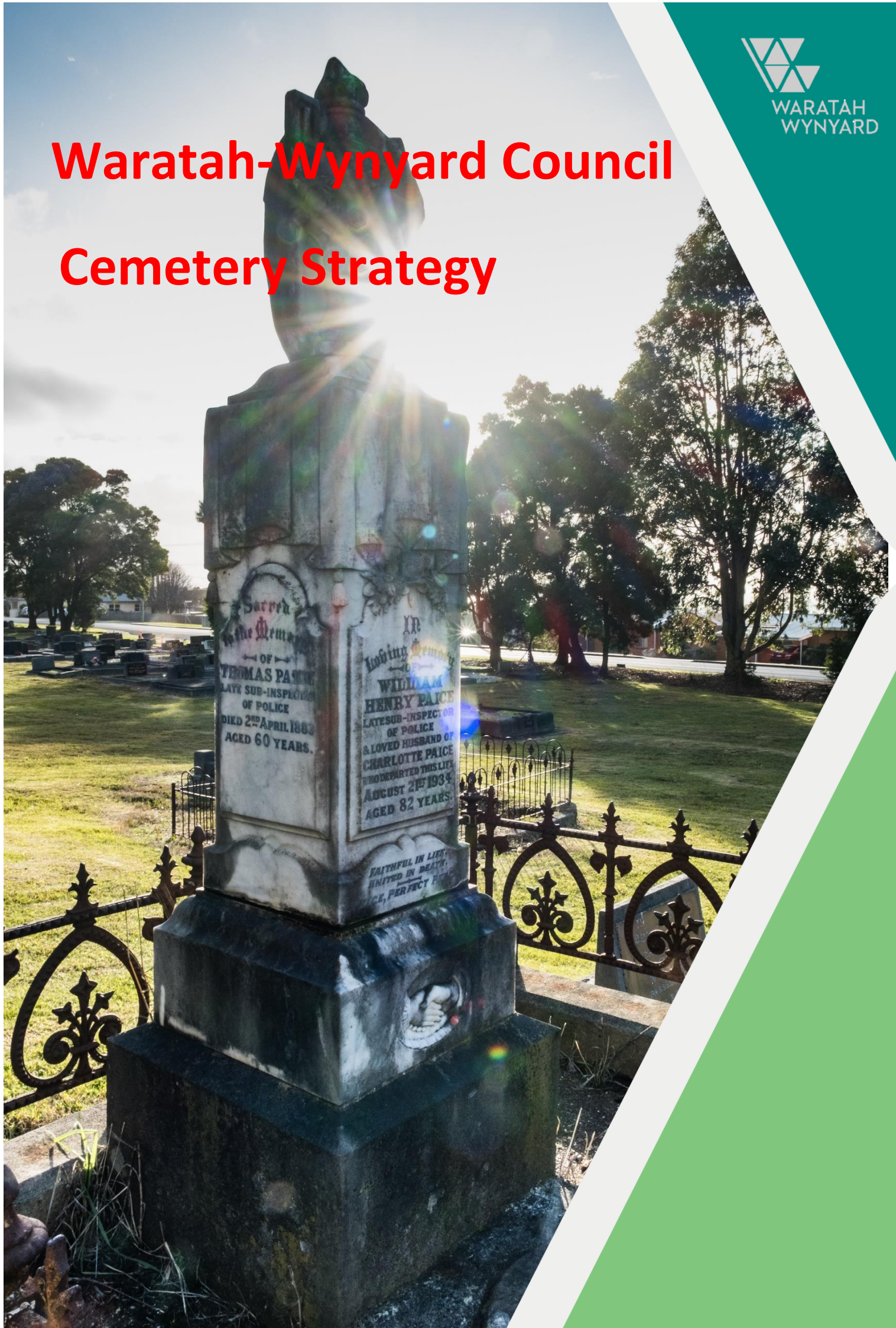


Waratah-Wynyard Council Cemetery Strategy



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Introduction

Waratah-Wynyard Council (WWC) is committed to a consistent and strategic approach to cemetery services. This Strategy has been developed to define Council's role in the provision of cemetery services and to ensure that the services are aligned with the needs of the community and are met both now and into the future.

Purpose

The purpose of the cemetery strategy is to:

1. Examine current service provision and management procedures
2. Define Council's role in the provision of cemetery services
3. Ensure that the services are aligned with the needs of the community
4. Identify opportunities for community engagement and make recommendations.

Scope

This strategy applies to the cemeteries under the care and control of Waratah-Wynyard Council.

This policy does not include:

- scattering ashes on private, commercial or government owned land
- water urns or scattering ashes in water
- war memorials or other memorials without interred human remains
- obituaries
- activities, legislation or regulation relating to the operation of a funeral directorship, funeral services or crematoria
- death certificates and/or government administration requirements on behalf of an estate or deceased person.

Outcomes

Taking into consideration the evolution of the cemetery and funeral industry and local government's important role in the provision of services and facilities, the need to establish a long-term direction for the **care, control and management** of public cemeteries is recognised.

In line with the purpose of the strategy, a number of conclusions have been drawn and subsequent **recommendations** made to provide a clear and consistent direction for the planning, management and operation of the cemeteries throughout the Waratah-Wynyard Local Government Area.

These operational improvements and strategic directions take into consideration a number of key drivers including:

- public expectations
- legislative and regulatory requirements
- industry standards and trends
- consistency with other Local Government Area's
- retainment of the key characteristics of the cemeteries within the Local Government Area
- future demands on the provision of cemeteries.

Legislative Context

A detailed review of relevant legislation and Council's current strategy framework, strategic documents and policies has been conducted to ensure the Cemetery Strategy aligns with applicable legislation and supports Waratah-Wynyard Council frameworks and priorities.

