

## Cemetery Administration Policy

Policy type	Council
Function	Infrastructure Services
Policy Owner	Asset Maintenance
Effective date	27 November 2025

### 1. Purpose

This policy aims to provide a framework for the respectful, sustainable, and efficient management of cemeteries under the Council's care and control. It seeks to balance the diverse needs of the community, respect cultural traditions, and ensure the long-term preservation of these important community assets.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to the cemeteries under the care and control of Cassowary Coast Regional Council. This includes:

- All areas designed for burials, cremations, and the placement of memorials.
- Cemetery grounds, gardens, and infrastructure (e.g. roads, pathways, buildings and fences).
- All operations and activities conducted within the cemetery, including burials, memorial installations, maintenance and visitor access.

This policy does **not** apply to:

- Private cemeteries not owned or managed by Council.
- State-controlled lands or areas outside of Council's jurisdiction

### 3. Definitions

**Council** – means Cassowary Coast Regional Council

**Adornment** – means an object or decoration to something to enhance its appearance or beauty.

**Ash placement** – means placement of an urn containing human remains.

**Breakable item** – means objects made of glass, ceramics, or other materials that may shatter into hazardous fragments


**Burial right** – means to have the exclusive right to designate who may be buried in a particular place.

**Interment** – means the burial of a deceased person or the placement of cremated remains.

**Monument** – means a type of memorial, often larger and more elaborate.

**Plot** – means a designated area of land within a cemetery intended for a burial or placement of ashes.

**Grave** – means a specific excavation in the ground for the burial of deceased persons.



**Mausoleum** – means a free-standing building or structure designed for the entombment of human remains above ground, often constructed to accommodate multiple internments

**Vault** – means a sealed chamber constructed above or below ground, designed to contain one or more coffins, providing structural support and protection

#### 4. Principles

The management of cemeteries under the control of Cassowary Coast Regional Council will be guided by the following principles:

- **Respect and Dignity:** All operations and activities within the cemetery will be conducted with the utmost respect for the deceased, their families and cultural traditions.
- **Sustainability:** Cemeteries will be managed in an environmentally and financially sustainable manner, considering future needs.
- **Preservation:** The historical and cultural heritage of cemeteries will be preserved and protected whilst still ensuring community safety.
- **Longevity:** Cemeteries will be managed to ensure their ongoing availability, functionality, and relevance for future generations through careful planning, sustainable use of space, and preservation of cultural values.

#### 5. Policy

The following statements outline the specific principles and objectives that will guide the management of cemeteries within the Cassowary Coast Region.

#### 6. Burial Rights and Allocation

Council will manage the allocation and transfer of burial rights in a clear and transparent manner.

Council will define the maximum number of interments and ash placements permitted per plot, consistent with the industry best practice and site constraints.

A minimum of two (2) working days' notice and a fully completed burial application are required to allow sufficient time for processing and grave preparation.

The allocation of burial plots will consider factors such as:


- Available space for future planning.
- Cultural and religious requirements.
- Accessibility.

Burial rights may be granted to:

- one person, or
- two or more persons as joint occupants

Burial rights may be transferred, surrendered, or revoked under certain conditions. Transfers are generally permitted to direct descendants, subject to a formal application and proof of relationship

Council may revoke burial rights if they remain unexercised, applicable fees are unpaid, or no eligible successor can be identified. Reasonable efforts will be made to contact the next of kin prior to revocation.



If the rights holder is not interred in the allocated plot, the rights revert to Council. However, Council may approve a transfer to a spouse, partner, child, or relative where appropriate.

Where the rights holder is interred and additional interments are permitted, remaining rights may pass to eligible family members in accordance with recognised succession.

Burial rights revert to Council upon the death of the Burial Rights Holder(s).

## **7. Burials and Ash Placements**

Burials and Ash placements will be conducted in a respectful and dignified manner, in accordance with relevant legislation and Council procedures.

Advance notice is required for all interments to ensure appropriate preparation and coordination, including the scheduling of cemetery staff, confirmation of burial plot details, completion of administrative processes, and communication with relevant parties such as funeral directors and service providers. Failure to provide sufficient notice may result in delays or the unavailability of the requested burial date and time.

