



He aroha te
AROHA

How much does a **TANGIHANGA COST?**

Tangihanga can look different for every whānau. Some are held on the marae, some at home, and others in churches or alternative venues. Costs can range from a few thousand dollars to well over \$15,000, depending on the choices made, the length of the tangihanga, and who is involved.

This information is intended to give rough guidance only, not all costs apply to every whānau, and many marae and communities will support whānau in different ways.



Funeral director costs (if used)

Using a funeral director is optional.

Some whānau choose full services, others choose limited support, and some manage everything themselves.

Approximate cost range:

\$3,000 – \$8,000+

This may include:

- Transfer of tūpāpaku
- Embalming and preparation of tūpāpaku
- Care and storage (if required) of tūpāpaku
- Coordination of paperwork (death registration, burial/cremation forms)
- Use of a hearse
- Support with the funeral or burial service

Some funeral directors offer whānau-led or tikanga-based packages at lower cost, it is okay to ask what can be removed or done by whānau.

Coffin or casket

Coffins and caskets vary widely in cost and style.

Approximate cost range:

\$800 – \$5,000+

Factors that affect cost:

- Material (plain wood, rimu, MDF, woven, or custom)
- Decoration or carving
- Whether it is made locally or imported

Some whānau choose:

- Plain or eco coffins
- Kahu wakatere | woven harakeke coverings
- Coffins built by whānau or local carvers

Embalming and preparation of tūpāpaku

Embalming is not legally required in all situations and is often included within funeral director costs. Embalming may be recommended depending on:

- **Length of the tangihanga**
- **Whether the tūpāpaku will be transported**
- **Where the tūpāpaku will lie (home, marae, funeral home)**
- **Extreme hot weather**

Approximate cost range:

\$500 – \$1,500

Some whānau choose:

- No embalming
- Using a cooling pad (if available)
- Minimal preparation
- Cultural or tikanga-based care where available

It is okay to ask for clear explanations and options.

Marae costs (if held at a marae)

Marae cost range from a kōhā based contribution, to charging fixed hire fees per night.

These cost can vary to cover:

- Koha/hireage for the marae
- Power, water, and cleaning
- Support for ringa wera and kitchen costs

Typical contribution range:

\$1,000 – \$4,000+, depending on length of stay and numbers

Extra marae costs may include:

- Marquee or gazebo hire
- Table cloths, extra tables and chairs, cutlery and crockery etc

Feeding people (kai)

Kai is one of the largest costs of a tangihanga.

Approximate cost range:

\$1,500 – \$6,000+

This depends on:

- Number of days (usually 2–5)
- Number of people attending
- The amount of kai recieved as kōhā or what is needed to be purchased
- Catering vs whānau-prepared kai

Koha for paepae and ringa wera

Koha is not a “fee” but a tikanga-based acknowledgement.

Typical koha range (very approximate):

Paepae: \$300 – \$1,000+

Ringa wera / kitchen support: \$300 – \$1,000+

This may be given:

- As cash
- As food
- As a combined koha to the marae

There is no expectation to give beyond what whānau can afford.

Home-based tangihanga

Holding a tangihanga at home can reduce some costs but increase others.

Possible costs include:

- Tūpāpaku care and storage
- Portable toilets
- Hiring Marquees, Gazebos, heaters, seating, cutlery and crockery, extra re Fridgeration
- Extra power or cleaning

Approximate cost range:

\$1,000 – \$4,000+

This option often relies heavily on whānau and community support.

Church or alternative venue

If the tangihanga or service is held at a church or other venue:

Possible costs:

- Venue hire
- Minister or celebrant koha
- Cleaning or security

Approximate cost range:

\$500 – \$3,000+

Some churches will reduce or waive fees for members or local whānau.

Burial or cremation costs

Burial costs may include:

- Plot purchase
- Burial fees

Burial is a common choice for many whānau Māori, particularly where there is an urupā, whānau plot, or strong connection to whenua. Burial costs vary depending on where the burial takes place, whether a plot already exists, and local council or urupā requirements.

Burial may take place in:

- A public cemetery (run by a local council)
- An urupā on Māori land
- A church or private cemetery
- A whānau urupā (where permitted)

The location will determine most of the costs.