Cemeteries in Tasmania are subject to State Legislation: Burial and Cremation Act 2019. This Act makes provision for the establishment and management of crematoria and cemeteries, to provide for, and

regulate, the handling and storage of human remains, to amend certain Acts and to repeal the Cremation Act 1934. In addition, each council is enabled under the Local Government Act 1993 to make a by-law with respect to cemeteries. The interrelationship of legislative and operational requirements is complex. All policy and procedures will be required to be clear and concise to be compliant with legislation and regulations and transparent to staff, customers and external agents.

Council's Strategic Context

The Cemetery Strategy has been developed to align with the council's existing policy framework. The Cemetery Strategy aligns with existing strategy frameworks and policies, including Community Plans (Age Friendly Community Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Youth Plan), the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Plan 2017-2027, the Settlement Strategy, iCEP Plan and other corporate plans.

The Cemetery Strategy aligns with Waratah-Wynyard Council's Corporate Strategic Plan, specifically addressing *Goal 3: Connected Communities – Waratah-Wynyard community members will feel a sense of inclusion, belonging and value within a thriving, innovative and diverse population. They will be actively engaged in developing Council facilities, services and programs, and will be encouraged to provide input to planning for community needs.* The Cemetery Strategy aligns with Council's overarching vision of delivering innovative, sustainable services to the community through strong leadership, clear direction and collaborative relationships.

The Cemetery Strategy responds to issues identified in these plans, such as population growth, providing essential services and infrastructure and identifying and protecting our cultural heritage.

The Cemetery Strategy aligns with a range of principles that the community has identified and will help guide the journey towards sustainability and ensuring the identity and character of the region is retained.

The preparation of the Cemetery Strategy supports many of Council's corporate themes including timely and appropriate infrastructure and service provision, and Council's services and assets meeting the needs of the growing community.

Government Role in Provision of Burial Services

Both State and Local Government have had a long-standing involvement in various aspects of burial and cemetery management. This includes:



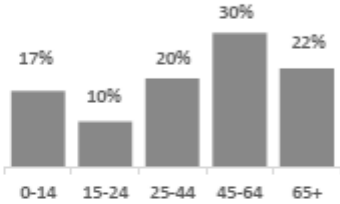
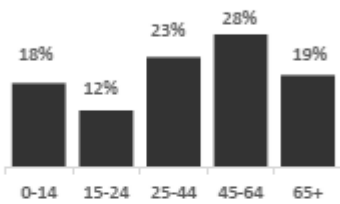
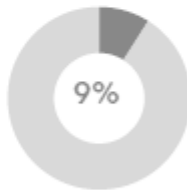
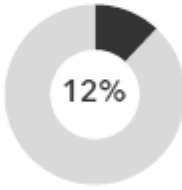
- The provision and maintenance of public land for burial. Burial space has been provided by the State Government through the provision of cemeteries for over 200 years. Local government manages and operates many of Tasmania's cemeteries.
- Planning for land uses. State and local government undertake land use planning and designate broad land use zones. Competing interests for land can make cemeteries and crematoria development less competitive than other uses within a close proximity to urban areas.
- The administration of statutes governing cemeteries, including health standards. State Government legislation administering cemeteries and crematoria includes the Crown Lands Act 1989, the Local Government Act 1993, the Necropolis Act 1901, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, the Public Health Act 2010, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the regulations associated with these Acts. As previously noted, there is an array of legislation and regulations that provide the framework for the operation, management and planning of cemeteries.
- The provision of affordable interment, including the interment of deceased destitute persons. State Government has played a role in the provision of affordable interment by providing land for burial purposes; through management by volunteer trusts; and the provision of funds for interment of deceased destitute persons. Some local Council's provide a discounted fee to the State to further

assist in the provision of burial space for deceased destitute persons.

- **Peak Bodies.** The peak body for the funeral industry in Tasmania is the Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA). Tasmania is covered by the Australasian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association (ACCA).

Waratah-Wynyard Demographic Profile

Waratah-Wynyard is located on the north-west coast of Tasmania and has a population of 13,578.

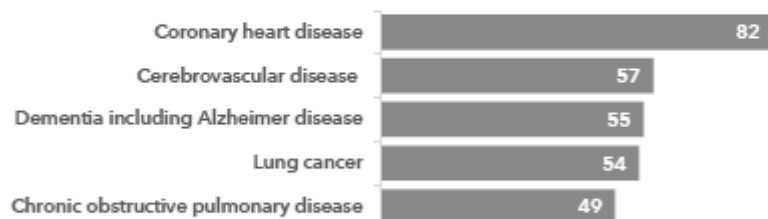
	Waratah Wynyard	Tasmania
Our population	13,900	540,780
Aboriginal population	 7.6%	 4.6%
Population by age		
Born outside Australia	 9%	 12%
Median age in years	47	42

Sources: Our population: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Data by region, Estimated Resident Population, 2020; Aboriginal population and Born outside Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Data by region, Estimated Resident Population (Census) 2016; Population by age, and Median age in years: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Data by region, Estimated Resident Population 2019.

Causes of death

During 2015-2019 coronary heart disease (10.7%), cerebrovascular disease (7.4%), dementia including Alzheimer disease (7.2%), lung cancer (7%), and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (6.4%) were the leading causes of the 769 deaths in the Waratah Wynyard LGA area.

TOP CAUSES OF DEATH 2015-2019, BY NUMBER



ALL CAUSES

769

Sources: Public hospital admissions: Department of Health and Human Services, Health Central Data Warehouse; accessed July 2021. Causes of death: Mortality over Regions and Time (MORT) book, LGA, 2015-2019, accessed July 2021.

* i) examination and investigation, ii) communicable diseases, iii) reproduction, iv) related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances, v) health services in other circumstances and vi) related to family and personal history and certain conditions influencing health status

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Waratah-Wynyard Council Cemetery Trends

The Waratah-Wynyard population is characterised by an older, ageing population. The cumulative impact of an evolving demographic profile needs to be continually monitored, as ethnic or religious backgrounds or population characteristics (such as population growth and age distribution) may raise the need for Council to undertake new approaches to how cemeteries operate.

