



CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL CEMETERIES

Masterplan Report

March 2019
Prepared for Cessnock City Council
by Studio GL



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Document Information

Job title	Cessnock Cemeteries
Client	Cessnock City Council
Job number	1720
Report title	Recommendations Report
File name	1720_Cessnock-Cemeteries-Recommendations_2018.indd

Revision	Date	Prepared by	Approved by
Draft	06/02/2017	FL, GT, DN, AN	FL
Final	16/03/2018	FL, GT, DN, AN, BB	FL
Revised Final	25/03/2019	LP	FL

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01 INTRODUCTION

1-1 Executive Summary

Studio GL were engaged by Cessnock City Council, in collaboration with Sym Studio, to undertake a consultation process to support the development of Guiding Principles that will inform the development of cemeteries within the Local Government Area (LGA). This project also included the development of concept Masterplans for the two largest cemeteries, Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery and Kurri Kurri General and Lawn Cemetery.

Cessnock City Council's objectives for the consultation component was to undertake a comprehensive consultation process that ensured all stakeholders and the wider community were provided with an opportunity to actively participate, so that the information gathered was representative of the industry and the community's interests and goals. A significant part of this process was a desire to inform the community of the important role of cemeteries within their town and society in general, and to educate the wider community about changes to legislation that impacts on the management of cemeteries.

The consultation process was undertaken in two phases. The first phase focused on educating the community and gathering thoughts and ideas about cemeteries, from stakeholders and the community. The second phase presented the first draft of the conceptual masterplans, and the developing Guiding Principles.

Overall the feedback suggests that the community is generally happy with the facilities provided by the cemeteries and they were particularly supportive of the level of maintenance currently carried out. With regard to future development, the consensus was that these are places of reflection and memory, and that they need to be respectful of those who are interred there.

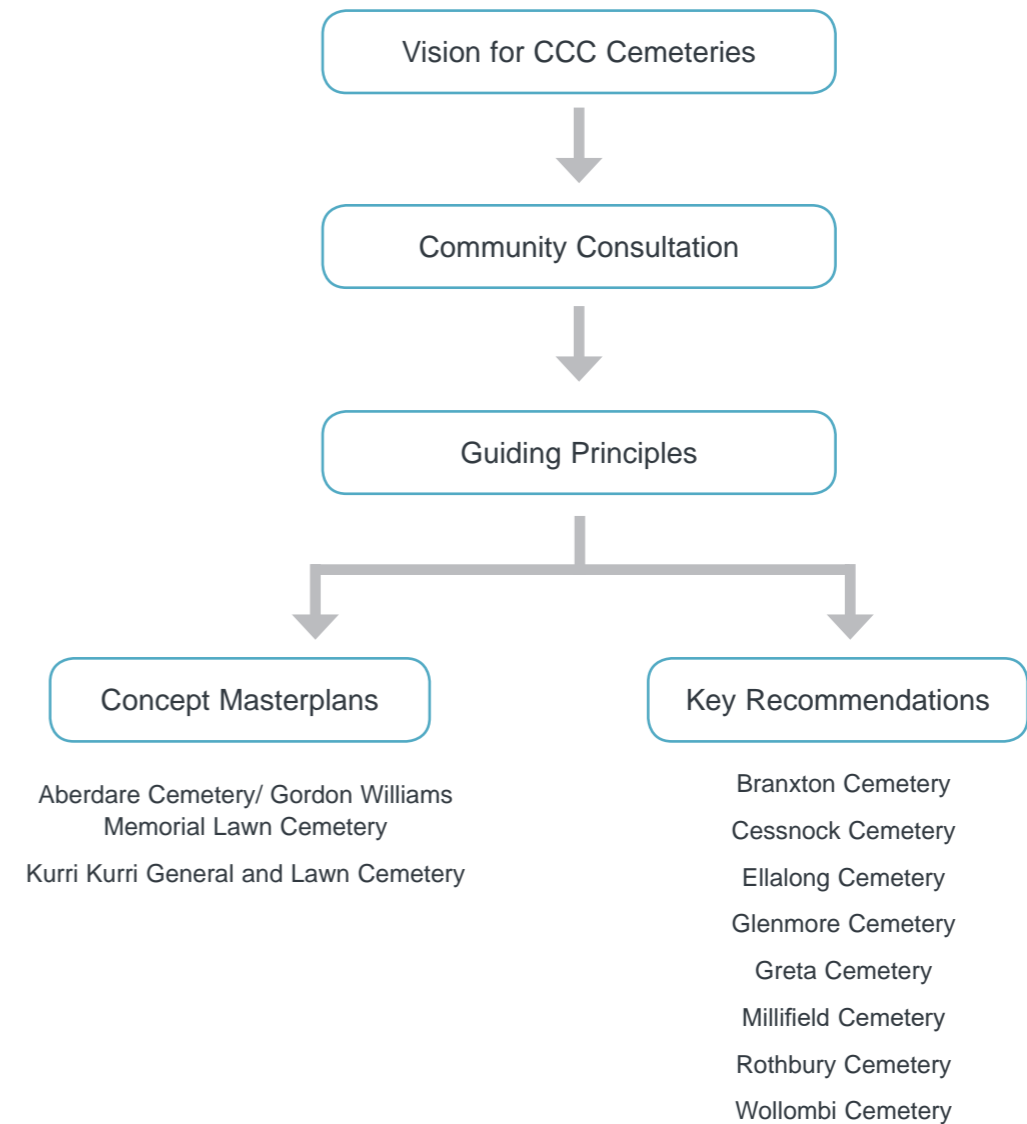
The findings from the consultation (which are detailed in the separate Consultation Report) were developed into themes and guiding principles, which led to the development of masterplans and key recommendations, which are set out in this report.

Concept masterplans were produced for the two largest cemeteries, the combined facility at Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery and the facility that encompasses the Kurri Kurri General and Lawn Cemeteries. Recommendations were developed for the other eight cemeteries located within the LGA.

This report has three components:

- Chapter One: provides an introduction to the project, a review of existing relevant documents and an overview of the existing facilities.
- Chapter Two: presents a summary of the themes and guiding principles developed from the consultation process
- Chapter Three: presents the masterplans and recommendations for the cemeteries, including a review of existing cemetery styles, options for interment, general recommendations and specific planting recommendations.

This report was prepared to support Cessnock City Council's review of its existing Cemetery Strategy document.



1-2 About this project

Studio GL were engaged by Cessnock City Council to undertake a community and stakeholder consultation process to support the development of Guiding Principles that will inform the development of the ten cemeteries and two lawn cemeteries within the Local Government Area (LGA).

Based on the outcomes of this consultation, Studio GL with Sym Studio, were also engaged to develop concept masterplans for Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery, and the Kurri Kurri General and Lawn Cemeteries.

In January 2008, Council released the Cemetery Strategy, which provided the strategic framework for the operations, maintenance and development of cemeteries within the LGA. This framework is now due to be reviewed and updated, and the outcome of this project will be incorporated into the review.

Changes to the legislation that governs how Council manages the cemeteries under its control has also resulted in a need to review and potentially revise some of the policies and procedures that are currently in operation. Some of these changes are aimed at providing clarity and certainty to the community when they purchase burial rights, so there is also a desire by Council to educate the community on their rights in regards to this issue.



Having consulted with the community over ten years ago on this subject, Council wanted to gain an understanding of what interment options were now required by the community, as there are increasingly a wider array of possibilities available. Options vary beyond the basic burial plot with a monument, to encompass lawn burials, natural burials, and a myriad of options for the interment of ashes. There are even alternatives to cremation now, including aquamation.



Always a sensitive subject, many people choose not to even contemplate what may be required when they are gone, choosing to leave the choices up to close family. Others want certainty about where their bodily remains will be interred, and pre-plan their funeral and pre-purchase their burial plot. Either way, it is a subject cloaked in discussions about death and dying, and is often an uncomfortable subject, but one that should be more widely considered by the community as it is one that will impact all of us at some point.



1-3 Document review

Cessnock City Council Cemetery Strategy

Author: Insite with Cessnock City Council

Date: January 2008

This document was developed to 'examine current service provisions and management procedures and consider options for the future provision of cemetery services'. The report provided a review of the trends within the Industry, examined interment options, analysed the nine identified cemeteries (excluding Glenmore Cemetery), considered a range of issues related to the provision of cemetery services within the Local Government Area (LGA), and made a series of recommendations for consideration by Council.

The issues identified as relevant to the provision of services included heritage and conservation considerations given the age of many of the cemeteries, burial space limitations, forecasted demographic and population growth projections, financial management challenges, risk management requirements, the need for public information dissemination, potential capital works and required maintenance, staff resourcing requirements and the development of policies and procedures.

There were seven recommendations put forward for consideration by Council. These included the establishment of a range of 'clear and concise policies, procedures and agreements', a review of fees and charges, including a review of comparable costs in relation to other LGA's, consideration of additional options for interment, especially of ashes.

It also identified promotion of Aberdare and Kurri Kurri as sub-regional facilities, improvements in the 'range and distribution of public information on cemetery planning, development and operation', recognition of the heritage value and subsequent conservation management requirements, including site specific assessment of various cemeteries with regard to conservation works, and the need for increased staffing levels to improve 'efficiency and effectiveness in the planning, management and operation of Cessnock City Council cemeteries'.

Relevance to this study

This document is being reviewed and updated, and has provided the strategic direction for the planning, management and operation of cemeteries throughout the LGA for the past nine years.

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 No 105

Author: NSW Parliamentary Counsel's Office

Date: November 2013

This document sets out the legislation that govern the management of cemeteries across NSW.

Relevance to this study

The following parts and divisions are of most relevance to the output of this report:

Part 3 Division 2 relates to codes of practice, that "may be developed and approved by the Cemeteries Agency on its own initiative or in collaboration with all or any participants in the interment industry, (...), for the purpose of providing guidance on any interment matter".

Part 3 Division 7 relates to management of cemetery operators, including their obligations regarding performance reporting, records, and reports.

Part 4 relates to interment rights, including the extension of the ability to offer renewable rights to Crown cemetery operators. This part also requires a register be established that accurately identifies 'interment rights, memorials, cremations and interments'.

Part 5 relates to the operation of Crown cemeteries and crematoria. Including the requirement for the development of strategic plans, the preparation of plans of management, the provision of financial records and auditing, and miscellaneous requirements relating to planning, conduct and maintenance.

Although not directly relevant to this report, the Act does provide guidance in Schedule 4 for the conversion of cemeteries to other uses.

Guide to the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act (NSW) 2013

Author: Mills Oakley Lawyers

Date: May 2015

This guide was produced to 'help cemetery and crematorium operators in New South Wales understand the new Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 and the new Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2014'.

This guideline sets out the requirements of the Act and Regulation in relation to four areas:

- The Cemeteries Agency – the formation of Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW (the Cemeteries Agency), with a strategic and regulatory oversight role.
- Cemeteries and Crematoria Register – a register that lists all cemeteries and crematoria in the state, with a record of the operator and any other information required by the Regulations.
- Crown Cemetery Trusts – amalgamation and streamlining of the Crown Cemeteries sector into a ten trusts, which will, along with local councils, manage the affairs of Crown cemeteries, and are subject to Part 5 of the Act.
- Interment Rights – an entire Part of the Act (Part 4) relates to interment rights, including the provisions for renewable interment rights.

Relevance to this study

This guideline sets out, in relatively straight forward terms, the requirements of the new Act and Regulation that will govern the management of cemeteries. It identifies significant changes impacting Crown cemetery operators, including local councils, such as the requirement for a Code of Conduct and the implementation of a Cemeteries and Crematoria Register.

Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Author: NSW Department of Primary Industries

Date: October 2015

The community has certain expectations relating to an individual's right to a suitable interment. These expectations include the right to be interred in compliance with various religious and cultural practices, and the right to be able to access these services at an affordable price. There is also an expectation that family and friends will be able to access these places, in order to remember and reflect on those who have departed.

The Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, passed in 2013, outlined the NSW Government's commitment to meeting these community expectations. It seeks to do this by recognising and protecting 'the right of all people in the state to respectful and affordable burial and cremation services'.

This Strategic Plan sets out how 'Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW will work closely with its partners over the next five years to continue to meet community expectations and improve burial and cremation services'.

The report establishes a Vision – 'All people in NSW have access to sustainable, innovative and culturally appropriate services provided by the interment industry in a consistent, transparent and accountable manner', a Purpose – 'To work with industry and the community to deliver our vision in a collaborative and constructive way' and Values – 'We promote and uphold the core values of the NSW public sector: integrity, trust, service and accountability'.

The Strategic Plan establishes four key priority areas: respect, affordability and sustainability, land availability and governance. Strategies have been developed that respond to the key priorities, and targets are then established, to provide short, medium and long term deliverables.

