



**Bass Coast Shire Council
Minutes for Special Meeting
Wednesday, 11 September 2019
Council Chamber
Bass Coast Civic Centre
Baillieu Street East
Wonthaggi
10.30am**

- 1. These minutes are due to be confirmed on 18 September 2019**
- 2. Any decision included in these minutes is subject to change resulting from a rescission motion passed by Council.**

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Meeting commenced

The meeting commenced at 10.34am

Statement: Cr Julian Brown read the Councillor Statement.

Acknowledgement: Cr Les Larke read the acknowledgement.

A Present and Apologies

Councillors: Cr Brett Tessari, Bunurong Ward (Mayor)
Cr Bruce Kent, Western Port Ward (Deputy Mayor)
Cr Julian Brown, Bunurong Ward
Cr Les Larke, Bunurong Ward
Cr Pamela Rothfield, Island Ward
Cr Michael Whelan, Island Ward
Cr Geoff Ellis, Western Port Ward
Cr Clare Le Serve, Western Port Ward

Officers in Attendance:

Ms Ali Wastie, Chief Executive Officer
Ms Allison Jones, General Manager Business Transformation
Ms Annette Waters, Acting Manager Governance and Property
Ms Lee-Anne Harmer, Governance Officer

Apologies: Cr Stephen Fullarton, Island Ward

B Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

C Public Question Time

C.1 Renee Loeckenhoff - Grave Markers

Has the Policy been developed for Grave Markers for unmarked Graves?

Response:

Councillors will consider and debate all aspects and implications of this issue as part of Council's agenda. (agenda item F.6 Cemetery Management Officer Report)

C.2 Renee Loeckenhoff - Harold Milkins's Funeral Service

Why were there no Councillors present at Harold Milkins's Funeral Service?

Response:

At the 17 July Ordinary Council Meeting the Mayor provided the below statement which is included in the minutes:

We would like to acknowledge the life of Harold Milkins who sadly passed away in June. Harold was highly respected by the Bass Coast community, and as a local funeral director he saw his job as an honour. He brought dignity and kindness to families across our shire and will be remembered for his compassion and service to the community.

Trust Administration worked closely with the Milkins in the lead up to the service. Trust Administration and the grave contractors were on hand the day of the service to ensure a smooth service and to pay respects.

The Mayor Cr Tessari advised the attendance of Councillors at funerals is a personal decision.

D Petitions, Joint Letters, Deputations and Correspondence

There were no Petitions, Joint Letters, Deputations and Correspondence.

Notices of Motion

E Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

Reports Requiring Council Decision

F Reports Requiring Council Decision**F.1 Wonthaggi Cemetery interment figures year to date**

File No: CM19/608
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

We are responsive, open, transparent
and financially sustainable

Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The Trust are responsible for the governance of the cemetery including the key roles of setting strategic direction, approving the annual budget, monitoring performance, ensuring compliance, developing policy, high level stakeholder management and ensuring that a risk management framework is in place. The Trust delegate day-to-day management of the cemeteries within its control to Council Officers in order to provide administration and operational support.

The number of interments of burials and cremated remains are an important consideration in how the Trust plans its availability of plots and sets its fees for future years.

The purpose of this report is to;

- Note the cemeteries interment figures for end of financial year 2018/19

Cemetery interment figures year to date

Wonthaggi Cemetery Trust								
Financial Year	Interment Ashes		Interment Burials		Plaques	Right of Interment (Pre-Need & At Need)		Memorial Permits
	Wall	Grave	1st	2nd / 3rd		Wall	Grave	
2012/13	5		43					
2013/14	5		42					
2014/15	7		47					
2015/16	10		43					
2016/17	8		43					
2017/18	4	8	30	22	85	14	31	1
2018/19	7	4	24	26	83	10	25	3

Wonthaggi figures remained on par with the previous year's figures. A slight decrease in right of interments due to many burials being a second and third interment.