The Cemetery Strategy is informed in part by revision of trends in service.

Of note in this region is:

- an improved standard of development and maintenance at public cemeteries (largely put down to the increased focus by local government on asset management and public standards).
- increased interest in alternate practices, such as “Natural Burial”.
- increased focus on family history searches and public tours of major cemeteries.
- increased number of family/legal disputes (which is reflective of the general litigious trends in Australia).

Within the Waratah-Wynyard Local Government Area, Waratah-Wynyard Council is the only provider of cemetery space and services. Council is the key service provider and an integral stakeholder in the planning, development and operation of cemeteries and their associated services. The balance of the interments is catered for largely through interment in neighbouring Local Government Areas, personal ash scattering or holding of urns.

Burial Statistics

2016-2021 (Information sourced from Council Records)	
Burials - Wynyard	287
Burials - Somerset	2
Burials - Flowerdale	1
Burials - Yolla	5
Burials - Waratah	3
Burial - Private	3
Burials - Total	301
Cremation – Old Wynyard Columbarium Wall	53
Cremation – New Wynyard Columbarium Wall	31
Cremation - Total	84

Future Considerations

In order for effective planning, management and operations of Council’s cemeteries to occur in the short, medium and long term, there needs to be an understanding of the matters which will impact on Council’s cemeteries now and in the future.

Since 1930, Waratah-Wynyard Council have maintained accurate spatial burial records of the cemeteries it manages. Council’s analysis of current cemetery services identified opportunities for Council to consider.

The following sections provide detail to these opportunities and outlines the key considerations for moving forward.

Natural Burials

- At the time of writing this report, one person has been buried following “natural burial” principles. This natural burial occurred in Waratah. There is land available at the Waratah Cemetery that is appropriate for natural burials. Council may be able to provide “natural burial” in Wynyard. An investigation needs to take place to determine an appropriate location for “natural burial” in Wynyard to occur.

What is Natural Burial?

- Natural burial is the interment of the body of a dead person in the soil in a manner that does not inhibit decomposition but allows the body to be naturally recycled.
- The body may be prepared without chemical preservatives or disinfectants such as embalming fluid, which might destroy the microbial decomposers that break the body down.
- The body may be buried in a biodegradable coffin, casket, or shroud.
- The grave does not use a burial vault or outer burial container that would prevent the body's contact with soil.
- The grave should be shallow enough to allow microbial activity similar to that found in composting.

Natural Ashes Interment

Determine the interest and costs involved in broadening the plantings in the current area available for ashes interment in native and/or ornamental garden settings at the cemetery in Wynyard. Consider:

- Ashes interment under selected trees within a cemetery bush section
- Ashes interment into a native or ornamental garden

Cemetery Infrastructure

Determine the interest and capacity in broadening the availability of cemetery infrastructure, incorporating principles of technological and digital innovation. Items to be considered for including at current Council cemeteries are:

- CCTV
- Fencing
- Vegetation
- Irrigation
- Subsoil Drainage
- Lighting (Solar?)
- Interpretive signage
- Shade structures
- Accessibility (parking and toilets)

Technology and Digitalisation of Cemetery Information

Determine the interest, benefit and cost involved in improving digital accessibility for cemeteries. Items to be considered are:

- Public cemetery portal (GIS)

- Online options for viewing burials
- App/augmented reality for finding graves
- App/augmented reality for historical videos
- Virtual cemetery tours
- QR Codes on plaques

Reflective Spaces

- Quiet reflective spaces that are natural, attract birds and insects, are inclusive, include some history

History, Education and Story Telling

The history of a community and the people who have lived there can be embedded in the local cemetery. General information about cemetery history and headstone significance, including the significance of the materials used, the size and placement of the graves and markers, and the words and symbols all have meaning. This information can be displayed for visitors to read and reflect on, creating a space that is attractive and welcoming.

Cemetery Capacity

Cemeteries ultimately have a life span. In some circumstances, cemeteries are unable to be developed further and are only providing burials within existing grave sites (for an additional interment) and reserved grave sites.

The Waratah and Wynyard communities have good cemetery capacity that is able to respond to the changing needs of the public. Waratah in particular is able to provide for evolving trends in burials, cremations and interments. It is difficult to determine an exact point in time when burial space will be exhausted in the Waratah-Wynyard municipality as there are a number of variables requiring consideration. These include:

- The impact of population forecasts for Waratah-Wynyard.
- In this municipality graves are generally dug to allow for three interments. Whether an interment in an existing grave occurs cannot be predetermined.
- The impact of whether reserved grave sites are used or remain reserved in perpetuity.
- The impact of the future trends and preferred interment options.
- The death rate is expected to increase as the baby boomers enter their later years. This could be expected to impact on total burials per annum.

Waratah-Wynyard Council have both “plinthed” and “unplinthed” areas in the Wynyard Lawn Cemetery. As of the end of the 2022 financial year there are 143 plinthed lawn spaces available. There are 1007 unplinthed lawn spaces available. There has been an average of 40 burials per annum. Council has three years capacity in the plinthed section and 24 years capacity in the unplinthed section. This will require capital allocation in the 2023/24 financial budget to plinth the area. Please note that the capacity count considers one burial per plot, however all the plots are dug to allow up to three burials in each site. Waratah-Wynyard Council do not have an area beyond the current Wynyard Cemetery formally identified for future expansion.

Community members have expressed an interest in having flower and tribute holders built into the concrete plinth. Determine costs associated with including this feature prior to laying the next lot of concrete plinths.

Recommendations

The following three key recommendations have been identified for Council's consideration:

1. Internal Management and Operational Systems

Objective: To effectively manage and deliver cemetery services ensuring all statutory obligations are met and assets are safeguarded over the long term.

