

Cemeteries Management Policy



Record number	D22/12273
Responsible Manager	Group Coordinator Civil and Buildings Projects
Other key internal stakeholders	Director Assets & Environment
Last reviewed	23 August 2022
Adoption reference	Council
Resolution number	1304
Previous review dates	21/08/19, 29/08/17, 16/07/14, 20/11/13, (previously: Cemeteries – Care and Control Policy), 18/01/11, 23/1/07, 25/2/03, 13/3/01
Legal requirement	NA
Due date next review	2025

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for the care and control of Council's Hope Valley Cemetery and Golden Grove Cemetery in relation to interments and memorials.

This Policy excludes memorials located outside of Council owned cemeteries. Refer to Memorial Management Policy for guidelines on installation of memorials on Local Government land and on Roads under the care and control of the City of Tea Tree Gully.

2. POLICY

2.1 Background

The City of Tea Tree Gully (Council) manages two cemeteries within the Council area: Golden Grove Cemetery and Hope Valley Cemetery. The cemeteries have been managed and operated by the Council for more than 150 years. Both cemeteries are considered to be historically significant.

Within these cemeteries Council permits two types of interment that being, earth burials and ashes memorial garden beds.

a. Golden Grove Cemetery

The Golden Grove Cemetery is bounded by Crouch Road, One Tree Hill Road and extractive industry land. The cemetery is small, approximately 11,000m² and has developed gradually over the years. Golden Grove Cemetery has limited available sites for interment of ashes with a number of leased burial sites available for second interments.

b. Hope Valley Cemetery

This is an urban cemetery small in size, approximately 4,200m² which has limited available sites for interment of ashes with a number of leased burial sites available for second interments.

To assist Council in meeting its legislative requirement, the management of leasing and licensing as well as the coordination of Interments, plaques and monuments is carried out through a Council engaged Contractor.

Council employees are responsible for various aspects of grounds maintenance and interments in accordance with Council's Cemetery Management Procedure.

2.2. General

The following general guidelines apply to Council cemeteries:

- a. Construction of vaults in Council's cemeteries is not permitted except where a burial licence has been issued prior to 20 April 1987
- b. Due to the limitation of space available within Council's cemeteries, burial licences will only be granted to Residents or former Residents of the City of Tea Tree Gully, or in circumstances where there is a burial licence already in existence.
- c. This may extend to family members who do not reside in the Council area but have immediate relations already existing within the cemetery or at the Chief Executive Officer's discretion with assessment based on the relationship with the City of Tea Tree Gully community.
- d. Sites are available for burials based on a need only basis (i.e. not for future use)
- e. Council will maintain the landscape and historical character of the cemeteries outside of any leased area, which includes pathways, fencing, plantings, signage and infrastructure (other than memorials).

2.3. Interments

In conjunction with the Burial and Cremation Act 2013 and the Burial and Cremation Regulations 2014 the following guidelines apply to interments in Council's cemeteries:

- a. Burials will generally take place Monday to Fridays between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Where burials are required on weekends, public holidays and / or out of the hours stated above, additional fees will be charged as set out in Council's Fees and Charges Register
- b. Burial plots will be to a standard size of 2.45 metres in length and 1.20 metres in width. The depth will not exceed 2.3 metres (and minimum depth is one metre from the top of the last burial to the natural earth level)
- c. Interment of Ashes is at the discretion of the curator of the cemetery
- d. Burial licences (not exceeding 50 years) will be required for all burials including the interment of cremated ashes
- e. The assignment of burial licences is not permitted unless it is an immediate member of the licensee's family
- f. Historical Burial Sites at Hope Valley and Golden Grove cemeteries do not require burial/memorial licence renewals. Non Historical Burial Sites will not be provided with renewals for licenses.

2.4. Memorials

The following guidelines apply for memorials in Council cemeteries:

- a. A memorial licence is required prior to the erection of a memorial headstone or any other structure on any allotment in Council's cemeteries
- b. Approval is required for additional inscription to monuments or for the replacement of monuments (as per AS 4204- 2019 - Headstones and Cemetery Monuments)
- c. Headstones will be located in accordance with all approvals. Memorials erected on cemetery plots leased after the 1 January 1988 will consist of a headstone only (set upon a footing), which will not exceed a height of 0.84 metres, a depth of 0.3 metres and a maximum width of 1.2 metres. Memorials of a more substantial or elaborate nature may, subject to the discretion of the relevant Contractor or Council's delegate, be allowed on plots existing prior to 1 January 1988

- d. The burial licence holder or their personal representative (usually family if the licence holder is deceased) will be responsible for the maintenance, repair or removal of damaged or deteriorated memorial work during the licence period.

