

# S355 Cemetery Advisory Committee Meeting

28 August 2017



## Minutes

HELD AT Bega Valley Shire Council

### Present

Cr Jo Dodds	Michael Pryke	Jackie Miles
Peter Phillips	Fiona Firth	Nancy Grant
Jackie Grant (BVSC Cemetery & Hall Assistant),	Karen Terwin (BVSC Cemetery & Hall Officer)	Anne Cleverley (BVSC Community Development Coordinator)

### Apologies

Anne Greenaway, Barbara Grant, Simon Schweitzer (BVSC Manager Community & Culture).

## 1. New Business

### 1.1 – Critical Issues District Level Cemeteries – Focus on Bega Cemetery

There are number of issues we face with our larger cemeteries, space is the key issue with cemeteries like Eden and Bega.

Eden Cemetery has a large portion of ground that is below water level and hence cannot be used for burials; there is the view that this area could be used for memorial gardens and ash interments.

Bega Cemetery has the space but infrastructure must be put in place to enable the area to be used to its full potential.

Below is a draft plan put together by Council staff with the view to stage works –



### **Stage 1**

- Access road (bottom of the cemetery)
- Address drainage issues above Catholic 7
- Concrete Beams for Lawn (bottom corner)
- Memorial Pathway
- Drainage above Salvation Army crosses
- Mark out 4-5 more rows of Conventional above this
- Upgrade signage
- Refurbish front gates (heritage)

### **Stage 2**

- Address drainage issue in centre of cemetery, including road upgrade
- Car parking
- Access road above Catholic 7
- Possibly extend Lawn
- Look at possibly more conventional north/west of Methodist Section
- Access to this section

Council staff will look to get engineers and surveyors on site in the next month to get formal plans drawn up and advise on the best course of action in regards to the drainage issues.

The issue was raised around car parking and access for people with mobility issues; this is also a consideration we will have to look at.

Budgets for works will have to be looked at, the main cost being the work around the drainage and access issues. The setup of the lawn and memorial pathway would more than likely not be a huge cost and these costs would be recouped with the sale of these plots.

We will organise a site visit between now and the next meeting with this committee to go over the plans moving forward.

*(PowerPoint attached)*

We will look to organise a tour of all the cemeteries to give committee members an idea of the different facilities each cemetery has.

When planning for these new sections it is important to think of the future maintenance, lawn sections for example have very little maintenance. Many of the older monuments within our cemeteries have degraded due to the fact that there is no family left to maintain them.

Cemeteries operate on many different levels for many different people; we have to be mindful of the environment we create. People are looking for more variation in the way they commemorate their loved ones.

The responsibility of monuments is that of the family, the person or people that placed it. There are of course situations where for example there are large trees growing out of plots or large headstones have cracked and have become WHS issue where we as the Cemetery Managers will resolve those issues.

## 1.2 – Business Plan for Cemeteries

There are number of things across all of the cemeteries we need to look at, such as expansion, the historic value of cemeteries, budgets and fees and charges.

We are looking at doing some future planning for the cemeteries as a whole; this may be a little sub-committee of this one if any member is keen to be a part of that.

This will involve looking at trends within the cemeteries as far as burials and ash interments.

How is the fee increase calculated? These are based on CPI and rounded where possible. The CPI in some cases was very large so in those cases the amount was rounded down; some fees were combined for ease to the customer.

With reservations (burial licences) held do they expire? They do now, from the start of 2015/16 financial year there is a 20 year limit on these at which point the holder can pay a small fee to continue with the reservation.

Currently there are some 700 reservations alone in the Bega Cemetery; Karen has spoken with a gentleman at Redlands Council that has done a lot of work there and at Rookwood Cemetery on confirming reservations and has got a lot of good advice on how to proceed. This will be a project we will be looking at getting underway soon; there is a large amount of work involved in this and some extra resources may be required.

## 1.3 – Cultural Awareness – Indigenous Burials

There has been some discussion in the community around the cemeteries becoming more culturally appropriate, this would include areas for certain types of ceremonies significant to different cultures.

The other conversations have been around the costs to aboriginal people, should there be a different policy around this. We have done some research around this but we have not found any other Council's that have a different policy.

There are also a number of unmarked or unknown indigenous burials across the Shire; we would look to perhaps identifying these and marking them if possible.

## 1.4 – Flora Reports

Jackie Miles read through some information around the flora within the cemeteries that she studied a number of years ago, with the view to map the vegetation.

The report is attached for committee members to read at their leisure. It was suggested that we have some signage at the cemetery with the view to grow awareness of the ecology of the cemetery and explain to people what flora is present at each cemetery. We could also incorporate some historical information on these boards. This will give people a full picture of where they are visiting.

## 1.5 Meeting Close

12:35pm

## 1.6 Next Meeting

21<sup>st</sup> November 2017