Relevance to the current study

This report provides the strategic framework within which Cessnock City Council manages the twelve cemeteries within the Local Government Area (LGA). The Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013, established Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW (CCNSW) as a State Government entity, tasked with oversight of the interment industry in a regulatory and governance capacity.

As such Council is required to operate cemeteries in accordance with the Act, and under the guidance of CCNSW. This Strategic Plan establishes the key priorities CCNSW is pursuing in its efforts to reform the industry and provide transparent, uniform, quality services across the State.

The key priority areas, strategies and targets that are of particular relevance to this report include:

Key Priority Area: Respect – All people in NSW have access to a range of interment services that preserve dignity and respect and support cultural diversity

Strategies:

- develop a comprehensive understanding of community needs and available services
- promote best practice service provision to ensure dignity and respect

Targets:

- The service requirements of local communities have been identified (short)
- operators are working to ensure services are delivered with dignity and respect (medium)
- services are available to address the essential requirements of local communities (long)

Key Priority Area: Affordability and Sustainability – All people in NSW have access to affordable and sustainable interment options

Strategies:

- Promote transparency of service offerings and pricing across the industry
- Support operators to provide affordable and sustainable interment services
- Promote preservation of the built and natural environment and provision for perpetual care

Key Priority Area: Land Availability – Sufficient and suitable land is available to meet future demand for interment services

Strategies:

- work with stakeholders to allocate sufficient cemetery space to meet the needs of local communities

Guide to the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2014

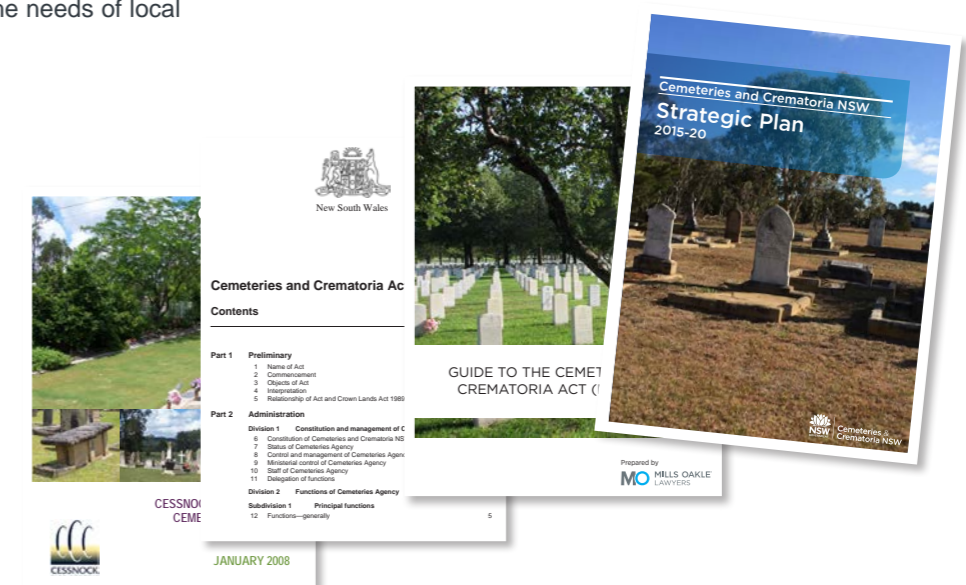
Date: Current 24 October 2014

(accessed 23 January 2018)

This document sets out the situation under which a general levy will be payable in respect of various actions undertaken by and within the identified cemeteries and crematoria.

Relevance to the current study

This document is not relevant to this study as none of the cemeteries within the Cessnock City Council LGA are on the list of facilities prescribed, for which a levy is payable.



Cessnock Signage Strategy 2015

Author: Moir Landscape Architecture

Date: April 2015

This strategy was developed to ‘provide guidance on the planning, design and installation of signage in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA)’. With an emphasis on providing improved vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding, this strategy has identified a range of options for signage depending on location and intended usage.

In creating a ‘family’ of signs that are proposed, that will provide a consistent system for the communication of visual wayfinding clues, and support a ‘unified approach to design elements in terms of materials, appearance, graphics and colours’.

Relevance to the current study

Whilst not specifically addressed, signage in the cemeteries should be designed in accordance with the principles outlined in this strategy. Signage developed for these cemeteries should be detailed to match the ‘family’ of signage being used throughout the LGA.

Hunter Valley Wine Country Signage Strategy 2015

Author: Moir Landscape Architecture

Date: April 2015

This strategy, developed as a joint project by Cessnock City Council and Singleton Council, ‘provides a hierarchy of new tourism signs’, ‘designed to guide visitors to and around the region and strengthen the branding of the area as a premier tourist destination’.

Focus has been placed on both the design of, and the location for installation of a range of signage, to ensure consistency and maximum efficiency for these elements.



Relevance to the current study

The two signage strategies were developed simultaneously and need to be considered together when producing signage for the LGA.

Due to the nature of many of the cemeteries in the LGA, and the increase in interest in researching family history and visiting areas of heritage value, signage that provides information for visitors to the area outlining some of this interesting historical and local information is important.



1-4 Overview of cemeteries

Council currently operates twelve cemeteries in ten locations:

- Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery
- Kurri Kurri General and Lawn Cemetery
- Branxton Cemetery
- Cessnock Cemetery
- Ellalong Cemetery
- Glenmore Cemetery
- Greta Cemetery
- Millfield Cemetery
- Rothbury Cemetery
- Wollombi Cemetery

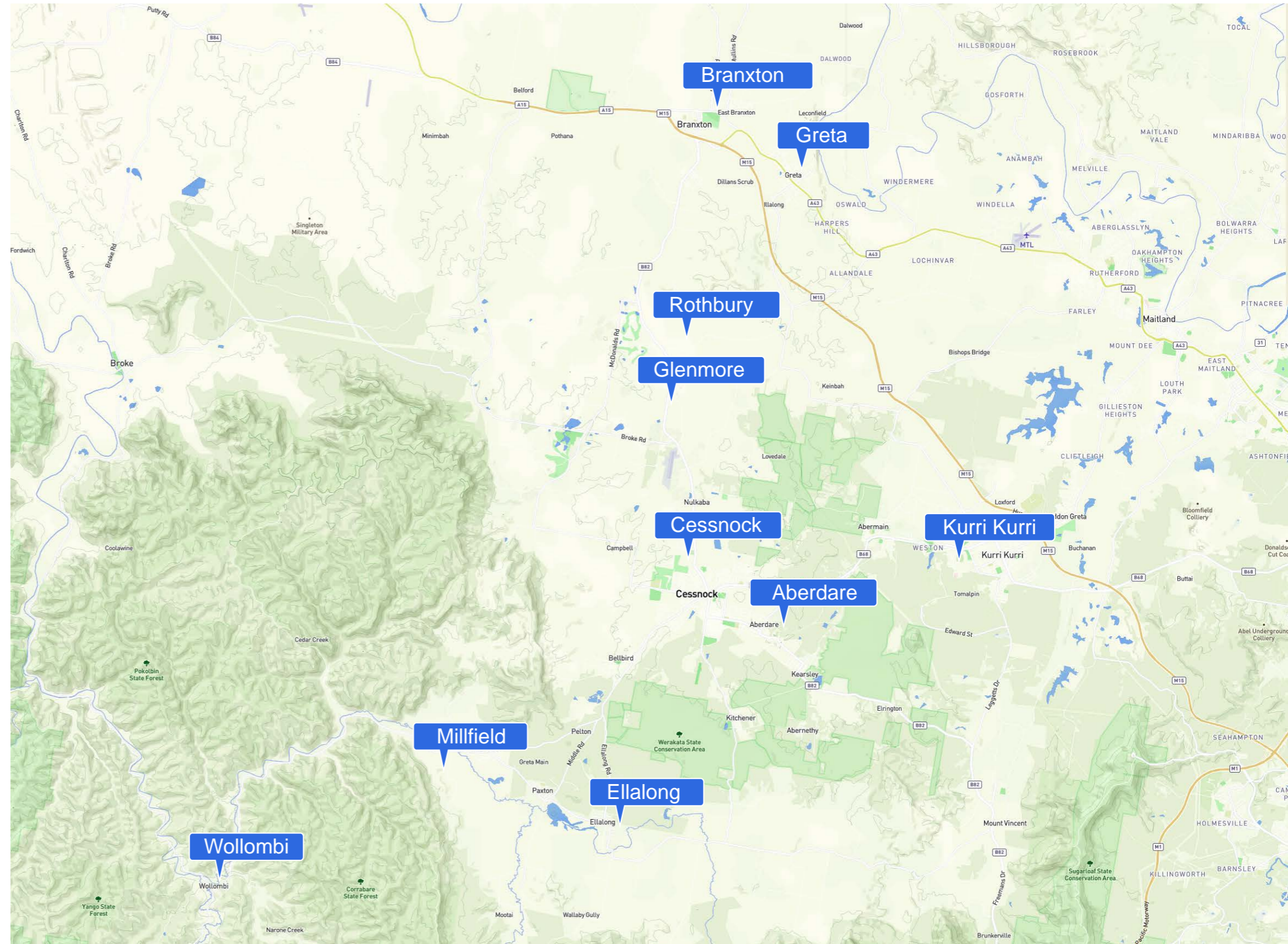


Figure 1 Location map of Cessnock LGA's cemeteries



Aberdare Cemetery and Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery

This cemetery is one of two regional scale facilities, that service the majority of interment needs within the Cessnock City Council Local Government Area (LGA). This cemetery has two parts, the general cemetery containing monumental burials in a range of denominations, and the Memorial Lawn which provides lawn burials, with a plaque placed on the concrete beam. There are also opportunities for ash interment into burial plots or garden beds. Ashes may also be interred into columbarium walls located within the lawn cemetery section.

The entry to the cemeteries is via memorial gates, dedicated to soldiers who served during the First World War. The site is surrounded by vacant land, with significant tree cover to the north and east. There are trees on site, especially in the eastern portion, although few are of significant size. Recent works have extended the lawn cemetery area and completed the road loop through this area. The cemetery is identified as being of local heritage significance in the Local Environmental Plan (LEP).



Figure 2 Aberdare Cemetery Plan (existing)



Kurri Kurri General and Lawn Cemetery

This facility, along with Aberdare, is a regional facility that services the majority of the interment needs of the Cessnock LGA. Entry is via two brick entry gate structures, delineating the entry to the monumental and lawn sections of the site.

This cemetery is in two parts, the General Cemetery that provides for monumental burials, and the Lawn Cemetery, which provides lawn burials, with a plaque placed on the concrete beam. There are also opportunities for ash interment into burial plots or garden beds. Ashes may also be interred into columbarium walls located within the lawn cemetery section.

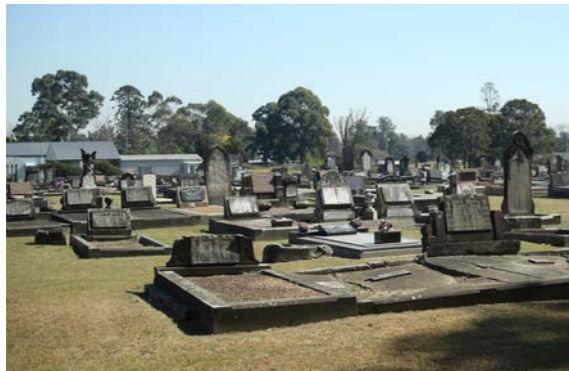
Part of the site is a designated EEC (Ecological Endangered Community), forming part of the Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland. This takes the form of a number of well established eucalypts and other swamp species. This area is protected and any development needs to consider potential impact to this eco-system.

This site is classified by the National Trust of Australia, it was listed as being of regional significance in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan (HREP 1989), and is listed as being of local significance in the current LEP. A significant memorial to the Stanford Merthyr Mine Disaster of 1905, was erected by the memorial committee and is an imposing tribute to those who lost their lives.



Figure 3 Kurri Kurri Cemetery Plan (existing)

- ① Pedestrian access point
- ② Vehicular access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- - - Pedestrian footpath (informal)
- Unsealed road
- Sealed road
- - - Topographical contour line (2 m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- Columbarium Walls
- - - Drainage reserve
- Drainage culvert
- - - Fence
- Garden Bed Interment
- Seats



Braxton Cemetery

This cemetery was dedicated in 1883. The site is classified under the National Trust of Australia, was identified as being of regional significance in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan (HREP 1989) and is listed as being of local heritage significance in the current LEP.