For burial in a public cemetery, if the whānau does not already have a burial plot, one usually needs to be purchased.

Approximate cost:

\$800 – \$3,000+

Costs vary depending on:

- The cemetery
- Whether the plot is single or double depth
- Whether the person lived in the district (resident vs non-resident pricing)

Some councils charge significantly more for non-residents.

Burial / interment fee (opening and closing the grave)

This fee covers:

- Digging the grave
- Equipment and staff
- Health and safety requirements
- Closing the grave after burial

Approximate cost:

\$800 – \$2,000

This cost applies even if the plot is already owned.

Additional costs may apply if:

- The burial is outside standard working hours
- The burial takes place on a weekend or public holiday
- Extra depth is required

Burial permit and paperwork

Before a burial can take place, official documentation is required.

This includes:

- Medical Certificate of Cause of Death
- Burial permit / authorisation
- Registration of death

Approximate cost:

Often included with funeral director services

(or \$0 – \$200 if self-managed)

Approximate cost range:

\$1,500 – \$5,000+

Burial at an urupā on Māori land

Burial at an urupā may involve:

- Little or no formal fees
- Koha instead of set charges
- Whānau-led grave preparation
- Tikanga-led processes

Costs here are often much lower, but still may include:

- Koha
- Equipment hire

Cremation

Cremation requires additional legal paperwork before it can take place. Alongside the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (required for all deaths), cremation must be approved by two medical practitioners, with one providing an independent confirmation of the cause of death. In some circumstances, such as sudden, accidental, or unexplained deaths approval from the Coroner may also be required before cremation can proceed. This extra process means cremation can sometimes take longer to arrange than burial, and whānau may wish to ask early about timing and any potential delays. This process can be handled by your funeral director.

Approximate cost range:

\$700 – \$1,500

Ash return, urns/boxes, and memorials may be additional.

Headstone/plaque (often later alongside unveiling processes)

Headstones and memorials can range widely in cost, depending on size, material, and design. In Aotearoa, a simple plaque or small memorial may cost around \$400–\$1,000, while a standard upright headstone commonly ranges from \$3,000–\$6,000, with more detailed or custom designs costing \$7,000 or more. Additional costs can include council or cemetery permit fees (around \$50–\$200), installation fees if not included, and optional extras such as photos, carvings, or additional inscriptions.

Approximate cost range:

\$400 – \$7,000

Lower-cost options are available where budgets are tight.

Other common costs

These can be unexpected but common:

- Printing service sheets (funeral directors may supply this as part of their services, though it may be more cost effective for whānau to source printing themselves - but this also means extra mahi)
- Flowers or putiputi/rakau for the coffin
- Travel and accommodation for whānau
- Clothing for tūpāpaku
- Live streaming or recording (funeral directors may have the capability to undertake this)
- Flowers or centre pieces for hakari tables
- Blankets for kaumātua and outdoor heaters in cold weather, or fans in hot weather

Important things for whānau to know

- You do not have to do everything
- You can say no things that don't feel right
- Tangihanga can be simple, beautiful, and deeply meaningful without being expensive
- Community, tikanga, and aroha often carry whānau through more than money

Questions to ask a funeral director

You have the right to ask questions, take time, and make choices that align with your values, tikanga, and budget. A good funeral director will respect this.

Support and tikanga

- Do you have experience supporting tangihanga and tikanga Māori?
- Can you work alongside kaumātua, marae, or whānau representatives?
- Will you respect our tikanga even if it differs from your usual process?

Services and costs

- Can you provide a full itemised quote?
- What services are optional rather than required?
- What can whānau do ourselves to reduce costs?
- Are there lower-cost or whānau-led options available?
- Are there any additional or hidden fees we should be aware of?

Care of our loved one

- Is embalming required in our situation?
- If not embalmed, what are the alternatives?
- Can we spend time with our loved one before or after preparation?
- How can whānau be involved in caring for tūpāpaku?

Coffins and taonga

- What coffin options are available at different price points?
- Can we use a coffin provided or made by whānau?
- Are eco or simple options available?

