



Sunshine Coast Council
Cemetery Plan
2019-2028



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the region, the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara people. Council is committed to working in partnership with the Traditional Owners to support self-determination through economic and community development opportunities.

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www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

T 07 5475 7272 **F** 07 5475 7277

Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

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Acknowledgements

Council wishes to thank all contributors and stakeholders involved in the development of this document.

Disclaimer

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About the Cemetery Plan

The *Cemetery Plan 2019-2028* (the plan) informs the delivery of Sunshine Coast Council's cemetery network.

The plan allows council to address key challenges and opportunities when determining operational planning and budgets for future years.

It has been drafted within the parameters of the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023*, *Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041*, *Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017* and *South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan 2017*. The plan aligns with council's overarching vision of being **Healthy. Smart. Creative.** as set out in the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023*.

Our cemetery network

Each year Sunshine Coast Council provides support to people of cultures, faiths and beliefs in our community, to help them celebrate the lives of loved ones.

Our cemetery network covers more than 60 hectares of public open space. We are committed to maintaining these beautiful, serene and historically-rich places, ensuring they are sustainable for generations to come. We are dedicated to providing services that are reflective of the needs, beliefs and choices of the community we serve; with services founded on respect, compassion, integrity and trust.

Our vision is twofold: to help our community plan and prepare for funerals, burials and ash interments, and memorial services and to ensure that the community is encouraged to bring life into the valuable green open spaces that cemeteries provide.

■ Our mission

To provide the final place of rest for loved ones, with compassion, understanding and dignity. We will provide services that respect our history and heritage, are inclusive of peoples beliefs and cultures, are sustainable both environmentally and economically, and responsive to community preferences.

■ Our purpose

The purpose of council's cemetery network is to provide cemetery products and services, maintain service standards and appropriately plan for the future.

Our team is dedicated to providing the highest level of service to support our community.

■ Our commitment

We recognise that our community is a collective of communities. Each community with its own unique identity and connection to place.

We are committed to supporting our community members to make important, long-term decisions that are reflective of their needs, wishes and beliefs. Decisions which honour legacies and celebrate life.

The Cemetery Plan is council's commitment to the community that we will provide choice as to where they can be laid to rest. We will also provide peaceful places for family and friends to gather and commemorate their loved ones and allow ongoing connections between people and place. Places that honour the unique identity of each cemetery.

“
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”



“
With a clear focus on effective planning, building strong community connections and partnerships, creating meaningful places, operational excellence and responsive services through innovation and technology - we are confidently progressing towards the future.
”

Executive summary

Our cemeteries hold significant value to individuals and families throughout their lifetimes. They are the final resting place for loved ones. Peaceful places to memorialise, honour and reflect on those who have passed. They are an inter-generational connection to our community's history and genealogy.

Cemeteries can be a difficult topic as they can represent loss and heartache. They are often associated with some of the most difficult times in a person's life.

We strive to provide services that are compassionate, dignified, inclusive and respectful. We are committed to creating meaningful places that honour and celebrate life, heritage and culture.

With the Sunshine Coast's population set to grow to more than 500,000 between now and 2041¹, we are one of Australia's fastest growing regions. Our cemetery network must evolve to ensure we're ready to continue to serve our community now and into the future.

We are working hard to anticipate and understand the changing demographics, high growth areas and customer needs and choices that will evolve over the next 10 years. We are committed to putting the community's needs at the forefront of everything we do and are investing in effective and sustainable land and resource planning to meet the needs and expectations of our community.

In preparing for the future, we are actively listening to the community's voice in order to provide options that are meaningful to them. Accessibility to services, locations and access to information are a high priority catered for

within the Cemetery Plan. Services that are inclusive of beliefs, faith and customs.

We understand that the way customers choose to engage and connect is also changing. Our services will be responsive to allow more flexibility for the customer both on an operational level and when accessing online services. Allowing a customer to access information from anywhere in the world, at any time, for the purpose of requesting information about burial services and tapping into the growing interest in tracing family history through digital and online pathways.

We are committed to investing in our people; equipping and empowering them to provide the highest standards of service. Our community can expect to meet with our team face-to-face, to provide guidance and support with respect, kindness, understanding and compassion.

We are exploring new technologies and innovations that can be integrated into our services to engage and inform our customers and enhance their experience, such as natural burials, eco-friendly burials, sculpture gardens and community use of green, open space for complementary activities that reflect peaceful spaces.

