

BELLBROOK CEMETERY

MANAGEMENT PLAN



Cemetery Road, Bellbrook

**Adopted by Council
9th January 2001**

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Headstones in the Catholic Portion of the Cemetery

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

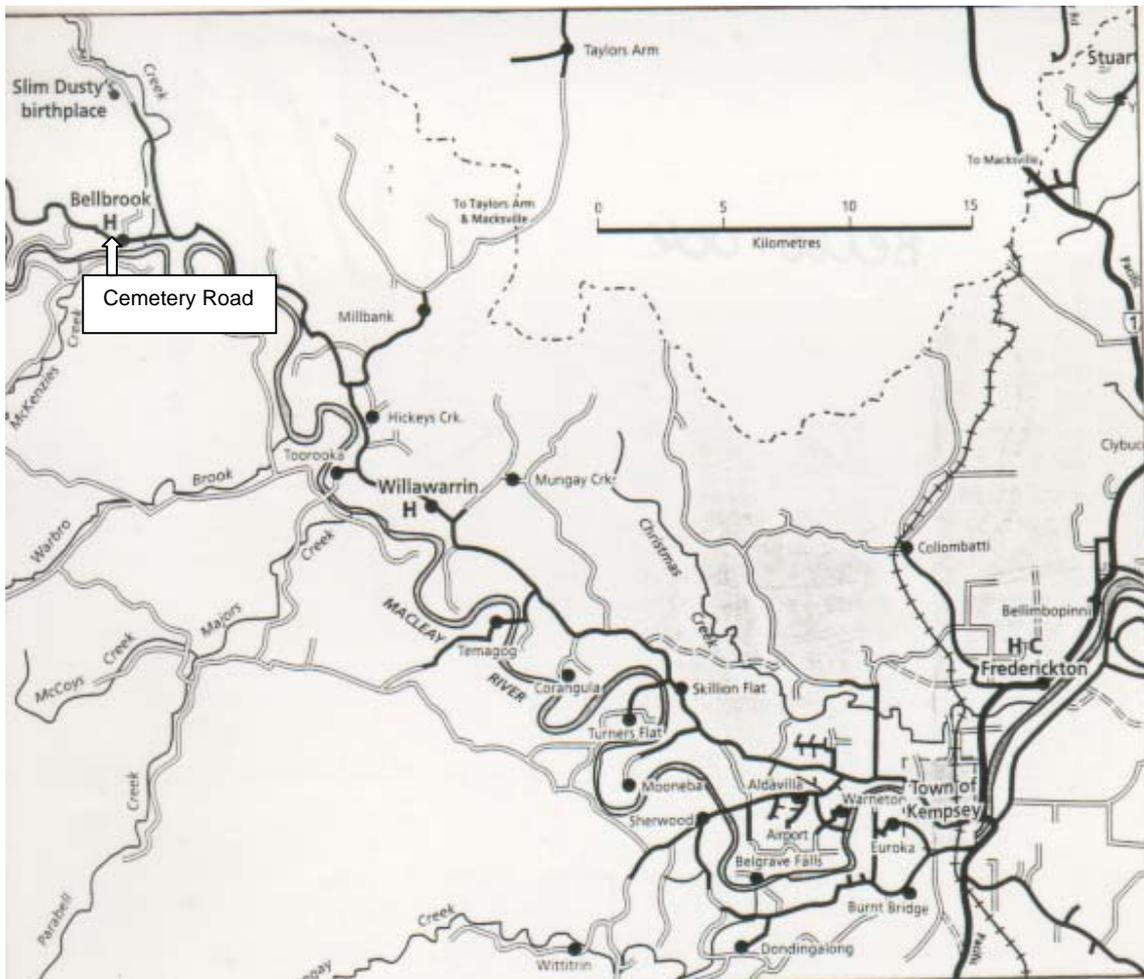
Bellbrook Cemetery is situated just off Armidale Road, Bellbrook at the end of Cemetery Road, in a rural farmland setting on hilly terrain. The Cemetery is fenced into areas by religious denomination and has a low rate of interment.

1.2 Where this Plan Applies

The cemetery is located at the end of Cemetery Road, Bellbrook, Parish of Nulla Nulla, County of Dudley.