2.5 Maintenance of Graves, Plaques, Monuments & Structures

The following guidelines apply for Maintenance in Council cemeteries:

- a. The ownership of plaques, monuments or other structures installed or constructed is deemed to be with the Interment Right holder (or their heirs and successors).
- b. The Interment Right holder is responsible for the upkeep, maintenance, repair etc. of any plaque, monument or structure.
- c. Council will maintain natural soil level where there is ground movement or subsidence not including structures as outlined above.
- d. The Council may act to remove any structure that has become dilapidated, unsafe or unsightly. Except in circumstances where there is a risk to the safety of persons or damage may be imminent to nearby sites, Council will take reasonable steps to contact Interment right holders to provide an opportunity to take required actions to remedy the interment site.

2.6 Floral and Memorial Tributes

The following guidelines apply for the provision of floral and memorial tributes within Council cemeteries:

- a. Council may remove any items that encroach on other graves or plots making collection available of any removed items for a period of two weeks
- b. No permanent potted and/or permanent plantings
- c. Once perished, faded or frayed fresh, dried or silk flowers will be removed periodically

For the safety of the community the following guidelines apply for the provision of floral and memorial tributes within Council cemeteries:

- a. Breakable Items
 - i. Items made from or containing glass or other breakable materials (including porcelain, terracotta and hardened clay), unless they are built into the monumental work, are prohibited as they may pose serious harm to visitors and staff when damaged. No alcohol bottles, empty or full, to be left at the site.
- b. Other Hazardous Items
 - i. Stones, pebbles, decorative fencing and metal spikes are prohibited in all lawn areas.
- c. Candles & Incense Sticks
 - i. We understand the cultural and religious significance surrounding the lighting of candles and incense sticks, however these items can pose a substantial fire risk. Candles and incense sticks must be placed within an approved container (such as a candle box) or communal facility where provided. Those placed within garden beds or lawn areas at any time will be extinguished.
 - ii. On days of total fire ban, the lighting of these items is prohibited. As an alternative, appropriately placed plastic LED candles may be used.
- d. Being Respectful
 - i. Tributes that encroach on neighboring sites or are of an offensive nature may cause considerable distress and may be removed.

2.7 Other – Burial Register

The Council Contractor maintains the burial register, plans and assessment of licence applications for Hope Valley and Golden Grove cemeteries.

2.8 Other – Burials and Cremations

The management of the all burials and cremations including opening of interment sites, exhumation and re-interment are in accordance with the Burial and Cremation Act 2013, the Burial and Cremation Regulations 2014 and managed through Council's third-party licenced contractor

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

CEO

Refers to the Chief Executive Officer (including their delegate) of the City of Tea Tree Gully.

Contractor

Third party contractor.

Historical Burial Sites

Pioneer sites both marked and unmarked created from 1849 at Hope Valley Cemetery and from 1853 at Golden Grove Cemetery as determined by Council's Heritage Adviser.

Memorial Sites

- (a) A gravestone, plaque, cenotaph or other monument; or
- (b) Any other structure or permanent physical object used to memorialise a deceased person

Resident

Is defined as a person on the Electoral Roll of the City; or a resident's child under the age of 18; or where evidence is provided to the Contractor to substantiate that the application is for a bona fide resident.

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

There is no legislative requirement for Council to have a policy relating to this area.

The following legislation applies to this Policy:

Burial and Cremation Act 2013

This Act provides for and regulates the identification, handling, storage, transport, disposal and memorialisation of human remains; provides for the establishment, administration and closure of cemeteries and natural burial grounds; as well as providing for the conversion of closed cemeteries into parklands or public parks or gardens.

Burial and Cremation Regulations 2014

This Regulation covers additional requirements in relation to the disposal of human remains, as well as other requirements relating to cemeteries, natural burial grounds and crematoria including powers of the relevant authority, prohibited activities and interment rights.

Local Government Act 1999

Section 163 relates to the rebate of rates for public cemeteries.

4.1 Other references

Council's document including:

- a. Fees and Charges Register (D22/51266)
- b. Cemetery Plot Preparation Procedure (D21/29575)

External document including:

- a. Australian Standards AS4204-2019 - Headstones and Cemetery Monuments.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN/POLICY

5.1 Strategic Plan

The following strategic objectives in Council's Strategic Plan 2025 are the most relevant to this report:

Objective	Comments
Community	
<i>People feel a sense of belonging, inclusion and connection with the City and the community</i>	The cemeteries are well maintained and provide a tranquil setting for families and visitors to provide respect to past residents of the City of Tea Tree Gully.
Environment	
<i>Environmentally valuable places and sites that are flourishing and well cared for</i>	The cemeteries are well maintained and are of historical significance.
<i>Infrastructure and community facilities are fit for purpose, constructed using sustainable practices and well maintained</i>	An inviting and comfortable place to remember the community's loved ones

5.2 Organisation Plan

Our Strategic Plan is supported by an Organisation Plan which focuses on five key themes of customer care, learning & growth, future capability and sustainable operations. The key theme most relevant to this policy is sustainable operations, in ensuring that we make consistent, informed decisions which are evidence based.

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant portfolio director and managed in accordance with Council's scheme of delegations.