With a clear focus on effective planning, building strong community connections and partnerships, creating meaningful places, operational excellence and responsive services through innovation and technology – we are confidently progressing towards the future.

Council, in consultation with the community, developed four guiding principles that will inform the provision and management of our cemetery network and services.

¹ Population Statistic referenced from the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017

Our key partnerships

In order to provide the highest standards of service, our cemetery network is built upon key partnerships with our local communities, other government agencies and relevant sectors.



The successful delivery of the plan is largely founded on strong partnerships and collaborations. Strategic partnerships, shared networks and shared resources improve and maximise outcomes for our cemetery services and the community. Increased engagement and collaboration with our community ensures council is well positioned to respond to emerging needs and expectations.

The financial and environmental sustainability of our cemetery network can be significantly supported through partnerships.

There are a number of existing partnerships between council, community groups and organisations with regards to our cemetery network which include:

- Friends of the Cemetery
- Youth Justice
- Emerging connections with genealogy and historical interest groups

We are committed to strengthening these existing partnerships as well as exploring new partnerships that will continue to leverage opportunities with community groups and organisations that have common values and principles.

Friends of the Cemetery currently support the conservation and maintenance of the Peachester cemetery. This partnership could be extended to other locations.

Throughout the life of the plan, council will continue to be informed by its partnerships and seek to further leverage opportunities through the exploration of new partnerships.



IN
MEMORY OF
THOMAS JONES

DELOVED HUSBAND OF
ELIZABETH JONES
DIED NOV 17 TH 1905
Aged 52 YEARS

In the Woombye Cemetery

Planning for the future

What's our current situation?

Council currently maintains 18 cemeteries². Significant population growth is projected for the Caloundra South, Beerwah, Sippy Downs and Palmview areas³. Caloundra and Mooloolah cemeteries are nearing capacity and continued accessibility to cemeteries for residents in these areas is a key challenge. With the expected population growing to more than 400,000⁴ in the Sunshine Coast by 2028, we anticipate an increase in the utilisation of cemetery services. Innovative technologies and solutions are being investigated, and further land use within the Mooloolah cemetery reserve is being explored. The *Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017* outlines the provision of an additional 10 hectares of land for cemetery purposes within the southern Sunshine Coast.

Purpose of the plan

The plan provides a framework for the management and delivery of cemetery services within the Sunshine Coast local government area through to 2028. It aligns with the strategic direction set out in the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023*, *Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041* and the *Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017*.

The purpose of the plan is to:

- give the community confidence in the service
- provide meaningful places and services within the cemetery network that are respectful, inclusive, sustainable and responsive
- outline the needs and considerations of the community and the cemetery network moving forward
- direct the exploration of innovative and creative solutions and technologies
- guide and encourage the partnerships with our community to strengthen the connection between people and place

The plan provides the direction to shape council's cemetery network over the next 10 years. The plan is not static; it is agile and will be responsive to the evolving needs and preferences of the community.

How the plan was developed

In developing the plan, we listened to our community – previous customers and also community representatives. We heard that the guiding principles – respectful, inclusive, sustainable and responsive – were of extreme importance moving forward. We heard that people wanted greater choice and access to practices that better aligned with their values and beliefs. Some of these include natural burials, family managed burials, dedicated burial areas that align with religious customs and the exploration of diversified cemetery space. We heard that people want to be able to be laid to rest in the location of their choice.

More about what the community said can be found in *Our community*, page 11.

The plan aligns with the strategic direction set for the Sunshine Coast in the *Corporate Plan 2019-2023*, *Sunshine Coast Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017* and *Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041*. These strategies will guide our approach – that while planning for growth – we retain a focus on strong, connected and engaged communities, our commitment to preserving and enhancing our natural environment and liveability of the Sunshine Coast and better access to services for all. This approach is the result of considered planning and a shared commitment across council, other levels of government, the community and key stakeholders to work together to build a strong community and deliver service excellence.

Australian and Queensland Government legislation guides the management of cemetery services (refer to Strategic and Legal Considerations). Council's local laws outline council's policy, guidelines and procedures regarding the operation and use of cemeteries within its network.

