

ITEM 4 WATERFALL GENERAL (GARRAWARRA) CEMETERY

Council at its meeting on the 28 November 2011, in considering a report on the Helensburgh 7D lands (Item 3) resolved that *a further report be prepared on the Garrawarra Cemetery in light of the implications of the Cemetery's significance*. This report has been prepared in response to this request. The report details the information gathered in relation to the site and outlines the key issues required to be resolved and addressed to inform decision-making. A staged process for decision-making and planning for the site is then proposed.

Recommendation

- 1 Stage 1 of the proposal detailed in this report be undertaken, including:
 - a Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan;
 - b Further explore access options/arrangements;
 - c Undertake a risk assessment;
 - d Undertake community consultation, including with families of those buried in the cemetery;
 - e Explore possible sources of funding for the site;
 - f Consider the potential for a 'Friends of the Cemetery' or a 'Cemetery Conservation' group.
 - g Pursue and make publicly available a burial register for the site.
- 2 Following completion of stage 1, a further report be provided to Council, detailing the outcomes of stage 1 and the options available for future management and public accessibility.
- 3 Council write to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage outlining support for consideration of the Garrawarra Hospital site, including the Cemetery, for listing on the State Heritage Register.

Attachments

- 1 Notification and Plan for Waterfall General Cemetery showing layout and sections, 27 February 1907.
- 2 Location Map for Waterfall General Cemetery.
- 3 Photographs of the Cemetery site including remnant gravestones.
- 4 Heritage Map for Waterfall General Cemetery and Hospital site.
- 5 Ownership Map for Surrounding Properties.

Report Authorisations

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Background

History of the Cemetery and its Management

The Garrawarra Hospital first opened in 1909 as 'the Hospital for Consumptives'. From 1914-1957 the site operated under the name 'Waterfall State Sanatorium for Tuberculosis'. In 1958, after considerable improvements in the treatment of Tuberculosis, the site was converted to a centre for the aged and chronically ill and became known as 'Garrawarra Hospital'. In 1992, the hospital site was converted to the 'Garrawarra Centre for Aged Care. The site continues to operate as a NSW Health Service Aged Care facility although many of the original hospital buildings have been abandoned, including the wards. The site is understood to be the State's only purpose built facility for the treatment of Tuberculosis or 'Consumption' as it was previously known.

In 1907, two (2) years prior to the opening of the Hospital, the Waterfall General Cemetery was notified by the State Government. The notification, including the layout of the Cemetery into religious sections, is provided as Attachment 1 to this report. The cemetery is located approximately 700m south of the hospital site, along the former route of the Old South Coast Road which is now preserved as a fire trail. The location of the Cemetery is shown on the map at Attachment 2. The Cemetery is understood to have received some 2000 burials between 1909 and the mid 1950's. In 1967, responsibility for care and control of the Cemetery was handed to Council from the State, along with the Wollongong, Scarborough and Helensburgh General Cemeteries.

A review of Council's records has indicated that little (if any) maintenance of the Cemetery by Council has occurred since this time. This raises the question as to whether Council has ever acknowledged this responsibility. Council's records do show that in 2000, Council was informed of these responsibilities by local historians, Carol and John Herben, during preparation of a partial burial register for the Cemetery. Council's records indicate that little action was taken by Council in response to this notification. In 2011, Council was contacted by the Helensburgh Historical Society, who provided a copy of a letter from the Member for Heathcote Lee Evans MP, which indicated that Council had custodianship of the Cemetery. Council's care and control responsibilities were not identified in Council's Property Information System. Council's property data has now been updated.

Current Condition of the Site

Due to the lack of maintenance at the Cemetery since the 1960's, and the Cemetery's remote location, the surrounding bush has encroached onto the site. The overgrown

condition of the site makes it unrecognisable as a Cemetery, as is indicated in the aerial photograph of the site provided in Attachment 2.

During site inspections of the Cemetery undertaken in January and March 2012, the site was found to be heavily overgrown, with many graves damaged by overgrown vegetation, vandalism and grave subsidence. This is clearly demonstrated in the photographs of the site included as Attachment 3 to this report. The site is also understood to have been affected by bush fires on several occasions in recent decades, including a significant fire in 2001. These fires are believed to have resulted in the loss of much of the evidence of the Cemetery including timber grave markers, which were likely to have been prevalent throughout the Cemetery.

