

Code of Operations Cemeteries

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1. Objective

- 1.1 The Code of Operations Cemeteries provides the overarching framework to ensure that appropriate service standards meet community needs at Council operated cemeteries.
- 1.2 To ensure a consistent approach to the operation of cemeteries managed and maintained by Burdekin Shire Council.
- 1.3 This Code of Operations details the processes for making reservations, appointing right of burial holders, interments, permit to work applications including standards for construction of memorial graves, mausoleums, below ground vaults and above ground vaults. It also specifies material standards and positioning for placement of plaques, vases and other memorial mementos in the Burdekin Shire Council's cemeteries, columbariums and memorial walls.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Council – Burdekin Shire Council.
- 2.2 Council Employees – refers specifically to employees within the Operations Department, Parks and Gardens Section and Customer Service centre as specified within this document.
- 2.3 Right of Burial – The legal right to inter human remains into a reserved plot or niche.
- 2.4 Right of Burial Certificate Holder – the person/s, who is nominated on the Right of Burial Certificate for a specific grave. The Right of Burial Certificate Holder is the only person/s who can authorise an interment into the grave. Consent is also required from the Right of Burial Certificate Holder or the Applicant on the Interment Consent Application Form to carry out work at a gravesite. (Appendix 3 – Permit to Carry out Works at a Gravesite Form).
- 2.5 Right of Burial Certificate – Is a legal document and permits the right to be buried in a particular grave and the right to authorise the burial of others in the grave (up to the number permitted in that grave as determined by Council)
- 2.6 Applicant – the person nominated by the family to authorise the interment and carry out work at a gravesite.
- 2.7 Interment – The act or ritual of interring or burying human remains.
- 2.8 Interment Consent Application Form – See Clause 3.7 (Appendix 2 – Interment Consent Application Form).
- 2.9 Statutory Declaration – as described in Queensland Legislation - Oaths Act 1867.
- 2.10 Above Ground Burial Crypts will be required to meet AS4425 - 2020 Above Ground Burial Structures.

3. General

- 3.1 Burdekin Shire Council manages the Ayr and Home Hill Cemeteries.
- 3.2 The principles within this document apply to all individuals, organisations, businesses and council staff who enter a cemetery under Council's control.
- 3.3 This document is supplementary to Burdekin Shire Council Subordinate Local Law No 1.9 (Operation of Cemeteries) 2012 and Subordinate Local Law No 1.13 (Undertaking Regulated Activities regarding Human Remains) 2012 with the Local Laws prevailing in the event of any inconsistency.
- 3.4 Choosing a burial plot, Columbarium niche or position on the "Our Little Darlings" wall can be organised by the family through Council's Customer Service Centre or a Funeral Director.
- 3.5 Details of Council's fees and charges for reservations, interments and permits to work etc. can be obtained by visiting Council's website, by calling Burdekin Shire Council's Customer Service Centre on 4783 9800 or through a Funeral Director. These fees and charges are reviewed annually.
- 3.6 Council will allow the surrender of vacant reserved plots in its cemeteries. The applicant will be required to produce a receipt for the original reservation and the refund will be the amount of the original purchase. If no receipt is provided the applicant must complete a Statutory Declaration confirming their relationship to the deceased and confirm they are the rightful person to receive the refund. The refund will be based on the fees and charges for the year of the reservation (or closest relevant year as per Council records).
- 3.7 Council applies cemetery fees and charges at an appropriate level to enable the provision of cemetery services at a fair price to the community. Cemetery fees and charges are set to cover the immediate costs of operating the cemeteries and to contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the cemeteries.
- 3.8 An Interment Consent Application Form must be completed and lodged with Council's Customer Service Centre, a minimum of two working days prior to the interment.

An Applicant must provide a Statutory Declaration and proof of relationship to the deceased (birth certificate, death certificate or cremation certificate) as evidence of the wishes of the deceased and their immediate family to inter, exhume or carry out works at a gravesite.

4. Standard Conditions

- 4.1 All funeral services and interments are to be coordinated by a Funeral Director and shall take place between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm weekdays. Interments and graveside services outside of these times, on weekends or Public Holidays can be negotiated with Council. Interments and graveside services occurring outside of normal hours will incur additional charges as set out within Council's fees and charges.
- 4.2 Procurement of approved plaques, vases and other memorial mementos is to be through a Funeral Director, Monumental or Stone Mason.
- 4.3 A minimum of two working days' notice is requested to allow sufficient time for grave preparation to be organised and completed. In circumstances where a burial is required on shorter notice due to religious beliefs, council will make every effort to enable this to occur.
- 4.4 Council can accommodate a maximum of 2 interments at each cemetery per day.