² As of 2019

³ South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017

⁴ Population and household forecasts, 2011 to 2041, prepared by .id , the population experts, December 2017

This plan informs the development of an action plan for the current cemetery network and sets the direction for increasing cemetery capacity for the Sunshine Coast Council local government area.

What is not considered in this plan?

The plan does not consider burials, cremations, interments or memorials held or undertaken outside of the Sunshine Coast Council cemetery network or the maintenance of memorials placed in our cemeteries for individuals.

Healthy. Smart. Creative.

*Sunshine Coast
Community
Strategy
2019-2041*

*Environment
and Liveability
Strategy 2017*

Sunshine Coast Council Cemetery Plan

Providing and maintaining cemeteries for
burial and ashes interment

Service Excellence

Positive experiences for our customers,
great services to our community.

To serve the community with excellence
and position the region for the future



The Woombye War Cemetery is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery maintained by the Commission's agent in Australia The Office of Australian War Graves.



Our guiding principles

The plan contributes to council's commitment to 'Service Excellence' as identified within the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023*.

The plan provides strategic direction to guide the effective management of our cemetery network over the next 10 years. Our guiding principles will inform decision making and will be the measure by which decisions are evaluated. These principles will also inform our goals and success measures.



The plan will be guided by the following four principles:

Respectful

of past, present and future generations, supporting the community's social wellbeing and conserving the Sunshine Coast's cultural heritage.

Responsive

to the preferences of a growing and changing community.

Guiding Principles

Sustainable

provision of services that balance the social, environmental, economic and cultural needs of the community.

Inclusive

of beliefs, faith and customs recognising the diversity of the Sunshine Coast.



Our community

In preparing the plan we consulted with the community from February to June 2019. Council contacted community representatives to seek their feedback on our cemetery services. We asked for feedback on their experience with council’s cemetery network, our proposed guiding principles, emerging practices in cemeteries throughout Australia and internationally and how these aligned with values or beliefs and areas council should consider in preparing this plan. This feedback was analysed and common themes included:

Our customers said:

“The team were all very kind and compassionate, making the process feel right.”

“What a terrific job cemeteries do in such difficult circumstances.”

“We appreciate how close the memorial is to us and the lovely setting.”

“The location and memorial is absolutely perfect.”

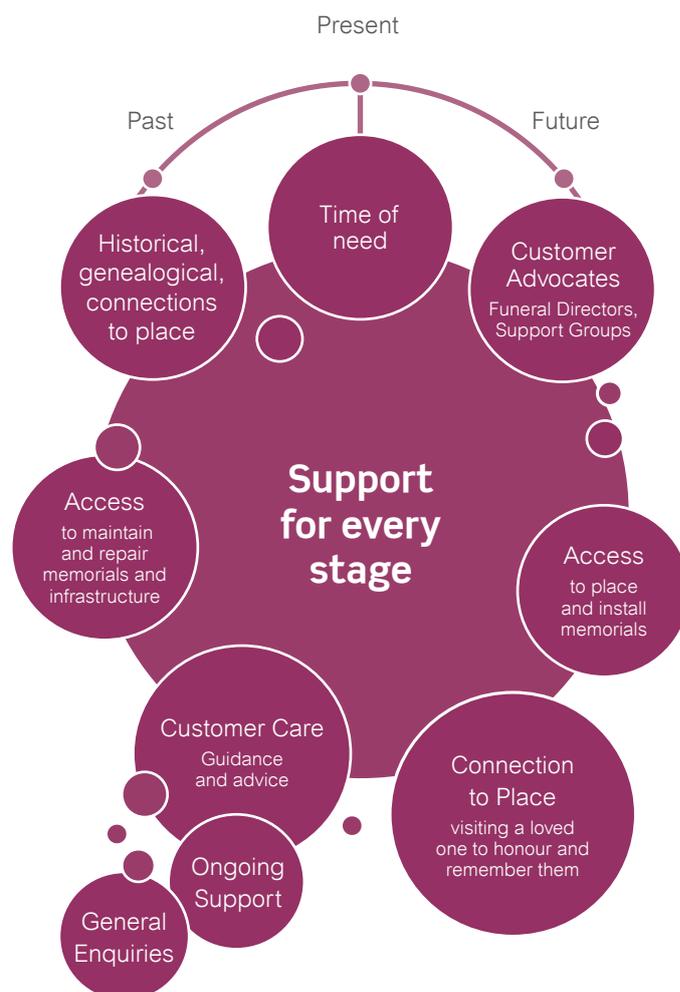
“From my first conversation with one of the team members I knew I had found what I felt was the correct choice.”