Action 1:1 Establish a range of clear and concise **policies, procedures and agreements** for the management and operation of Waratah-Wynyard Council Cemeteries.

Action 1:2 Ensure that trees in cemeteries are addressed in existing Council tree/planting policies. Ensure that future tree planting in cemeteries is addressed in existing Council tree/planting policies.

2. Viability and Sustainability

Objective: To ensure that funding for Waratah-Wynyard Council cemetery services is appropriate to meet its short term and long-term cemetery commitments.

The provision of cemeteries infrastructure and maintenance of cemeteries is predominantly funded by the community through General Rate income.

Council must consider the cost-effectiveness and capacity of the community to pay for services when planning for new cemetery infrastructure and setting service standards.

Council will seek to fully recover the full cost of burials through the setting of burial fees. Burial fees will be reviewed annually as a part of the Council's annual budget deliberations. A copy of the current Fees and Charges schedule can be found on Council's webpage or be obtained by contacting Council.

Council will seek to strike a balance between full cost recovery and affordability when setting burial fees.

Differential pricing will be considered for different interment options.

Action 2:1 Review the cemetery-based **fees and charges** and compare to actual cost of interment. Review current service levels and determine annual maintenance costs.

Objective: To ensure that sustainable funeral services and practices can be catered for in Waratah-Wynyard Council cemeteries.

Action 2:2 Ensure the longevity of Waratah-Wynyard Council cemeteries by investigating increasing **the range of interment options** such as modern burial systems (<https://hardingshotmix.com.au/services/modern-burial-systems/>), columbarium walls, garden interments, monuments and natural burials.

Action 2:3 Determine an appropriate location for a designated "natural burial" area in the Wynyard municipality.

Action 2:4 Determine community interest in broadening the current area available for ashes interment in

native and/or ornamental garden settings in Wynyard.

In most cases each municipal cemetery resides within a discreet parcel of land. However, these parcels have varying levels of spatial integrity.

Spatial accuracy of cemetery land parcels is important, with most of Councils older cemeteries having a very low spatial integrity. For closed cemeteries this is not as critical however for those where burials are active ensuring the parcels boundary is critical. In order to improve the spatial integrity of the parcels a land surveyor would need to be engaged.

Action 2:5 Each modern cemetery that is still being utilised by Council to be surveyed by a registered land surveyor if there is any lack of confidence in the accuracy of the spatial integrity of the land parcel. This will ensure that any future action with respect to individual cemeteries is undertaken within legal boundaries.

3. Stakeholder Engagement and Historical Value

Objective: To align service provisions with the needs of the community and enhance community ownership and connectedness with their local cemeteries.

Objective: To maintain records and make information accessible to the public

Action 3:1 Review existing service levels and clarify Council's maintenance obligations for historic/other cemeteries in the community.

Action 3:2 Improve the range and distribution of **public information** regarding municipal cemetery history through the establishment of appropriate **community collaborations** with subject matter experts, such as the Wynyard Historical Society and/or the Waratah Museum Society.

Action 3:3 Seek funding for -

- cemetery conservation works
- history, education and story telling
- enhancing the digitalisation and accessibility of cemetery information

Cemeteries are a valuable social and historical resource for the community. Cemeteries illustrate the historic record of the region which also provides a history of the area's growth and a valuable insight into its evolution. In some instances, the cemetery or gravesite may be the only place where a person's life is recorded. It is therefore important to conserve the cultural significance of council's cemeteries.

The ongoing maintenance and upkeep of Council's cemeteries is integral to preserving the history and cultural significance of Waratah-Wynyard. Future operators of Council's cemeteries need to be mindful of this significance, and promote their recognition, protection and conservation. This can be facilitated by applying for external funding when available and educating the community of the value of Council's cemeteries.

Action 3:4 Council to -

- upgrade entry and directional signage at each Council owned cemetery
- provide access to Council record and registers of burials and geographical information system

Action 3:5 Establish a series of partnerships with community groups and agencies to benefit the community, and the cemetery.

Partnerships to investigate include:

- a partnership with a relevant agency, such as Mission Australia, to establish a Work for Dole program
- a partnership with Youth Justice Commission to establish a youth program
- a partnership with the Historical Society to foster the collection of knowledge particular to local cemeteries to ensure the historical significance of the cemetery is maintained. (Council provides this group with assistance, including meeting space free of charge and other supports as requested in order to facilitate the ongoing preservation and maintenance standards)

It is important to continue to build these partnerships with the community. One such opportunity exists for the creation of a 'Friends of the Cemeteries' group. Similar groups have been established in other Council areas and involve a regionally based group who work alongside council to maintain the integrity and historical significance of cemetery sites. The creation of partnerships with external groups creates the opportunity for cost savings and long-term gains, which should be explored further, and any opportunities maximised.

Conclusion

As a means to implement the proposed actions of this strategy an **action plan** outlining the required action, responsible officer and proposed timeframes has been developed.

The action plan concentrates on the initial implementation of the strategy over the life of the plan and should be reviewed and updated biannually.