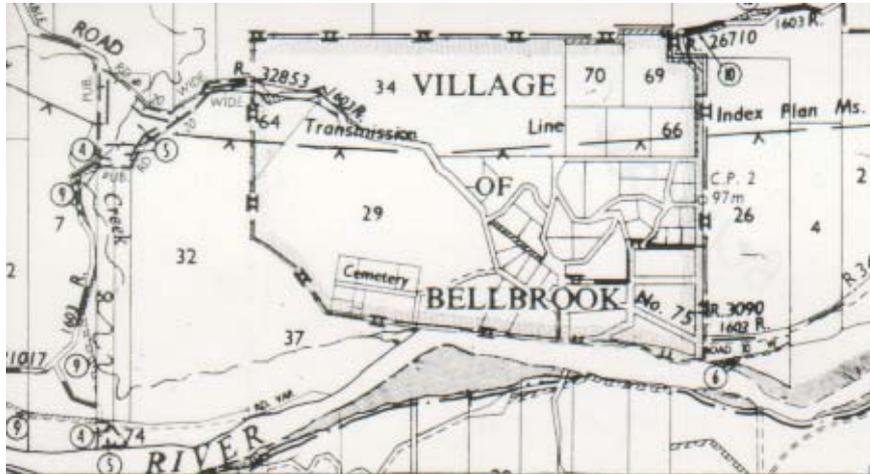
This Cemetery is a Crown Land Reserve No. 16583.

1.2 Regional Location Map



1.2.2 Plan of the Cemetery

Parish Map of Cemetery at time of Gazettal



Map of Cemetery as it is today.

1.3 Previous Planning Strategies

18 March 1997	DCP No 24 – Access and Mobility
16 June 1998	DCP No 25 – Advertising Signs in Kempsey Shire
21 July 1998	DCP No 28 – Leasing of Public Areas for Restaurants and Cafes
21 July 1998	DCP No 29 – Bed & Breakfast Accommodation.
24 December 1993	Amendment No 1
12 August 1988	Amendment No 4
12 August 1988	Amendment No 11
12 August 1988	Amendment No 17
24 December 1993	Amendment No 35
23 May 1994	Classification of Land – Operational Minute No 1.20550

1.4 Summary of History of the Cemetery

The history of the Cemetery is chronologised as follows:-

YEAR	EVENT(s)
?	Reservation of cemetery gazetted
1960's	Council took control of the Cemetery as defined by State Government requirements.



Headstone protection methods at the Cemetery.

2.0 CURRENT PRACTICES AND SERVICES

Aim: Councils aim in undertaking maintenance is to control grass and weeds around gravesites. Maintenance of headstones is not part of Councils maintenance regime due to the professional requirements of such an undertaking and Councils limited funding.

2.1 Horticultural Maintenance

2.1.1 Mowing

Mowing of the cemetery is undertaken at regular intervals by day labour staff

2.1.2 . Control of Weeds and Problem Species

Weeds are controlled by spraying with a biodegradable herbicide. Graves are also whipper snipped around when mown as part of the maintenance mowing operation.

Weed control is undertaken between September and November each year prior to the growing season.

2.2 Rubbish Removal

Garbage bins are located around the cemetery. The rubbish is removed by the day labour staff at regular intervals and before and after special occasions such as Mothers and Fathers Days, Christmas, Easter and Anzac Days.

2.3 Water Supply

The Bellbrook Cemetery is not connect to any water supply at all. There is currently no provision for any supply to be made available at the cemetery.

2.4 Power Supply

There is no connection to a mains power supply.

2.5 Roadways

The Cemetery road is used as an access for this Cemetery. The access road needs to be maintained in a weed-free condition and devoid of hazards.

2.6 Fire Control

Fire can have disastrous effects on cemeteries. Local fire authorities are to help with the prevention of fire damage to cemeteries by ensuring that there are adequate firebreaks around the boundaries and within larger sites. A fire control plan will be put in place to manage this emergency and will be undertaken by the NSW Rural Fire Service.

3.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

3.1 Current Management Structure

The current management structure is as follows:-

Community Services Department Staff

Director Community Services – Operations overview

Community Services Officer – Handles the day to day management of the cemeteries.

Operational Services Department Staff

Co-ordinator– supervisors day labour staff

Head Gravedigger – Day labour staff

Assistant Gravedigger–Day labour staff

3.2 Future Management Structure

Councils cemeteries are currently being maintained by Day labour staff.

Currently Council maintains eight (8) cemeteries. During the past two summers the gravediggers have had the assistance of an additional employee to assist with the maintenance.

If Council is to increase the level of service at the cemeteries there is a need to look at its human resources.

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 Financial Resources

An examination of cemeteries financial reports indicates that income is only sufficient to allow for basic horticultural management with occasional capital works funded. Unless a more substantial funding base is achieved cemetery management cannot hope to further its objectives.

