

# STRAT0046 CEMETERY AND COLUMBARIUM MANAGEMENT POLICY

## 1. Purpose & Scope

- 1.1** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for cemetery and columbarium operations for Charters Towers Regional Council.
- 1.2** This policy applies to all cemeteries, and columbarium's administered and operated by Charters Towers Regional Council:
- Charters Towers Lawn and Monumental Cemetery
  - Pentland Monumental Cemetery
  - Ravenswood Monumental Cemetery
  - Mingela Monumental Cemetery
  - Greenvale Monumental Cemetery
  - Sellheim Cemetery

The following cemeteries are closed for all burials and reservations:

- Pioneer Cemetery (Charters Towers)
- Kirk River Cemetery
- Macrossan Cemetery
- Cape River Cemetery

## 2. Commencement of Policy

- 2.1** This Policy will commence from 18 June 2025.

## 3. Application of Policy

- 3.1** This policy is to set guidelines defining relevant criteria for the management and administration of Council owned cemeteries.

## 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Adornment	Any decorative elements added to the gravesite to honour and commemorate the deceased.
Applicant	The person or entity making an application for a cemetery service provided by Council that is subject to an application process
Appropriate fee	A fee according to Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges
Application form or application	All forms which are required to undertake a service within Council Controlled Cemeteries
Cemetery or cemeteries	An area containing one or more burial places
Columbarium	A structure having recesses in the walls to receive cremated remains
Burial	The act of burying the remains of a deceased person
Burial site/plot	A place for the disposition or memorialisation of the remains of a deceased person, whether cremated or not
Burial rights	Exclusive rights to a burial site approved by Council to a person or entity (there is no entitlement to any 'real estate' or property as such). It is Council's intention that rights to a burial site are primarily allocated to family, next of kin, closely related parties, etc. Generally, it is not Council's intention that an independent person or entity would "own" the rights to

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	a burial site.
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Burial Rights Holder	The person or entity who has been issued with the burial rights, whose name and details appear on the approved application form.
Council	Charters Towers Regional Council.
Cultural Burials	Specific customs, rituals, and traditions that a particular cultural or ethnic group follows when burying their deceased.
Registered Funeral Director	A professional who is engaged for the purpose of planning and coordinating a funeral or exhumation.
Cremated remains	The human remains that have undergone the cremation process, and the body has been reduced to small pieces of ash and bone.
Reservation	To pre-purchase a burial right for a burial site/plot
Register	Council's formal repository of data containing all the required details of Council's cemetery services.
The Policy	This Policy
Monument	Any structure, plaque, headstone, masonry, metal work, casting or item placed in the allocated area of a burial plot/site.
Niche	The hollow space in a Columbarium Wall to place cremated remains
Scattering	To respectfully disperse the cremated remains of a deceased person

### 5. MANAGEMENT OF CEMETERIES

#### 5.1 Operating Hours

- 5.1.1 Council will facilitate interments and services within the ordinary operating hours of 8.00am and 3.00pm Monday to Friday. Interments and services outside of these times, on weekends, public holidays or periods of Council closure, where accepted, incur additional fees as set out in Council's Fees and Charges. Cemetery ordinary opening hours are everyday 8.00am to 8.00pm.
- 5.1.2 Interments requested outside of ordinary operating hours will be considered and determined at the sole discretion of Council.
- 5.1.3 Applications received will be reviewed, with acceptance of the application being notified in writing. Reason(s) for non-acceptance will also be notified in writing to the applicant as soon as practicable.

#### 5.2 Work Undertaken Within Cemeteries

- 5.2.1 Council does not permit any person to undertake any activity within a Council controlled cemetery unless the activity has been approved by Council.

#### 5.3 Register of Burial Places and Cremation

- 5.3.1 A register of burials will be kept by Council in respect of all burial places under Council's control. Where possible and practicable, a register will be kept of plots and sections, and will be numbered accordingly.
- 5.3.2 A register of reservation plots/sites will be kept by Council in respect of each reservation.

- 5.3.3 The register may not include interments in historical and monumental cemeteries due to loss of records from previous operating entities.

#### **5.4 Exhumation**

- 5.4.1 To exhume human remains from a burial site, a Prescribed Activity Form (F0215) must be submitted to Council for approval, together with the relevant evidentiary documentation as required by Subordinate Local Law 1 (Administration) 2021.
- 5.4.2 Council does not carry out exhumations.
- 5.4.3 All arrangements for exhumations are to be made with a registered Funeral Director.

