



Policy Title: COUNCIL CEMETERIES

Policy Type: ADMINISTRATIVE
 (Statutory, Financial, Administrative, Human Resources)

Policy Number: A017

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Approved by CEO/Director:	Bernie McCarthy – CEO	 Signature.	
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Implementation Department		Officer Name	
Community Services		Director Community Services	
Revision #:	Document Management File #		
1.0	01-03-A017		

1. Objective

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a systemic and equitable process for dealing with operational matters relative to Council controlled cemeteries.

Application of the Policy

This Policy applies to all cemeteries identified on the Aurukun Shire Council Planning Scheme.

2. Scope

Council is responsible for the operation of public cemeteries within the geographical boundaries of the Aurukun Shire Council area. All burials within the Aurukun Shire Council lease, must be conducted in designated cemeteries. Any other burials conducted within the Ngan Aak-Kunch (NAKAC) lease must be made on application to Council and with the written consent of the Ngan Aak-Kunch Aboriginal Corporation.

This responsibility includes, but is not limited to:

- 2.1 The interment of the remains of deceased persons
- 2.2 The regulation and control of the installation and maintenance of memorials erected to deceased persons.
- 2.3 The regularly schedules cemeteries maintenance activities consistent with Council's Works program.

3. Definitions

Authorised Officer: The Council officer or officers to whom the Chief Executive Officer delegates authority from time to time to administer this Policy.

Chief Executive Officer: means the Chief Executive Officer of the Aurukun Shire Council.

Council: means the Aurukun Shire Council

Council Cemetery: A cemetery administered and operated by Council within the Aurukun Shire Council area.

Grantee: The recipient of a permit, right or approval under this Policy.

Owner of the Burial Right:

- a) a spouse of the deceased; and
- b) a guardian of the deceased; and
- c) brothers and sisters of the deceased, or a spouse of the deceased; and
- d) ascendants and descendants of the deceased, or a spouse of the deceased.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Director of Community Services will be responsible for liaising with family for burial details; general preparations for the burial, burial register, submission of

applications for funeral assistance, registration of death with the Department of Justice and Attorney General and liaison with the State Coroner's office.

Director of Technical Services will be responsible for asset maintenance of cemeteries.

Director of Corporate Services will be responsible for any invoicing of charges to third parties in relation to cemetery fees and charges.

Owner of the Burial Right or Family Member or another person who has a proper interest is responsible for the general grave maintenance and erection of headstone.

5. POLICY

5.1 Interment of Deceased Persons

Standards which must be met for the interment of human remains in Council's cemeteries are set out in Aurukun Shire Council's Local Law No. 1 Schedule 15.

5.2 Reservation of Burial Sites

Council will maintain a Register of Reservations of Burial Sites for the Aak Ngench Thayan Cemetery. This register will take the form of an electronic database developed from existing records and modified by the addition or deletion of reservations from time to time.

5.3 Erection of Memorials to Deceased Persons

A person must not erect or install a memorial to a deceased person in a Council cemetery unless approved. A written application will be required.

5.3.1 Application to erect Memorials

Applications need to be in writing from the Owner of the Burial Right or Family Member, to include:

Identification of Burial Site; and

Nature and Dimensions of the proposed memorial.

5.3.2 Ownership of Monumental Work

The ownership of plaques, monuments or other structures is deemed to be with the owner of the burial right that caused the monument or structure to be constructed. The care, maintenance and repair of monumental work on a grave is the responsibility of the owner of the burial right.

5.3.3 Maintenance and Repair of Memorials by Owner of a Burial Right

The owner of the burial right or any relative or family of the deceased or another person, who has a proper interest in the maintenance of a memorial to a deceased person, may, with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised officer, carry out maintenance or repair work on a memorial in a Council cemetery. A person who carries out

maintenance or repair work under this section must comply with directions by the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised officer about how the work is to be carried out in accordance with prescribed standards, technical specifications or other prescribed documentation issued by Council from time to time.

5.3.4 Interference with Graves

A person must not interfere with a grave, or with flowers or tokens on a grave or memorial, must not remove, damage or interfere with any structure, memorial or plant in any Council controlled cemetery unless the approval of the Council has been first obtained.

5.4 General Maintenance of Graves

It is the responsibility of the owner of a burial right or a member of the family of a deceased person, or another person who has a proper interest in the maintenance of the plot to maintain the grave plot and any fixture thereon. Council will maintain the surrounding area, including pathways, plants, fencing, structures, water service and grave identification markers.

5.5 Grounds Maintenance

Minimum standards for grounds maintenance of Council cemeteries are defined as:

1. Presenting Council facilities in a clean and tidy condition for use by the community.
2. Exercising due care so as to minimise the risk of damage to grave plots, memorials and the like.
3. Complying with Workplace Health and Safety obligations.
4. Complying with identified risk/hazard minimisation strategies.
5. A commitment to Quality Assurance principles of continuous systems improvement.
6. Developing and maintaining a team environment to achieve a consistently high standard of customer service.

5.5.1 Grass Cutting

Grass cutting in Council cemeteries is carried out using pedestrian operated lawn mowers, and ride-on machines and slashers where appropriate to the particular area of the cemetery being maintained.

The use of the line trimmers, whipper-snippers and other similar devices will be limited to areas where the use of such equipment will not cause damage to graves or monumental structures.

5.5.2 Planting of Trees and Shrubs

No shrubs, bushes, trees or live living plants may be planted at any place or time within the cemeteries by any individual other than regular cemetery maintenance personnel.

Private planting of trees, shrubs, and bushes is to be approved by Aurukun Shire Council.

5.5.3 Weed Control

Chemicals are used to poison weeds and grass around the perimeter of structures, graves and fences to assist with or minimise lawn mower access. Weed control will be undertaken on average 4 times each year particularly during the warmer growing period or following significant rain events.