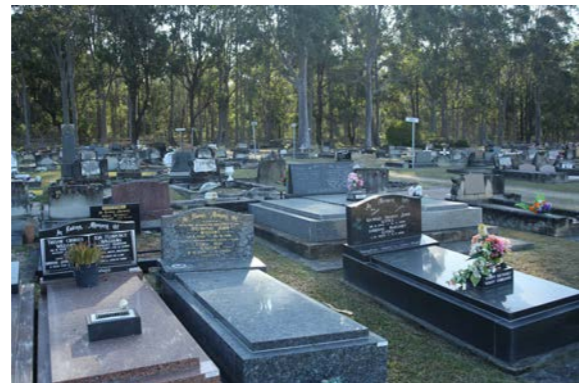
The existing character of the cemetery is of rural, open pastures. All the interments are monumental burials, with a number of large, ornate stone monuments. Due to the age of some of these elements, there are a number that are beginning to deteriorate and several have fallen over.

The presentation along Maitland Street includes a pool style fence, a timber entry structure and a historic turnstile. Community comments referenced the problem of accessing the site from the rear (Lindsay Street), due to the swale that becomes impassable after rain. Also, there are very few options for shade given the open pasture nature of the cemetery.



Figure 4 Braxton Cemetery Plan (existing)

- 1 Pedestrian access point
- 2 Vehicular access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- - - Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- Unsealed road
- Carparking (on/ off-street)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- - - Drainage reserve
- ⌋ Drainage culvert
- - - Fence



Cessnock Cemetery

This cemetery, also commonly known as Nulkaba Cemetery, is closed to new burials, with only reserved plots and re-openings available. It has been identified that there are approximately 650 unmarked graves on this site, and there is a memorial garden established in memory of babies buried here, whose graves are unmarked.

The large unoccupied grass area to the south east is the site of the original St John’s Church building. It is customary not to place graves within the site of a former church, so this area remains un-used for burials. The south west of the site abuts a Men’s Shed facility. As the cemetery is full and overcrowded, it is generally perceived to be difficult to navigate and unwelcoming.

This site is classified by the National Trust of Australia, it was listed as being of regional significance in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan (HREP 1989), and is listed as being of local significance in the current LEP.



Figure 5 Cessnock Cemetery Plan (existing)

- 1 Pedestrian access point
- 2 Vehicular access point
- Cemetery cadastre boundary (approx.)
- - - Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- - - Exterior fence
- Unsealed road
- Carparking (on/ off-street)
- Topographical contour line (2m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation



Ellalong Cemetery

Located at the top of a rise, this cemetery is prominently placed within the town of Ellalong, adjacent to the Public School.

This cemetery currently occupies approximately half of its site, with the unused site remaining heavily treed. There is no access available off Vulture Street. The primary access is off Helena Street, which has a pool style fence along the boundary. While a part of the site has thick vegetation, the main cemetery area is more open, with limited shade.

Predominantly Anglican (Church of England) graves are located at this site, with a much smaller Catholic section. There is evidence that a fence divided the two parts at one time. This cemetery is listed in the LEP as being of local heritage significance.



Figure 6 Ellalong Cemetery Plan (existing)

- ① Pedestrian access point
- ② Vehicular access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- - - Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- Unsealed road
- Carparking (on/ off-street)
- - - Topographical contour line (10m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- - - Fencing



Glenmore Cemetery

This is the most rural of all the cemeteries in the LGA, and the smallest. Located adjacent to Wine Country Drive, this cemetery is difficult to find and has limited signage or presence.

Comprising two distinct parts, one section is located adjacent to the road, whilst the other part is set back approximately 150 m from the road and appears to be graves for a related family. Some of the graves have fencing around them, most likely to ward off animals, as the fence is just post and wire, unlikely to keep off wild animals.

This cemetery is listed as being of local heritage significance in the LEP, and is sometimes referred to as Peacock Hill Cemetery.



Figure 7 Glenmore Cemetery Plan (existing)

- ① Pedestrian access point
- ② Vehicular access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- - - Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- Unsealed road
- - - Topographical contour line (10m)
- Existing vegetation
- - - Fence



Greta Cemetery

This is a large cemetery that appears only partially utilised, although a study carried out in 1984 confirmed at least 568 burials in unmarked graves at the site. Greta was the location of a large Army training camp during WW2, and then the facilities were converted into a migrant internment camp. The location of such a facility, that operated until the early 1970's, necessitated a large cemetery.

The cemetery is of historical significance, it was listed as of regional significance in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan (HREP 1989), and is listed as being of local significance in the current LEP. The Greta Tidy Town Committee has undertaken a range of projects to enhance the cemetery, and improve the facilities, including the erection of a columbarium wall.



Figure 8 Great Cemetery Plan (existing)

- 1 Pedestrian access point
- 2 Vehicular access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- Unsealed road
- Topographical contour line (2m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- Columbarium Walls
- Fence



Millfield Cemetery

Created to service the small town of Millfield, this cemetery is well laid out in orderly rows. The fenced cemetery area only comprises approximately a third of the site, with significant opportunity for expansion in the future. Even within the cemetery fence line there is capacity for burials for a number of years. There is also a columbarium wall that provides the option for ash interments.

The site is heavily treed, outside the cemetery fenceline, with few trees in the cemetery itself. The front fence, facing Crump Street, is a timber picket fence with an elaborate brick entry gate structure. There are no clearly defined roads or paths, except for a short unformed road from the entry gates, that travels for about 40 metres.

One unfortunate characteristic of this cemetery is the soil condition, which has resulted in almost all of the monuments and grave sites heaving. This has resulted in damage to some of the older headstones. This cemetery is listed as being of local significance in the current LEP.



Figure 9 Millfield Cemetery Plan (existing)

- 1 Pedestrian access point
- 2 Vehicular access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- Unsealed road
- Carparking (on/ off-street)
- Topographical contour line (2m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- Columbarium Walls
- Seats



Rothbury Cemetery

This is a relatively small cemetery, located off Wilderness Road behind Emma's Cottage Vineyard. It is remote and difficult to locate, but is set in a beautiful location.

Many of the burials in this cemetery are of members of a few pioneer families who settled in the Pokolbin area, and the cemetery is laid out in family groups.

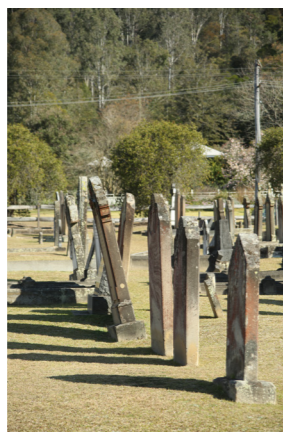
This site was originally the location of St Paul's Church, opened in 1868, the church was demolished in 1968. While a part of the site has thick vegetation, the main cemetery area is largely devoid of trees and resultant shade.

There is evidence of deterioration of many of the older monuments. This site is classified by the National Trust of Australia, it was listed as being of regional significance in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan (HREP 1989), and is listed as being of local significance in the current LEP.



Figure 10 Rothbury Cemetery Plan (existing)

- 1 Pedestrian access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- - - Pedestrian footpath
- Unsealed road
- - - Topographical contour line (10 m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- - - Fencing
- Water



Wollombi Cemetery

Located adjacent to Millpond, this cemetery is at risk of flooding, especially along its northern boundary. There is limited opportunity for expansion, although there is land to the west that is outside the fence-line, but within the site boundaries. There are anecdotal stories of a grave located in this area.

Many of the headstones in this cemetery are produced from local sandstone and there are many examples of the monumental stonemason’s art.

Vehicular (hearse) access is limited to this site, and parking is non-existent.

The adjacent land has a number of significant trees, although the cemetery itself is lacking in trees and resultant shade.

The cemetery was listed as being of regional significance in the Hunter Regional Environmental Plan (HREP 1989), and is listed as being of local significance in the current LEP.

The cemetery is within the Wollombi Conservation Area and is an integral part of the historical significance of this village.



Figure 11 Wollombi Cemetery Plan (existing)

- 1 Pedestrian access point
- Cemetery boundary (approx.)
- Pedestrian footpath (formalised)
- Unsealed road
- Topographical contour line (10m)
- Existing building
- Existing vegetation
- Fence
- Seats



02 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2-1 Themes from community consultation

Role of cemeteries in communities

There was a strong indication from the consultation that the community values cemeteries as a place to remember and memorialise family and friends who have passed away. They were also valued as a quiet place, and a place for reflection.

Cemeteries were considered important because they provide a connection to the past, a record of a community's history and a way to research ancestral information.



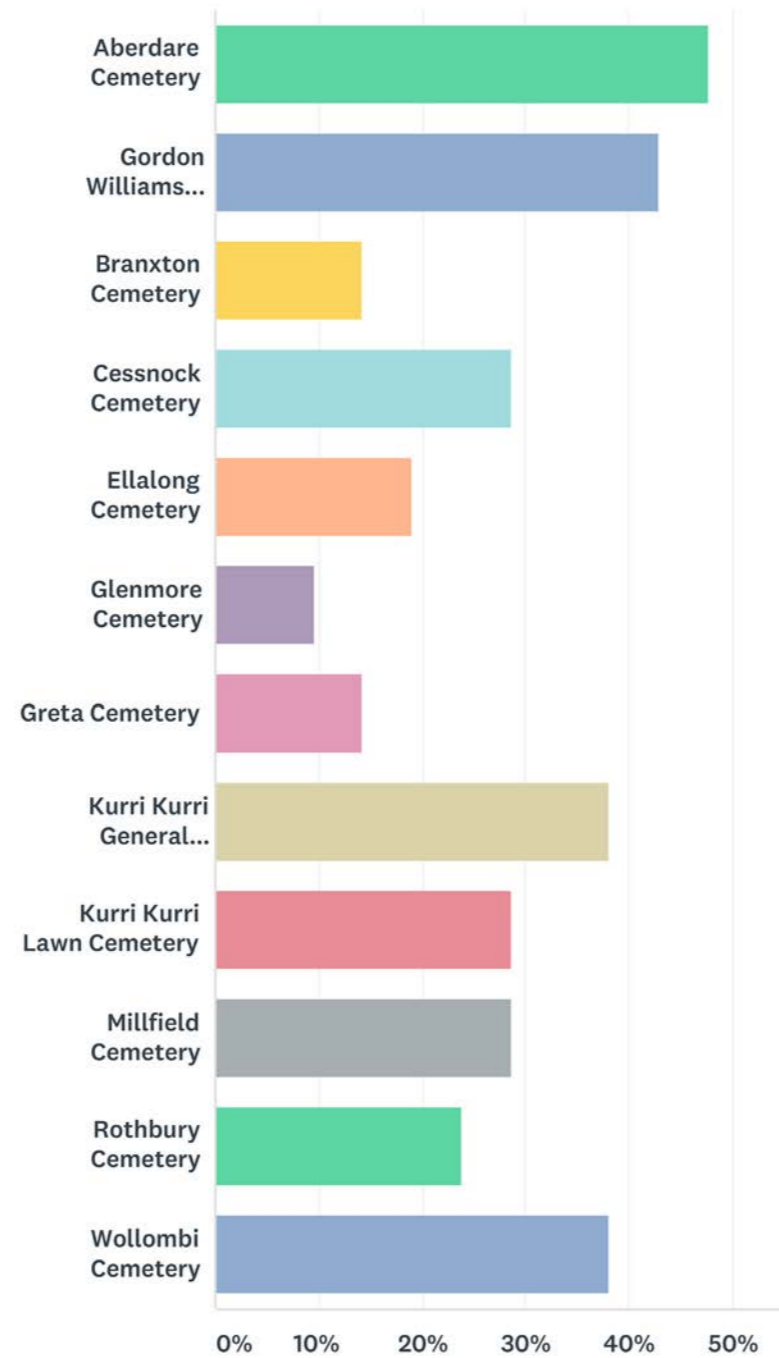
Visits to Cessnock Council cemeteries

Questions around this issue, asked in the online survey, sought to gain an understanding of which cemeteries the community frequents, how often and how do they access these facilities.