Our local communities said

- The community **entrusts** council to **conserve** and provide cemetery practices that **protect** the environmental, social, historical, cultural and personal values of the Sunshine Coast.
- They feel **connected** to a community and place where they can have **confidence** that their **personal, religious or cultural beliefs** can be **honoured** when they are laid to rest.
- Having reasonable **access** to the cemetery grounds and facilities is extremely important; allowing them to tend to their loved ones.

- They are interested in **innovative** and **responsive** technologies being applied to cemetery services including **access to online** information and **alternative** interment methods which are **sustainable, environmentally conscious** and **respectful**.
- Any alternate use⁵ of cemetery grounds should remain **respectful** of the cemetery as a **dignified and peaceful location**.

Following on from the feedback, it was identified that there are different stages of need that connect our communities.



⁵ Alternate Use – other uses which may occur whilst remaining respectful of the cemetery including art display, weddings, and remembrance days.



Who we are on the Sunshine Coast

Our communities are made up of people from many ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and faith.⁶



POPULATION

Currently **319,922**. Projected to exceed **400,000** by 2028. Annual growth rate of 2.2% (approx. 8300 people per year).



Currently 20% of our population are **65 years or older**. **26% of the population by 2041 will be 65 years or older.**



Sunshine Coast Council cemetery network receives approximately 17% of the Sunshine Coast's mortalities of which 69% are burials and 31% ashes interments.⁷



19.5% population were born **OVERSEAS**.

Mostly from United Kingdom, New Zealand and South Africa.

5% population speak a language other than English at home.



5716 people identified as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** in 2016.

41.3% increase since 2011.



97% of all projected population growth will come through **migration from other areas within Australia**.

Most populated localities 2019

- Kawana Waters
- Buderim-Kuluin-Mons-Kunda Park
- Wurtulla-Buddina
- Beerwah-Caloundra
- Maroochydore

Most populated localities in 2028

- Beerwah-Caloundra
- Palmview/Sippy Downs
- Nambour
- Maroochydore

BELIEFS in 2016

57% have religious beliefs

34% have no religion

9% chose not to respond



Mortality Rate of 0.7%

(7 deaths per year per 1000 people)

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, demographic information for this section has been sourced from the Sunshine Coast Council Community ProfileID, and provides a point-in-time snapshot of the demography of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area

⁷ Percentages calculated on council interment rates against the projected mortality rate advised by Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Key challenges and opportunities

In preparing the Cemetery Plan, council recognises that the plan cannot be static. As the Sunshine Coast continues to grow, we need to be agile and dynamic in our response to the evolving needs and preferences of the community, both now and into the future.

As an organisation, we are committed to delivering services that place the customer at the forefront of everything we do. We will respond to challenges and opportunities with a culture of continuous improvement, smart and creative innovations, strong partnerships and effective planning.

Population growth

The Sunshine Coast is experiencing greater than average population growth relative to other areas within the state. The population is projected to reach more than 500,000 people by 2041, with an annual growth rate of 2.2% over the next 10 years. Of this growth, 97% comes from people moving to the Sunshine Coast from other areas within Australia.

The median age of the population is also shifting. Forecasts identifying at least a quarter of the population will be 65 years or older by 2041. The Sunshine Coast's mortality rate currently sits at 0.7% (7 deaths per 1000 people per year), slightly higher than the Queensland average. Whilst the mortality rate will vary, this will influence the demand placed upon council's cemetery network.

Capacity

The most recent cemetery established is the Kulangoor Cemetery which became operational in 1987. Kulangoor Cemetery is the largest in the network and primarily services the north of the Sunshine Coast. It contains significant capacity.

Existing cemeteries throughout the Sunshine Coast are diminishing in capacity. Caloundra, Beerwah and Mooloolah cemeteries service the south coastal area of the Sunshine Coast where much of the population growth is projected. Both Caloundra and

Mooloolah cemeteries are nearing capacity although investigations and innovations may realise additional space in the Mooloolah Cemetery. With the possibility of Caloundra and Mooloolah reaching capacity, it is reasonable to anticipate demand shifting to the Beerwah Cemetery. This outcome would significantly increase the uptake of use at Beerwah Cemetery. Therefore the Sunshine Coast *Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017*, commits to investigating additional land to the south of the region to address the growth.