Various funding options available to Cemetery services are provided below:-

4.1.1 Direct Allocation

Kempsey Shire Council funds the continual maintenance of the cemeteries from its annual operating budget. This budget is allocated in July of every year. The 2000 / 2001 operating budget is \$172,100 for all of Councils cemetery services.

4.1.2 State Government Allocation

Cemeteries which are Crown Reserves or community land may receive recurrent allocations from State government and may be eligible to apply for funds from particular sources.

4.1.3 Grants and Loans

Governments make grants and loans available from time to time under such schemes as the National Estate Grants Program and the Heritage Assistance Program. In New South Wales, many small cemetery conservation projects have been assisted financially by these means. Outright grants are becoming less common, and most government agencies expect organisations applying for funds to raise a significant proportion of the amount they need, usually at least \$ for \$.

Under some funding schemes, applicants can obtain loans at attractive rates, sometimes with deferred repayments.

The New South Wales Department of Land and Water Conservation administers the Public Reserves Management Fund from which some grants are made available for regular operating costs of some cemeteries which are Crown Reserves, allocated on a recurrent rather than an annual basis.

4.1.4 Sponsorship/Donations

Relatives of those buried in a cemetery could be approached to assist with the conservation of their forebear's graves. They may also be prepared to donate funds for memorial gardens, walls or seats.

4.1.5 Merchandising

While the cemetery may not seem to offer many merchandising opportunities, there is scope for the production, for sale, of volumes of biographical information about people in their respective cemeteries, and this is another avenue which may be developed further. Examples from Waverley Councils biographies are linked to themes such as "Crime and Punishment" and "Arts and Literature" and complement guided tours of the cemetery conducted by that Councils' Local History Librarian.

4.1.6 Burial Fees and Other Fees for Services

Attached at Appendix A is a schedule of fees levied for burials, placement of ashes, administrative fees for monumental works, and other cemeteries services.

5.0 COMMUNITY NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Many cemeteries today can fulfil multiple purposes as places of burial and remembrance, genealogical research and passive recreation. A visitor survey is a useful way that will help to define the needs and expectations the local community has for the cemetery.

5.1 Visitor Profile

As part of the process of undertaking the Cemetery Management Plan for the Bellbrook Cemetery a Visitor Survey was produced and advertised extensively in the Shire. A copy of the Survey is attached at Appendix B.

No surveys were received from the community relating to this cemetery.

6.0 BELLBROOK CEMETERY ASSETS

As part of the plan all of the Cemetery assets have to be quantified and relevant programs implemented for their maintenance and new facilities / assets identified.

6.1 Current Assets

The Bellbrook Cemetery has a number of assets.

The land is an asset of the Cemetery and due to the low rate of interments no additional land would be required to meet any need for expansion.

The Cemetery is also currently fenced, with stock proof fencing and has gates to the individual sections.

6.2 Future Assets

The Bellbrook Cemetery is a working cemetery. Although its use is relatively small compared to other cemeteries in the Shire, One (1) interment every five (5) years, there appears to be no need to set aside land for its expansion in the future.

The Cemetery Services Asset Management Program for all cemeteries is detailed in Section 10.



Headstones at the Anglican Portion of the Cemetery.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

7.1 Public Safety

Cemetery management and staff are committed to a policy of risk management and public liability minimisation. Regular inspections and monitoring of the site is carried out to identify potential and future risks and hazards. Reports of hazards and incidents are made, and log books of remedial actions taken will be kept.

Any identified public safety hazards should be removed and/or appropriate warning signs and barricades should be erected as soon as possible.

Adequate levels of insurance to cover public liability should be maintained.

7.2 Occupational Health and Safety

Cemetery managers and staff are bound by the provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* and its Regulations, Codes of Practice and Guidelines.

A number of Australian Standards relevant to Occupational Health and Safety are applicable to cemeteries. These include:

AS 1470 – 1986 – Health and Safety at Work
AS 4204 – 1994 – Headstones and Monuments
AS 1657 – 1985 – Fixed Platforms, Walkways, Stairs and Ladders
AS 2727 – 1984 – Chain-saws – Guide to Safe Working Practices
AS 2726 – 1984 – Chain-saw Safety Requirements
AS 1716 – 1994 – Selection, Use and Maintenance of Respirators
Draft AS 2865 – 1995 Safe Work in Confined Spaces

Also relevant to cemetery operations are the following:

Worksafe Australia Draft Ultra Violet Radiation Standard
New South Wales Manual Handling Regulation – 1991
National Standard NOHSC: 1001 (1990) – Manual Handling
National Code of Practice NHOSC: 2005 (1990) – Manual Handling

In all works cemetery management and staff comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* and Regulations. Where the law requires a licence or permit for the operation of plant and equipment, the head Gravedigger (as a representative of Management must) ensures that all workers operating such plant and equipment have the relevant, current licence or permit. Whether or not a licence or permit is required, cemetery management ensures that all operators have been instructed in the safe and correct use of the plant and equipment, that the plant is stable on the ground, and that it is only operated within legally required distances from powerlines.