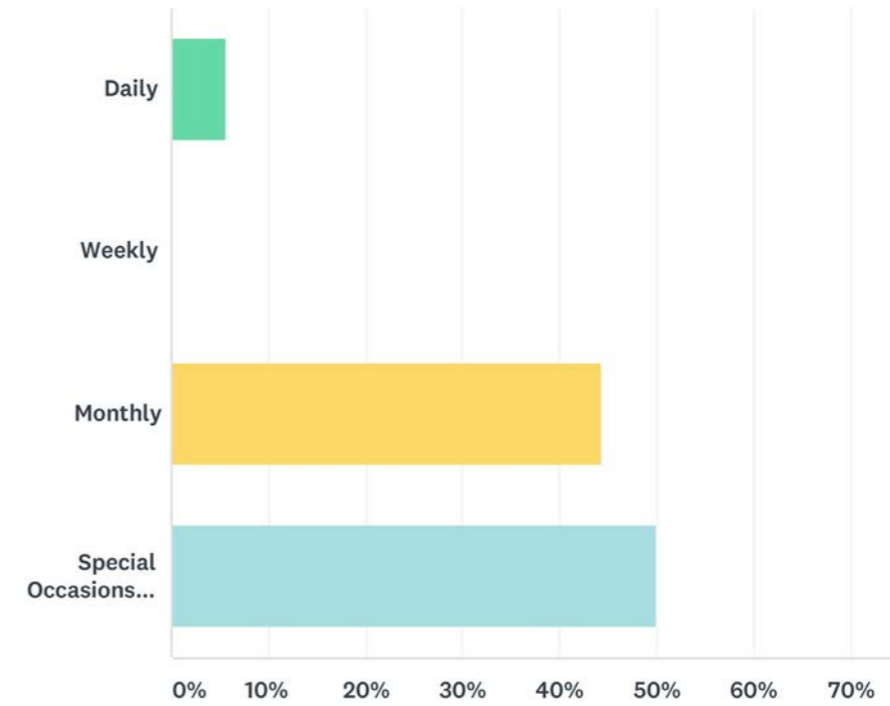
Overall all the cemeteries within the Local Government Area (LGA) are visited, including Glenmore which is the smallest, most remote of the cemeteries. Aberdare, including Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery, and Kurri Kurri, both general and lawn cemeteries, are the most visited. These are the two major cemeteries that provide the majority of interment capacity for the region.

Respondents indicated that special occasions, such as Mother’s Day, are the most common reason to visit a cemetery, although many people visit monthly and a small percentage visit daily. All respondents indicated that they travel to the various cemeteries by car.

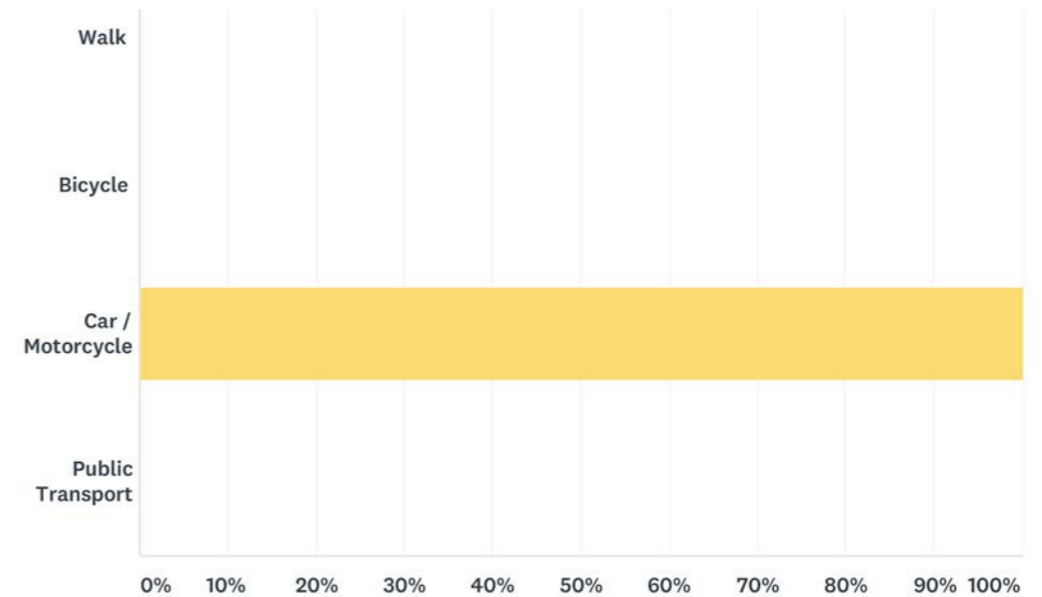
Visits to cemeteries



Frequency of visits



Mode of travel



Considerations for future development of cemeteries

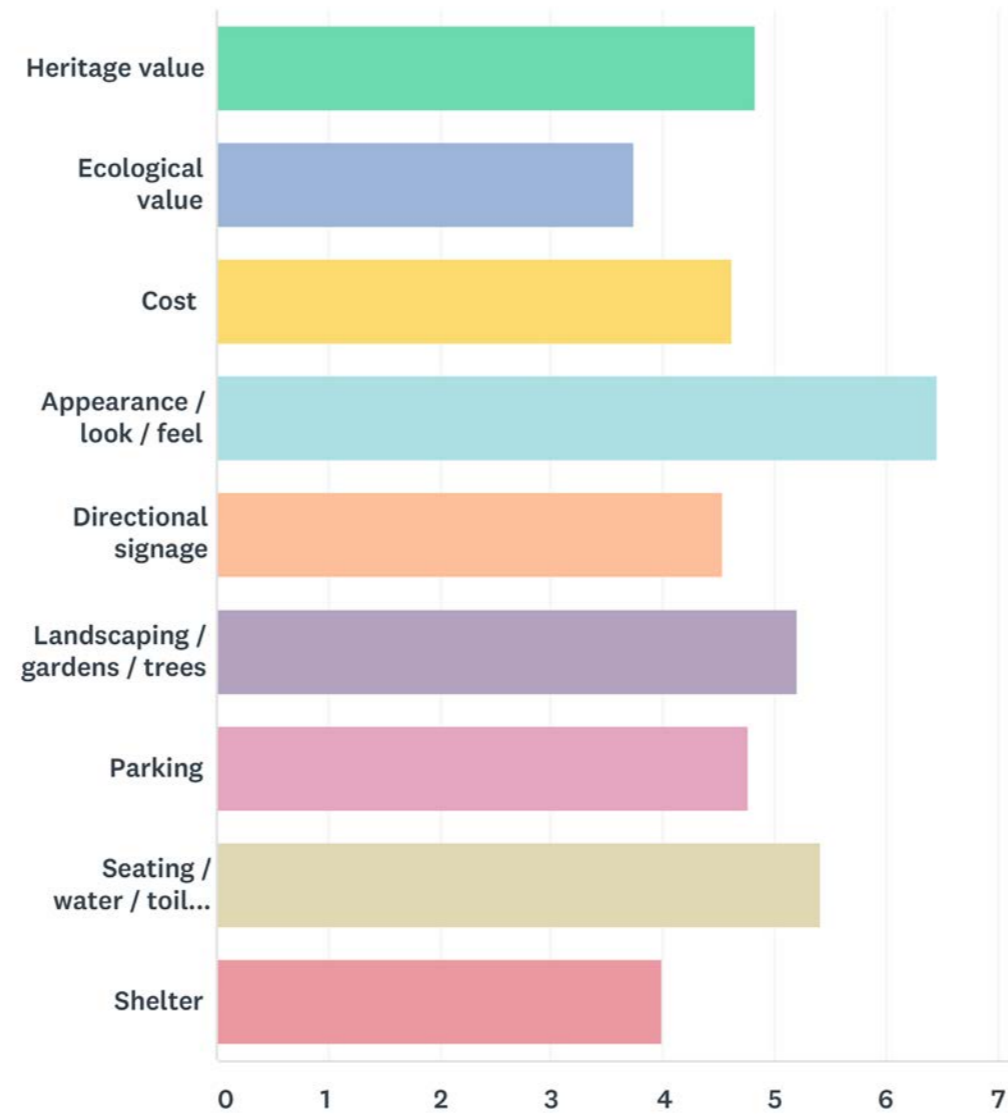
The online survey asked those who participated to rank the importance of a series of elements relevant to cemetery development, including:

- Heritage value
- Ecological value
- Cost
- Appearance / look / feel
- Directional signage
- Landscaping / gardens / trees
- Parking
- Seating / water / toilet facilities
- Shelter

The element considered of greatest importance was Appearance / look / feel. This was matched by the comments put forward by those who attended the community consultation events, who emphasising the need for good on-going maintenance so that the cemetery was 'clean, presentable and well-maintained'.

A common comment was that the cemeteries are well maintained now, and this level of service is appreciated by those who visit.

Importance of cemetery elements to users



Sense of place desired in a cemetery

Overwhelmingly the community wanted cemeteries to be a place of reflection, of peace and quiet, and of serenity. The need to show respect for those who are buried at these facilities was also a strong theme. A number of respondents desired a place that was comforting during a time of grief.

The provision of facilities that are beautiful and spiritual was also strongly supported. Some spoke of creating an 'atmosphere that makes people want to come back rather than feel that they have an obligation to do so'.

Overall there was an indication that the community likes the sense of place created in the facilities that are currently provided.



Kind of gardens appropriate for a cemetery

This question raised a wide array of responses. Many considered roses synonymous with cemeteries, others liked the idea of native gardens. There was a preference generally for easily maintained gardens that did not look 'messy' or overgrown.

Trees were seen as important, although support for specific types of trees was diverse with some respondents liking gum trees and natives, whilst others thought exotics were more appropriate.

The response to this question highlights the need for diversity within these facilities, some people will choose to be interred in a formal garden, others prefer a more rustic native garden. Choice is the significant factor that all these share.



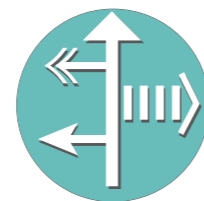
2-2 Guiding principles for cemeteries

These are the guiding principles that will support the development of Council’s cemeteries into the future. Focusing on elements that enhance the experience of visitors to these facilities, these principles will work to maintain the place of these cemeteries within the community and ensure that they are a valued community asset.



Amenity & Facility

Provision of shade trees, seating options and the creation of spaces for contemplation and reflection through planting would improve the experience of visitors to these facilities. Spreading these amenities throughout the sites allows for a variety of opportunities to enjoy the environment and the sense of peace that is present in these places.



Access & Connectivity

The installation of wayfinding signage that clearly identifies the various parts of the cemetery, and improves navigation to and within the cemetery. Well defined roads and paths enable visitors to access the site and support ease of movement for those attending funerals, especially those who have mobility challenges.



Diversity & Inclusivity

The need to provide a range of options for interment, so that the decision of a final resting place can be tailored to the needs of the individual, drives the proposal for the provision of additional possibilities. Monumental graves are present in all the CCC cemeteries, but additional options, such as columbarium walls, garden bed ash interment areas and scatter walls are all facilities that the community is seeking.



Environment & Landscape

Enhancing and building on the existing vegetation present at these sites is important, as often the existing vegetation is part of the unique character that distinguishes each place. There are often well established flora and fauna communities that inhabit these relatively untouched areas, which need to be respected and cultivated.



Recreation

This refers to the use of these open spaces for activities such as walking, bird watching and other passive recreational pursuits. These sites are places of quiet reflection and contemplation and parts of the community have indicated that they value the opportunity to commemorate their loved ones in a range of ways.



Amenity & Facility

The provision of amenities on site, especially for the larger cemeteries, is essential to support the needs of visitor to these facilities.

Shade, either via trees or a permanent man-made structure, provides a reprieve from either rain or the sun. Shade structures can be utilised for small gatherings, or for memorial events. They provide unique characters and introduce points of interest to individual cemeteries while providing shade, toilets, storage, etc.

Seating encourages visitors to stop and rest, it allows them to contemplate and reflect and spend time with the departed in a peaceful environment.

The provision of toilets at the two regional facilities would cater for regular visitors as well as those attending a funeral. Care needs to be taken to ensure that these amenities are easily maintained, and that they are clean and safe for use.

Services, utilities and maintenance are also essential to providing proper lighting for safety, drinking water, rainwater harvesting, equipment storage area and staff area, especially for larger cemeteries.



Seating placed to take advantage of shade form trees



Example of timber shade structure in Woronora, NSW



Example of shade structure with seating

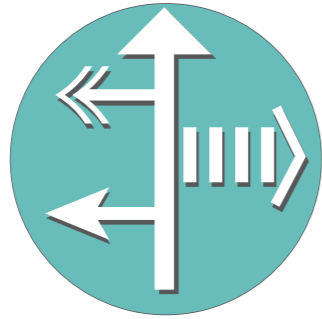


Example of freestanding toilet structure



Example of a scatter wall and mounted plinth options





Access & Connectivity

The community indicated that they access the cemeteries throughout the LGA via car exclusively. The provision of roads (and parking at the larger sites) within the cemeteries will ensure that cars accessing the site do not do damage to either monuments or landscaping.

Parking is especially of concern when there is a funeral, as this results in a large number of cars accessing the site at a specific time. Parking provisions encourage funeral attendees to park in an orderly manner and in suitable areas. It is also advisable to maintain roll top curb to allow incidental roadside parking.

Access throughout the facility needs to consider the needs of those whose mobility is compromised, many attendees at funerals are elderly, requiring the use of walkers, or even wheelchairs, so paths that are well formed and easily maintained are an important component.