Recommendation

That the Trusts note the Wonthaggi Cemetery interment figures year 2018/19.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report

Decision

Moved: Cr. Les Larke / Seconded: Cr. Pamela Rothfield

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

F.2 San Remo Cemetery interment figures year to date

File No: CMI9/609
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

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Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The Trust are responsible for the governance of the cemetery including the key roles of setting strategic direction, approving the annual budget, monitoring performance, ensuring compliance, developing policy, high level stakeholder management and ensuring that a risk management framework is in place. The Trust delegate day-to-day management of the cemeteries within its control to Council Officers in order to provide administration and operational support.

The number of interments of burials and cremated remains are an important consideration in how the Trust plans its availability of plots and sets its fees for future years.

The purpose of this report is to;

- Note the cemeteries interment figures for end of financial year 2018/19.

Cemetery interment figures year to date

San Remo Cemetery Trust								
Financial Year	Interment Ashes		Interment Burials		Plaques	Right of Interment (Pre-Need & At Need)		Memorial Permits
	Wall/ Garden	Grave	1st	2nd / 3rd		Wall/ Garden	Grave	
2012/13	0		18					
2013/14	1		12					
2014/15	4		6					
2015/16	2		5					
2016/17	3		5					
2017/18	3	1	4	2	7	5	4	1
2018/19	6	0	6	4	21	7	8	1

San Remo figures show positive increase this year. Customer feedback advised that this is due to the cemetery gaining public interest with the development of the San Remo Master Plan and it being a cheaper alternative to Melbourne based cemeteries.

The memorial garden continues to be a popular choice for ash interments.

Recommendation

That Council notes the San Remo Cemetery interment figures year 2018/19.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report

Decision

Moved: Cr. Pamela Rothfield / Seconded: Cr. Les Larke

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

F.3 Works completed at the Wonthaggi and San Remo Cemeteries

File No: CMI9/612
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

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Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to note the works completed at the Wonthaggi and San Remo Cemeteries.

Works completed at the Wonthaggi and San Remo Cemeteries

The following works have been completed at the cemeteries from June 2019 to end August 2019:

Wonthaggi

- Drainage project stage 2 is now complete with final planting of the swale.
- MDL contractors have been very busy with constant monitoring and top dressing of graves due to the heavy rain speeding up the sinkage.
- Heavy rain during winter caused four trees along the Cameron Street boundary to uproot. These have been removed, with no damage caused to fencing. Replacement of these trees are planned.
- Repair toilet sink and toilet door lock.
- Assignment and site walk through of new garden maintenance tasks for Connecting Skills Australia.
- Preparation to remove garden mulch and spoil stockpiles to prepare area for tree planting and future expansion works.

San Remo

- New hoses and reels installed. Thank you to volunteer Russell Riseley for all his research, donation request and installation work on this project with the assistance of wife Jean. Thank you to Bunnings Wonthaggi for the donation of hoses and reels, which assists the volunteers in their roles.
- A couple of large trees had fallen in the wet and windy weather, one falling on an external fence and the other onto a niche wall. No damage to the niche wall and minimal fence damage. Thank you to council's parks team for attending to these quickly and they were cut and then left for community members to pick up for firewood.
- Assignment and site walk through of new garden maintenance tasks for Connecting Skills Australia. This was in agreement with cemetery volunteers to alleviate them of the labour intensive tasks.

- Volunteers have investigated and purchased new plants for the memorial garden regeneration. Thank you to volunteers Russell, Jean and Marlene for their work.
- Memorial garden maintenance continued with topsoiling and mulching by Connecting Skills Australia.
- MDL contractors have been very busy with constant monitoring and top dressing of graves due to the heavy rain speeding up the sinkage.