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Overview of Cemeteries

Current Council Cemeteries	
Wynyard Monumental Cemetery Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street Closed for new FULL Interments Open for Interment of Ashes 2345 Existing Interments 82 Existing Reservations First confirmed interment on record 16/03/1903	Flowerdale Cemetery Preolenna Road Closed for new FULL Interments Open for Interment of Ashes 180 Existing Internments 16 Existing Reservations Non-Council Freehold Title (Possibly a Church trustee group. All deceased) Council maintain and manage First confirmed interment on record 12/09/1877
Wynyard Lawn Cemetery Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street Open for all burials 3289 Existing Interments 2 Existing Reservations 1151 interment spaces available First confirmed interment on record 10/07/1969	Somerset Monumental Pelissier Street Closed for new FULL Interments Open for Interment of Ashes 941 Existing Internments 19 Existing Reservations First confirmed interment on record 07/08/1857
Wynyard Rose Garden Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street Open for Ashes Interment ONLY 25 Existing Interments 9 Existing Reservations 6 Available Plots First confirmed interment on record 31/01/2017	Henrietta Cemetery East Yolla Road Open for Interments 127 Existing Interments 5 Existing Reservations First confirmed interment on record 29/06/1912
Old Wynyard Columbarium Wall Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street Open for Ashes Interment ONLY 1 Wall 7 Available Niches 315 Existing Interments 46 Existing Reservations First confirmed interment on record 29/08/1957	Waratah Lawn Cemetery Waratah Road Open for Interments 27 Existing Interments 18 Existing Reservations 1 Natural Burial 524 interment spaces available Large Plot for future planning First confirmed interment on record 06/11/1995

Other Cemeteries in our Community	Historic Council Cemeteries
Tollymore Cemetery Closed 66 Interments 12 Reservations Non-Council Freehold Title Current title owner deceased	Mount Hicks Cemetery Closed 90 Interments First confirmed interment on record 02/12/1891
Table Cape Cemetery Closed Possibly 2 Internments	Waratah Pioneer Cemetery Cemetery Road Closed 711 Interments First confirmed interment on record 23/10/1880
Possible Inglis River Cemetery Closed Unsure of exact location Unknown Interments Historical reference only	Jenner Street Cemetery Closed 369 Existing Interments 8 Reservations First confirmed interment on record 15/08/1876
NB - Council are legally obliged to keep a record of all burials on private land.	

Table 8: Cemeteries and Memorial Reserves Maintenance Schedule

Location	General Inspections	Grass Mowing (average)	Grass Mowing		Irrigation	Permanent Garden Bed Major Renovation (including mulching)	Permanent Garden Bed Minor Renovation	Mulching	Weeding (hand)	Spraying	Raking Leaves & Debris	Lawn Levelling	Tree Pruning	Cenotaph Maintenance	Furniture Cleaning	Furniture Maintenance	Tribute Removal, Flowers, Etc.	Rubbish Collection	
			May-Aug	Sept-Apr														5x240L	1x/wk
Wynyard Lawn Cemetery (old & new)	1x/wk	1x/2wks	1x/2wks	1x/mth	3x/wk	1x/2yrs	1x/2yrs	1x/2yrs	1hr/mth	3x/yr	2hr/wk	1x/yr	reactive	2x/yr	1x/yr	reactive	1x/wk		
Jenner St Cemetery	1x/mth	1x/6wks	1x/6wks	1x/6wks						2x/yr			reactive		reactive				
Somerset Cemetery	1x/mth	1x/6wks	1x/mth	1x/6wks						2x/yr			reactive	1x/yr	reactive				
Waratah Cemetery (new)	1x/yr	3x/yr	2x/yr	1x/yr						1x/yr	reactive		reactive		1x/yr	1x/yr	1x/yr		reactive
Wynyard Monumental Cemetery	1x/mth									2x/yr			reactive		reactive				
Flowerdale Cemetery*	1x/mth	1x/6wks	1x/6wks	1x/6wks						2x/yr			reactive		reactive				
Mt Hicks Cemetery	1x/6wks	1x/6wks	1x/6wks	1x/6wks						2x/yr			reactive		reactive				
Yolla/Hemietta Cemetery	1x/mth	1x/6wks	1x/6wks	1x/6wks						2x/yr			reactive		reactive			1x/6mths	
Old Waratah Cemetery	1x/yr	3x/yr	2x/yr	1x/yr						2x/yr	reactive		reactive		reactive			reactive	
Table Cape Cemetery																			
Tollymore Road Cemetery*																			
Wynyard Cenotaph	See Table 4: Parks and Reserves Maintenance – Included with Gutteridge Gardens																		
Waratah War Memorial Park	1x/yr	4x/yr	3x/yr	1x/yr						2x/yr	reactive		reactive		1x/yr			reactive	
Yolla War Memorial Grove*	1x/2mths	1x/6wks	1x/6wks	1x/6wks									reactive						

* Not Council owned or licenced.