Wayfinding within a cemetery helps specific graves or plaques to be located. Ease of finding the grave of a family member helps visitors to connect, especially if they are distant relatives.

The presentation of the cemetery to the wider community, and the connectivity of the facility all enhance the sense of place. Use of contextual fencing, either semi-transparent or open style, suitable for the location and complementing the surrounding context makes the site more inviting and less intimidating for visitors.



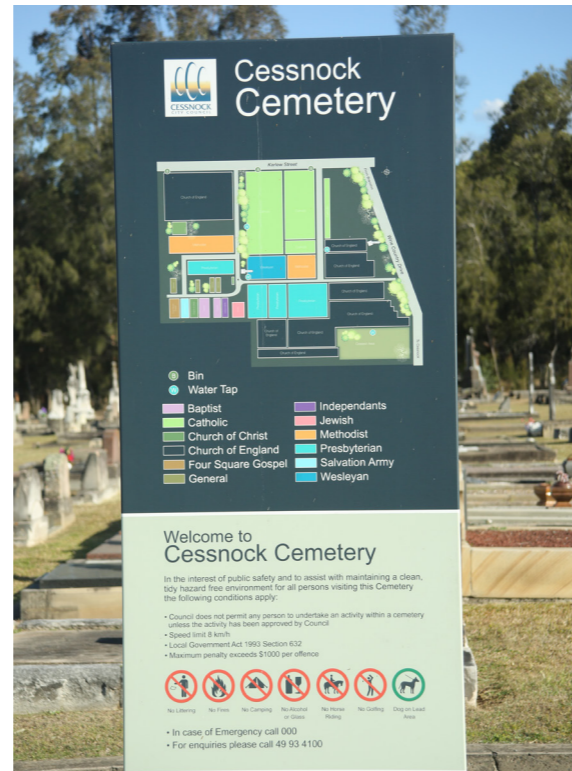
Example of traditional rural timber fence at Wollombi



Example of a more structured path



Wayfinding signage within the cemetery improves navigation



Example of cemetery map signage at Cessnock



Example of row marker



Example of meandering path



Diversity & Inclusivity

In response to the requirements of current users and the wider community, a variety of options for interment are needed. When many of the CCC cemeteries were established, monumental graves were the only form of burial. Now cremation, and the subsequent interment of ashes has become more common, along with more modern forms of burial, such as in a lawn cemetery format.

Ash interment can take place into existing graves, new burial plots, garden bed surrounds and columbarium walls of various designs. Scatter wall options are also a recent development, providing a location for the installation of a plaque, when the ashes are scattered in a different location, within the cemetery grounds, or elsewhere.

The pre-planning of funerals, and pre-purchasing of burial plots or ash interment locations, mean that many people are making the decision about where they wish to be laid to rest, so this choice is becoming increasingly a personal one.

Another form of ash interment that is growing in popularity is the family plot. This takes many forms, but generally comprises a central focal point, either a tree or rock or the like, with a family name in the form of a plaque, around which are positions for multiple ash interments. These are sold as a single plot, and can be utilised for many generations. Some other forms of interment include bush gardens, sculpture gardens, vine & orchards as well as separate areas for pets.



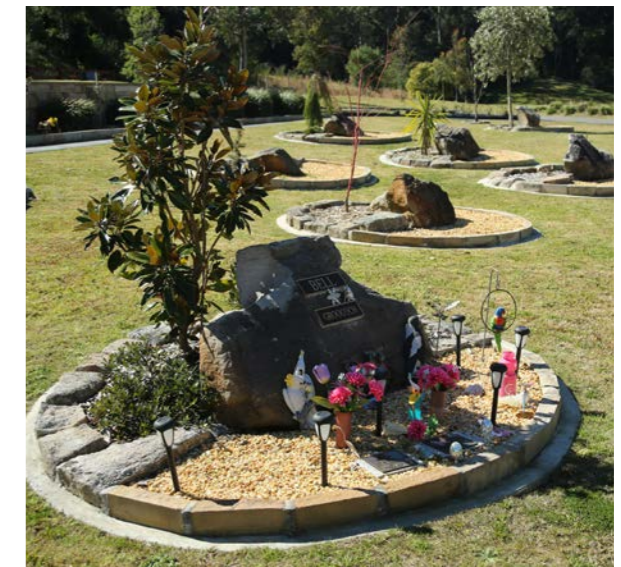
Columbarium walls



Curved layout for interment plots



Ash interment around focal point sculpture



Example of family plot interment option



Memorial garden



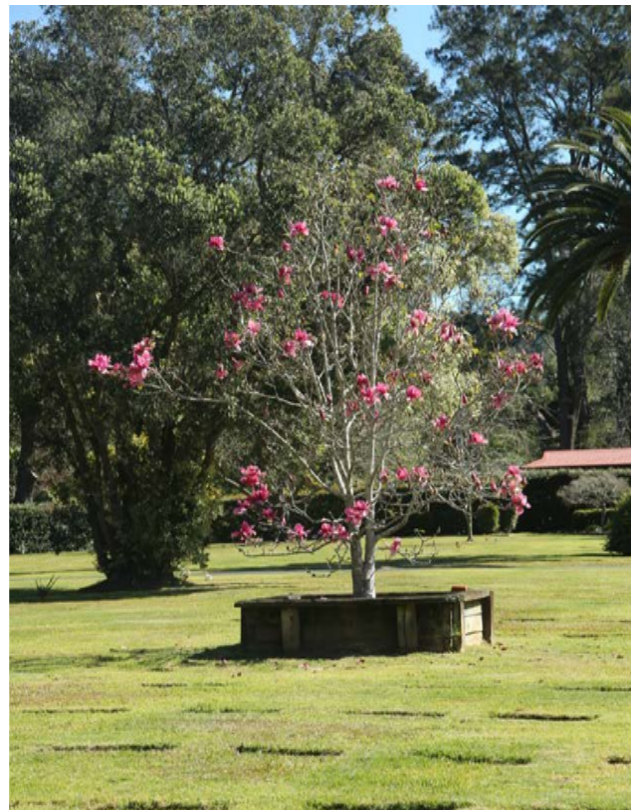
Environment & Landscape

Gardens are vital to the creation of a sense of place in cemeteries. They can take the form of a formal or informal layout, they can utilise native or exotic (introduced) species, they also offer protection and sanctuary. The guiding principle is that the garden needs to be well maintained, and well considered. The plant selection needs to consider the natural setting, and take account of the topology, hydrology and geology of the place.

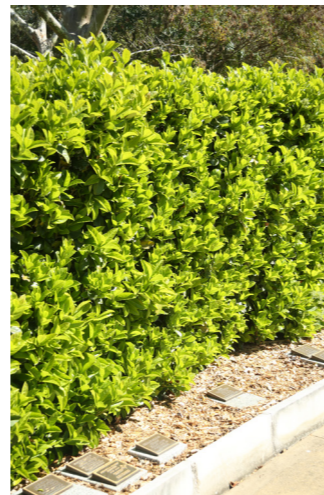
The use of colour is essential, as it ‘enlivens’ the site and connects visitors to time and place. This can be achieved with the use of seasonal colour, roses and other flowering plants as well as culturally significant species to visually representing the changes of seasons and natural growth. Cemeteries also provide a sanctuary for fauna, and can operate as natural wildlife corridors.



Shrubs planted amongst lawn graves



Flowers add colour to the Palmdale Cemetery



Hedging around ash interment



Flower bed with ash interment



Colourful flowers planted in memorial garden bed



Recreation

Increasingly cemeteries are considered as places for passive recreation. They are often beautiful places that are a haven away from the chaos of everyday life, where a visitor can spend time in quiet contemplation and reflection.

Most cemeteries can be designed to include a combination of prospect (views out) and refuge (reflection and contemplation). Some people choose to picnic at the site, others celebrate the birthday of the deceased with a party. As long as the site is always treated with respect and that all evidence of use is cleaned up, the use of these sites in a range of ways should be encouraged to help support the grieving process.

The proliferation of wildlife, especially birds, in these rarely disturbed areas, creates an ideal environment for pursuits such as bird watching and walking. They are also places where you can just enjoy the gardens, and explore the rich cultural heritage presented by the graves of past generations.

Other forms of recreation in cemeteries take the form of genealogical research and locating and photographing the graves of distant relatives has become a passionate pursuit for many.



Passive seating corner



Natural settings have potential for bird watching



Covered bench at Woronora Memorial Park, NSW



Seating area within trees and columbarium walls

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03 RECOMMENDATIONS

3-1 Existing character styles & interment styles

Existing character styles



Existing interment styles



3-2 Precedent character styles & interment styles

Precedent character styles



Precedent interment styles

INTEGRATED WITH PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE



CONTEMPORARY GROVE/ORCHARD GARDEN BEDS



BUSHLAND GARDENBED PLACEMENTS



ASH/SCATTER GARDEN



SCATTER WALL



















SCULPTURE



3-3 Concept Masterplan for Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery

LEGEND

-  PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS
-  PROPOSED ROAD EXTENSION
-  EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED
-  EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED
-  PROPOSED LANDSCAPE TREES
-  PROPOSED LANDSCAPE HEDGE/SHRUBS
-  EXTEND EXISTING INTERMENT TYPE
-  BUSHLAND GARDEN MEMORIAL WALK
-  LAWN BURIAL
-  NATIVE BUSHLAND GARDEN BURIAL
-  COLUMBARIUM WALL (BACK TO BACK)
-  GROVE/ORCHARD BURIAL PLOTS
-  PROPOSED CARPARK
-  PRIMARY GATHERING POINT/SHELTER
-  PEDESTRIAN REFLECTION POINTS
-  SCULPTURE/WAYFINDING LANDMARK



KEY

- ① Extend and connect existing roads to create internal loop and enhance avenue planting
- ② Introduce central pedestrian avenue
- ③ Primary gathering point/shelter/outdoor ceremonial space. Inc. Self contained toilets
- ④ Picnic area/gathering space
- ⑤ Various scales of offline pedestrian reflection points for contemplation & respite.
- ⑥ Primary pedestrian network
- ⑦ Extend various existing burial types
- ⑧ Informal bushland setting memorialisation garden plaques to cemetery periphery
- ⑨ Grove/orchard burials - Family plots
- ⑩ 'Garden of innocence' childrens burial
- ⑪A Proposed carparking (hard paved with shade trees)
- ⑪B Temporary parking (prior to expansion)
- ⑫ Works compound. Approx 25x9m. To include tanks for irrigation
- ⑬ Buffer planting between cemetery and tea trees