4.5 Cemetery plot sizes are:

Lawn Section 3.0 x 1.50 m (inc. concrete plinth)

Monumental Section 3.05 x 1.525 m

Infant Section 1.20 x 0.60 m

Grave depths prepared for burials are:

Infant / Still Born depth 1.20 m

Single depth 1.37 m

Double depth 1.83 m

Vaults

Single Depth 0.70 m

Double Depth 1.58 m

4.6 The maximum number of interments permitted in a plot shall be:

- Infant Plot - One (with exception of twins interred within the same coffin);
- Lawn Plot - Two casket burials (first interment must be at double depth) and a maximum of two interments of ashes in memorial urns;
- Monumental Plot – Three casket burials. First must be at double depth, second at single depth and third interment in a single above ground vault and a maximum of two interments of ashes in memorial urns;
- Headstones on monumental plots may include columbarium niches to accommodate additional interments.

4.7 Historically there have been instances arise where the first interment has not reached the required depth of 1.83 metres. In this case Council will need to confirm if a second interment can attain the required depth.**4.8** Preparation of plots – Council's Cemetery staff will prepare grave sites. The preparation includes:

- Excavation of grave and installation of aluminium shoring.
- Assist with the set-up of Funeral Director supplied lowering devices as requested.
- Erect pedestrian exclusion barriers.
- Assist with the set-up of chairs and marquees, for graveside services as requested by a Funeral Director.

4.9 Funeral Directors are required to supply lowering devices. Council does not accept any responsibility for any maintenance or repairs to such devices. Council will take every care with the Funeral Director's equipment including lowering devices, lifting straps, shade tents and chairs.**4.10** Council staff will be present to hand over the burial site and make Funeral Directors aware of any safety concerns. This must occur at least 15 minutes in advance of the commencement of an interment or graveside service. Funeral Directors will be required to sign an acceptance of the site prior to hand over by Council Cemetery staff. The site then becomes the responsibility of the Funeral Director as their "Place of Work".

- 4.11 The Funeral Director must remain on site and be present during the grave side service at all times.
- 4.12 The Funeral Director's responsibility for the site concludes when the last family members and the Funeral Director's employees leave the site. At this point the site is handed back to Council staff.
- 4.13 Council staff will endeavour to backfill a plot as soon as possible after the departure of the family and the removal of the Funeral Director's equipment to ensure the safety of cemetery patrons.
- 4.14 In the event of a reopening, it becomes the families' responsibility to engage a Monumental or Stone Mason to have any structure removed a minimum of 24 hours prior to the graveside service or interment to allow the gravesite to be prepared.
- 4.15 Participation by Council staff in the actual interment process is not permitted; this includes Council staff carrying the casket from the funeral vehicle during a service.
- 4.16 All activities undertaken within the cemetery grounds shall comply with relevant Work Health and Safety requirements. Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011, AS4204-2019 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments, AS4425-2020 Above Ground Burial Structures.

5. Monumental Cemetery

- 5.1 Reservations for burial plots can be made through Council's Customer Service Centre or a Funeral Director.
- 5.2 Council will permit the construction of above ground burial vaults in the monumental sections. Such vaults will be required to meet AS4425 - 2020 Above Ground Burial Structures.

If the above ground burial vaults do not satisfy the aforementioned standard, Council at its sole discretion, may allow an interment if the following conditions are met:
 - I. The body is to be embalmed by a Certified Professional whom has successfully completed the Certificate IV in Embalming (SIF40213) by Mortuary and Funeral Educators or other training authority and is authorised to perform such works in Australia.
 - II. The undertaker must provide a copy of the embalming certificate to Council prior to interment.
 - III. The body is then to be hermetically sealed in a fit for purpose hermetically sealable body bag prior to final placement in the coffin.
 - IV. A signed statutory declaration is to be provided to Council as evidence that hermetic sealing has occurred prior to interment
 - V. The family and undertaker are wholly responsible for any outcomes that do not meet Council Standard Conditions.
- 5.3 Interment of ashes in the Monumental Section can be coordinated on behalf of the deceased's family through Council's Customer Service Centre, Council's Cemetery Sextons or a Funeral Director.
- 5.4 No work is to be carried out in the Burdekin Shire Council cemeteries without the approval of Council in writing. Should any unauthorised work be carried out, Council reserves the right to undertake what actions it sees fit without notice, and reserves the right to recover all costs incurred from the responsible person/s.

- 5.5 Reopening of graves is only permitted after a period of 12 months has lapsed since the last interment.
- 5.6 Pumping out of water prior to interments from excavated plots will be the responsibility of Council.

6. Lawn Cemetery

- 6.1 Reservations of plots in Lawn Cemeteries are not permitted.
- 6.2 Interment of ashes in the Lawn Section can be coordinated on behalf of the deceased's family through Council's Customer Service Centre, Council's Cemetery Sextons or a Funeral Director. A minimum lead time of two working days is requested.
- 6.3 Graveside services and interments coordinated by a Funeral Director on behalf of the family require a minimum lead time of two working days.
- 6.4 Reopening of graves is only permitted after a period of 12 months has lapsed since the first interment.
- 6.5 Pumping out of water prior to interments from excavated plots will be the responsibility of Council.