Accessibility

We are committed to providing our community with choice when it comes to accessibility.

Location

Where a person is laid to rest is a significant decision and is often reflective of strong connections between people and place. Some may choose to travel further to a cemetery that holds personal, cultural, historical or genealogical significance. For others, it is important to have the ability to be buried close to where they have lived and created meaningful connections. A location that is easily accessible for family, friends and loved ones to visit.

Inclusive cemetery services

In planning for the future, we acknowledge that the needs and choices of our community are constantly changing. We will strive to ensure that our services are respectful of these evolving preferences wherever possible.

We will work closely with partners within the community and other levels of government to explore innovative solutions for:

- transport options to and from cemeteries
- all abilities access
- access to facilities such as carparks and toilets
- online access to services and information
- service options that honour the diverse beliefs within our community



Customer care

Our cemetery network is driven by our commitment to support our community to honour and celebrate their loved ones in a way that is meaningful to them. We are dedicated to actively listening to the collective community voice to deliver services that are reflective of expectations and preferences.

Our people will be supported through ongoing training and professional development to ensure that they are empowered and equipped to provide excellent customer care and maintain our cemeteries to the highest standards.

We recognise that our community have varying preferences when it comes to communication and will work to provide a variety of communication channels. The utilisation of online and self-service options will be explored, allowing access to services and information at any time.

Innovation and technology

A high priority for council is ensuring our cemetery network supports the needs of the community through creativity and innovation.

We are committed to investing in systems that improve ease of access and service excellence for our customers. Key areas for consideration include:

- ensuring the cemetery network is safe and presentable
- balancing affordability with standards of service
- ensuring services and access to information are customer-focussed.

“
We are committed to delivering services that place the customer at the forefront of everything we do
 ”

Sustainability

Council is committed to providing environmentally sustainable products and services and investing in effective and sustainable land and resource planning.

In delivering on our commitment to reduce our ecological footprint, our energy consumption is now completely offset by council's solar farm at Valdora. We will continue to explore innovative solutions that may be utilised in further reducing our environmental impact including:

- natural burials, eco-friendly burials, vertical burials
- undertaking continuous improvements
- optimising use of space in the cemetery network
- exploring the idea of activating cemeteries through placemaking.

To ensure our cemetery network is sustainable, financial considerations are also imperative. Areas for consideration include:

- strengthening and expanding existing partnerships and exploring new partnerships with local community groups such as Friends of the Cemetery, schools and Youth Justice to assist with maintenance
- exploring internal partnerships in relation to maintaining cemeteries
- restructuring cemetery network by developing a regional/local cemetery network model (primary sites, typically larger and well embellished are supported regionally by local cemeteries servicing local community needs and expectations)
- managing the addition of memorials for amenity, safety and ease of maintenance.



Disaster management response

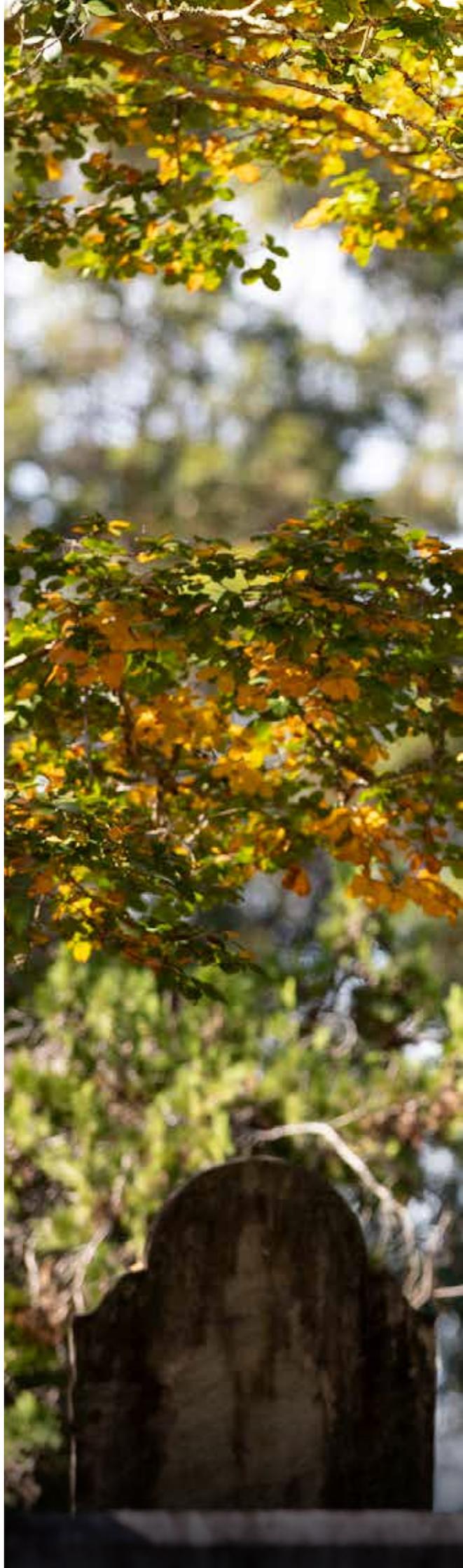
Our cemetery network will ensure a continuity of service and care in the event of a disaster. Council's Business Continuity Plan for Cemeteries identifies the need to draw upon alternate resources and ensure community health is maintained where a mass casualty event occurs. In the unlikely event that primary holding facilities provided by hospitals and funeral directors are overwhelmed, the Sunshine Coast's cemetery network may be required to provide a rapid response to facilitate increased numbers of interments to protect the community's welfare.