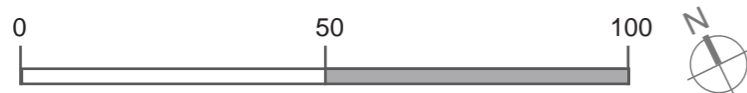


Figure 12 Aberdare Cemetery - Concept Master Plan

03 RECOMMENDATIONS

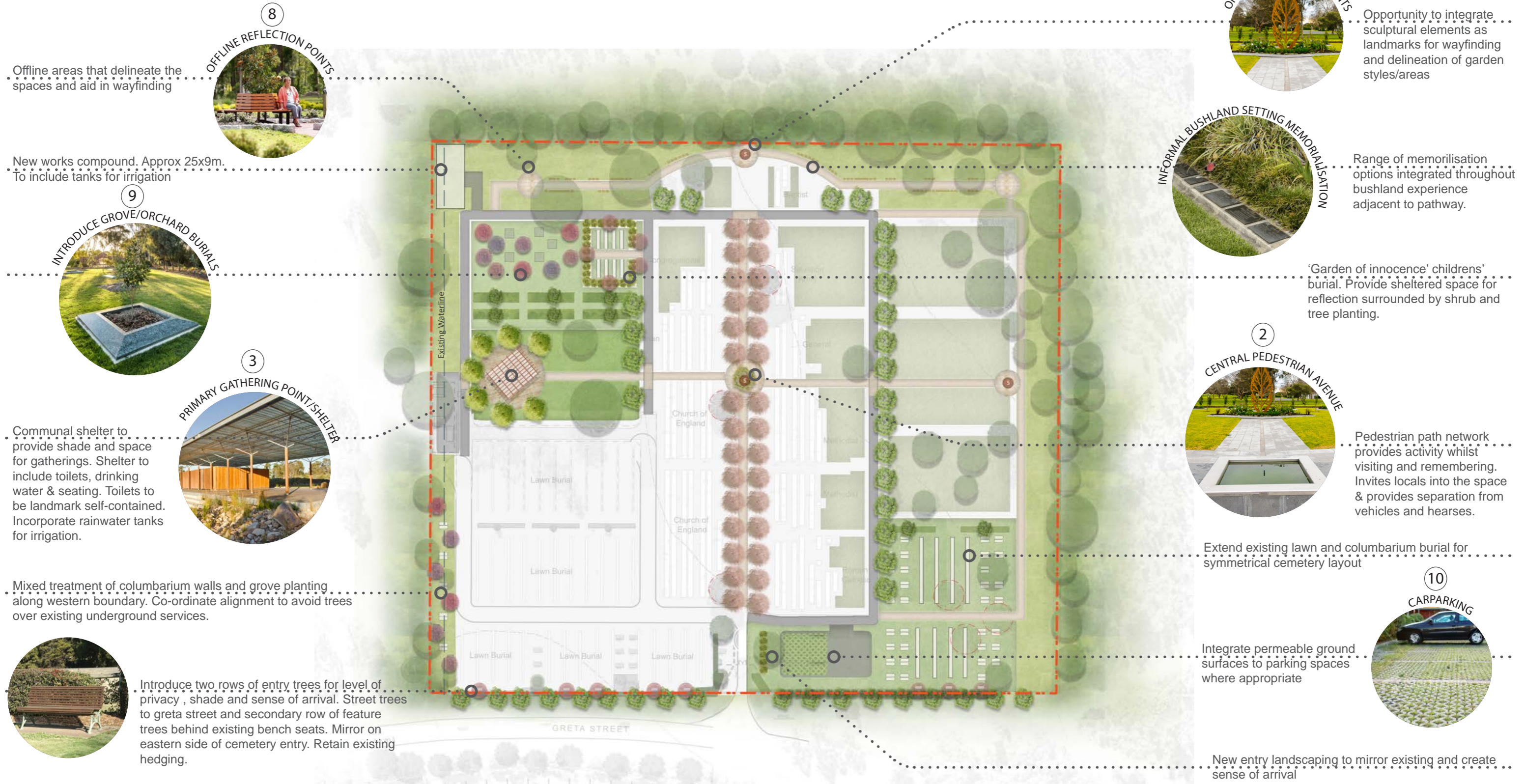


Figure 13 Aberdare Cemetery - Concept Imagery



◀ This masterplan outlines improvements that can be undertaken at this site. Some of these will be able to be implemented in the short term, and some will be long-term projects. All of these upgrades will work to make the two cemeteries at this site more attractive, and more accessible for the community.

Upgrades include the provision of toilet facilities, and a shade structure that can be used for small gatherings. Additional options for interment are also proposed, such as family plots and a different form of plaque / monument in a new lawn cemetery area.

Additional planting is proposed, to support the creation of reflective, respectful spaces, that will also provide shade to those who choose to spend time there. The formal entry to the site is enhanced with the proposed pedestrian avenue of trees, and reflection points, highlighted with sculptures or specific plantings, are proposed to create focal points to aid wayfinding.

Aerial view illustrating the concept masterplan for Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery

3-4 Indicative Plant Species for Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery

NATIVE PLANTING

The bushland periphery will be planted with flowering natives for colour interest and to attract birds. Potential flower colour theme includes pinks, purples, whites to compliment the tree grove.



CREPE MYRTLE TREE GROVE

Clients can select a colour of drought hardy Lagerstroemia indica cvs. Different heights and colours are available from white, through pinks to purples, giving cohesion with opportunity for personalisation.



ENTRY, FOCAL, AVENUE'S, CHAPEL

Avenue and frontage species options include Jacaranda mimosifolia, Prunus 'Oakville Crimson Spire', and Gleditsia 'Sunburst'. Fagus sylvatica, Ginko Biloba and Malus 'Profusion' can provide beautiful focal point trees at the ends of avenues or associated with gathering areas as landmarks.



















HEDGE SPECIES

A variety of hedge species can be used to create the feeling of separate garden rooms. The suggested species are of varying heights to define different areas.



3-5 Concept Masterplan for Kurri Kurri General & Lawn Cemetery

LEGEND

-  PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS
-  PROPOSED ROAD EXTENSION
-  EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED
-  EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED
-  PROPOSED LANDSCAPE TREES
-  PROPOSED LANDSCAPE HEDGE/SHRUBS
-  EXTEND EXISTING INTERMENT TYPE
-  BUSHLAND GARDEN MEMORIAL WALK
-  LAWN BURIAL
-  NATIVE BUSHLAND GARDEN BURIAL
-  COLUMBARIUM WALL (BACK TO BACK)
-  GROVE/ORCHARD BURIAL PLOTS
-  PROPOSED CARPARK
-  PRIMARY GATHERING POINT/SHELTER
-  PEDESTRIAN REFLECTION POINTS
-  SCULPTURE/WAYFINDING LANDMARK



KEY

- ① EXTEND AND CONNECT EXISTING ROADS TO CREATE INTERNAL LOOP AND ENHANCE AVENUE PLANTING
- ②A STABILISE AND ENHANCE EXISTING DRAINAGE TRENCH
- ②B NEW OPEN DRAINAGE TRENCH TO NEW ROAD
- ③ EXTEND VARIOUS EXISTING BURIAL TYPES
- ④ REMOVE EXISTING FENCING, EXPAND & INTRODUCE GROVE/ORCHARD BURIALS
- ⑤ INFORMAL BUSHLAND SETTING TO CEMETERY PERIPHERY WITH GARDEN BED MEMORIAL PLAQUES INLAID IN PATHWAY EDGE.
- ⑥ NATURAL SCATTER GARDEN
- ⑦ MEANDERING 'CONTEMPLATION' WALK TO PERIPHERY WITH GARDEN BED MEMORIAL PLAQUES INLAID IN PATHWAY EDGE.
- ⑧ PRIMARY GATHERING POINT/SHELTER/OUTDOOR CEREMONIAL SPACE
- ⑨ VARIOUS SCALES OF OFFLINE PEDESTRIAN REFLECTION POINTS FOR CONTEMPLATION & RESPITE
- ⑩ PROPOSED CARPARKING (Half sealed/half grass cell)
- ⑪ WORKS COMPOUND. (Size approx 6X15m)

DASHED LINE INDICATES APPROXIMATE EXTENT OF KURRI SAND SWAMP

Figure 14 Kurri Kurri Cemetery - Concept Master Plan

03 RECOMMENDATIONS

5
INFORMAL BUSHLAND SETTING MEMORIALISATION



Range of memorilisation options integrated throughout bushland experience with garden bed plaque placements or kurri sand swamp dedicated tree species.

New fencing similar to cessnock cbd - 1200mm height to front and 1500mm to sides and rear

2
STABILISE + ENHANCE EXISTING SWALE



Extend and connect existing roads to create internal vehicular loop to create separation between pedestrians, vehicles and hearses. Enhance avenue tree planting. Introduce paving materiality to road surface to indicate pedestrian priority and

1
CREATE INTERNAL VEHICULAR LOOP



Extend and reorientate existing lawn burials. Integrate back to back columbarium walls throughout.

4
INTRODUCE GROVE/ORCHARD INTERMENT



Requires removal of existing fencing and incorporates existing garden bed placements. Provides opportunity for family plots.

Natural scatter garden to south-western corner

Run new services along southern boundary



9
OFFLINE REFLECTION POINTS



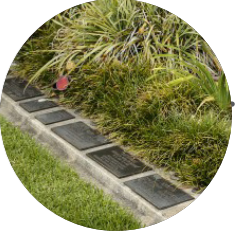
7
MEANDERING CONTEMPLATION WALK



Pedestrian path network provides activity whilst visiting and remembering. Invites locals into the space & provides separation from vehicles and hearses.

Potential for future expansion to include bushland memorilisation experience with garden bed plaques along contemplation walk.

5



8
PRIMARY GATHERING POINT/SHELTER/CEREMONIAL SPACE



Introduce hedge planting to create sense of enclosure to existing garden of innocence. Retain and protect existing sculpture.

Architecturally designed communal shelter to provide shade and space for gatherings. Shelter to include toilets, drinking water & seating opportunities. Incorporate rainwater tanks for irrigation.

9
OFFLINE REFLECTION POINTS



Areas for respite provide opportunity to integrate sculptural elements as landmarks for wayfinding and delineation of garden styles/areas.



◀ This masterplan sets out upgrades to the two cemeteries located at this site that can be undertaken in the short term, medium term and long term. With a focus on integration of this facility with the local context, and respect for the ecological value of the surrounding land, this plan outlines a range of additional interment options, including a unique offering that incorporates local sandstone blocks to provide family plot style multiple interment locations.

Provision of a shade structure, suitable for small gatherings, and the inclusion of toilets, will enhance the experience for visitors to the site. Improved access around the site will be facilitated by formalised pathways and roadways. This will be particularly of benefit for those with mobility issues.

Planting on this site has been focused on creating a naturalised setting where the site interacts with the adjacent areas of ecological value. Exotic species have been proposed as specimen plants for colour and to create distinctive areas within the overall facility. Such an area is the proposed grove/orchard area that will provide family plot options for multiple interments.

Aerial view illustrating the concept masterplan for Kurri Kurri General & Lawn Cemetery

3-6 Indicative Plant Species for Aberdare Cemetery / Gordon Williams Memorial Lawn Cemetery

NATIVE PLANTING

Conservation areas will be planted with Kurri Sand Swamp Community; tree, shrub and ground cover species with the remainder of the bushland periphery planted with flowering natives for colour interest and to attract birds, in a warm flower colour scheme.



SYZIGIUM 'RESILIENCE'



BANKSIA SPINULOSA 'BIRTHDAY CANDLES'



ACACIA COGNATA 'LIME MAGNIF.'



MELALEUCA 'CLARET TOPS'



CERATOPETALUM GUMMIFERUM

DWARF GUMTREE GROVE

Clients can select a colour of Dwarf Gumtrees, both Eucalyptus and Corymbia sp. for uniformity, with different cultivars and hence flower colour options available.



EUCALYPTUS FIGIFOLIA



CORYMBIA 'FAIRY FLOSS'



CORYMBIA 'ORANGE SPLENDOUR'



CORYMBIA CITRIODORA 'SCENTUOS'



EUCALYPTUS SIDEROXYLON 'ROSEA'

ENTRY, AVENUE, DRAINAGE

Potential avenue species include Eucalyptus citriodora or Acer x freemandii. Drainage reserve species include Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'. Entry planting options include Fraxinus 'Raywood', Quercus paulustris or Metasequoia glybiostroboides.



PISTACHIO CHINENSIS



EUCALYPTUS CITRIODORA



FRAXINUS 'RAYWOOD'



PYRUS CALLERYANA 'CHANTICLEER'



ACER X FREEMANDII

MEADOW BURIAL (POTENTIAL TO BE CONFIRMED)

There is potential for planted graves of soft grasses and perennial planting with a yellow, blue, white colour scheme for a prairie style meadow of colour and movement.



PENNISETUM SP.



SALVIA SP.



RUDBECKIA SP.



ALLIUM SP.



DESCHAMPSIA 'TATRA GOLD'

3-7 Branxton Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Branxton Cemetery



◀ The key recommendations / guiding principles for Branxton Cemetery include the planting of shrubs / hedging along the western boundary to provide screening to the adjacent property, upgrading the fence, and providing wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities. Adding a shade structure within the cemetery would also provide improved amenity for visitors to this facility, as would the provision of more shade trees and seating options.

Currently there are no garden bed ash interment options available, so the creation of some in the long term along the western edge would increase the interment options available at the site. Incorporating these with some specimen trees that would provide colour, and depending on the final design and layout, they could also provide the setting for family plots.



Structure at Palmdale Cemetery



Shade structure at Woronora Cemetery



Plaques in a tree bed



Garden beds



Figure 15 Braxton Cemetery - Recommendations



3-8 Cessnock Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Cessnock Cemetery



◀ The key recommendations for Cessnock Cemetery include creation of a defined edge, via the use of shrubs or hedging along the perimeter and upgrading the fence. The hedging could be extended to provide a visual screen to the adjacent Men's Shed area.

Along the Wine Country Drive edge, some additional trees and seating are also proposed to provide shaded seating options. Seating is also proposed to the western edge of the cemetery, amongst the large existing trees.

The recommendations also include providing a more formalised road, and incorporating wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities.



Seating area within trees and columbarium walls



A defined edge using shrubs



A formalised path at Rookwood Cemetery



Figure 16 Cessnock Cemetery - Recommendations

3-9 Ellalong Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Ellalong Cemetery



◀ A range of key recommendations have been developed for Ellalong Cemetery, including the creation of an improved street frontage to Helena Street, via the use of a hedge, or garden bed beyond the fence line. The provision of more trees, with careful selection to avoid the risk of damage to existing monuments, would provide shade which would be welcome, especially when combined with well-shaded seating. The recommendations also include upgrading the fence, providing a more formalised road and providing wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities.