Despite the condition of the Cemetery, Council staff successfully located 43 identifiable graves, with at least partial inscriptions that are expected to allow for identification, following receipt of a full burial register. In addition, a range of burial sites without plaques or markers have been identified across the site, with many being marked out using ironstone edging placed on the ground surface. Whilst clearing of the site would likely reveal further evidence of burials, and whilst a thorough survey of the Cemetery is yet to be completed, it is clear that evidence of many of the 2000 odd burials on the site has been lost. It is however likely that at least some of the evidence of the Cemetery's original layout, roadways and religious sections could be revealed through clearing and careful management of the site, as evidence of some fencing, roadways and entry gates remains on site.

Heritage Listings and Significance

The Garrawarra Hospital site is subject to a local heritage listing (item 6486) within Schedule 5, Part 1 of the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009. This listing includes the gates and gatehouse, administration building (Palmer House), kitchen blocks, kitchen and store block, staff cafeteria, nurse's hostel, and residential houses. The 'Garrawarra Hospital Cemetery' is subject to a separate local heritage listing (item 61028). The Garrawarra Hospital site is separately identified as a Heritage Conservation Area within Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009, in recognition of the significant landscape and site features that are not buildings. The Cemetery is not within the boundary of the Conservation Area. The boundaries of these heritage listings are shown in the map at Attachment 4.

Whilst the Garrawarra Hospital site was the subject of a detailed heritage assessment undertaken by Howard Tanner in 1993 and documented in a Conservation Management Plan, this report is very architecturally focused. The report provides little mention and discussion of the Cemetery and no assessment of its significance or condition other than a brief inventory which identified that the site was overgrown and required further assessment. No evidence of a statement of significance prepared for the Garrawarra Cemetery has been found in the preparation of this report. Council's Heritage Officer has prepared the following brief Statement of Significance to summarise the importance of the Cemetery.

Waterfall General (Garrawarra) Cemetery is of significance to the Community of Wollongong, Sydney, and possibly the State of NSW, as it provides evidence of historic burial practices for those with infectious disease, as a part of a complete care approach for infectious disease, within a Government operated asylum. The Cemetery's layout, remote location, and association with the Garrawarra Hospital site, provides strong evidence of the Government's approach to health care and the treatment of Tuberculosis in the early 20th Century. The Cemetery forms part of the only purpose built facility for the treatment and care of Tuberculosis patients in NSW. The 2000 burials contained within the Cemetery provide strong evidence of the devastating effect that Tuberculosis had on the community during the first half of the 20th Century and of the many who succumbed to the disease. The site retains a strong connection to the families and descendants of those who succumbed to Tuberculosis and who were buried on the site, often some distance from their homes and families.

Whilst the condition of the Cemetery is poor due to lack of maintenance over the past 50 years, and whilst the site has been consumed by vegetation, with evidence of many graves having been destroyed in the process, the site retains sufficient physical evidence to be able to interpret the significant history of the Cemetery, its association with the hospital, and the memory of those buried within its boundary for current and future generations.

During the preparation of this report, Council officers contacted the NSW Heritage Office to discuss the significance of the site. The NSW Heritage Office indicated that the Cemetery, as part of the broader Garrawarra Hospital site, may potentially meet the criteria for listing on the State Heritage Register. Further assessment of the significance of the Cemetery as part of the broader site would be required to establish if this is the case. The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage have now written to Council seeking support for consideration of a potential State Heritage listing.

Support for this process is recommended. Due to the State ownership and management of most of the Garrawarra Hospital site, any potential listing would be subject to State government considerations and inter-Departmental discussion. Listing on the State Heritage Register would however open up potential funding avenues for the future maintenance and conservation of the Cemetery.

Heritage Conservation

There will be challenges in managing such an overgrown Cemetery site with heritage significance in a very isolated location. The National Trust has produced a publication 'Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation' which provides management and conservation guidance in relation to Cemeteries. These guidelines provide a useful starting point and could form the basis for the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan for the site.

Access

The Cemetery is located on a landlocked site, surrounded by other Crown Land in the management of various State Government Departments, as shown in Attachment 6.

Council does not currently have legal access to the site, and is presently accessing the site via the fire trail (the Old South Coast Road) through the Garrawarra Centre, with the permission of Garrawarra Centre Management. This process requires Council staff to borrow keys and to sign in and out of the site. The old South Coast Road, which runs adjacent to the site, has been “closed” for some time and now functions as a fire trail, with locked gates at either end.

Anecdotal evidence would indicate that whilst the site does not have legal access, the site does receive regular visitation from a range of individuals. For example, a representative of the Department of Veteran’s Affairs annually inspects a military grave located in the Cemetery. It is unclear how many people presently visit the site, however regular requests to visit the site are received by Council, the Helensburgh Historical Society and the Garrawarra Centre.