Activation

Many cemeteries established in other countries during the 1800's incorporated burials and memorials into beautiful and frequented green-spaces. Spaces where the memories of the deceased were respected and honoured alongside its use for recreation and relaxation. Exploring the utilisation of our cemeteries as extensions of open space is an innovative possibility that is best explored through partnership with our community and key stakeholders.

The activation of arts-centric activities within cemeteries is a partnership worth exploring. Installation of artwork and sculptures would support local artists, add to the amenity of the cemetery and increase the number of visitors through walking tours and art showcases.

Cemeteries hold immeasurable historical, cultural and personal value. Partnerships that support the conservation of historical and genealogical wealth which enable access and activities that are respectful are possibilities to be considered. This can foster a strong sense of place in our cemeteries whilst supporting local enterprise and encouraging stewardship through continued use.



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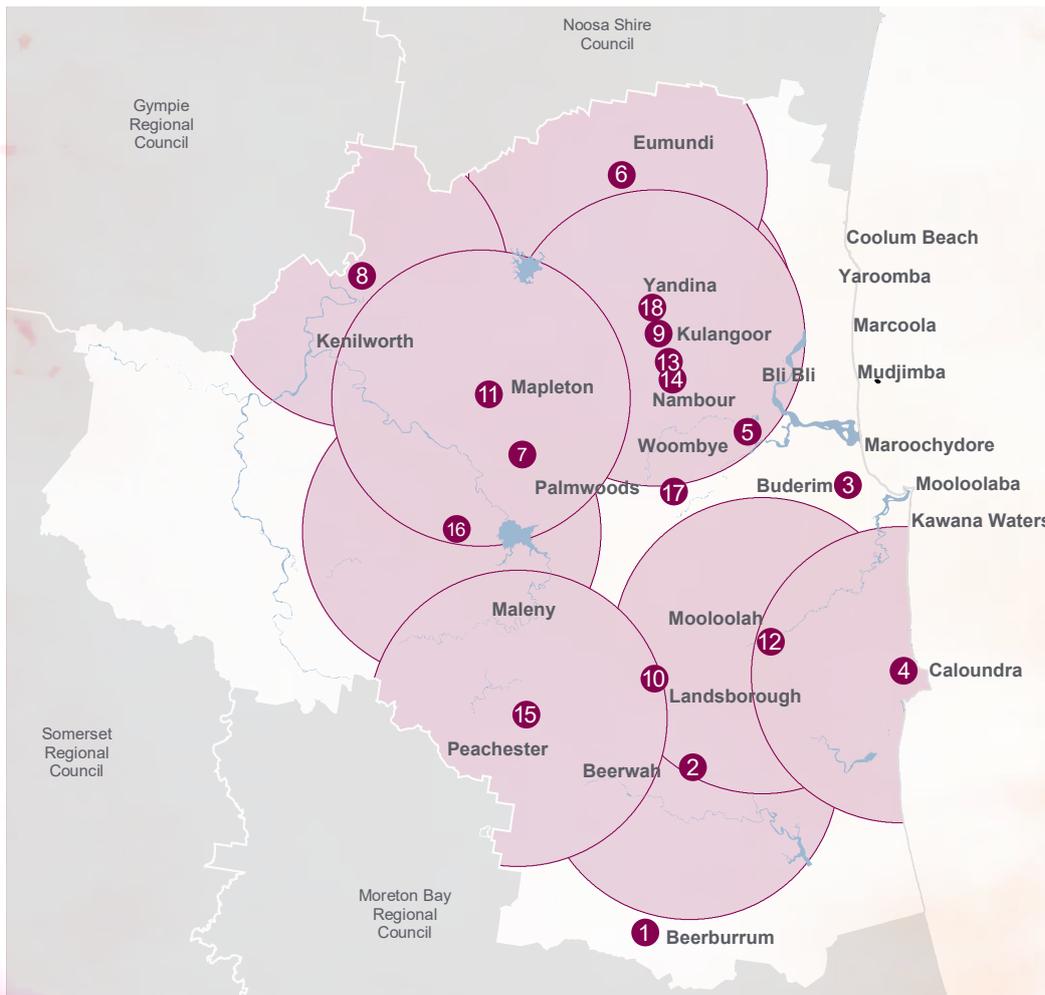


