

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

This policy links to objective 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.

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.

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.

At-need means a service or Interment Right is purchased and executed at the time of, or immediately after the death of an individual.

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, including natural burials, 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. a limit of up to 4 interments (combination of ashes and body) will be allowed in a burial plot, with a maximum of 2 bodily interments in each site (this does not include destitute burials).
- d. 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
- e. the removal, replacement, and maintenance of memorial structures erected within the cemeteries remain the responsibility of the interment right holder. To ensure the safety of our community, if deemed unsafe, Council will cordon off or lay down a monument, in line with the processes identified in the industry interment scheme.
- f. the conducting of religious or other ceremonies of burial, disposition, or commemoration will be allowed with prior approval by Council within our memorial gardens and cemeteries. Religious or other memorial ceremonies wishing to be undertaken in public parks or other areas may be subject to separate approvals and booking processes.
- g. cremated remains will be stored securely for a period of up to 12 months from the date of delivery. During this time, 3 attempts will be made to contact the Interment Right Holder to determine placement arrangements. If after 12 months and with no confirmed arrangement, council reserves the right to inter the ashes into one of our allocated scatters gardens. This approach and timeframe will also be applied to memorial plaques, in which case they will be placed at the individual reserved plot.
- h. where the supply of interments is restricted, Council will allow only at-need burials to ensure the community can access sites when needed. The option of reserving one pre-need Interment Right at the time of purchasing an at-need Interment Right, is allowed however will expire **30 days after the date of burial**.
- i. destitute burials will be provided at Wollongong Lawn Cemetery.

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*
5. *Australian Standards for Headstones and Cemetery Monuments AS 4204:2019*
6. *Crematoria and Cemeteries NSW Industry Interment Scheme 2024*

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.

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 a minimum of once every term of Council, 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 STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Management policy - Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries Operations Management.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Commercial Operations and Property
Date adopted by Council	7 April 2025
Date/s of previous adoptions	26 May 2014, 29 May 2017, 20 March 2023
Date of next review	7 April 2029