Flora and Fauna Assessment

Given the location of the site within an area with strong environmental and ecological values, it is considered essential that the heritage significance of the site must be balanced with the consideration of the sites environmental values. This is particularly important given that the site has been allowed to return to bush land. For this reason, a Flora and Fauna Assessment of the site was undertaken by Council officers. The assessment identified that the site is occupied by a range of native vegetation types, is remarkably free of weeds, and provides potential habitat and foraging for a range of fauna. However, there are no specific or significant environmental constraints likely to impact on decision making relevant to the site.

Cemetery Records

Whilst it appeared that the best documentation available relating to the Cemetery was the Herben’s report, it has come to Council’s attention that a full burial register is in the process of being prepared for the site. An experienced archivist has accessed records that were stored in the basement of a Garrawarra Building and voluntarily undertook the process of archiving the records for storage within NSW archives. During this process the Archivist has been compiling what she believes to be a complete burial register for the site, containing some 2000 names of individuals buried in the Cemetery. The Archivist has indicated that she will be happy to provide a copy of her research and burial register to Council when it is complete. The timing of this is unclear at this stage.

The public accessibility of records relating to burials at the Cemetery, and the ability to link these with photographs of the site, to map out locations of burials and overlay these across the site is an extremely important outcome, regardless of the future management or public accessibility of the Cemetery.

Future Ownership and Management

Prior to the commencement of work toward preparation of this report, Council’s responsibility for management of the site was known to only a few people. The management of the Garrawarra Centre also believed that the site fell within their custodianship. Given the complexities of site management in this remote location and

that the site is surrounded by Crown Land, including water catchment, road reserve and health facilities, and with a lack of legal access, a question could be raised over whether Council is in the best place to manage the site into the future. Consideration could be given to the potential handing of the site back to the State Government depending on the outcome of further investigations, and depending on the State Government's willingness to resume responsibilities for management.

Proposal

In order to allow for further consideration and resolution of the issues identified within this report, a staged process for working toward decision making is proposed to further consider options for the future management, conservation, and potential public accessibility of the Waterfall General (Garrawarra) Cemetery. This process is detailed below in three (3) stages:

Stage 1 – Research Project

Stage 1 involves the continuation of the project commenced in the preparation of this report, and is aimed at gathering and preparing additional information to inform Council decision making in relation to the key issues identified within the report. The matters to be addressed in this Stage would include:

a **Conservation Management Plan**

Develop a Heritage Conservation Management Plan for the Cemetery, using the principles and policies of the Burra Charter and the National Trust Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation, so as to inform future management and conservation of the site. Estimated cost \$10,000, which could be funded under the current Heritage budget.

b **Access Options**

Explore available options to establish legal access to the Cemetery site for Council management, as well as for public access, if this were considered appropriate in the future.

c **Risk Assessment**

Undertake a detailed risk assessment of the site to consider risks associated with the potential future management and operation of the site, with consideration to the various options for future management and public access.

d **Consultation**

Undertake further stakeholder, and broad community consultation, relating to possible options for the future management of the site, including engagement with known families of those buried on the site.

e **Funding**

Undertake a financial assessment of available management options and explore potential funding avenues available through other levels of government if and when

available. Consider the suggestion of the Wollongong Heritage Advisory Committee as to the feasibility of re-opening the Cemetery (if space is available) to provide funding for works to the site.

f Friends or Cemetery Conservation Group

Explore the potential to establish a 'Friends of the Cemetery' or 'Cemetery Conservation' group, to assist with management, fundraising and conservation projects (potentially under a similar model to the Berkeley Pioneer Cemetery Restoration Group).

g Cemetery Records

Work with the Archivist and State Records to ensure that a thorough burial register can be finalised and made available to the public in an easily accessible format and/or location.

Stage 2 – Council Report and Decisions on Future Management

Following the completion of the work outlined in Stage 1, a further report will be prepared for Council's consideration, detailing the findings of the stage 1 project, along with the documentation and reports already gathered and prepared (such as the Flora and Fauna Constraints). This report will then outline possible future management options, which are anticipated to include (but not necessarily be limited to):

- 1 Opening of the site to full public access in a similar arrangement to other Council Cemeteries.
- 2 Opening of the site to restricted access (e.g. by appointment/arrangement, or at set times and dates throughout the year).
- 3 Fencing and securing of the site to prevent public access.
- 4 Maintenance of existing arrangements (with little to no active management).
- 5 Transfer of care and control responsibilities to a State Government Department.