Recommendation

That Council notes the works completed at the Wonthaggi and San Remo Cemeteries

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report

Decision

Moved: Cr. Bruce Kent / Seconded: Cr. Geoff Ellis

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

F.4 Wonthaggi Cemetery Financial Report

File No: CMI9/598
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

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Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

Under Section 52 of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*, cemetery trusts are required to submit a financial report each year to the Department of Health and Human Services. The report, known as the abstract of accounts, is to give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the trust for the reporting period.

The abstract contains a statutory declaration, which is to be signed by the Trust. The abstract for the cemetery is being presented for consideration.

Wonthaggi Cemetery 2018/2019 Abstract of Accounts

The 2018/2019 Statement of Accounts is attached. A Summary of observations from the abstract is shown in the table below and shows the comparison to the previous year.

	2017/2018	2018/2019
INCOME	\$233,887	\$198,439
EXPENSES	\$211,999	\$221,076
Profit/(Loss)	\$21,887	(\$22,637)
Bank Balance	\$225,329	\$155,633
Perpetual maintenance	\$249,457	\$308,118

The focus this year has been to deliver and complete the Stage 2 drainage works, which was financed by a Department of Health and Human Services grant from the previous year. This is why the abstract shows a loss of \$22,637.

In line with recommendations of the Wonthaggi Masterplan, emphasis has been on providing memorial plaque options. The design and supplying of plaque proofs instead of the manufacturer has resulted in reduction of cost and increased revenue to the Trust while improving the options and service for customers. Promotion of plaque restorations has also contributed to plaque revenue.

The perpetual maintenance fund has increased by \$58,661 amounting to a current total of \$308,118.

Recommendation

That Council notes the Wonthaggi Cemetery Abstract of Accounts

Attachments

AT-1 Wonthaggi Cemetery Abstract of Accounts 2018-19 1 Page

Decision

Moved: Cr. Pamela Rothfield / Seconded: Cr. Les Larke

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

F.5 San Remo Cemetery Financial Report

File No: CMI9/628
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

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Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

Under Section 52 of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*, cemetery trusts are required to submit a financial report each year to the Department of Health and Human Services. The report, known as the abstract of accounts, is to give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the trust for the reporting period.

The abstract contains a statutory declaration, which is to be signed by the Trust. The abstract for the cemetery is being presented for consideration.

San Remo Cemetery 2018/2019 Abstract of Accounts

The 2018/2019 Statement of Accounts is attached. A Summary of observations from the abstract is shown in the table below and shows the comparison to the previous year.

	2017/2018	2018/2019
INCOME	\$23,416	\$65,546
EXPENSES	\$27,892	\$50,893
Profit/(Loss)	-\$4,476	\$14,652
Bank Balance	\$33,423	\$37,901
Perpetual Maintenance	\$61,069	\$74,373

The focus this year has been to design a Master Plan for the San Remo Cemetery. We received a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services for this work which is why the income and expenditure is higher than normal.

The Profit/(Loss) for the year shows a figure of \$14,652 which is a larger margin than previous years.

San Remo has continued to have an increased number of reservations and interments for the memorial garden, lawn beam and monument areas across the year. An effort to offer memorial options and restorations has also attributed to increased revenue.

The total contribution made to the perpetual maintenance fund for the year was \$10,174 which includes a contribution of \$4,395 transferred from the annual profit of the cemetery.

Recommendation

That Council notes the San Remo Cemetery Abstract of Accounts.

Attachments

AT-1 San Remo Cemetery Abstract of Accounts 2018-19 | Page

Decision

Moved: Cr. Pamela Rothfield / Seconded: Cr. Julian Brown

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

F.6 Cemetery Management Officer Report

File No: CMI9/583
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

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Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The Trusts are responsible for all management of the cemeteries, supported by Council Officers who provide administrative and operational support.

This quarterly report is aimed at providing the Trust with information on the administrative and operational matters in relation to the cemeteries to enable the Trusts to monitor the effectiveness of its decisions and make plans for the future.

