

COUNCIL POLICY



Policy Name	Public Facilities - Cemeteries
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Abstract

To set guidelines for implementing a consistent management plan for Council and Funeral Directors for the Service provided by Council for all Council controlled cemeteries.

Dates	Policy or amendment approved	16 Feb 2011
	Policy or amendment takes effect	16 Feb 2011
	Policy is due for review (up to 4 years)	16 Feb 2015
Endorsed by	Council	
Approved by	Gunnedah Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 16 Feb 2011 Resolution number: 169.9	
Policy Custodian	Manager Public Facilities	
Relevant to	Council	
Superseded Policies		
Related documents		
Related legislation		

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Council is responsible for the maintenance, interments, record keeping, family history enquiries, liaison with funeral directors, contract management, asset improvement and maintenance of health standards and other legislative requirements relating to its cemeteries. This Policy outlines the principles and procedures that Council will apply to the care, control and Management of its cemeteries.

Council's Planning and Environmental Services Section controls six cemeteries within the Gunnedah Shire Council Local Government area. Five of these cemeteries are available for burials. The remaining one (Hunter Street) is closed to new burials except where prior reservations have been made.

Apart from Memorial Park, which is non-denominational, the remaining cemeteries under Council's control are denominational.

2. CEMETERIES MANAGED BY COUNCIL

Historical Cemetery (closed except where prior reservations have been made):

Hunter Street Cemetery Hunter Street, Gunnedah

Operational (available to the public)

Memorial Park Wandobah Road, Gunnedah

Curlewis	Old Cemetery Lane, Curlewis
Breeza	Western side off Main Street, Breeza
Tambar Springs	O'Rourke Street, Tambar Springs
Carroll	Stephens Street, Carroll

3. **BURIALS**

A Right of Burial is an 'exclusive' right granted by Council (or its predecessors) for use of a burial or cremation (ash interment) site. There is no entitlement to 'land'; the ownership of the land, wall or garden remains with the Council.

The holder of the Right of Burial has the sole authority to determine who can be interred (buried) in the grave or cremation site/plot and to allow headstones, inscriptions, memorials to be placed on the site.

3.1 **Buy Back of Entitlement**

Council will not buy back an entitlement for use of an unused burial site.

3.2 **Transfer of Entitlement**

An entitlement for use of a burial site may be sold to other persons provided Council's Transfer of Reservation document is completed and duly signed in the presence of a Justice of the Peace. Such Transfer of Reservation document must then be returned to Council to allow records to be amended accordingly.

3.3 **Multiple Burials**

Multiple burials, with a maximum of two per plot, may be permitted. However, the depth of a plot may be restricted by the natural ground conditions (rock, water table, type of soil) and the depth of any previous interment. If a first interment is excavated to a depth of 2.1 metres, a site is capable of accommodating two burials. In all cases Council is guided by the Public Health (Disposal of Bodies) Regulation 2002 (Clause 20) which outlines minimal soil depth requirements.

The location of adjacent burial sites with existing monumental work can also determine whether a second interment can occur in an existing plot.

3.4 **Cremated Remains**

Cremated remains may be interred in a burial site at the discretion of Council.

4. **COUNCIL SERVICE**

Council provides the following services within its fee/charges:

- Digging of the burial site.

Note: In the interest of public safety, Council's normal practice is to dig the site on the day of the funeral. However, circumstances may dictate alterations to Council's normal practice.

No service will be scheduled for earlier than 11am unless approved by Council.

- Provision of a mobile shelter over the grave site (Memorial Park only).

Note: The erection of the mobile shelter will occur at the discretion of Council staff dependant on prevailing wind and weather conditions.

- Back-filling of the grave.
- General land maintenance of the Cemetery sites.

5. **FUNERAL DIRECTORS**

A Permit to Bury certificate is issued at the time of death. The permit is required prior to any interment (burial) in Gunnedah Shire Council cemeteries. It indicates that Council authorises a Funeral Director to bury a deceased person in a particular plot in one of its Cemeteries.

Families making funeral arrangements for interments (burials) liaise directly with a Funeral Director. The Funeral Director then liaises with Council.

The Funeral Director must complete and lodge an Application for a Burial Permit prior to the funeral/burial. Such application should be faxed to Council's Offices on 02 6740 2139. Upon receipt of the fax, Council officers will confirm any previous reservation details or allocate a burial plot for the deceased. Council officers will then phone the funeral directors to confirm plot details.