7. Lawn Cemetery Plaques, Vases and other Mementos

- 7.1 At least one (1) standard size plaque is to be installed on each burial plot.
- 7.2 All Lawn Cemetery plaques are to be:
 - Rectangular in shape manufactured from Bronze or Granite.
 - Bronze plaques will measure 380mm by 280mm with a minimum thickness of 10mm.
 - Granite plaques will measure 380mm by 280mm with a minimum thickness of 12mm.
 - Have a flat back.
 - Possess a single background colour.
 - A maximum of two (2) standard sized plaques are permitted per burial plot.
- 7.3 All Lawn Cemetery vases are to be:
 - Manufactured in bronze or stainless steel.
 - A maximum of 150mm high and a maximum of 60mm outside diameter.
- 7.4 Each burial plot in the Burdekin Shire Council's Lawn Section shall be entitled to a maximum of two (2) standard flower vases.
- 7.5 No plaques, vases or memorials are permitted beyond the boundary of a burial plot.
- 7.6 Council is responsible for the installation of approved plaques and vases. No other plaques, vases or memorials are permitted.
- 7.7 Removal of plaques and vases for refurbishment is the responsibility of the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant. Council does not accept responsibility for any damage incurred during the removal of plaques or vases.
- 7.8 Reinstallation of refurbished plaques and vases is to be undertaken by Council.

- 7.9 Decorative vases and other mementos placed at the burial plot, other than those approved by this code, shall be removed by Cemetery staff after observation of a respectful mourning period (notionally a minimum of one month post interment) to enable regular maintenance activities to continue.
- 7.10 All photographs are to be contained within or be mounted on the deceased person's plaque. All such memorial photographs shall be installed by Council.
- 7.11 No other memorial photographs are permitted.
- 7.12 It is the responsibility of the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant or a person authorised by Right of Burial Holder to:
- Arrange for the order and supply and installation of any plaques, vases and memorial photos through a Funeral Director
 - Obtain all necessary approvals for the use of Military emblems and provide a copy of such authority to Council
- 7.13 Should a plaque or memorial be provided without the express authority of the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant then Council reserves the right to remove same. Council will accept no responsibility for any damage incurred to remove any such plaque. Notice will be given to the person who owns the unauthorised plaque to collect same.
- 7.14 Should a plaque or vase not meet the specifications contained in this Code of Operations then the plaque and or vases may be removed and returned to the responsible person with details of the non-compliance.
- 7.15 No other memorial, vase or decoration is to be erected at burial sites or installed on beams in the Ayr and Home Hill Lawn Cemeteries.
- 7.16 A plaque shall be provided for all deceased persons within six (6) months of the interment. Council will allow the placement of a temporary recognition marker for a period of up to six months from the date of interment, to allow for the procurement of an approved plaque.
- 7.17 Flowers (real or artificial) are to be placed in standard flower vases provided for each burial plot. Glass flowers are strictly prohibited.
- 7.18 Council staff, after observing a respectful mourning period (notionally a minimum of one month post interment), may remove and dispose of flowers (real or artificial) if they are no longer considered attractive or present a workplace health and safety risk.
- 7.19 Council does not accept responsibility should a plaque, vase or any memorial photograph on the plaque, be damaged by an act of vandalism or the operation of irrigation systems.

8. Columbariums

- 8.1 Long term reservations for interment niches can be made through Council's Customer Service Centre or a Funeral Director.
- 8.2 Interment of ashes in Columbariums can be coordinated by a Funeral Director or in direct consultation with Council's Cemetery Sextons. Interment of ashes into the columbarium niche will not be permitted until the accompanying memorial plaque has been provided to Council
- 8.3 Interment of ashes in a columbarium in conjunction with a committal ceremony will require a minimum lead time of one day.
- 8.4 A columbarium ashes urn is to be a maximum of D215mm x W110mm x H85mm in size.

9. Columbarium Plaques, Vases and Photographs

9.1 Columbarium plaques shall be:

- Rectangular in shape manufactured from Bronze.
- Measure 152mm by 114mm with a minimum thickness of 10mm unless multiple reservations exist, then Council may approve a larger plaque.
- Be fitted with mounting brackets top and bottom.
- Have no more than one background colour.

9.2 Columbarium vases shall be:

- Manufactured in either bronze or stainless steel.
- A maximum of 100mm high and maximum 35mm outside diameter.
- Shall be dark brown painted or polished stainless-steel finish.

9.3 Council is responsible for the installation of approved plaques, vases and photographs. No other plaques, vases or memorials are permitted.