The provision of some garden bed ash interment options in the long term, around the base of some of the proposed new trees, would increase the range of options for interment offered at the facility. These could also be developed as family plot options if the community desires it.



Crepe Myrtle trees to provide colour & shade



Seating in shade



Plaques at Mac Park Cemetery



Figure 17 Ellalong Cemetery - Recommendations

3-10 Glenmore Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Glenmore Cemetery



◀ This is the smallest of Council's cemeteries, and one of the most rural. The key recommendation for this site is the provision of a simple fence to create a sense of enclosure and to ensure that damage does not occur due to inadvertent access.

An entry structure of some type would provide a sense of arrival from Will's Hill Road, and signal the cemetery's location. The carpark area already exists, but is undefined, so a fence and hedge or shrubs would give definition. Seats have been placed to provide options for visitors to rest and enjoy this very pastoral location.

The recommendations also include the provision of wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities.



Timber entry structure



Shade and seating

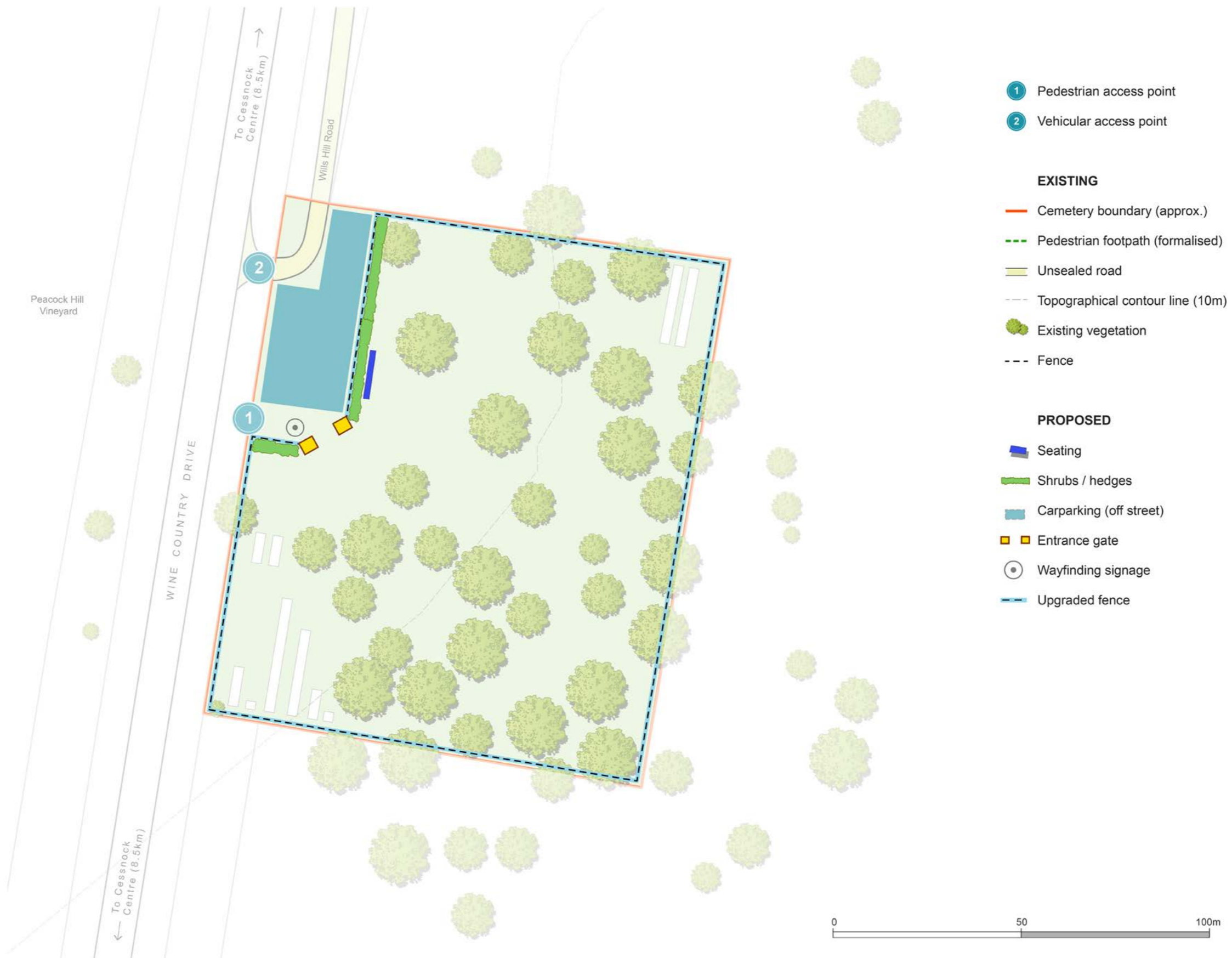


Figure 18 Glenmore Cemetery - Recommendations

3-11 Greta Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Greta Cemetery



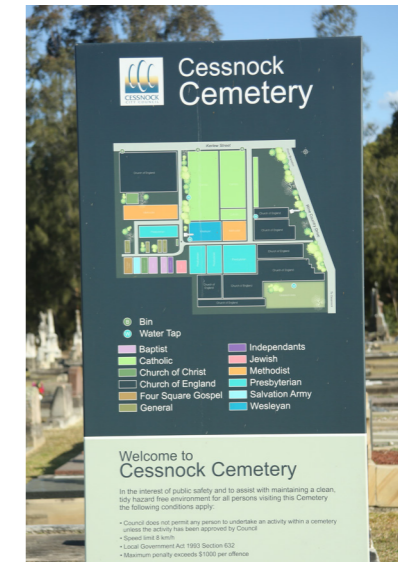
◀ The key recommendations for Greta Cemetery relate to improving the presentation of the cemetery to the street (Evans Street), and increasing the interment options available. Building on from the works initiated by the Greta Tidy Town committee, it is proposed that additional garden beds with ash interment edging, adjacent to the entry, be provided in the long term.

Large trees, in keeping with species currently present on the site, are proposed around the entry, which will create shade opportunities for seating in this area.

Definition of the roads within the cemetery, through edging and grading, will also improve accessibility and reduce the risks of damage to existing monuments. The recommendations also include upgrading the fence and providing wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities. The structure provided by the Tidy Town committee, could be repurposed to work as wayfinding signage in accordance with the Cessnock Signage Strategy guidelines.



Example of flower garden bed



Cessnock Cemetery map

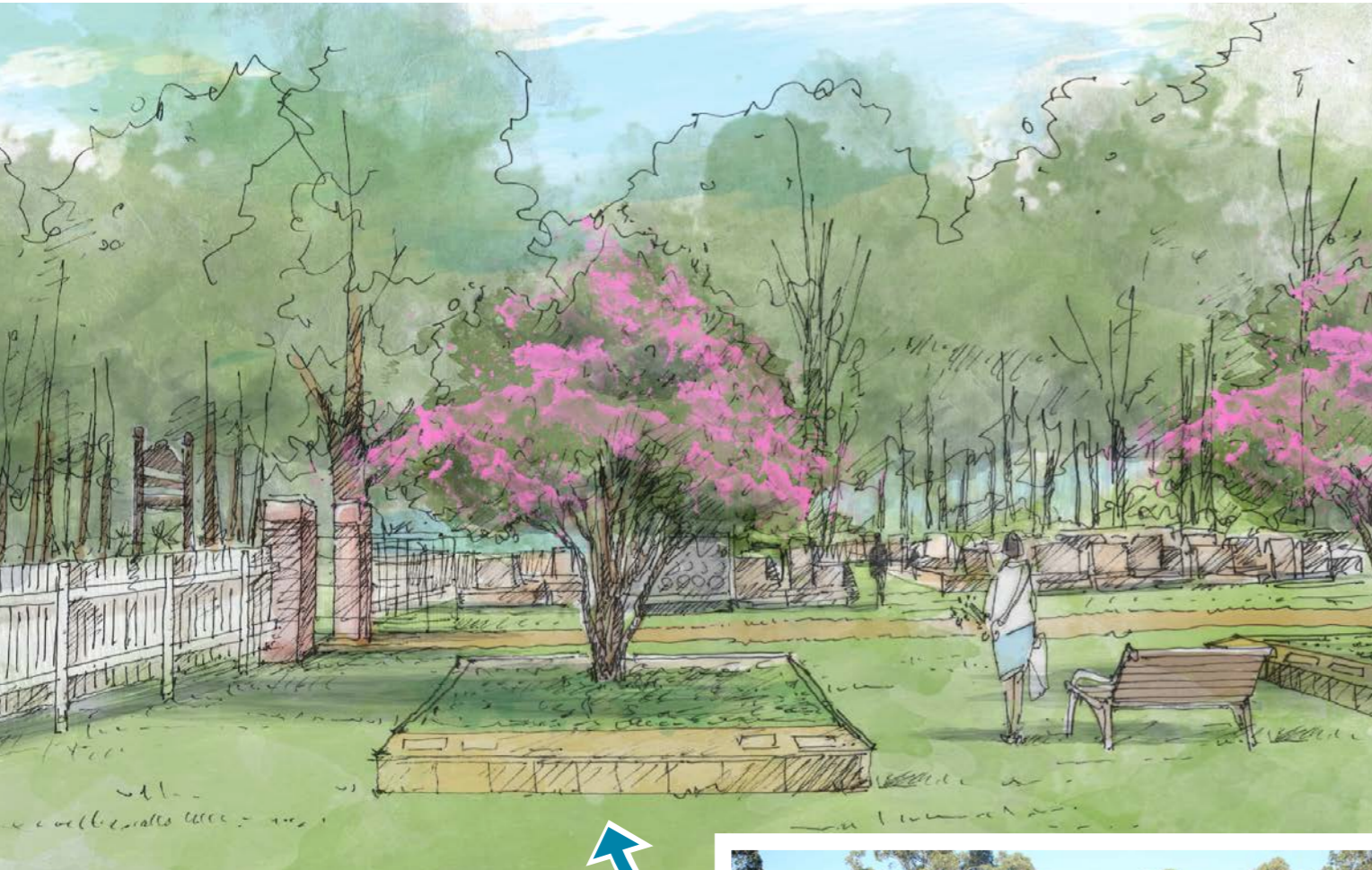


Defined gravel path



Figure 19 Greta Cemetery - Recommendations

3-12 Millfield Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Millfield Cemetery



◀ The recommendations for this cemetery include the creation of a low hedge or an agapanthus garden bed along the northern fence line to create an improved frontage to the site. Additional shade trees, in keeping with the large part of the site that is not developed, would provide shade options. These would need to be selected to reduce the risk of damage to the existing graves, and also with regard to the soil conditions, which appear to be volatile given the number of headstones that have tilted.

The provision of colourful specimen trees adjacent to the entry, combined with garden bed interment would provide additional interment options at the site. These have also been utilised to provide shading to seating in this location.

The recommendations also include upgrading the fence, providing a more formalised road and providing wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities.



Concrete plaques at Woronora Cemetery



Crepe Myrtle trees can provide colour and shade



Figure 20 Millfield Cemetery - Recommendations

3-13 Rothbury Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Rothbury Cemetery



◀ The key recommendations for Rothbury Cemetery, due to its 'untouched' history character and remote location, relate to creating a defined edge via the planting of shrubs or hedging. The installation of a new fence, in a post and rail configuration would also create a sense of enclosure to the site.

In conjunction with the fence, an entrance structure that clearly identifies the cemetery and delineates the entry would create a sense of arrival.

There are existing trees at the entry which could be utilised for shade, which new seating in this area would benefit from.

The recommendations also includes the provision of wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities.