#### **5.5 Burial Rights**

- 5.5.1 Burial rights may not be sold.
- 5.5.2 A burial right on a vacant or reserved plot may be surrendered to Council.
- 5.5.3 At the adoption of this Policy,
- All new Burial Rights must be held in the name of an individual, with the exception of Government entities who are authorised to act on behalf of the deceased;
  - No Right will be issued without full payment;

#### **5.6 Burial Rights Holder**

- 5.6.1 A 'Burial Rights Holder' is the person or entity who has been issued with the burial rights, whose name and details appear on the approved application form.
- 5.6.2 There can only be one Burial Rights Holder per plot.
- 5.6.3 The Burial Rights Holder has the right to be buried in that plot, the right to authorise the burial of others in that plot (up to the permitted number as determined by this Policy) and to approve modifications to the plot.
- 5.6.4 If the Burial Rights Holder cannot be contacted after 24 hours, Council will decide any application received for the plot.
- 5.6.5 On the death of the Burial Rights Holder, the Burial Rights for that plot will revert to Council.
- 5.6.6 Council, in its absolute discretion, may transfer the burial rights, provided it has no reason to believe that the original Burial Rights Holder would have objected to such transfer.
- 5.6.7 The Burial Rights Holder must comply with all rules and regulations which apply to the operation of Council's Cemeteries.

**Note:** Council acts in good faith when it relies on advice provided by the Burial Rights Holder and does not accept any responsibility for allowing a service that might be subject of a later dispute between family members.

#### **5.7 Reservations of Plots**

- 5.7.1 Reservations of plots are to be made in accordance with the current application process and are limited to specific cemeteries.
- 5.7.2 Reservation of plots in all Lawn Sections of the cemetery expire twelve months (12) from date of application of reservation. The plot will be surrendered to Council on expiration. Council may consider extensions based on justification and/or exceptional circumstances.
- 5.7.3 Reservation of plots in the Monumental Sections of the cemetery do not expire.
- 5.7.4 The number of plots shall be limited to two, and additional plots will be assessed case by case upon application to Council.

### **5.8 Interments – Burial Plots**

- 5.8.1 Written notification must be received by Council at least two (2) working days prior to requested burial date.
- 5.8.2 No burial will, under any circumstances, be permitted in a Council controlled cemetery until an application has been received and approved by Council in writing.
- 5.8.3 No more than two (2) coffin interments and four (4) ashes interments shall be buried in the same burial plot/site. Secondary coffin interments shall only take place after a twelve (12) month settling period. Exceptions will be considered at Council's sole discretion. Council may limit to one (1) coffin interment due to ground or other conditions.
- 5.8.4 Burials in the same burial plot/site shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.8.5 Every burial plots/sites within a Council controlled cemetery will be prepared by Council employees (or Contractors of Council), excluding exhumations.
- 5.8.6 All burial plots/sites are allocated by Council employees.
- 5.8.7 Specific Cultural/Religious requirements are to be advised in writing at time of application. Council will endeavour to grant the requirements of each request and Council employee assistance will be in line with Council's Work Health and Safety Policy and availability of suitably skilled staff and equipment.
- 5.8.8 Animal burials are prohibited in Council Cemeteries.

### **5.9 Ashes – Placement in Graves**

- 5.9.1 Multiple ashes are permitted to be placed in existing or new graves.
- 5.9.2 A maximum of four (4) ashes may be interred in an existing grave (two (2) at the head of the burial plot and two (2) at the foot of the burial plot).

### **5.10 Ashes – Placement in Columbarium Wall (Lynd Highway Cemetery)**

- 5.10.1 The container holding the ashes must be constructed of suitable weather resistant material and capable of being inserted in a rectangular niche:
  - a) Single niche – 130mm x 90mm
  - b) Double niche – 130mm x 170mm

5.10.2 A bronze memorial plaque of a size is to be fitted to seal the niche at the expense of the Burial Rights Holder:

- a) Single niche – Size 152mm width x 127mm length
- b) Double niche – Size 155mm width x 255mm length

5.10.3 Council will only carry out the interment of ashes in the Columbarium Wall after the applicable fee has been received and the memorial plaque provided.