Wynyard

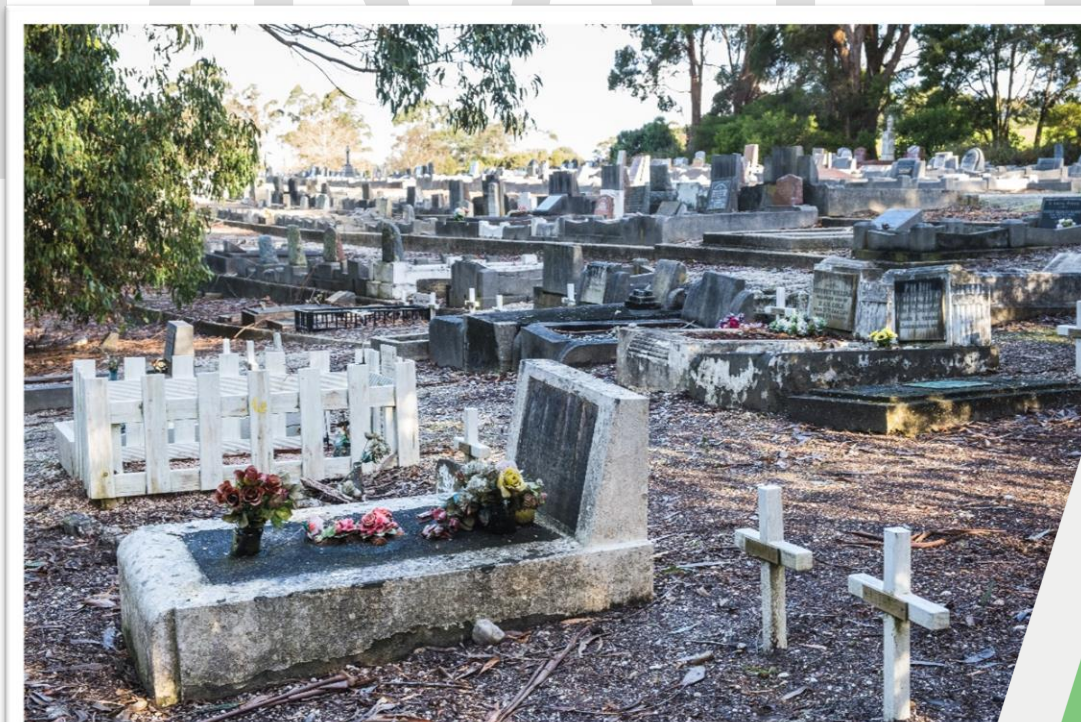
Monumental Cemetery

Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

2345 Existing Interments

82 Existing Reservations

March 1903 First Confirmed Interment



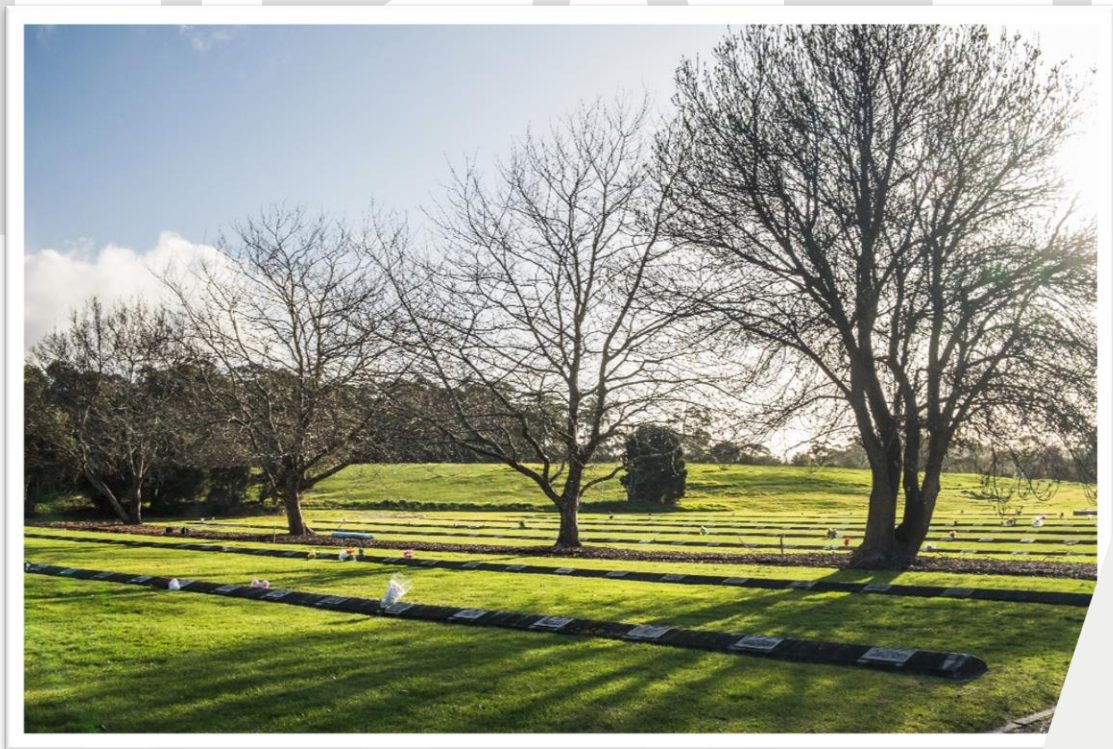
Wynyard Lawn Cemetery

Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

3289 Existing Interments

2 Existing Reservations

July 1969 First Confirmed Interment



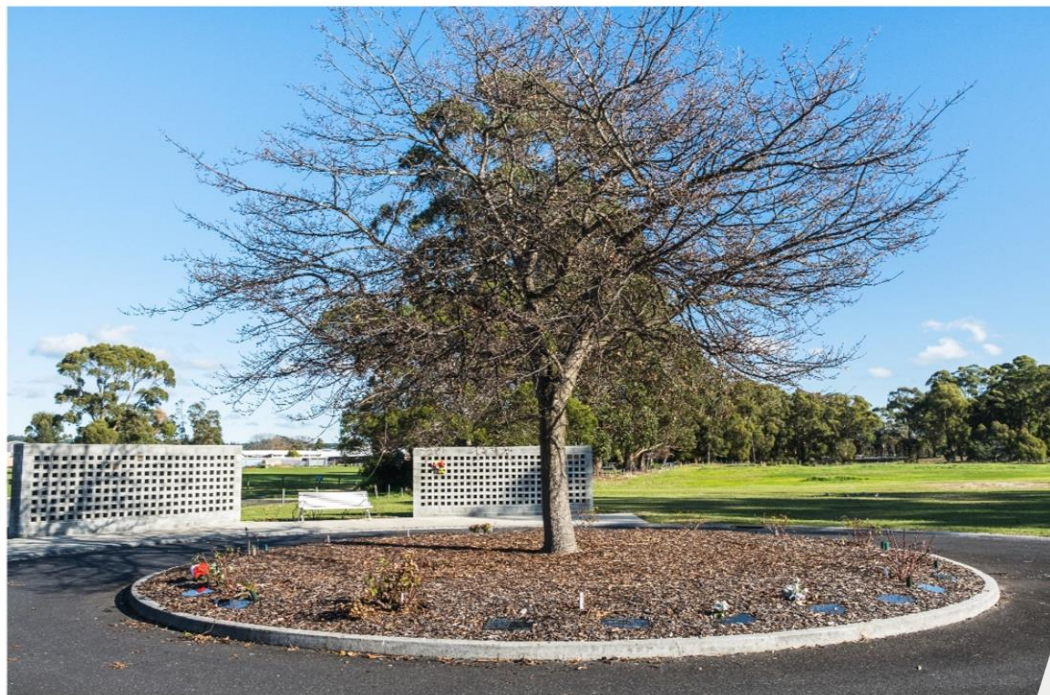
Wynyard Rose Garden

Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

25 Existing Interments

9 Existing Reservations

January 2017 First Confirmed Interment



Old Wynyard Columbarium Wall

Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

315 Existing Interments

46 Existing Reservations

7 Available Niches

August 1957 First Confirmed Interment



New Wynyard Columbarium Wall

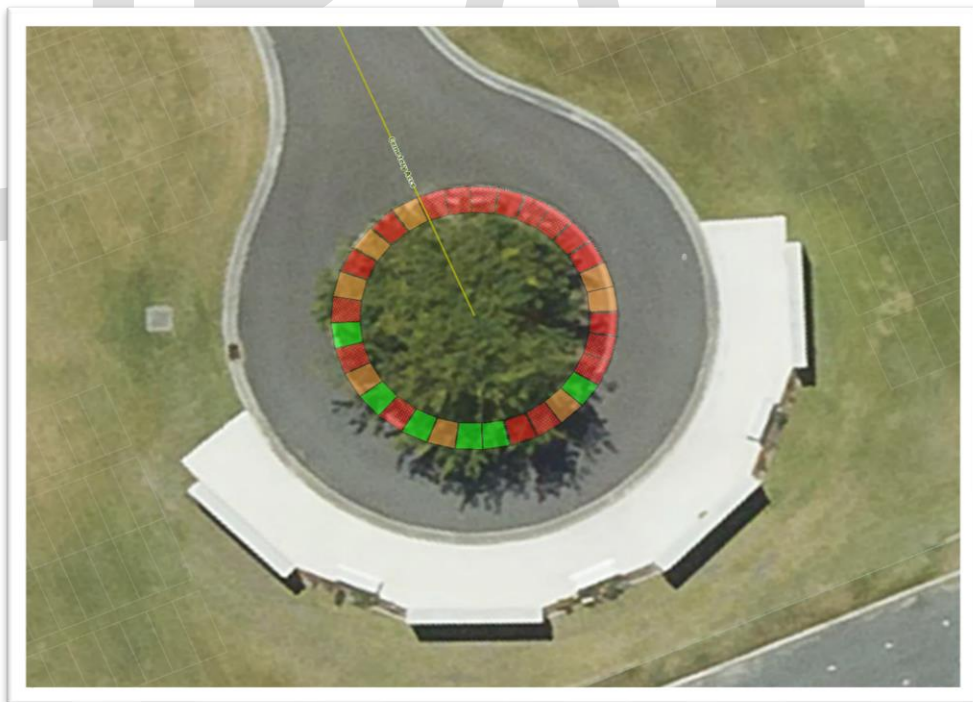
Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