Timber post fence at Wollombi Cemetery



Seating backed by hedging

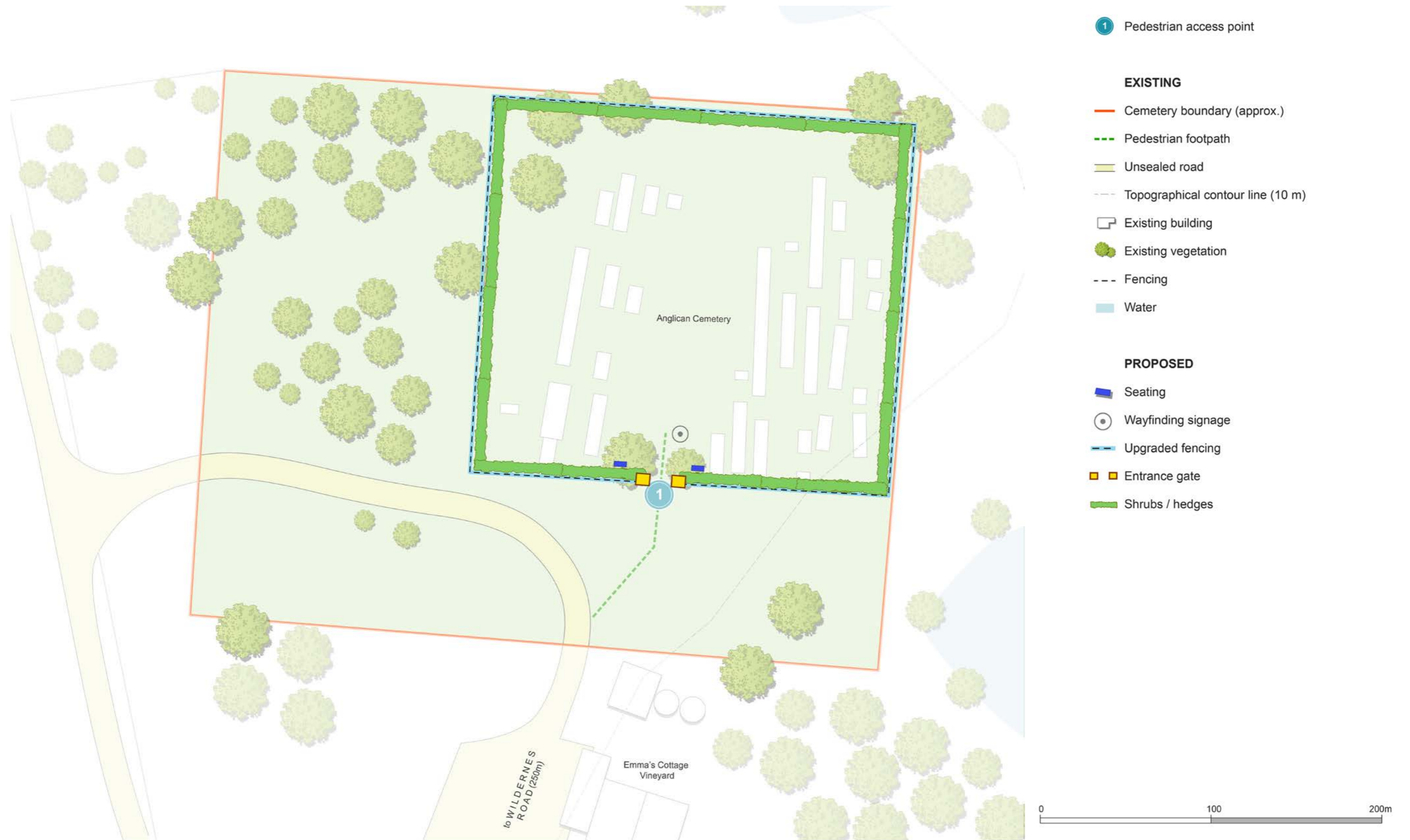


Figure 21 Rothbury Cemetery - Recommendations

3-14 Wollombi Cemetery



Artist's impression of future look & feel



Existing view of Wollombi Cemetery



◀ The key recommendations for Wollombi Cemetery include the planting of suitable trees and shrubs along the northern edge and one to two trees along the western edge, taking into consideration the likelihood of flooding in this area. The provision of seats near these trees, utilising the shade as the trees grow, would provide a series of opportunities for contemplation and reflection.

It is also proposed to provide some interment garden beds in the western area of the cemetery in the long term to enable additional options for interment of ashes.

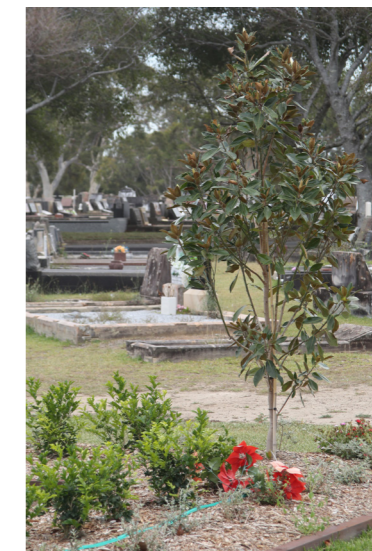
The recommendations also include upgrading the fence, providing a more formalised road and providing wayfinding signage at the entrance to the cemetery and directional signage within the cemetery to indicate different areas and amenities.



Seating & hedge screening



Shaded seating within garden beds



Tree planting in garden bed



Figure 22 Wollombi Cemetery - Recommendations

3-15 General recommendations

In addition to specific recommendations for the cemeteries, there are a few additional amenities and maintenance issues that would be good to implement in all the cemeteries:

Wayfinding Signage

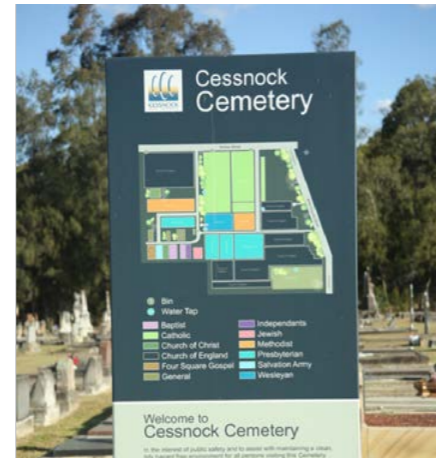
Cessnock Council recently issued the Cessnock Signage Strategy document which provides guidance on the planning, design and installation of signage in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA). The document proposes community facility entry signs, information signage/maps, and destination markers, all of which could be incorporated in Cessnock Council Cemeteries to improve the navigation to and within the cemeteries.

Community Facility Entry Sign

This would be the cemetery sign board located outside the Cemetery entrance to welcome visitors and create street presence.

Community Facility Information Sign

Cessnock Council has installed cemetery maps in a few cemeteries. However, not all of them have maps to help visitors navigate the cemetery grounds. The Community Facility Information Sign template could be repurposed to work as a two-sided sign with a cemetery map on one side and directory board on the other side.



Existing map at Cessnock Cemetery

Destination marker

Destination markers, as designed in the Cessnock Signage Strategy document can be customised to be used within the cemetery for improved navigation; for amenities such as drinking water & toilets, and as row markers to help locate graves.



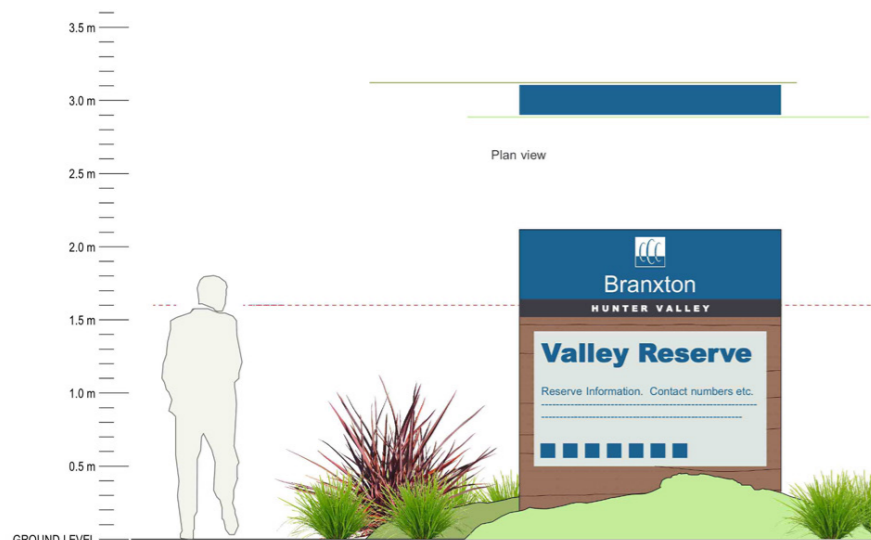
Example of row marker

Formalised Roadways & pathways

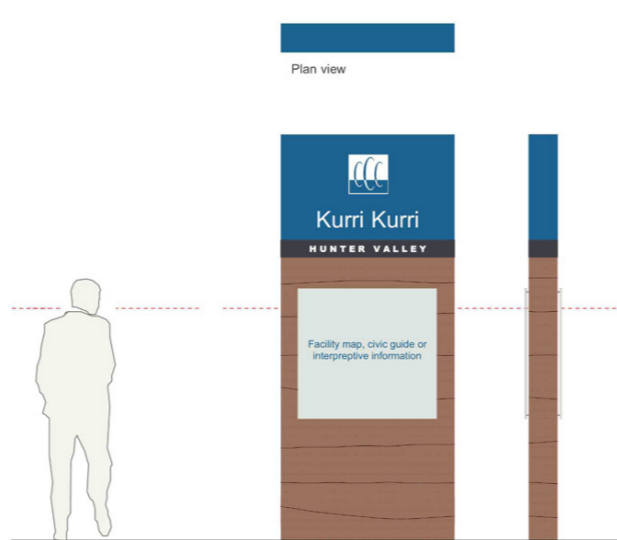
Generally the roadways and pathways in many of the smaller cemeteries are not formalised, this can lead to damage to the existing monuments and also increases the effects of erosion and damage to landscaping. Formalised pathways and roadways, utilising stabilised gravel and the like, provide clear indications of where vehicles are allowed and keep pedestrians on defined paths. Improved paths also are more accessible, for those with mobility challenges.



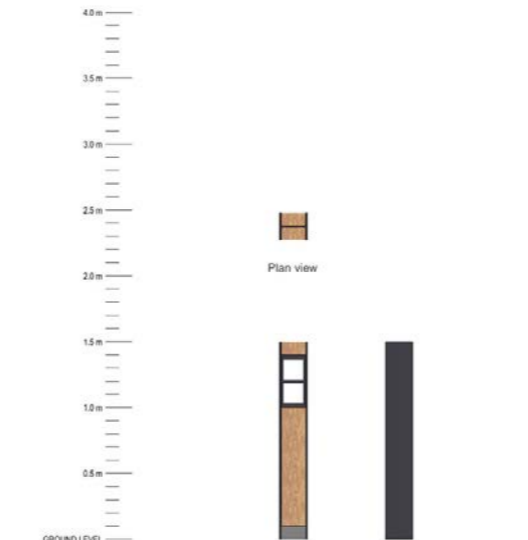
Examples of a more structured path - Rookwood Cemetery



Entry sign design (source: Cessnock Signage Strategy)



Information Sign design - Cemetery map & Directory (source: Cessnock Signage Strategy)



Destination marker design (source: Cessnock Signage Strategy)



Formalised pathway at Palmdale Cemetery

Upgraded Fencing

The fencing styles across all the cemeteries are varied, ranging from rustic post and rail to metal (pool) fencing. As fencing requires replacement, it is recommended that consideration be given to selecting a style that is in keeping with the context of the cemetery and its location.

Upgrading of fencing, where possible, will also ensure increased security, and lessen the likely impacts of anti-social behaviour. In some instances, such as Glenmore, installing fencing will ensure that animals do not inadvertently cause damage.

Fencing can also be used to improve the 'streetscape' appeal of the cemeteries, as well maintained, appropriate fencing, can provide a frame for the cemetery landscaping.



Timber post fence at Wollombi Cemetery

Lighting

Providing lighting, where possible, would enhance security and lessen anti-social behaviour. Many of the more remote facilities do not currently have power provided, so the option for solar lighting may need to be considered. These facilities are not usually accessed at night, so lighting is generally only required during times when days are shorter, or when it is heavily overcast.

Drinking and non-potable water

Where the cemetery has connections to town water, the provision of a drinking water fountain would be appropriate. The provision of water for use in vases is also an essential element to provide in the larger facilities, but this can be non-potable water provided from a water tank.



Water taps could be installed near shaded seating

Bud-holders

The bud-holders currently provided by Council are considered suitable by the community. A number of comments were received from the community regarding additional options for floral tributes, especially around columbarium walls, so this may need to be considered in the design of the future installation of these elements.



Bud holders at Woronora Cemetery

Infrastructure maintenance

On-going maintenance of these sites is essential to ensure that the facilities are kept to a standard that the community expects. There were numerous comments received from the community that referenced the current level of grounds maintenance and complimented Council on the fact that the grass is regularly cut.

Reference is also made to the National Trust (NSW) Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation, as a valuable source of information relating to options for preservation of the heritage value of these facilities. The level of intervention Council can take, with regard to monuments that have deteriorated, is limited due to ownership issues relating to burial rights, but where works are required for reasons of safety, these guidelines set out options for how to undertake these works.



Historic turnstile located at the entrance to Branxton Cemetery from Lindsay St.

Overflow parking

Overflow parking is sometimes required on special occasions, such as Mother's Day, and when especially large funerals are occurring at the sites. Generally there is ample on-street and off-street parking at most facilities, but overflow parking options have been identified for the two largest sites.