Stage 3 - Implementation

Council's decision at Stage 2 is likely to result in a range of additional works and planning being required to support implementation of this decision. This stage may include, for example:

- Development of a Plan of Management for the site.
- Development and implementation of an Asset Management Plan for the site.
- Completion of maintenance and conservation works in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan.
- Removal/reduction of overgrown vegetation on the site to protect graves and monuments from further damage, as well as from future fires.
- Establish if possible a formal vehicular and/or pedestrian access to the property.
- Consider the need for construction of site fencing to enable the site to be secured and to prevent illegal vehicular access and potential vandalism.

- Potential establishment and running of a 'friends' or 'Cemetery Conservation Group'.
- Preparing a planning proposal to rezone the site from its current E3 Environmental Management zone (proposed E2 Environmental Conservation zone) to SP2 – Cemetery.

It is felt that this staged approach to decision making will allow Council to provide a considered approach to management and planning for the site. This will ensure that the relevant risks and costs of various options can be accounted for in the decision making process. Consultation with stakeholders and the community will need to inform all stages of the process.

Consultation and Communication

In preparing this report, consultation has occurred with a range of groups and individuals with an interest in the Cemetery and its future management. These groups have included: The Helensburgh Historical Society; the Wollongong Historical Society; the NSW Health Service, Garrawarra Centre management, a small number of descendants of those buried within the Cemetery, the NSW Heritage Office and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch of the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

It is of note that local historians from the Helensburgh and Wollongong Historical Societies, provided a significant amount of background material and assistance, used in preparing this report. In addition, the Archivist, a volunteer archivist who is currently finalising a full burial register for the Cemetery has provided additional assistance and offered to provide a copy of her work to Council as soon as it is finalised.

On 11 July 2012 Council's Heritage Advisory Committee considered a report, detailing the proposed staged project approach to the future management of the Waterfall General (Garrawarra) Cemetery. The Committee supported this approach and requested that this support be noted for Council's information. It is also noted that members of the Heritage Advisory Committee suggested exploring the potential to reopen the Cemetery for burials, as a potential means of funding required works to the site.

Consultation with the above groups, along with other key stakeholders, including the relevant State Government bodies, should continue in future stages of the project as part of a broader approach to community consultation.

Planning and Policy Impact

Now that Council is aware of its responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Cemetery, Council is confronted with a range of risks and management issues related to this previously unrecognised asset. The identification of an additional Cemetery within Council's asset base, despite its effective closure, will require the

addition of the asset to Council's Asset Register and funding toward asset maintenance, in whatever form that may take.

The process defined and recommended within this report is intended to further inform decision making by gathering further information in relation to the likely costs and complications related to various future management options. The policy impacts of this will be further detailed in the Council report on the Stage 1 Project, which is detailed within this report.

Risk Assessment

Whilst no formal risk assessment of the Cemetery has been undertaken, the site currently presents a range of risks relevant for Council's consideration. These risks include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- The potential for injury caused by the current condition of the Cemetery, and uncontrolled access without an established legal access right;
- Continued negative impacts on heritage significance due to lack of management;
- Negative perception in the community and from those connected to the site, such as descendants of those buried in the site who expect the site to be maintained;
- Potential further damage to the Cemetery and contribution to potential bushfire risk, due to lack of maintenance and build up of fuel loads.

A detailed risk assessment forms part of the recommended project proposed in this report. This risk assessment would be aimed at ensuring that decision making relating to the future management of the Cemetery is informed by the potential consequences and risk considerations. For example, the removal of vegetation from the site may result in illegal access to the site by motorcycles or other vehicles.

Financial Implications

The Stage 1 project proposed within this report will require a commitment of Council staff time and resources as well as funding for the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan for the site, and costs related to advertising and community consultation to inform the project. These costs are anticipated to be in the order of \$15,000. Funding of the project can be allocated from the annual heritage budget allocation and the public exhibition budgets of the Environmental Strategy and Planning Division.

The future costs relating to the management and conservation of the Cemetery will be dependent on the future management approach for the site. As this asset has not previously been acknowledged by Council, it will need to be added to Council's asset register and funded in future years. Further details of the expected costs will be detailed in the report on the Stage 1 Project recommended within this report.

Conclusion

Council has had responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Waterfall General Cemetery since 1967 when it was made trustee. Due to forty five (45) years of unintentional neglect of these responsibilities, there are a range of risks generated, as well as social and ethical responsibilities which Council must now address. Whilst the issues presented by this site are extremely complex, and the condition of the site is such that any change to management arrangements is likely to take some time to implement, this report details and proposes a process that will enable informed decision making around future management of the Cemetery.