

S355 Cemetery Advisory Committee Meeting

14 May 2019



Minutes

HELD AT **Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre**

Present

Michael Pryke (Chair)	Nancy Grant	Katrina Berenguer (BVSC Acting Cemetery & Hall Officer)
Jackie Miles	Barbara Grant	Ann Fagan (BVSC Administration Assistant)
Fiona Firth	Cr Jo Dodds (BVSC)	

Apologies

Anne Greenaway and Peter Phillips

1. Confirmation of Minutes and Introductions

The minutes from 21 February 2019 Cemetery Advisory Committee Meeting were taken as read.

2. Business Arising

2.1 Action Items from the last meeting

Signage for Cemeteries Update

Ann Fagan distributed examples of new signage recently installed at the Snowy Monaro Council cemeteries. We would like to adopt a similar format with the aim to include relevant historical, local aboriginal and flora and fauna information.

Ann Fagan is also working with Council's Grants Officer for grant funding opportunities to help with the cost.

Eden Cemetery

ROLLING ACTION: Council to assess the condition of the Eden Cemetery fence and report back to the Committee.

Inspection of the fence was done. It is not dangerous or falling down but will need to be addressed at a later time. Not an immediate action.

3. New Business

3.1 Cemeteries Strategic Plan Update

Simon Schweitzer from Kategic Solutions attended the meeting to provide an overview of the draft Cemeteries Strategic Plan. A confidential copy was distributed to the committee. Please do not share the document with anyone until it is placed on public exhibition.

Document is high level and is based more broadly across all cemeteries. Key areas that were discussed:

- **Community Consultation** – about 30 recommendations from short term to long term
 - Overall cemeteries are run well but improvements can be made.
 - Maintenance and appearance of the cemeteries network was a strong indicator.
 - Alternative burial options - **Committee recommends to identify specific cemeteries that can be designated for natural burials.**
 - Improved Cemetery mapping and access to records
- **Asset Management**
 - Cemetery network is large (14) compared to other Councils and they are all fully operational. Unique blend with reservations spread across a vast geographical area.
 - Noted that other Councils' have closed cemeteries deeming them historical only. Reservations will be honoured but no new burials.
 - Moving strongly away from conventional and favouring lawn cemetery due to ongoing maintenance of monuments and low set up cost.
 - Road network is critical and has only been managed in a reactive way rather than planned maintenance or renewal. Recommended that the cemetery internal road system is managed by Council's public road team. Bega Cemetery road needs attention.
 - Critical safety issue – parking at Cobargo Cemetery in a 100 km/h zone.
- **Facility Management Plans**
 - Need to be finalised for each cemetery and adopted.
- **Financial performance**
 - Improved internal financial reporting on reserve balances to track cemetery performance.
 - Staffing is at the minimum level.
 - Training and professional development for staff eg. grief counselling and challenging circumstances.
 - Analysis required to identify adequate staffing that covers both cemeteries and halls.
- **Maintenance and Operations**
 - Mowing and maintenance currently a mix of volunteers and contractor.
 - Further investigation to look at direct employment of a maintenance officer to do mowing and maintenance, grave marking, responsive maintenance, sight inspections and oversight of contractors and funeral directors. Reduce pressure from administrative staff.
 - Auditing and inspection of monumental masons to ensure safety is to AS4204 Australian Standard.
- **Ecological Considerations**
 - Incorporate ecological considerations in the Facility Management Plans eg lovegrass management.
- **Capacity**
 - Some cemeteries are close to capacity such as Bega and Eden. Large amount of reservations and thorough audit is required to establish real position. Can be a complicated process with old reservations. Can involve a call out to the community/public announcement. Might need additional resource.
 - Do not recommend any new cemeteries as there is plenty of available space at existing cemeteries.
- **Cemetery Contractors/Funeral Directors**
 - Establish service level agreements
 - Regular meetings to discuss ongoing operational issues
- **Aboriginal Liaison**
 - Identify acknowledgment of local Aboriginal community at the cemeteries.
- **Marketing**
 - Better presentation of fees and charges and burial options on Council website
 - Self-searching cemetery maps available on Council website

Action: Committee to review draft Cemeteries Strategic Plan document and provide any suggestions or feedback to Katrina Berenguer before 28 May 2019.

3.2 Other Business

- Jackie Miles advised that African lovegrass at Wyndham Cemetery is an issue and she has advised Council's Biosecurity and Invasive Species area to address. Some sections of the cemetery require attention with areas that have not been mowed for a while which is causing tree and shrub re growth.

Action: Katrina Berenguer to investigate Wyndham Cemetery and arrange mowing and maintenance to address issue.

- Community raised the issue of Council maintaining Tarraganda Cemetery. It is privately owned and is not currently managed by Council.
- Jackie Miles reported that she has visited Wyndham to conduct a botanical assessment and will be visiting Rocky Hall and Towamba on Friday 17/5 or Saturday 18/5.

5 Meeting Close

12:30pm.

6 Next Meeting

Tuesday, 13 August 2019 at 11am