9.4 Removal of plaques, vases and photographs for refurbishment is the responsibility of the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant. Council does not accept responsibility for any damage incurred during the removal of plaques or vases.

9.5 Reinstallation of refurbished plaques, vases and photographs is to be undertaken by Council.

9.6 Each Columbarium Niche shall be entitled to install a maximum of one (1) standard flower vase, which shall be positioned beside the plaque where practicable.

9.7 Each Columbarium Niche shall be entitled to install a maximum of one (1) memorial photograph, which shall be erected beside the plaque where practical. The maximum size for a memorial photograph is to be specified by the maximum space available between niches.

10. Our Little Darlings Memorial Wall

10.1 Consecutive placement of plaques will occur on the “Our Little Darlings Memorial Wall”

10.2 Each reservation shall be entitled to install a maximum of one (1) standard flower vase, which shall be positioned beside the plaque where practicable.

10.3 Each reservation shall be entitled to a maximum of one (1) memorial photograph, which shall be erected beside the plaque where practicable.

10.4 Council is responsible for the installation of approved plaques, vases and photographs. No other plaques, vases or memorials are permitted.

10.5 All “Our Little Darlings Memorial Wall” plaques shall:

- Be rectangular in shape.
- Measure 200mm high by 240mm wide with a minimum thickness of 10mm for bronze.
- Measure 200mm high by 240mm wide with a minimum thickness of 12mm for granite.
- Have no more than one background colour.

10.6 “Our Little Darlings Memorial Wall” vases shall be:

- Manufactured in either bronze or stainless steel.

- A maximum of 100mm high and maximum 35mm outside diameter.
- Shall be a dark brown painted or polished stainless-steel finish.

- 10.7 Removal of plaques and vases for refurbishment is the responsibility of the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant. Council does not accept responsibility for any damage incurred during the removal of plaques or vases.
- 10.8 Reinstallation of refurbished plaques and vases is to be undertaken by Council.

11. Memorials and Monuments

- 11.1 All memorials and headstones must be constructed by a licensed Builder, Monumental or Stone Mason (who has provided council with evidence of a current public liability insurance policy) and must comply with the Australian Standard AS4204-1994 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments and AS4425-1996 Above Ground Burial Structures. Failure to comply may result in a request to remove unauthorised works.
- 11.2 A Permit to Carry out Work at a Gravesite (Appendix 3) must be completed and approved prior to the erection of all new monuments, headstones and upgrade works.
- 11.3 The fee for a Permit to Carry out Work at a Gravesite can be found in Council's fees and charges or by contacting the Council Customer Service Centre. Once a permit has been paid for and approved, it will be issued to the applicant.
- 11.4 A Permit to Carry out Work at a Gravesite will only be issued with consent from the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant on the Interment Consent Application form.
- 11.5 A family can request to erect a monument on a historical plot in honour of the deceased person by completing a Permit to Carry out Work at a Gravesite application form and providing proof of relationship to the deceased and evidence of the wishes of the immediate family.
- 11.6 Maintenance of any monumental grave, vault, monument, headstone, plaque or marker in the Cemetery shall be the responsibility of the Right of Burial Holder/Applicant.
- 11.7 Opening of vaults, crypts or mausoleums is to be co-ordinated by the Right of Burial Holder with a suitably qualified Funeral Director, Monumental or Stone Mason. A minimum of two working days' notice must be provided to the Council's Cemetery Sextons.

12. Exhumations

- 12.1 To exhume human remains from a burial site or niche, an exhumation application form must be submitted for approval to council together with the relevant evidentiary documentation as required by *Subordinate Local Law 1.13 (Undertaking Regulated Activities Regarding Human Remains)*, *Section 5 and Clause 3.9 of this Code of Operations*.

Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities that are assigned to individual positions from the context of this Operational Standard are listed below:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matthew Magin
Managers (Senior Leadership Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayne Saldumbide
Supervisors/Coordinators (Senior Supervisors Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jaime St. John
Health and Safety Representatives (HSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Work Health and Safety Advisors (WHSa)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Related Documents

Reference Number	Document Title	Relationship Description
PGC-FRM-0001	Reservation of Grave Site Form	Cemetery Form
PGC-FRM-0002	Interment Consent Application Form	Cemetery Form
PGC-FRM-0003	Permit to Carry Out Works at A Gravesite Form	Cemetery Form
PGC-FRM-0004	Right of Transfer Application Form	Cemetery Form
PGC-FRM-0005	Right of Burial Holder Certificate	Cemetery Form
PGC-FRM-0017	Exhumation Application Form	Cemetery Form
BSC Subordinate Local Law 1.13	Undertaking Regulated Activities Regarding Human Remains – 2012 – Section 5	Local Law

Document History and Version Control

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