5.10.4 The placing of vases, bottles or containers, for the holding of flowers, other than the memorial vases approved by the Council, is not permitted.

#### **5.11 Removal of Ashes**

5.11.1 Applications to have cremated remains removed from any cemetery for any reason, must be made in writing to Council. The application must be signed by all applicants or their rightful successor, or a Statutory Declaration may be submitted stating that all near relations of the deceased have been advised of the request for removal.

5.11.2 The Burial Rights Holder may relinquish the burial niche to Council in writing after the removal of the ashes.

#### **5.12 Scattering of Ashes**

5.12.1 Scattering of ashes is not permitted on open grassed areas, including lawn sections, within Council Cemeteries.

#### **5.13 Plaques, Monuments, Inscriptions, Vases, Adornments and Mementos**

5.13.1 Memorial plaques are the responsibility of the Burial Rights Holder and may be organised through a Funeral Director or a private supplier.

5.13.2 A person shall not, in any Council controlled cemetery, construct or install any structure without approval.

5.13.3 Council will not be liable for the repair, maintenance, upkeep or preservation of any plaque or item placed on a burial site. The responsibility for the costs of repairs and maintenance to plaques, monumental and historical graves and headstones, lie with the Burial Rights Holder.

5.13.4 Funeral Directors and Monumentalists are to ensure the person ordering the plaque/monument is the Burial Rights Holder or has obtained written permission from the Burial Rights Holder.

5.13.5 Council must be notified by way of lodgement of an application with Council two (2) working days prior to any maintenance repair work being sought to be carried out.

5.13.6 It is the responsibility of the Burial Rights Holder or a person authorised by the Burial Rights Holder to:

- a) Arrange for the order, supply and installation of any plaques, vases and memorial photos through a Funeral Director or a private supplier.
- b) Obtain all necessary approvals for the use of Military emblems and provide a copy of such authority to Council.

5.13.7 All Lawn Cemetery plaques are to be:

- a) Rectangular, manufactured from Bronze or Granite with single background colour.
- b) Bronze plaques will measure 380mm width x 280mm length with a minimum thickness of 10mm with a flat back.
- c) Granite plaques will measure 380mm width x 280mm length with a minimum thickness of 12mm with a flat back.
- d) A maximum of two (2) standard sized plaques are permitted per burial plot.
- e) A maximum of four (4) half sized plaques are permitted per ash burial plot.

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

5.13.9 Removal of plaques and vases for refurbishment is the responsibility of the Burial Rights Holder. Council does not accept responsibility for any damage incurred during the removal of plaques or vases.

5.13.10 Reinstallation of refurbished plaques and vases is to be undertaken by Council.

5.13.11 All photographs should be fixed to the plaques and installed by Council.

5.13.12 No other memorial photographs are permitted.

5.13.13 Council is not responsible for the maintenance of, or repairing damage caused to, memorials through acts of vandalism, ageing or deterioration. Maintenance and the repair of damage is the responsibility of the Burial Rights Holder.

5.13.14 Adornments and mementos may be permitted within the allocated burial site of each individual plot. Adornments and mementos should/shall:

- Be appropriate in size so not to intrude on neighbouring plots; including
  - The majority of the item being no more than 300mm in height
  - The item being no more than 900mm in width; and
  - The item being no more than 300mm in depth.
- Be secured to the cement area within the plot allocation or weighted so not to create a hazard or risk to families, visitors, wildlife, etc.
- Not be unsightly, offensive, insensitive or pose a risk to public safety

At Council's sole discretion, should it be considered adornments and/or mementos do not comply with the above conditions, Council will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the cemetery is upheld. Efforts will be made to contact impacted parties however Council will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or removal of adornments or mementos.

## **6. Variations**

6.1 Council reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this Policy from time to time.



## 7. Associated Documents

- Application for Burial in Local Government Cemetery (F0252).
- Application for Reservation of a Niche or Site in a Local Government Cemetery (F0251).
- Application for Permit to Erect, Install, Maintain or Repair a Memorial/Monument in a Local Government Cemetery (F0250).
- Application For Prescribed Activity (F0215)
- Open Space Policy (Refer Level of Service)
- Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011
- *Human Rights Act 2019*

Document Review			
<b>Date Adopted by Council</b>	18 June 2025	<b>Council Resolution</b>	4502
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