

Policy

Headstones and Cemetery Monuments

Responsible department	Public Health and Environment	Document Register ID	250.2021.58.2
Policy owner	Cemetery Services	Review date	18 November 2024
Date of Council Meeting	18 November 2021	Resolution Number	279/21
Legislation, Australian Standards, Code of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2013 • Heritage Act 1977 • Crown Lands Act 2016 • Native Title Act 1993 • AS 4204.2019 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments <p>Note: the most recent edition and revision of the above documents shall apply to the policy.</p>		
Aim	<p>To ensure that monuments erected within the Council cemeteries meet the minimum requirements in structural design, performance and installation to ensure safety and a serviceable life. The policy also aims to ensure that the comforting symmetry of the cemetery is maintained.</p>		

1 Council Cemeteries

Snowy Monaro Regional Council has 16 operational cemeteries. Each of these cemeteries have what is referred to as a Monumental Section – an area where monuments may have just a headstone, a full monument - headstone, kerbing and ledgers, or other markers which permanently identify the burial location of a person(s).

Cooma Lawn Section is designed to have a headstone on a concrete footing which meets a specific style, size and using only “natural stone” material to create that headstone. (specifications for this headstone are available from Council Cemetery Services).

Bombala, Moonbah and Delegate Cemetery Lawn Sections have a pre-formed concrete header and require the placement of a Plaque – this plaque must meet the requirements of council policy - SMRC Plaques in Council Cemeteries.

2. Monumental Requirements

2.1 Approval to Erect a Memorial

All works which are carried out within any Council Cemetery must firstly be approved by Cemetery Services staff – this includes but is not limited to the establishment of a Memorial, Headstone or Plaque.

In order to gain approval to erect a Headstone, Memorial or place a Plaque an authorised applicant or family member must firstly submit an “Application for Erection of a Memorial”. In this application details of size, construction, supports and materials must be specified.

A monumental mason or other suitably qualified person must be nominated on the application to undertake works in relation to erection of the Headstone, Monument or Plaque

In the event of an approval not being granted an authorised applicant or family member may make formal application to vary this policy using a formal application form. As part of that application valid reasons must be detailed as to why Council should vary this policy.

2.1.1 Monumental Materials and Components

All headstones and monuments must be built in accordance with the Australian Standard: Headstones and Cemetery Monuments (AS4204:2019)

All structural materials used in the cemetery must possess high corrosion-resistant properties and have a serviceable life with minimal periodic maintenance.

- Natural stone and some metals are considered most suitable for this application as specified in AS 4204.2019.
- Consideration must be given to foot traffic and maintenance purposes
- Thermal stresses are generally considered the most severe stress on monuments so must be taken into consideration due to the extremes of temperature in the SMRC area.
- Consideration must be given to the fixing of different materials to stone elements for the likely differential movements.

Items not permitted for use in Council cemeteries due to the impact they pose to Work Health and Safety of maintenance staff are:

- Domestic glass objects – jars, vases etc.
- Planting of trees or shrubs on graves
- Loose pebbles/stones

2.1.2 Specifications

Where a full monument is requested there are specific opening dimensions which must be strictly observed.

- Width – minimum clearance between the inside face footing and piers shall be 790mm.
- Length – minimum clearance shall be 2160mm.

Should a request be made to reopen a grave which does not meet the above specifications and a monument is damaged - the costs of repairs are to be borne by the applicant.

The maximum external measurements of a full monument must not exceed the maximum width of the specified plot – 1200mm wide and 2400mm in length.

Cemetery plots are determined with 100mm distance between each plot.

Where a monument is next to another monument, concrete is to cover the 100mm spacing to assist with maintenance.

Burial Plots may have monuments that adjoin the burial plot beside it.



2.1.3 Cooma Lawn Cemetery Specifications

The Cooma Lawn Cemetery section has been created by the placing of a specific styled headstone of natural stone on a concrete footing. The shape, size, style and material of this headstone is to be strictly adhered to.

In the event that a headstone is placed in the cemetery without authorisation and does not meet specifications it will be removed.

Full details of the size and specifications are available from Council cemetery services.



2.1.4 Lawn Sections Bombala Moonbah & Delegate

The lawn section at Bombala, Moonbah & Delegate Cemetery's has been created by the placement of a pre-cast concrete header. To this a pre-cast Bronze plaque can be affixed to create the memorialisation.

The plaque must meet the criteria as set out in council policy for SMRC – Plaques in Council Cemeteries.

2.1.5 Masons and Funeral Directors

Any person or business providing or carrying out monument masonry services in any council cemetery, including construction, erection, repair, cleaning and restoring must observe the requirements of Council's Cemetery Operation Policy, Council's Work Health & Safety Policy and all work must be approved by Council's Cemetery Services prior to commencement.

2.1.6 Maintenance of Structures

Council shall not be responsible for the upkeep, maintenance or repair of any monument or structure over a burial place.

It is the responsibility of the family or next of kin of the deceased to maintain the monument or memorialisation and occupied grave site within a Council cemetery.

Council may act to remove any structure which has deteriorated to the point of being dangerous and in danger of falling.

Council may remove shrubs, trees or other vegetation that has been planted without written consent to be used as a memorial.

If a structure is identified as being unsafe Council will undertake a Risk Assessment and all reasonable attempts will be made to notify the Right Holder of the site. If the Holder cannot be contacted following reasonable action the structure will be removed.

2.1.7 Monuments for Historic Graves

Where a grave is over 50 years old, it is subject to the Heritage Act 1977. Council will not issue a "Permit to Erect a Memorial" in respect of a burial site, which is over 50 years unless the proposed works conform to the requirements of the National Trust of Australia

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/cemeteryconservationguide.pdf>

When a grave has been left unmarked for at least 50 years and no applicant for the burial can be found; it is permitted that other persons may erect a monument at their own expense, with approval from Council.

3. Related Documents

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Documentation

- 250.2020.630.1 - PROCEDURE - Interment of Ashes to an existing grave
- 250.202.583.1 – PROCEDURE – Ordering of Plaques For Council Cemeteries
- 250.2020.20.1 – PROCEDURE – Cemetery Reservation Fees
- 250.2020.582.1 – POLICY- Plaques in Council Cemeteries
- 250.2021.30.1 – POLICY – Cemetery Operations
- 250.2020.5.2 – FORM Application For Interment of Ashes
- 250.2017.392.3 - FORM - Application for Perpetual Interment Right
- 250.2017.391.4 – FORM - Application for Perpetual Order of Interment
- 250.2016.144.5 - FORM- Application for Erection or Repair of Memorial
- 250.2021.55.1 – FORM –Application To Vary Council Cemetery Approval
- 250.202.6.2 - FORM – Application For Transfer Of Perpetual Interment Right

Variation

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy and should be reviewed periodically to ensure it is relevant and appropriate.