Cemetery management, staff, voluntary workers and contractors are made aware of Occupational Health and Safety practices / responsibilities. Regular safety audits for occupational health and safety are also carried out. Necessary safety procedures and measures (eg, OH &S training for staff, and provision of safety equipment) are put in place.

Cemetery employees are made aware of the danger of UV radiation in the outdoor environment of the cemetery. During times of exposure employees are required to be

well protected by clothing appropriate to their particular circumstances. Areas of exposed skin kept to a minimum and a UV protective cream or lotion applied to exposed areas. Council provides employees required to work in wet weather with appropriate wet weather gear, and ensures that an adequate supply of clean, cool drinking water is available at all times.

7.4 Insurance Cover

Adequate insurance cover should be maintained for the following:

- Public Liability
- Voluntary Workers
- Workers compensation (compulsory)
- Fire and damage to replaceable assets

Necessary monitoring and procedures to minimise health and safety risks to cemetery management, staff and visitors should be carried out, thereby limiting the exposure of the cemetery management authority to litigation. The value of assets should be assessed for insurance purposes and adequate cover for structures and contents maintained. A valuation of conservation works (eg, repairs to vaults) and assets (eg, shed, plant and equipment) should be carried out

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Plans of management must continue to evolve. While they may be endorsed at a particular point in time, they must include provision for review and updating to allow for the fact that some of the plan's recommended strategies will have been implemented, or because circumstances have changed.

Possible changes relevant to a cemetery include the following:

- changes to the physical environment eg, natural disasters such as a major storm.
- changes to the economic environment eg, reduction in available funding as a result of cuts to grant programs, default on lease;
- changes to the organisational environment eg, abolition or restructuring of the management authority;
- changes to the social environment eg, type of stakeholder, for instance, demise of Friends group;
- changes to the political environment eg, change of government, leading to amended policy directions.

Consequently, the Plan needs to be reviewed and amended as necessary after a period of not more than five years. Cemetery management must also continue to be accountable to the community and should monitor and evaluate the Plan's performance and success in achieving its desired outcomes and strategies.

9.0 PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BELLBROOK CEMETERY.



Cemetery Access Road, looking towards the cemetery.



Current Cemetery signage.



Land available for future expansion if required.



10 CEMETERY ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

As part of the Management of Change process the Cemetery Services Section of Council has been asked to implement a staged and prioritised program for the establishment and implementation of the Cemeteries Assets.

Several programs have been established. The different programs are as follows:-

Maintenance Programs

The maintenance program is divided into two different programs. These programs are as follows:-

- The Maintenance Program – 4.x 3 months plan looks at how the cemetery is maintained in any given year and is applicable to all cemeteries under Councils care and control and
- The Maintenance Program – 3 x 1 year plan looks at the cemeteries existing assets and what maintenance of these assets needs to be undertaken. Appropriate requests with \$'s are prepared for Council's consideration with the Annual Budget.

Both these programs will ensure the continued maintenance of the current assets.

Asset Acquisition Programs

The Asset Acquisition Program looks at acquiring assets that would benefit the cemeteries. There are two (2) programs that look at acquiring assets and are as follows:-

- Short Term Asset Acquisition Program,- looks at acquiring assets in the immediate future, and
- Long Term Asset Acquisition Program, - looks at acquiring assets in twenty (20) years time taking into consideration any potential growth of services.

These programs are explained further in the following pages.

11 APPENDICES

Appendix A – Burial Fees and Other Fees for Services.

Appendix B – Visitor Survey.

12 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ashes Garden	A repository where ashes are placed.
Burial	To place deceased body into the ground.
Chronologised	To place in order starting with the first event.
Columbarium Wall	A repository where ashes are placed.
Crown Reserve	A parcel of land that is owned by the State Government of New South Wales and has been given to Council to manage the land.
DCP	Refers to a Development Control Plan that has been placed in by Council.
Gazettal	This is when an item of business is passed into practice by State Government and written notification is given.