

## INTERMENT AND LAND MANAGEMENT POLICY

### Purpose

Bellbrae Cemetery provides a beautiful, tranquil, and historic setting for the respectful final resting place of loved ones. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear operating guidelines for all interment types—including traditional bodily interments and the placement of cremated remains (ashes)—ensuring efficient land management, accurate record-keeping, and the long-term sustainability of the cemetery grounds.

### Statutory Authority

Under the *Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2003* (Vic), the Bellbrae Cemetery Trust has the legislative power to manage cemetery operations and determine the conditions under which rights of interment are granted:

- **Section 26:** Authorises the Trust to make rules regarding the care, protection, and management of the cemetery, including the disposition of human remains and the granting of rights of interment.
- **Section 20:** Empowers the Trust to set aside specific areas of the cemetery for managed zoning, land use, and specific purposes.
- **Section 73:** Confirms that a Right of Interment (ROI) may be granted subject to specific conditions determined by the Trust.

### Land Management & Plot Restrictions

Burial land is a finite resource. To maximise the utility of available space and secure the long-term capacity of the cemetery, the Trust requires specific allocations based on plot types:

#### ~ Full-Size Burial Plots ~

- **Primary Use Mandate:** All newly purchased full-size burial plots are designated to include at least one traditional bodily interment.
- **Usage Restriction:** A full-size burial plot cannot be used exclusively for cremated human remains.
- **Capacity & Density Limits:** The maximum capacity of standard plots is strictly regulated by depth to ensure efficient usage of existing burial stock.

Plot Depth	Maximum Coffins	Maximum Cremated Remains (Ashes)
Single Depth	1 Coffin	3 ashes
Double Depth	1 Coffin	3 ashes
	2 Coffins	2 ashes
Triple Depth	1 Coffin	3 ashes
	2 coffins	2 ashes
	3 coffins	1 ashes



## ~ Dedicated Cremated Remains (Ashes) Sites ~

Families seeking interment for cremated remains exclusively will be directed to dedicated "CR Only" burial plots or Memorial Gardens, rather than full-size burial plots.

Plot Type	Maximum Cremated Remains (Ashes)
"CR Only" Burial Plot	4 ashes
Memorial Garden	1 ashes

- **Allocation:** One set of ashes is permitted per standard dedicated ashes site.
- **Combined Ashes:** Where ashes have been combined (e.g., partners), a single plot may be used with both names inscribed on a single plaque.
- **"CR Only" Plots:** In existing plots designated specifically as "Cremated Remains Only," a maximum of 4 sets of ashes may be interred.
- **Ashes to Earth** – The Trust supports an "ashes to earth" approach where ashes are released from the container directly into the earth. However, caution is advised where ashes are being co-located in a standard plot.

## Arranging an Interment

- **Authorisation:** No interment (bodily or cremated remains) may take place without the formal authority and verification of the Trust.
- **Notice and Logistics:** Families or Funeral Directors must contact the Trust to initiate any interment. This allows the Trust to verify the chosen site, confirm dates, prepare required paperwork, and arrange for timely site excavation.
- **Excavation Verification:** Confirmation of the physical site must be verified by the Trust prior to any excavation or structural work, regardless of who completes the work.
- **Depth Specifications:** Traditional bodily interments must strictly comply with the cemetery's regulations regarding the depth of burials in graves.
  - Cremated remains are not bound by bodily burial depth regulations but must be interred at an appropriate depth (indicatively 600mm) or as allowed by soil conditions, using the recess excavated by the Trust.
- **Attendance:** The physical interment may be performed by the Trust, a licensed Funeral Director, the family, or a nominated third party. However, a designated Trust representative must be present during the interment.

## Memorialisation (Plaques and Headstones)

All installations, designs, and placements must strictly comply with the Trust's relevant policies and requirements relative to the interment section chosen.

- **Material:** All plaques must be made of bronze. Plastic, aluminium, timber, or other non-approved materials are strictly prohibited.
- **Lawn Sections:** Additional interments require details to be added to the existing plaque or, subject to space permitting and Trust approval, an additional plaque added to the desktop.
- **Rose / Native Gardens:** Plaques must match the existing style and dimensions utilised in that specific section.



- **Under-Tree Gardens:** These sections are provided with a dedicated pillar to which plaques must be securely attached.

For further details, refer to the "Guide for Selecting a Site and Installing a Plaque".

### Administration, Fees, and Tenure

- **Pre-purchase:** Both cremated remains sites and full-size burial plots can be pre-purchased or acquired at-need. All rights of interment issued are of perpetual tenure.
- **Documentation:** The Trust Administrator will advise families, Funeral Directors and other impacted parties with the details of required documentation and any other legal requirements.
- **Fees:** All fees and charges are gazetted in alignment with Department requirements. The Trust Administrator will advise families and providers of the fee structure. Fees must be paid prior to burial.
- **Record-Keeping:** In compliance with statutory duties, the Trust maintains accurate records of all interments, including the precise positioning of bodily remains and ashes.

Note: Historically, ashes interments were not generally recorded in Victorian cemeteries prior to 2005.

### Duty of Care

- **Interment Safeguards:** The Trust exercises every care to ensure interments are conducted in a timely and respectful manner. However, particularly in older, historic areas of the cemetery, unforeseen anomalies may arise (e.g., historic, unrecorded, or unauthorised site utilisation).
- **Resolution Protocol:** If a site conflict is discovered, the interment may be temporarily deferred to allow a thorough check of historical records. If an immediate resolution cannot be determined by the Trust Administrator, the matter will be referred to the Trust Chairperson as a matter of urgency for final determination.