I. Masterplans**I.1 Wonthaggi**

The Wonthaggi master plan provides a staging plan for actions. The current status of all the actions are outlined in the 1-5 years plan attached (AT-1).

The stage 2 drainage works have improved the drainage around the beam areas of the cemetery. Focus is now on addressing the drainage issues throughout the old lawn beam, denominational and Cameron Street boundary areas.

A tree-planting day is being arranged for late September/October to improve the cemetery boundary adjacent to Councils transfer station. This will provide screening and enhancement of the newly developed area of the cemetery. Community members will be invited to join council officers and Connecting Skills Australia to help deliver this project.

Council Officers met with the members of the Wonthaggi RSL Sub Branch to discuss potential locations for a memorial wall for war veterans. Three possible locations were presented and discussed. Further investigation and review of the master plan staging is required.

I.2 San Remo

An application for a grant to cover the cost of a master plan was submitted to the Department of Human Services grants program in November 2018. This was successful in obtaining a grant of \$18,000.

Master planning commenced in January with a consultant leading the project, and involving key stakeholders in discussion. A draft plan has been produced.

Community consultation was conducted from June through August. Feedback is currently being reviewed and will be reported in the final master plan report. This report is scheduled to be presented at the next cemetery trust meeting.

2. Contracts

2.1 Ground Maintenance (Grass Mowing)

The contract for ground maintenance of both Wonthaggi and San Remo Cemeteries expired 8 August 2019. Through a tender process, Connecting Skills Australia awarded a new 3 year contract.

Connecting Skills Australia is a non for profit organisation and affords local people with disabilities opportunities in the workforce. The company has proven service delivery, with its performance being measured through assessment criteria each year.

2.2 Grave Digging

The contract for grave digging of both Wonthaggi and San Remo Cemeteries expired on 4 September 2019. MDL Constructions was awarded a 3 year contract with an option of up to a 3 year extension.

This service requires a continuity of knowledge, specialist skills and sensitive service provision which MDL Constructions has proven through its current delivery and its tender response.

2.3 Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping Project

The commencement of a GIS mapping project will provide digital maps of both cemeteries enables a match of the geographic location of graves with the burial registers.

2.4 General Cemetery Maintenance

The grounds maintenance contractor is now engaged through a variation in the existing contract to supply additional weekly resources to ensure the levels of service at both cemeteries meet the needs of the public. Works cover a wide range of services including; weeding, adornment removal, rubbish collection and removal of tree branches.

Public amenities are on a contract cleaning schedule in-line with council's public amenities cleaning rosters.

Council Officers will implement reporting and monitoring systems to assist cemetery contractors in the maintenance and safety of the cemeteries.

3. Electronic Burial Registers

On the 14 June 2017 the Cemetery Trust resolved;

1. *That the San Remo and Wonthaggi Cemetery Trusts both commence new manual cemetery registers back dated to 1/01/2017 for all burials, interments and spreading of ashes;*
2. *That the San Remo and Wonthaggi Cemetery Trusts introduce a standard practice of entering all burial, interment and ashes details into both a manual and electronic register from the 1/01/2017;*

Cemetery Trusts administration processes for the burial register have since been reviewed.

Wonthaggi and San Remo cemeteries manual burial registers were uploaded to an electronic register. The electronic registers enable each cemetery to more effectively;

- update personal details for right of interment holders
- manage availability, reservations and burials
- manage plaque orders
- produce availability maps
- search burial records for enquiries
- show families details of registered information
- produce reports to obtain current figures for reporting to the Department of Health and Human Services, Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria and Cemetery Trust Meetings.

These systems are backed up by our IT systems which means that the records cannot be lost or destroyed.

Confirmation has been received from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Cemeteries and Crematorium Association Victoria that only one form of burial register is required; manual or electronic. The smaller cemeteries with only a few burials a year generally have manual burial registers, where the cemeteries with a larger number of burials have moved to electronic registers.

