

Media Release

From: Jill Stringer, Communications Advisor

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Subject: Unveiling

The unveiling of a memorial headstone will be held on 26 March, 2004 at 2.30pm in the children's section of Riverside Cemetery, conducted by the Reverend Hariata Tahana. The headstone has been established as a memorial for those people who had no other gravesite to visit for an event of loss.

"The idea for a memorial headstone came about when we were trying to determine the origin of a small number of specimens kept at Masterton Hospital for teaching purposes", says Jill Stringer, DHB Communications Advisor. "We had retained a very few specimens, including parts of skeletons, and three fetuses. After extensive research, the origins of the specimens were unable to be determined. They had plainly been collected many years ago, before guidelines were introduced about collection and retention of human organs or specimens. It is considered most likely that the skeletons were purchased many years ago for teaching purposes."

Eventually, it was decided that the appropriate course of action was to cremate and inter the specimens. A ceremony was held in October 2002, at Riverside cemetery and the cremated remains were interred in a quiet corner of the children's cemetery.

"We came to realise that a memorial would be particularly important for women/families who lost babies or had stillbirths in previous decades, when the importance of being able to hold and farewell infants, no matter what their gestation, was not well understood and not routine hospital practice", said Ms Stringer.

The headstone, donated by Headstones Wairarapa, reads:

"This is the final resting place of undated and untraceable human remains,
including 3 unborn babies, formerly held by Masterton Hospital for clinical teaching,
respectfully interred 4 October 2002.

Let this be a quiet place to remember those who have no other memorial,
save in a corner of our hearts.

Oki oki I roto I te Ariki – Lie now in peace.

Ends

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