

**ITEM 7 POLICY REVIEW - WOLLONGONG MEMORIAL GARDENS & CEMETERIES**

The Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries Council Policy has been reviewed to better reflect Council's policy framework and provide a clear understanding of the management and operations of Council's cemeteries and gardens.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Council endorses the revised Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries Policy.

**REPORT AUTHORISATIONS**

Report of: Lucielle Power, Manager Property + Recreation  
Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 Draft Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries Council Policy

**BACKGROUND**

The policy has been developed to provide our community with clear guidelines around how Council manages our cemeteries and gardens and to ensure our community feels confident that Council will undertake its responsibilities to provide space to honour and remember those that have passed.

The policy has been amended to highlight Council's commitment to its community by providing cemeteries and gardens that meet their needs well into the future. It specifically provides guidance and procedures in relation to:

- the setting aside of sections for different types and classes of interment.
- areas dedicated to specific cultures where the burial needs differ from those of the general sections.
- the establishment of standards of construction and design of monuments and structures.
- the carrying out of work by Funeral Directors and monument masons in the Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries.
- the erection, installation removal and maintenance of structures.
- the improvement and maintenance of Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries.
- the conduct of religious or other ceremonies of burial, cremation, disposition, or commemoration.
- suspension or cancelling of pre-need reservations to maintain access for at-need burials or memorials.
- the provision of indigent burials within the cemeteries.
- the allocation of interment rights to customers.

Most of the information held within the policy previously was operational in nature and therefore has been moved to the Management Policy to leave a clear identification of the strategic outputs of the cemeteries function. The exception to this is the removal of references to several Cemeteries being closed including Bulli, Wollongong, and Scarborough, where reviews are currently being undertaken to identify new sites for burials.

All references to cremations within the Council Policy have also been removed.

The Management Policy now provides guidance on how each section of our cemeteries and gardens will be operated. It now incorporates a significant proportion of the previous Council Policy. It provides understanding around:

- Interments including transferral of interment rights, certificates of interments, requirements for interment right holders.
- Funeral Directors and monumental masons' responsibilities and compliance requirements.
- Removal of structures, including unsafe structures from within the cemeteries.
- Responsibilities of the interment right holder to the ongoing maintenance of any monument, headstone, or plaque.
- Procedures around the establishment of sections within the cemeteries including:
  - Lawn Sections
  - Monument and Headstone Sections
  - Macedonian and Full Monument Sections
  - Crypts and Vaults
  - Islamic Burials
- Booking of Burials after hours.
- Carrying out of indigent burials and exhumations.

The Council Policy will provide staff and the community with clear expectations on how our cemeteries and gardens are managed, how our community will be treated and how Council will ensure all community members have a final resting place that meets their individual faith needs into the future.

## PROPOSAL

Council endorses the Wollongong Memorial Gardens & Cemeteries Council Policy.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Property & Recreation
- Governance

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 Goal 5. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2032	Delivery Program 2022-2026
Strategy	Service
5.4 Provide a variety of quality and accessible public places and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community.	Manage Council's commercial businesses to optimise service delivery at Wollongong Memorial Gardens and cemeteries

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The policy allows Council to restrict sales at a cemetery or within a cemetery to at-need only. Providing opportunity to ensure that dedicated space is available when the community needs it. It also allows Council to be able to return reserved spaces back to the community if unused after 50 years. Together this will ensure that land set aside for burials and memorialisations is used effectively.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

By limiting sales of sites to pre-need ensures Council can provide for the community when needed.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial impact on implementation of this policy.

## CONCLUSION

The Wollongong Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries Council Policy provides consistent interpretation of our operations and ensures all decisions are applied in line with the relevant acts that oversee the industry. It provides the community a clear understanding of Council's role in the management and operations of our cemeteries.



## WOLLONGONG MEMORIAL GARDENS AND CEMETERIES COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

### PURPOSE

Council recognises the importance of its Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries to our community. This policy has been developed to ensure that Council's Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries are managed effectively and provide our community with access to interment services that are respectful of culture and faith and provided in a consistent, transparent, and accountable manner.

### POLICY INTENT

The main objectives of this policy are to –

- 1 Recognise the importance of our Cemeteries and Memorial Gardens to our community.
- 2 Ensure that our Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries are well managed, safe, and accessible.
- 3 Enable Council to continue to meet the needs of our community through effective management and future planning.

