

BELLINGEN SHIRE COUNCIL CEMETERIES
BURIAL PROCEDURES

OBJECTIVE: **To establish procedures for the issue of burial plots, the digging of graves and the erection of monumental work.**

POLICY:

(For Cemeteries at Urunga, Bellingen, Dorrigo and Fernmount)

Introduction:

1. These policies, as detailed below, shall apply to all Cemeteries under the control of Bellingen Shire Council.
2. The operation of these Cemeteries shall be in accordance with the provisions contained in the Public Health Act 1991 and Public Health Regulation 1991.

Aims:

1. To provide for the efficient and effective management of all Cemeteries.
2. To control and regulate burials.
3. To control and regulate the erection of memorials to a standard that is aesthetically acceptable to the environs of the Cemetery.
4. To maintain all Lawn Cemeteries to an acceptable standard and the Monumental Sections in a clean and tidy condition.
5. To ensure that all Lawn Cemeteries remain virtually maintenance free and require minimal labour expenditure.
6. To ensure that the operation of all Cemeteries results in minimal financing.

Fees:

1. Fees for all burials, reservations, placement of ashes and erection of monuments in Council's Cemeteries shall be in conjunction within Council's annual review of fees and charges (refer to Management Plan).
2. All fees are to be paid in full at the time of application and within 30 days of the interment taking place.
3. Applications for refund of reservation fees shall be considered on the basis of the following formula:-
 - **Up to 10 Years** – Refund calculated on a pro-rate basis ranging from 50% in the tenth year to 100% in the current calendar year.
 - **Over 10 Years** – No refund.
 - Production of documentation showing proof of reservation.

Burials

1. Burials shall only be within the established areas dedicated for denominational use.
2. Burials in the monumental sections (old portions) of all cemeteries will be prohibited unless evidence is produced that a reservation has been duly made and can be readily identified.
3. A maximum of two casks per grave will be permitted with a minimum coverage of soil of 900mm between the uppermost casket and the natural ground level.

Issuing of Allotments

1. Allotments shall be issued in an orderly manner, at the discretion of the General Manager or his representative.
2. Reservation of allotments shall be permitted in the Lawn Sections of the Cemeteries only (except for Clause 3).
3. The Cemetery Registrar shall issue allotments for Reservations and Burials and no grave is to be dug without first obtaining the approval of the Cemetery Registrar.

Memorials: (Lawn Section Only)

1. In the lawn section of each Cemetery a concrete slab will be made available by council for the erection of a suitable headstone.
2. Headstones shall not exceed the following dimensions:
 - Height 1 metre
 - Width 1.2 metres

It is generally recognised that the erection of monuments should be carried out by a qualified Monumental Mason and should comply with Australian Standard No. 4204/94 – Headstones and Cemetery Monuments.

Council recognises that the financial costs involved may be prohibitive for some families therefore alternate means of identifying the graves may be permissible subject to prior approval by the Cemetery Registrar.

The placement of any memorial, shrub, tree, vase, fence, garden or the like over or in the vicinity of all sections of all cemeteries is prohibited.

Council will not be responsible for the general maintenance of any monument, or for repairs which may arise out of general neglect or damage by vandals.

Maintenance:

1. Council will attempt to maintain all cemeteries to an acceptable standard using Council, voluntary or contract labour.
2. Following new burials, the excess fill will remain on top of graves for a period of at least 6 months to allow normal settlement. Levelling of graves will be the responsibility of Council.
3. To allow for more efficient maintenance of the lawn surface all containers, flowers and wreaths will be removed from the top of the grave site no less than one week following the interment.
4. The Council will remove any unauthorised item from the grave or any item which is considered to detract from the general appearance of the Lawn Section.

Columbarium Walls

1. Columbarium Walls for the placement of ashes are provided at Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga Cemeteries.
2. Issue of niches shall be in an orderly manner at the discretion of the Cemetery Registrar.
3. Perpetual Maintenance of the Columbarium shall include:
 - Mowing of lawns and maintenance of gardens surrounding the Niche Wall and the trimming of trees.
 - The removal of foreign matter from within the void of unallocated nichesPerpetual Maintenance for the Columbarium shall not include:
 - The replacement of plaque or plaques that have deteriorated from their original condition due to the effects of normal ageing and exposure to weather conditions.
 - The replacement of plaque or plaques that have been damaged by intentional or unintentional acts of vandalism caused by person or persons identified or unidentified.
 - The replacement of plaque or plaques removed from the Niche Wall by person or persons identified or unidentified.
4. The purchase and replacement of niche plates is the sole responsibility of the applicant.
5. Niche plates dimensions shall be 146mm x 146mm and generally contain no greater than 4 lines of memorialisational information.
6. No adornment is to be placed on the Columbarium wall without the prior approval of the Cemetery Registrar.
7. Requests to remove ashes for alternative placement shall be in writing and contain the approval of all family members.
8. Reservation of niches shall be permitted.

Dogs

No Dogs are permitted within the boundaries of any Cemetery. All dogs sighted within a Cemetery, restrained or otherwise shall be regarded as being within a prohibited place and be subject to the issue of an on-the-spot penalty infringement notice or impounding.

Administration

1. The application for interment is to be received from the applicable Funeral Director prior to the interment of the deceased.
2. The application for the installation of a memorial shall be submitted to Council and approved by the Cemetery registrar, prior to the installation of the memorial.
3. All relevant forms are to be signed by an Authorised person, approved by the family of the deceased, to make arrangements relating to the deceased.

Grave Digging

Grave digging is not undertaken by Council. It is the responsibility of each applicant to employ the services of a Council approved grave digger for all burials in a Council Cemetery.

PRIVATE BURIALS

OBJECTIVE: **To establish procedures for dealing with applications to bury deceased persons on private land.**
To provide for requests to inter deceased persons on private land.

The Director of Environmental Health & Planning has been authorised to determine applications for private burial on rural land, subject to the following:

1. Private burials are only permitted on land zoned 1(a1) and 1(a2) under the Bellinghen Local Environmental Plan 1990 and not subject to further small lot subdivision.
2. Written application being made to Council.
3. The application being accompanied by a survey accurately locating the grave site.
4. The gravesite being marked by a permanent post or similar.
5. The payment of the prescribed fee.