The Permit to Bury form includes the following information:

- Name of the Deceased
- Address of the Deceased
- Gender and Age of the Deceased
- Denomination of the Deceased
- Service Details (Church Service, Graveside or Chapell)
- Cemetery Location (Memorial Park, Hunter Street or Village)
- Grave Depth and Casket Size
- Details of Previous Reservations Held
- Whether a Reservation is Required
- Issuing Officer of Death Certificate
- Date and Time of Funeral
- Next of Kin Details
- Signature of Undertaker

6. **FEES**

As the land manager of the cemetery sites, Council reserves the right to impose a fee/charge for burial preparation.

This fee/charge is included in Council's Management Plan which is placed on display to the public for twenty eight days prior to adoption by Council at its June Ordinary meeting each year.

The following categories of fee/charges have been included in the Management Plan and are reviewed annually:

a) **Hunter Street**

Interment of child (12 years and under)

- Week days
- Saturday and Public Holidays

Interment of body except as above:

- Week days
- Saturday and Public Holidays

Additional for double depth

- Permission to erect monument
- Reception of Interment of Ashes

b) **Memorial Park**

- Land for Grave
- Niche in Columbarium, including permission to place ashes and erect wall plaque

Interment of child (12 years and under)

- Week days
- Saturdays and Public Holidays

Interment of body in Portion A

- Week days
- Saturdays and Public Holidays
- Additional for double depth
- Additional Internment in occupied double depth plot

Interment of body in Portion C

- Week days
- Saturdays and Public Holidays

Additional Internment in occupied double depth plot

- Permission to install lawn plaque
- Reception of Interment of Ashes

c) **Villages**

- Land for grave 1.2m x 2.8m

Interment for child (12 years and under)

- Week days
- Saturdays and Public Holidays

Interment for body

- Week days
- Saturdays and Public Holidays
- Permission to erect monument
- Reception of Interment of Ashes
- Niche in Columbarium, including permission to place ashes and erect wall plaque at Tambar Springs

d) Burial Enquiry Research Fee (per hour)

7. MONUMENTAL WORKS

All monumental work carried out in Gunnedah Shire Council managed cemeteries must comply with Council specifications.

The design and size of a headstone must meet Council's "Policy for Monumental Work Memorial Park", and be installed by a Monumental Mason who has obtained a monumental permit approval. A Monumental Application Form is available from the Reception front counter of Council's Administration building.

In Memorial Park the only monumental works permitted are plaques and associated which shall be constructed:

a) Only after payment to Council of the prescribed fee and the issue of the necessary permit.

b) To a maximum size of:

- i) 600mm long
- ii) 380mm wide
- iii) 150mm high

c) Shaped in accordance with Council's Plans and Specifications of:

- i) Concrete (25 mpa) with a bronze plaque inscription
- ii) Stone with a bronze plaque inscription attached or inscription engraved in the stone.

d) ONLY by recognised Monumental Masons.

8. **FLORAL TRIBUTES**

Floral tributes will be considered as per Council's "Policy for Monumental Work Memorial Park".

- a) Containers (vases and the like) required to hold floral tributes are restricted to two articles for each grave with these containers being placed in the special opening provided in the monument.
- b) Aged flowers and wreaths are to be regularly removed from the grave.
- c) Glass jars and containers are not to be used.
- d) Wreaths and tributes are not to be placed on graves where standard plaques are not installed (other than for a short period immediately following interment).
- e) No fixtures or fittings are to be attached to the plaques or associated bases.
- f) Should it become necessary for the Park Groundsman to remove vases and other items from graves, and where in Council's opinion these items are considered of value, they will be stored at the Park and be available for return to owners on request.

9. **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Contractors undertaking work in Council's Cemeteries will be provided with a copy of Council's current OHS Policy. All contractors are required to comply with Council's relevant policies and procedures, particularly in relation to sun protection.

In addition, all contractors are required to provide Council with copies of current public liability insurance certificates and any applicable certificates, licences or permits.

10. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS**

Name	Phone	Fax	Email
Helen Johnston	02 6740 2130	02 6740 2139	helenjohnston@infogunnedah.com.au
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Version Control and change history

Date	Version	Approved by & Resolution No.	Amendment
16 Feb 2011	1	Council Meeting 16 Feb 2011 Resolution 169.9	