### WOLLONGONG 2032 OBJECTIVES

5.4 Provide a variety of quality and accessible public places and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, learning and cultural activities in the community.

This will be achieved through the management of Council's commercial businesses to optimise service delivery at the Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries

### POLICY

#### Citation

This Policy may be cited as 'the Policy' or 'the Council's Cemeteries Policy'.

#### Application

This Policy applies to all cemeteries and memorial gardens controlled, managed, administered, operated, and maintained by Council.

#### Definitions

**Cemetery or Cemeteries** means an area containing one or more burial places and that is administered or controlled by Council.

**Council** means Wollongong City Council.

**Cremation** means the process for the reduction of the human remains by fire or heat, alkaline hydrolysis or by other means prescribed by the regulations.

**Interment** means the act of burying, interring, or immuring the remains of a deceased person, whether cremated or not.

**Interment Right Holder** means the person/s granted by application the exclusive right to authorise the interment of human remains (whether cremated or not) and/or to establish or alter a Monument or other memorial at the interment site in respect to which the right was granted

**Interment Site** means a grave site, vault site, crypt site, memorial site or other place for the disposition or commemoration of the remains of the dead, whether cremated or not.

## WOLLONGONG MEMORIAL GARDENS AND CEMETERIES

## COUNCIL POLICY

**Memorial Gardens** means an area containing sites for cremated remains only, and that which is administered or controlled by Council.

**Monument** means any structure, memorial, plaque, headstone, masonry, metal work, casting or item placed over, in or around an Interment Site.

**Pre-need** means a service or Interment Right purchased or being purchased in advance of actual need, that is, the entitlement of the Interment Right has not been exercised.

### PROVISIONS

#### Planning, Conduct and Maintenance of Council's Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries

Council will make such provisions as it considers necessary to ensure the effective management of its memorial gardens and cemeteries to ensure they are well managed, safe, and accessible to the community through the following:

- a. the setting aside of sections for different types and classes of Interment. Council will ensure, where available and based on need, that a variety of interment options are available for the community's use across its cemeteries and gardens.
- b. areas dedicated to specific cultures where the interment needs differ from those of the general sections. Council will provide options for cultural interments at Wollongong Lawn Cemetery, where there is significant need within the local community.
- c. the carrying out of work by contractors and external stakeholders, including conducting burials, and the installation and maintenance of monuments in the Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries will require approval by Council
- d. the removal, replacement, and maintenance of monuments. Structures erected within the cemeteries remain the responsibility of the interment right holder. If deemed unsafe, Council will cordon off or lay down a monument to ensure the safety of the public.
- e. the conducting of religious or other ceremonies of burial, cremation, disposition, or commemoration will be allowed with prior approval by Council.
- f. suspension or cancelling of pre-need reservations to maintain access for at-need burials or memorials. Where the supply of interments is restricted, Council will allow only at-need burials to ensure the community can access sites when needed.
- g. the provision of indigent burials within the cemeteries. Burial sites at Wollongong Lawn Cemetery will be made available for indigent burials.

### LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This Policy is aligned with the following legislation to ensure that the Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries administered by Council comply with statutory requirements:

1. Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013;
2. Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2022;
3. NSW Public Health Act 2010 and Public Health Regulation 2022;
4. Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-Law 2006; and
5. Australian Standards for Headstones and Cemetery Monuments AS 4204:2019

It considers statute and common law, regulation and National Standards that affect the management and operation of memorial gardens and cemeteries. It also sets reasonable and practical standards of conduct for those entering Council's cemeteries and memorial gardens.

## WOLLONGONG MEMORIAL GARDENS AND CEMETERIES

## COUNCIL POLICY

### APPLICATION OF ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) PRINCIPLES

The Policy assists in achieving practical allocation of diminishing resources, primarily interment rights and interment sites, within the cemeteries and memorial gardens.

It also encourages all new structures (monuments, etc) to be built in accordance with the best practices and standards, thereby making them as sustainable as possible.

### REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every two years from the date of each adoption of the policy, or more frequently as required.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Operations Manager Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries will oversee the implementation of this policy across all sites under Council's control.

### RELATED PROCEDURES

Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries Operations Management

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Property and Recreation
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	26/05/2014; 29/05/2017
Date of next review	[Not more than two years from last adoption]