Council will work with funeral directors and families to ensure that burial arrangements meet their needs and preferences where possible.

## **8. Monuments**

Council recognises the importance of monuments as a means of remembrance and commemoration.

Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the cemetery grounds; however, the upkeep of individual memorials remains the responsibility of the respective families.

To preserve the uniformity and safety of the cemetery, strict and significant conditions shall apply to all applications for large monuments, including mausoleums and similar structures. Council reserves the right to refuse any application that does not comply with these conditions, at its discretion. All existing monuments are required to meet Council's current guidelines. Council further reserves the right to remove or relocate any memorials determined to be unsafe, damaged, or non-compliant, following reasonable efforts to notify the next of kin.


## **9. Adornments**

Adornments must be placed within a Council-approved receptacle. Any item that poses a safety hazard will be removed immediately by Council.

Where permitted, receptacles must comply with Council guidelines, including (but not limited to) requirements for size, quantity, and anchoring. Receptacles must not encroach on adjacent graves or grassed areas, must be of sufficient weight to remain secure, and must not hold water.

Flowers (including but not limited to) floral arrangements and fresh floral wreaths may be placed against the memorial or at the headstone of the grave. Visitors are requested to remove wrapping and rubber bands from floral arrangements before they are left as tribute.





Limited artificial flowers are permitted within headstone and monumental sections, columbarium and mausoleums, within approved receptacles only, if over embellished, Council will remove.

**The following items are not permitted on Council gravesites**

- a) Breakable items (*unless they are permanently installed on memorials, fixed against the headstone or at the head of a grave*)
- b) Items deemed offensive
- c) Draped or flying flags as adornments
- d) Lights (including solar or battery powered)
- e) Alcohol or alcohol containers (full or empty)
- f) Clothing
- g) Balloons, photo frames, candles or naked flames, windchimes, furniture, statues or other ornaments
- h) Sharp edge items including hooks and spikes
- i) Permanent planting of trees, bushes, flowers or installation of any garden edging or fencing within the cemetery

While Council is responsible for the general upkeep of the cemetery grounds, the maintenance of grave adornments is the responsibility of the next of kin and or family.

Council will not be liable for any damage to or loss of grave adornments.

Council reserves the right to remove and store any adornments that do not comply with the established guidelines. Reasonable attempts will be made to notify the next of kin prior to removal.

Removed items will be stored for a period of 60 days, after which they will be disposed of by Council.

## **10. Cemetery Maintenance**

Council will carry out regular maintenance of cemetery grounds to ensure their appearance meets community expectations and reflects the respect these spaces deserve. Maintenance activities will include:

- Mowing, gardening, and tree care
- Maintenance of roads, pathways, and other infrastructure

Council will undertake regular inspections of the cemetery grounds and infrastructure to identify and address any maintenance requirements.

Council is not responsible for the maintenance of private infrastructure the responsibility remains solely with the family.

Cemetery staff will conduct a thorough clean-up of the cemetery grounds and gravesites annually, or as needed. During this process, any items that may pose a hazard during storms, or that do not comply with this policy or the *Best Practice Management Guidelines*, will be removed. To ensure transparency and public awareness, notices will be displayed at the cemetery in advance of the scheduled clean-up.

## 11. Cemetery Operating Hours

Council cemeteries are open to the public seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Requests for burials or ash placements outside normal operating hours will be considered at Council's discretion and may be subject to specific conditions. Additional fees may apply.

Council maintains a schedule of fees for cemetery services, which is subject to change and reviewed annually. The current fee schedule is publicly available on Council's website.

<b>Related forms, policies and procedures</b>	<i>Cassowary Coast Regional Council Local Law No.1 (Administration) 2022.</i> <i>Cassowary Coast Regional Council Local Law No.7 (Human Remains and Cemeteries) 2021.3</i>
<b>Relevant legislation</b>	<i>Burial Assistance Act 1965</i> <i>Cemetery Act 1865</i> <i>Cremations Act 2003</i> <i>Land Act 1994</i>
<b>Reference and resources</b>	

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