

### **Purpose**

This Policy and its linked guidelines are in place to inform and assist the Bellbrae Cemetery Trust and its stakeholders with planning and organising funerals, cremated remains placements and other Trust operations on days of declared High Fire Risk.

### **Scope and Context**

- Our Cemetery is located in what is formally identified as a “Severe Risk” site. As such there may be times when access to the Cemetery and interment services may need to be deferred or cancelled at short notice. The Trust recognises the potential impact and stress this may cause to families however the safety of our team and the community is always paramount.
- This Policy and its guidelines are to be active during High Fire danger periods.
- Our operational Guidelines are aligned to that of Geelong Cemeteries Trust as our Mentor and Grave Digging Contractor. The attached Guidelines provide specific conditions based on the declared status for an “At Risk” day or period.
- To find out more about how the Bellbrae Cemetery Trust works with the Geelong Cemeteries Trust during the Fire Season fire season please refer to Attachment A or [click here](#).

### **Our Duty of Care**

The Bellbrae Cemetery Trust has a duty of care to provide for the health and safety of its team, its stakeholders and to the public when visiting our cemetery. A bushfire is an obvious threat to the health and safety of anyone caught in its path. This Policy and its guidelines are provided to assist with managing the safety of all attending the cemetery, by identifying and assessing potential fire risks, and implementing actions to reduce those risks to an acceptable level.

Funerals or other services in a high-risk fire area may expose our team including contractors, funeral directors and mourners to the risk of bushfire in the right set of conditions. It is important to note that many of these people when present, may have increased vulnerability for one or more of the following reasons:

- They may have little or no education or knowledge in relation to bushfire;
- They not reside locally and therefore easily become disorientated;
- They may have reduced capacity through age, disability, health, emotional state or other impediment to evaluate the risks and to respond adequately to the bushfire threat;
- They may present organisational difficulties for evacuation and/or management;
- They may be vulnerable to physical stresses and anxiety arising from the bushfire threat, including heat and smoke;
- There may be significant communication barriers.

The Trust also considered its responsibilities as an employer and land manager with an understanding of:

- Its duty of care to its clients under common law.
- The public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover it holds.
- OH&S considerations for its team, funeral directors and other persons under its supervision and direction.

**Postponing a funeral or restricting team / Cemetery operations.**

- Request for funerals/ interments in or adjacent to the declared Fire Season will include mention of this Policy.
- Urgent and timely advice will be provided to relevant parties should the decision be made to postpone an event at the Cemetery.
- The Trust will work with its contractors (Grave Diggers, Funeral Directors and Stone Masons) and families when planning funerals in the Bush fire season.
- The Trust will not be liable for costs incurred should a funeral be postponed as a result of this Policy.

**Further Reference**

To assist the Bellbrae Cemetery Trust in making their decision about restricting Trust operations on certain days during the fire period, a variety of resources were referred:

- The Geelong Cemeteries Trust as our Mentor and Grave Digging Contractor
- The CFA Guidelines for Conducting Small Events and Gatherings in High Fire Risk locations.
- The CCAV Code Red Management Plan.
- The CFA website <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/>
- The Bureau of Meteorology website <http://bom.gov.au>

**VERSION CONTROL**

No.	Date	Comments	Next Review
1	January 2019	Initial policy developed and circulated	February 2020