

MEMORIALISATION POLICY

Bellbrae Cemetery Trust (the Trust) understands, promotes and supports the use of a wide range of memorial items at the Cemetery. The Trust requires memorialisation items to be:

- Respectful to the deceased and all visitors
- Durable (except for fresh flowers and temporary memorials)
- Safe for all visitors and for cemetery workers conducting their daily tasks.
- Support the aesthetics, standards and general nature of the particular area of the cemetery.
- Respectful of and acknowledge cultural diversity.

This policy covers the requirements within the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act (The Act) and the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation (The Regulations).

All Right of Interments for graves and cremation positions in cemeteries are held by the Holder(s) of the Right of Interment (HROI) or the legal heirs of the original HROI. Holders have the primary responsibility for maintenance and care of a memorial. Including any related costs.

Memorials and places of interment

A person must apply to the Trust for approval to establish or alter a memorial in the cemetery. The relevant cemetery fee must be lodged with a plan or design of the planned work as well as the written consent of the HROI.

A monument or headstone must meet the minimum requirements of the Australian Standard AS4204 – 1994 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments, or its successors.

The Trust may require the removal or alteration of a memorial if it has been established or altered without Trust approval. If a person fails or refuses to remove or alter the memorial, the Trust may remove or alter it and dispose of it as it sees fit and recover the costs of taking such action.

Temporary Memorials

The Trust will permit a wooden grave marker of height no greater than 900mm as a temporary marker on a grave subject to the marker being maintained in a condition satisfactory to the Trust.

Unless written approval has been received, a grave marker may remain in position for a maximum period of one year following a burial or until a more permanent approved memorial has been installed at the grave; whichever comes first. The Trust reserves the right to remove the marker if it is broken or degraded.

Memorial items

A person must not, without the approval of the Trust, place the following items on a memorial or place of interment:

- Ceramic or glass items or
- Metal and wooden items that are likely to deteriorate.

A person must not place any item likely to cause a risk to health or safety on a memorial or place of interment. When placing an item, you must ensure it does not extend beyond the memorial or place of interment boundaries.

The Trust has the power to remove any object that extends beyond the boundary of the memorial or place of interment; any dead flowers or any other item that is in a poor condition; any object placed on a memorial or place of interment in contravention of the Act, the regulations or the Model Rules.

Rights of Dedication

Individual Rock / Bench seats for visitor use are located throughout the cemetery – they can be dedicated by families. Conditions & fees apply. e.g. No interment rights / One bronze plaque permitted. Further details available from the Trust.

Vegetation

A person must not dig or plant anything in a cemetery without the prior written approval of the Trust.

A person must not remove, pick or damage any plant, flower, shrub or tree in the cemetery without prior written approval of the Trust.

GUIDELINES

Flowers and Flower Vases

- The Trust allows both fresh and artificial flowers to be placed at a grave or cremated remains interment site provided all items do not extend beyond the interment site.
- Breakable glass, ceramics, etc. vases and containers are not permitted and will be removed for safety reasons as they pose a potential health & safety risk to the public and workers.
- The Cemetery provides plastic spiked vases to be used as temporary receptacles.
- Dead and stray flowers will be removed as required by cemetery workers/contractors during maintenance of the area.
- Up to two granite or masonry flower containers may be affixed to the beam in a lawn plaque area, provided such flower containers do not encroach onto other graves or obstruct lawn mowing equipment.

Signs with the following wording are erected in our cemetery:

FLORAL TRIBUTES & MOMENTOS

Dead flowers or any other item that is in a poor condition may be removed and disposed of at the discretion of the Trust.

VEGETATION

No tree, shrub or other vegetation may be planted in a cemetery or on or near a grave without the prior written approval of the Trust.

Ornaments in lawn areas and monumental areas

Loose ornaments may be permitted if they do not pose a health and safety risk to the public or Trust workers, they do not inhibit the maintenance of the lawn areas or encroach on other graves.

Should items need to be moved, they will be replaced with care, however no responsibility will be accepted for damage, or the accuracy of replacing such items in the exact location.

Items placed on the lawn area in front of beams will be removed.

Plaques – (Refer also: BCT – Guide For Selecting A Site and Installing a Plaque)

Anyone wishing to install a Bronze or granite plaque must apply to the Trust, with the plaque being subject to approval of material, size, wording and supports the standards for a specific area within the cemetery.

