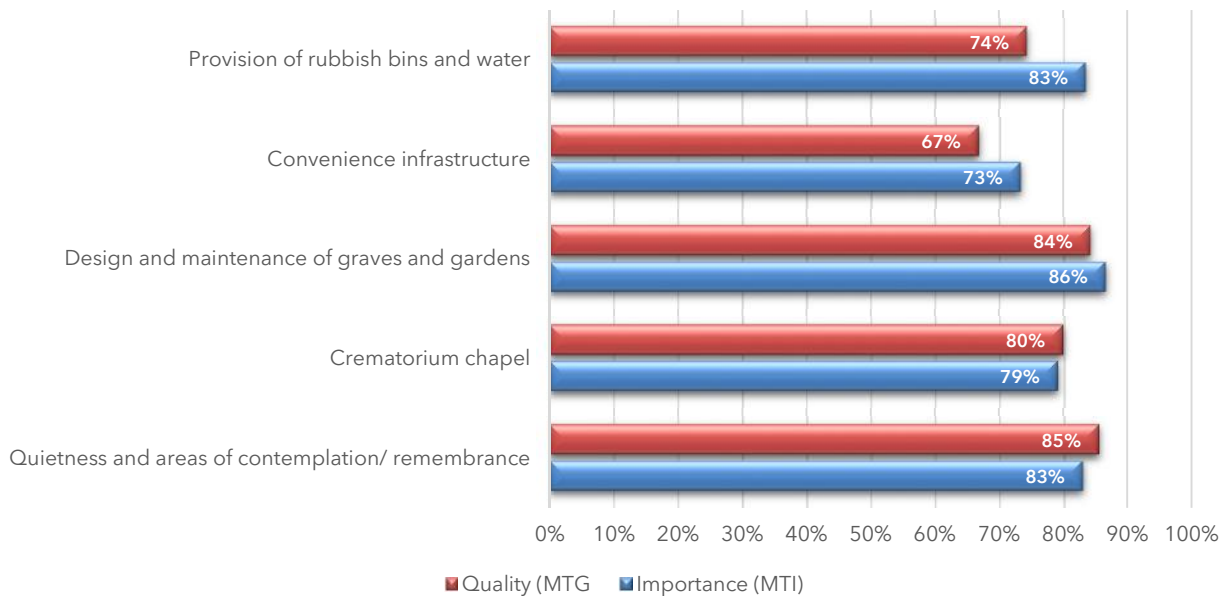
Table 5.4: Quality of the Crematorium Services

Aspect of Crematoria	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Quietness and areas of contemplation/ remembrance	85%	34%	52%	14%	1%	0%
Design and maintenance of graves and gardens	84%	33%	52%	15%	1%	0%
Access hours for visiting	81%	26%	55%	18%	1%	0%
Access hours for services	80%	25%	55%	19%	1%	0%
Crematorium chapel	80%	33%	47%	16%	4%	0%
Provision of rubbish bins and water	74%	22%	52%	21%	4%	1%
Convenience infrastructure (toilets, seating)	67%	19%	47%	28%	4%	1%

The following graph shows the importance (MTI) of crematoria relative to their quality (MTG) rating. Figure 5.2 demonstrates that crematorium services were generally rated similarly in terms of quality and importance. The areas where importance was rated higher than quality, suggesting improvement is needed, were:

- The provision of rubbish bins and water (83% importance vs. 74% quality); and
- Convenience infrastructure such as toilets and seating (73% importance vs. 67% quality).

Figure 5:2: Importance vs. Quality of Crematorium Services



Respondents were asked whether two open cemeteries meet the needs of the community and if they would consider using the Crematorium grounds for the burial of ashes as opposed to the cemetery. Nearly all respondents (92%) said the needs of the community were met by the use of two cemeteries. Two thirds of respondents (65%) would consider the use of crematorium grounds to bury ashes.

Table 5.5: Needs of Community Met by Two Cemeteries

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Two Open Cemeteries Do Meet Community Needs	510	92%
Two Open Cemeteries Do Not Meet Community Needs	43	8%

Table 5.6: Consider Use of Crematorium Grounds for Burial of Ashes

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Would Consider Use of Crematorium Grounds	383	65%
Would Not Consider Use of Crematorium Grounds	209	35%

Respondents were asked what options they were aware of for the interment of ashes in Invercargill City, 96 responses were received. Over half mentioned Crematorium Gardens (54%), followed by an unspecified cemetery (22%). A small number (8%) had family plots.

Table 5.7: Options for Interment of Ashes at Invercargill City

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Crematorium Gardens	52	54%
(Un-named) Cemetery	21	22%
Existing family plots	8	8%
Eastern Cemetery	5	5%
Any option you prefer	4	4%
Some churches	3	3%
Through a funeral home	2	2%
RSA Cemetery	1	1%

5.5 Invercargill City Council's Cemeteries and Crematorium Service

Respondents were asked to rate the ICC's cemeteries and crematorium service. Only those that used the service rated it.

The ICC's cemetery and crematorium service was rated highest for its value for money in terms of rates paid (78% MTG) yet lowest for the charges for the service (47% MTG).

Table 5.8: Performance of ICC's Cemeteries and Crematorium Service

ICC's Cemeteries and Crematoria Service	MTG	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Value for money for this service (average residential rate per year \$10)	78%	35%	43%	20%	2%	1%
Responsiveness to complaints	68%	42%	26%	26%	5%	0%
Overall improvement of this service in the last three years	56%	10%	46%	41%	3%	0%
Convenience infrastructure (toilets, seating)	51%	9%	43%	35%	13%	1%
Charges for cemeteries/ crematorium service	47%	8%	39%	46%	5%	2%

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments or suggestions regarding the ICC cemeteries and crematorium service, 51 responded to this question. Nearly a fifth of responses cited the ICC to be doing a good job, while 12% stated better maintenance of older cemetery areas were required (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Additional Comments about Cemeteries and Crematorium Service

Additional Comments	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Doing a good job	9	18%
Better maintenance of older cemetery areas needed	6	12%
Cameras/ Security against vandals	4	8%
Crematorium building should be brighter/ updated	4	8%
Helpful staff	3	6%
Improve access to public toilets on cemetery grounds	3	6%
Access to water at cemeteries	3	6%
Bluff Cemetery is neglected	2	4%
Lack of seating at cemeteries	2	4%

Additional Comments	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Improve maintenance of St John's Cemetery	2	4%
Rose garden at Queens Park should be available to scatter ashes	1	2%
Security has improved	1	2%
Deal with the rabbit problem	1	2%
Crematorium hours limited on Saturday	1	2%
Crematorium car park a long distance from chapel	1	2%
Modernise all facilities	1	2%
Plots too close together/ Not enough walking space between rows	1	2%
Provide a centralised car park for funeral services	1	2%
Becoming expensive	1	2%
A green cemetery	1	2%
Keep water out of Eastern Cemetery	1	2%
Pick up clippings on new side of Greenpoint ICC	1	2%
Improve maintenance of trees/ plants	1	2%