Research has found that many class B (smaller) cemeteries are now following the operational standards of class A cemeteries typically moving to cemetery management systems that include all burial register information, right of interment certificates, memorial permits, plaques, grave photos, invoicing and mapping.

As a result of the review, it is considered that;

1. The current practice of maintaining electronic and manual burial registers is a duplication of process which impacts resourcing capacity and can lead to error
2. The manual burial register process captures limited information compared to the electronic process
3. The electronic register is portable and is safe guarded by IT backups.

4. Trees and Weeds - Historical Graves Maintenance

Trusts Administration received enquiries in relation to weed control. Advice was sought from councils Buildings and Open Space team and the Department of Health and Human Services in regards to the appropriate method of grave maintenance.

The grounds contractor and internal maintenance teams are the qualified licensed staff responsible for chemical application for weed eradication in line with weed management practices.

Council continues to investigate weed control methods through both chemical and vegetation practices.

5. OH&S – Historical Graves

The Trusts Administration has received requests from members of the community in relation to unsafe monuments and the request to maintain these monuments.

Recent correspondence with the Department of Health and Human Services have provided Council with the process to follow in-line with cemeteries legislation.

6. Grave Memorials

The Trusts Administration has received requests from members of the community asking for the Trusts to provide solutions to the on ground marking of unmarked graves in order to identify location.

In relation to this, DHHS advise as follows:

In relation to grave markers the trust is able to place markers on graves to identify the location of a grave, this is part of managing a cemetery so they know where graves are located and falls within the Act under s. 12 of the Act (1) The functions of a Class B cemetery trust are -

- (a) To properly and efficiently manage and maintain each public cemetery for which it is responsible.*

There is currently no provision under the Act for a memorial to be placed on a grave where the right of interment holder cannot be found.

The way in which a person can find the location of a person at the cemetery when the grave is unmarked is through the electronic burial register. A name search will provide the area, row and number of the grave at the cemetery. Each area of the cemetery is mapped. The ability to find a person already exists.

Currently, the older sections of the cemetery where the unmarked graves exist, have limited signage. This is being reviewed.

GIS mapping will identify graves with coordinates.

Distinctive Areas and Landscapes – DELWP

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has recently undertaken community consultation regarding the distinctive areas and landscapes planning scheme amendment and the government's commitment to strengthen planning protection for these areas.

All cemetery trusts in Bass Coast Shire have received correspondence from DHHS advising of the distinctive areas and landscapes amendment and advising that there may need to be a Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) for the cemeteries. The purpose of a SPP is to guide the future use and development of land in the declared area, making sure the distinctive attributes of the declared area are protected.

Council's planning department has advised that at this stage the proposal will not affect the cemeteries and no action is required. The planning team are happy to speak to any cemetery trusts in our area that have further questions.

Farewell to Harold Milkins

It is reported with great sadness that one of our local funeral directors Harold Milkins passed away in July. The Trusts Administration and grave contractors were on hand the day of the service to ensure a smooth service and to pay respects.

At this time we reflect on the years of service Harold gave to the community in their time of need.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Notes the Cemetery Management Officer report.**
- 2. Amends the decision of the Cemetery Trusts at its meeting on 14 June 2017 that requires registers to be recorded in manual and electronic formats.**
- 3. Resolves that all burial records are to be recorded in an electronic burial register.**

Attachments

AT-1 Wonthaggi Cemetery - masterplan progress report 2 Pages

Decision

Moved: Cr. Les Larke / Seconded: Cr. Geoff Ellis

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

G Urgent Business

There was no Urgent Business.

Mayoral Announcement Of Next Meeting Of Council

The next **Ordinary Council Meeting** will be held on 18 September in the Bass Coast Civic Centre Council Chamber, Baillieu Street East, Wonthaggi commencing at 5.00pm.

Meeting closed

The meeting closed at 10.59am