Image: Woombye Cemetery

Our cemetery network

The *Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017* provides direction for equal access for the community to council's cemetery network. This direction has assisted in guiding the plan and informing council's planning for the next 10 years. Map 1 – Sunshine Coast cemetery

locations provides the localities for council's 18 cemeteries. "Active" or "Transitional" cemeteries in the Cemetery Lifecycle are also provided with indicative catchments which are serviced by each cemetery.



Map 1. Sunshine Coast cemetery locations

Cemetery lifecycle⁸

To respond to the key challenges over the next 10 years, we are exploring capacity shortfalls, particularly in the south of the Sunshine Coast Council area where the majority of development and population growth is predicted. The current rate of utilisation of reservation or burials informs the projected stage a cemetery will be at within the cemetery lifecycle, refer to Table 1: Cemetery lifecycles.

The stages in a lifecycle are as follows:

Planning

Planning for population growth and products and services demands

Establishment

- Securing space for the future
- Design and construction
- Ensuring accessibility

⁸ Refer to Glossary for definition of terms

Table 1: Cemetery lifecycles

Cemetery	Stage in Lifecycle 2019 – 2023	Stage in Lifecycle 2024 -2028 ⁹
1 Beerburrum	Perpetual	Perpetual
2 Beerwah	Active	Active
3 Buderim	Perpetual	Perpetual
4 Caloundra	Transitional - Perpetual	Perpetual
5 Diddillibah	Perpetual	Perpetual
6 Eumundi	Active	Active
7 Flaxton	Perpetual	Perpetual
8 Gheerulla	Active	Active
9 Kulangoor	Active	Active
10 Landsborough	Perpetual	Perpetual
11 Mapleton	Active	Active
12 Mooloolah	Active	Transitional
13 Nambour Garden	Perpetual	Perpetual
14 Old Nambour	Perpetual	Perpetual
15 Peachester	Active	Active
16 Witta	Active	Active
17 Woombye	Perpetual	Perpetual
18 Yandina	Active	Active

Active

- Cemetery is open
- Provide and maintain services
- Additional space may be opened



Transitional

- Limited capacity
- Provide and maintain services
- Explore alternative solutions



Perpetual

- No further capacity
- Ongoing maintenance

⁹ Stages are based on projected use

1.

Connecting generations

Guiding principle 1

RESPECTFUL of past, present and future generations supporting the community's social wellbeing and conserving the Sunshine Coast's cultural heritage.

In preparing for the future, we are committed to honouring the legacy of our community's history and heritage within the cemetery network – acknowledging that new histories are also being written every day.