24 Existing Interments

20 Existing Reservations

788 Available Niches

January 2016 First Confirmed Interment



Flowerdale Cemetery

Preolenna Road

180 Existing Interments

16 Existing Reservations

September 1877 First confirmed interment



Somerset

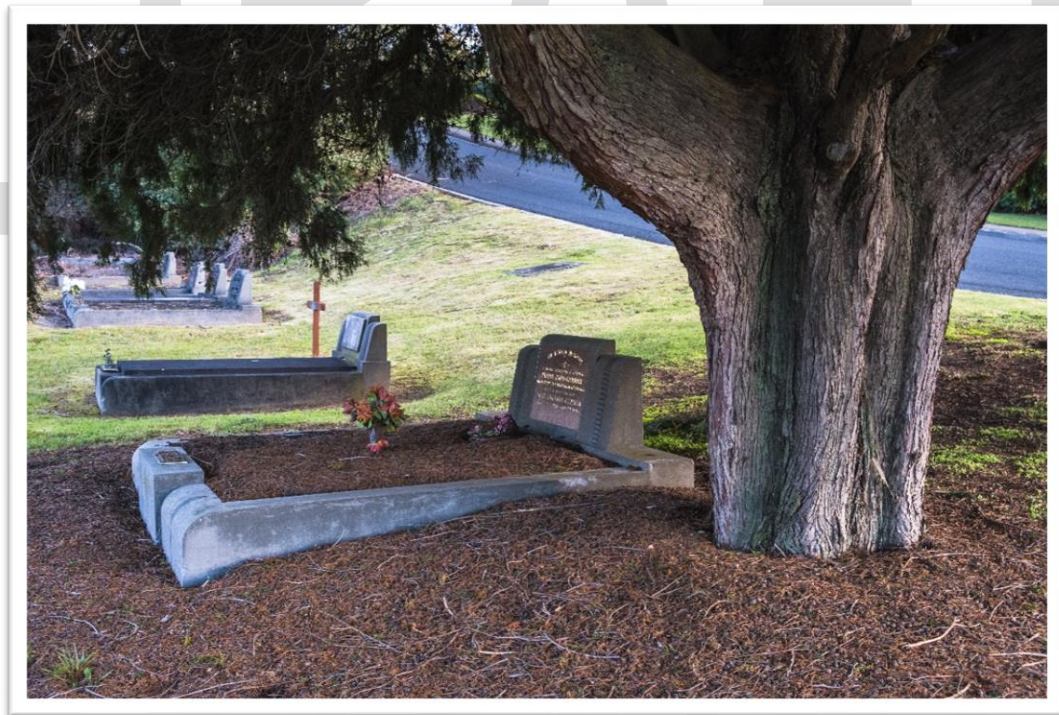
Monumental

Pelissier Street

941 Existing Interments

19 Existing Reservations

August 1857 First confirmed interment



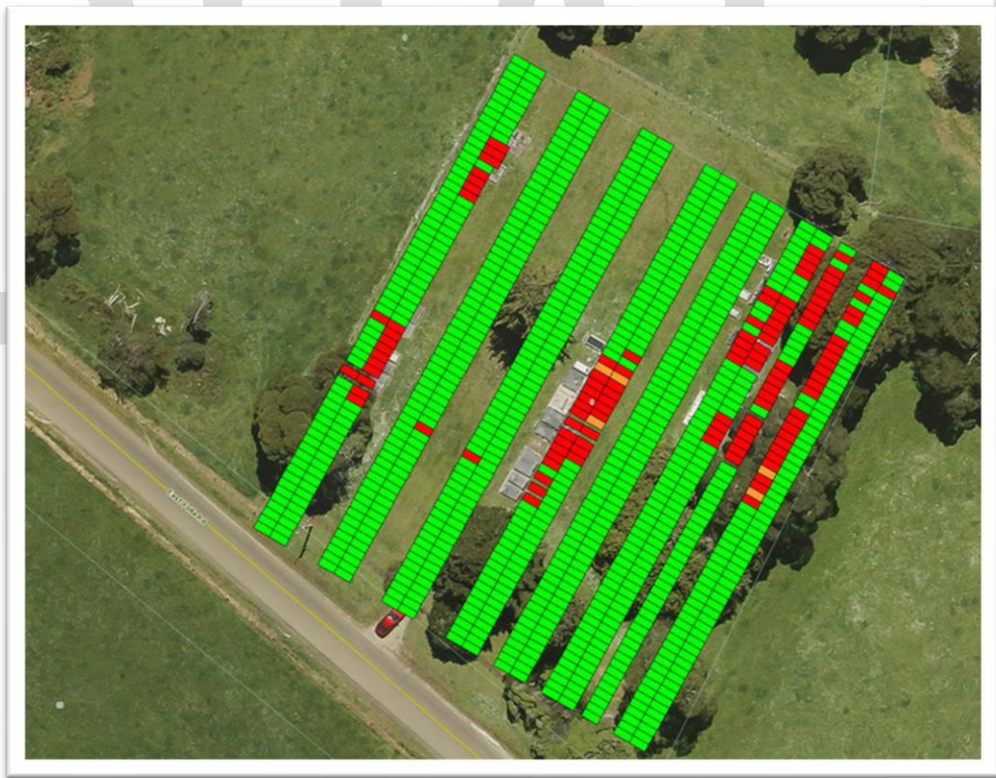
Henrietta Cemetery

East Yolla Road

127 Existing Interments

5 Existing Reservations

June 1912 First confirmed interment



Waratah

Lawn Cemetery

Waratah Road

27 Existing Interments

18 Existing Reservations

1 Natural Burial

November 1995 First confirmed interment



Wynyard Cemetery - Islamic

Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

4 Available Plots

August 2013 First confirmed interment

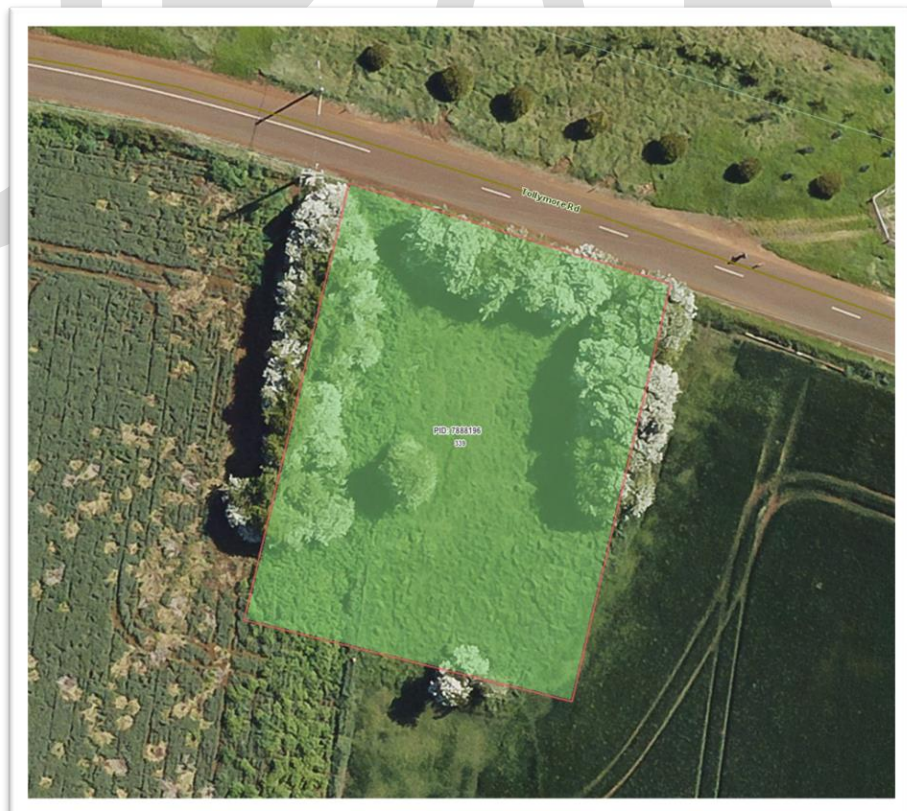


Tollymore Cemetery

Tollymore Road

68 Existing Interments

12 Existing Reservations



Mount Hicks Cemetery

90 Existing Interments
December 1891 First confirmed interment



Waratah

Pioneer Cemetery

Cemetery Road

711 Existing Interments

October 1880 First confirmed interment



Jenner Street Cemetery

Jenner St, Wynyard

369 Existing Interments

8 Existing Reservations

August 1876 First confirmed interment



Table Cape Cemetery

Corner of Austin and Gibbons Street

Possibly 2 Existing Interments

Historical reference only



Inglis River Cemetery

Unsure of exact location

Unknown interments

Historical reference only