Bronze Plaques must be installed by authorised persons only (approved installers) and may be affixed to monuments or headstones.

Granite Plaques may be permitted in some garden areas or affixed to monuments or headstones.

Candle Box

Due to its rural location and the increased risk of fire the Trust does not permit candle boxes that use naked flames.

Monuments and Headstones

Anyone wishing to erect or repair a monument or headstone must apply to the Trust on the approved Application for the Erection/ Alteration to a Place of Interment form and pay the relevant fee.

A monument or headstone must meet the minimum requirements of the Australian Standard AS 4204 – 1994 Headstones and cemetery monuments, or its successors.

The HROI or other authorised person must provide permission for this application. The Trust will require this authority in writing and may require a Statutory Declaration if the HROI is unable to sign the application form.

Any work must be undertaken by a party that has been accepted by the Trust for safe work practices, and work will not be allowed to commence without the receipt of a permit from the Trust. Each permit issued by the Trust is valid for a period of 12 months only.

Unauthorised monuments, headstones or other structures will be removed at the cost of the right of interment holder.

The Trust:

- Will provide details of height limits for monuments or headstones when requested.
- May require applications, at applicant cost, to include design and strength specifications and computations from an independent engineer to ensure stability and public safety.
- Does not permit the erection of timber monuments, surrounds or structures - apart from temporary grave markers.
- Does not permit the use of bricks or masonry blocks.
- Does not permit any inscriptions that may cause offence.
- Will not approve plans for monuments, which incorporate provision for garden beds.

Mausolea and Concrete Lined Graves (Vaults)

Bellbrae Cemetery does not offer the option of Mausolea or Concrete Lined Graves - Vaults.

Care of Memorials

Care and maintenance of memorialisation items is the HROI responsibility. This care may include:

- Weeding in or around a grave (Note: no herbicide is to be sprayed on or around graves).
- Cleaning (including polishing) the graves and headstones, including the inscription.

The Trust has no objection to a private contractor offering a paid service to perform this work, however private contractors must apply in writing to the Trust before offering to undertake the above work and must comply with the following terms and conditions:

- The HROI has provided written permission for this work to occur.
- No canvassing for business will be permitted within any Trust-operated cemetery.
- Private records detailing ownership over graves will not be provided to anyone proposing an enterprise to undertake this work.
- The applicant must indemnify the Trust in writing against any claims for compensation, which may arise as a result of the conduct of the enterprise.
- The applicant must provide proof of applicable Public Liability Insurance cover and other insurances as needed.

The Trust will grant an exclusive right of trade for these services. Any further similar applications may also be considered and approved by the Trust.

Structural integrity of Memorials

The primary responsibility for maintaining a memorial rests with the HROI or their legal heirs. When a grave, headstone or other memorial is considered dangerous, unsafe or unstable, immediate action will be taken. If the family member or members likely to be responsible for its maintenance are identifiable, they will be contacted immediately and informed of the situation and directed to repair, remove or make safe the memorial.

If the responsible person refuses to repair, remove or make safe a memorial, the Trust, with consent of the Department, will make the memorial safe by either lying down or removing it. The Trust will request that the costs associated with the rectification are reimbursed to the Trust.

If the responsible person is not in the cemetery records, the Trust will try to locate them, which may include placing an advertisement in the local press. Costs associated with rectification noted in the Cemetery Management System for possible future debt recovery.

Theft or Damage

The Trust:

- Is unable to accept any responsibility for the theft of any item of memorialisation.
- Is unable to accept any responsibility for damage to any item of memorialisation unless it can be shown that such damage was caused by tasks carried out by cemetery workers.
- Will assist a HROI make a claim for theft or damage under the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority Cemetery Trusts Insurance Program.

Management of Litter and Waste

To ensure items are not a safety hazard or detract from the cemetery aesthetics, litter and waste (withered flowers, weathered ornaments, wrapping papers, rubber bands, etc) should be placed in the bin provided. If not available, rubbish must be taken away.

Other References

- Cemeteries and Crematoria Act / Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations
- Australian Standard AS 4204-1994 Headstones and Cemetery Monument.
- BCT – Guide For Selecting A Site and Installing a Plaque