Where significant or noxious weeds are prevalent in a cemetery, Council will take action to eradicate such weeds by poisoning irrespective of whether such weeds are contained within a grave plot or growing on a pathway or other area.

5.5.4 Litter

Litter and other debris, whatever the source, is picked up from the cemetery grounds on a minimum of once per month.

Council will provide refuse bins on site for the collection of waste materials in the cemetery.

5.5.5 Animals within the Confines of a Cemetery

Where it is detected or notified that an animal or animals have become trapped within the confines of a cemetery, Council will make every effort to humanely remove these animals from the cemetery as soon as practicable after detection or notification.

Where animals become trapped in the cemetery grounds and die, Council will make every effort to remove the carcasses of these animals as soon as practicable after detection or notification to reduce odour and visual pollution for persons visiting the cemetery.

5.5.6 Responsibility for Damage

Council will not assume responsibility for any vandalism of memorials or plaques. Where vandalism is discovered, the matter will be reported to the local police for investigation and reasonable efforts will be made to notify the owner of a burial right or a member of the family of a deceased person, or another person who has a proper interest in the maintenance of the grave where the vandalism has occurred.

Council will not automatically assume responsibility for any damage allegedly caused to any structure, monument, grave, or plinth by Council personnel in the execution of their duties in a cemetery but will investigate how such damage may have occurred.

If an authorised officer has reason to believe that a person has committed, is committing or about to commit an offence in the cemetery, the authorised officer may require the person to leave the cemetery forthwith.

5.6 MAINTENANCE OF STRUCTURES

Where structures have been provided in a cemetery for use of the public (for example the rotundas), an adequate program of maintenance will be undertaken to ensure such structures are fit for the designated purpose.

5.7 INDIVIDUAL CEMETERIES

While this policy applies generally to all cemeteries under Council's control, there are unique elements that apply only and specifically to selected cemeteries. These details are set out below.

5.7.1 Old Cemetery – MacKenzie Drive

5.7.1.1 Interments – closed for any interments

5.7.1.2 Monumental Works

Monumental works will be permitted

5.7.1.3 Expansion of Cemetery

No further expansion will be considered.

5.7.2 Aak Ngench Thayan Cemetery

5.7.2.1 Interments – no restriction on interments in Stage 1.

5.7.2.2 Monumental Works

Monumental works will be permitted in the cemetery.

5.7.2.3 The toilet block will only be open on Funeral days.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Subordinate Local Law No. 1 (Administrative) 2021 Schedule 14

7. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (Traditional Owners)

These guidelines are provided to community residents so that they are aware of arrangements to be made in preparation for funerals.

The guidelines are supported by the Aurukun Shire Council, Cemeteries' Policy <http://www.aurukun.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/A017-Council-Cemetery.pdf> and the Western Cape Communities Trust

<https://www.westerncape.com.au/opportunity/southern-sub-regional-trust/> Funeral Assistance Eligibility.

Aurukun Shire Council has determined funeral costs to be an amount of \$7,500, which is aligned the approved funding from WCCCA (Southern Region). This funding is approved for the purchase and transportation of the coffin, fresh flowers, funeral service booklet/eulogy and site preparation at the cemetery. This

preparation includes the excavation of the grave, provision of shade structure, grave surround and cross (timber) and grave identification plaque affixed to the cross. Chairs are available, but a deposit of \$50 is payable at the Council office prior to use. Artificial matting will be placed around the burial site. An automated lowering device for the coffin is available on request. Straps are retained on site and stored in the hearse. The hearse is made available for all transportation routes for the coffin until the conclusion of the burial. A funeral service booklet is printed at the Aurukun Shire Council office (maximum 8 pages in colour x 100 copies)

For persons who pass away in other locations, WCCCA will consider repatriation costs to Aurukun on application. This request is noted in the *Funeral Assistance Eligibility Application*.

For deceased persons requiring a State Coroner's Court autopsy, the Department of Justice and Attorney General's Department will reimburse Aurukun Shire Council for the repatriation costs to Aurukun. If autopsies are to be conducted at the request of family members, WCCCA will not meet these repatriation costs.

If families wish to have a viewing or feasting at a private residence, Aurukun Shire Council will deliver one loader bucket of sand, which is equal to two cubic meters. Any further tasks at the residence eg. spreading of sand or refuse removal, will need to be undertaken and organised by family members. Any additional sand required will need to be paid for prior to delivery. If a family wishes to have vehicles removed from the yard or footpath, payment is required prior to the works being undertaken. The cost will be in accordance with the Aurukun Shire Council Fees and Charges. <https://www.aurukun.qld.gov.au/council/documents/fees-charges/>

The current cost of sand is \$56 per m³ (at 15 September 2020) and car removal is \$300 per vehicle (at 15 September 2020) With respect to removal of vehicles, the vehicle must be located on the footpath or front of the yard for easy access.

WCCCA does not fund costs in relation to the premises. Family are advised to contact the CYE office for assistance with yard cleaning, firewood, shade cover or chairs.

WCCCA does fund the feasting to the value of \$3,000. It is recommended that prior to commencing shopping, the family contact the WCCCA office on PH:40697 945 to confirm arrangements. Aurukun Shire Council also provides the Wo'uw Ko'alam Community Centre at no charge for wakes. To confirm this booking, contact the Manager on PH 40606815. The applicant is responsible for cleaning of the grounds and removal of all refuse to the wheelie bins supplied. No food is to be left in wheelie bins and needs to be removed from the grounds.

8. REVIEW

Policy will be reviewed annually.

9. PRIVACY PROVISION

Council respects and protects people's privacy and collects, stores, uses and discloses personal information responsibly and transparently when delivering Council services and business.