Tangihanga location

- Are there any additional requirements if our loved one lies at home or on the marae?
- What does your support look like if the tangihanga is not held at a funeral home?

Transport and timing

- What transport is included in the price?
- Are there extra charges for distance, time, or multiple days?
- Can we take time before making final decisions?

Paperwork and legal matters

- What paperwork do you manage on our behalf?
- What do we need to organise ourselves?
- How long do we have before decisions must be made?

Tangihanga budget worksheet (guide only)

This worksheet is to help whānau estimate, plan, and prioritise. Not all costs apply to all whānau.

Funeral director and tūpāpaku care

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Funeral director services	\$	
Embalming / preparation	\$	
Storage / care	\$	
Transport	\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Coffin / casket

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Coffin / casket	\$	
Flowers / Decoration / carving	\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Venue

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Hireage fee /Marae koha / venue costs	\$	
Hireage (toilets, Marquees/gazebos etc)	\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Kai

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Groceries / catering	\$	
Other supplies	\$	
Hireage cost (cutlery, crockery, fridge, tables)	\$	
Kōha (Donations) received	-\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Koha and tikanga

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Paepae	\$	
Ringa wera	\$	
Grave diggers (if applicable)	\$	
Weavers (if applicable)	\$	
Other koha	\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Burial or cremation

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Burial plot / fees	\$	
Paperwork fees (if applicable)	\$	
Cremation (if applicable)	\$	
Urn (if applicable)	\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Other costs

<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Printing / service sheets	\$	
Travel / accommodation	\$	
Live streaming / recording	\$	
Subtotal	\$	

Estimated total tangihanga cost

\$ _____

What support is available for whānau?

When someone passes away, whānau are often expected to organise everything quickly, while grieving. There is support available, and asking for help is not a failure. It is a practical act of care for your whānau. Support can come from government agencies, iwi and hapū, marae, workplaces, churches, and the wider community.

Financial support

Work and Income (WINZ) — Funeral Grant

A Funeral Grant may be available to help with funeral and tangihanga costs.

What it can help with:

- Funeral director costs
- Coffin or casket
- Burial or cremation fees
- Transport

Important things to know:

- The grant is income and asset tested
- It is paid after costs are confirmed
- It does not usually cover the full cost, but can help reduce pressure

Whānau can apply themselves, or a funeral director may assist with the application.

ACC support (if the death was due to an accident)

If the death was caused by an accident, ACC may provide support.

This can include:

- Funeral costs (up to a set limit)
- Support for dependents
- Ongoing financial assistance in some cases

It is okay to ask ACC directly whether your situation is covered.

Iwi, hapū, and marae support

Many iwi, hapū, and marae have their own ways of supporting whānau during tangihanga.

This may include:

- Reduced or waived marae costs
- Support with kai
- Help from ringa wera
- Koha kai or koha putea from iwi organisations or rūnanga
- Guidance with tikanga and process

Community and whānau support

Tangihanga are often carried by the wider community.

This support may look like:

- Kai donations
- Grocery vouchers
- Cooking and cleaning help
- Fundraising organised by friends or whānau
- Online fundraising platforms are also sometimes used. For some whānau this is helpful; for others it does not feel right. Both choices are valid.

Workplace support

Some workplaces offer:

- Bereavement leave
- Additional paid or unpaid leave
- Flexible work arrangements

It may help to ask HR or a manager what is available or have someone else advocate on your behalf if needed.

Church, faith, and kaupapa Māori organisations

Churches, mosques, and faith communities often provide:

- Venue support
- Minister or celebrant services
- Kai
- Financial or practical help

Kaupapa Māori organisations may also offer:

- Advocacy
- Navigation support
- Emotional or cultural support for whānau

Non-financial support matters too

Not all support is about money.

Whānau may need:

- Someone to help make phone calls
- Help coordinating people and roles
- Emotional or spiritual tautoko
- Time and space to grieve

It is okay to ask someone you trust to be a support person or coordinator during this time.

Kōrero whakamutunga

You do not have to carry this alone

Support exists because people understand loss

Accepting help does not diminish mana

Tangihanga are collective by nature

Aroha is shown in many forms, including practical help.