

S355 Cemetery Advisory Committee Meeting

12 November 2019



Minutes

HELD AT **Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre**

Present

Cr Jo Dodds (Chair)	Barbara Grant
Jackie Miles	Nancy Grant
Fiona Firth	Rickee Marshall (BVSC Property and Facilities Coordinator)
Anne Greenaway	Katrina Berenguer (BVSC Acting Cemetery & Hall Officer)
Michael Pryke	Mary Barker (guest)

1. Apologies

Peter Phillips

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes from the Cemetery Advisory Committee Meeting held 13 August 2019 were taken as read.

3. Business Arising

Action Items from the last meeting

BVSC Cemeteries Website

Katrina Berenguer has reviewed the BVSC website – Shire Cemeteries and updated the fee descriptions to a more comprehensive detail. This includes that not all graves at Eden Cemetery require shoring.

Wyndham Cemetery

BVSC Bio-security has advised that roadside weed management will be commencing in January, 2020. Some of the cemeteries will be incorporated in this program.

Weeds Management

The cemeteries mowing contractor has been provided a copy of the weed management document on Towamba Cemetery and the Survey of Weeds on Reserves and Threatened Flora Sites in Bega Valley by Jackie Miles. He is very receptive about conservation and has agreed to not mowing Towamba cemetery as low to the ground. He will also slash the area at Wyndham cemetery that has been left unmown for some time.

Jackie Miles suggested that Paul McPherson at Burragate has done some work in Towamba Cemetery in the past and might agree to do future work. A contact number was provided.

Action: Katrina Berenguer to set up BVSC internal meeting with Natural Assets Officer from Parks & Sportsgrounds, Bio-Security officer and Environmental Management officer to discuss weed management, high value EEC areas and rabbit control at Eden cemetery to gain their expertise and formulate a plan. Jackie Miles would like to attend.

Native Title Claim – Crown Land

A hard copy of the historical status search information on all BVSC cemeteries was distributed at the meeting.

Eden Cemetery

Katrina Berenguer visited Eden Cemetery and met with Peter Phillips on 22 August 2019 to investigate the vegetation clearing from the nearby development and inspect the damage caused by rabbits.

Upon further investigation the clearing of vegetation was approved by Council. Clearing work was conducted on their land. A Council officer/surveyor inspected the boundary line and marked with pegs. It does appear that the fence was constructed inside the boundary line due to vegetation and the natural drainage line.

Property Services and Facilities Co-Ordinator has received a referral for comment regarding the next stage of the Development Application for the subdivision, multi-dwelling development which includes further vegetation clearing and filling in the natural drainage line. A meeting has been requested with the Planning department to request more information about this development to ensure this subdivision will not impact the cemetery or its operations. A request will also be put forward for the developer to re-erect the fence on the boundary line.

Rabbit control is an issue in the Barclay Street area of Eden and is impacting the cemetery, sportsground and caravan park. The rabbits live in the nearby sand dunes and flourish in drought conditions.

The Recreation Assets Officer has been working on a rabbit management control plan to be adopted by Council.

A partnership between BVSC and South East Local Land Services commenced a rabbit control trial at Merimbula's Short Point in November 2019 which includes releasing the newest strain (K5) of the Calicivirus. This is the first step in a staged approach to improve our rabbit management processes, with effective pest control often demanding a mix of techniques applied in sequence over time.

Once these trial results are determined, BVSC will look at a program for priority sites across the shire for the next stage of rabbit management control.

4. Business Arising

Gravedigger

It was noted that at the Council meeting held on the 30/10/2019 the Gravedigger's contract was discussed and became very heated largely due to the sudden rise in the contract prices.

The Gravedigger's contract was reviewed and found that the probity was correct and will remain in place for the duration of the contract.

It was felt that there was a risk that this process would have caused the Gravedigger some distress.

Council have kept the Gravedigger informed in the process and acknowledges that his knowledge and expertise is of a high standard. He can also handle a full week of burials and then can also maintain periods of time when it is not busy.

It was also mentioned that the ABC media and social media had a negative impact on Council's cemeteries fees and charges. Communications advised not to respond at that time.

Action: It was recommended by the Cemetery Advisory Committee to construct a letter of support and appreciation to the Gravedigger signed by a senior officer.

Cemetery Strategy 2020 - 2024

Councillors were presented with an overview of the Cemetery Strategy at a workshop last week and were provided a copy of the documents from Kategic which included the Community Consultation, Review of Operations and the Cemetery Strategy 2020 - 2024.

It was highlighted in the meeting the need for a Council Maintenance Officer to improve overall maintenance and health and safety for visitors. We believe that it is important to have someone on the ground, plus this supports the strong feedback from the community of the expectation of improved maintenance.

Council will review again in February, 2020.

Cemetery Mapping

Authority Cemetery Register Training will be commencing soon which will improve the mapping system and will streamline processes which will eventually link to drone mapping of cemeteries. When this is complete it will allow community to search for graves online.

It was suggested to get the schools or University of Wollongong involved doing the GPS mapping of graves as a history project or community activity. The new technology would interest students and they receive formal acknowledgement for undertaking community activities.

Natural Burials

Mary Barker, James Cook and Michael Inner have formed a small group to research natural burials and looking at a stand-alone system. There is only one commencing in Australia in Armidale which is at the development application process. The land has been gifted to the group and they have raised the money for the DA process via crowd funding.

People are buried in natural materials with ground level GPS markers. Family can plant trees on site and the space can be used for family and friends to picnic in a beautiful environment.

The group are looking for a de-graded site in the Bega Valley Shire with a substantial amount of land that can be environmentally improved.

At this early stage they need an organisation to support them.

Anne Greenaway suggested contacting the Aboriginal Land Councils to create a partnership and she believes this would be supported. She suggested they talk to the Local Aboriginal Land Councils e.g. Glenn Willcox at Bega, Merriman's and Eurobodalla.

Rickee Marshal also suggested getting in touch with Crown Lands for any land holdings in the Bega Valley area that would be suitable where Category 2 Crown Land Manager Status could be created. This would mean that the group will not need to purchase land.

5 Meeting Close

12:25pm.

6 Next Meeting

11 February 2020 at 11am