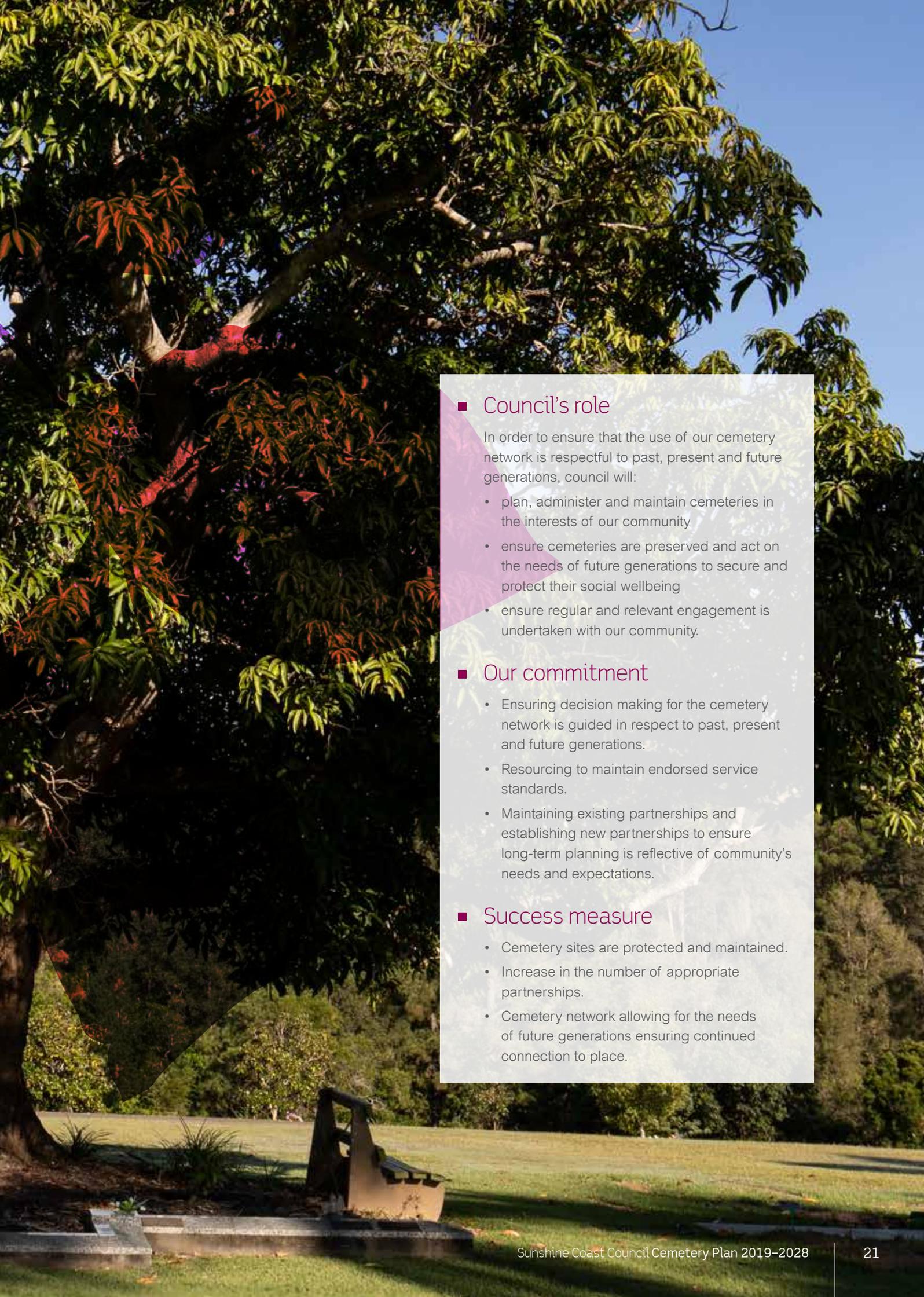
We are committed to delivering respectful services and peaceful places for generations to come.

Objectives

- **Custodians of history and heritage**
 - Preservation and promotion of our cemeteries history and heritage.
- **Conservation of existing cemetery network**
 - Optimise use of the existing cemetery network.
 - Continue to provide a cemetery network which supports the community, their wellbeing and resilience, and contributes to liveability.
- **Securing the future**
 - Strengthening our partnerships with the community to ensure we understand their needs and expectations.



Image: Witta Cemetery



■ Council's role

In order to ensure that the use of our cemetery network is respectful to past, present and future generations, council will:

- plan, administer and maintain cemeteries in the interests of our community
- ensure cemeteries are preserved and act on the needs of future generations to secure and protect their social wellbeing
- ensure regular and relevant engagement is undertaken with our community.

■ Our commitment

- Ensuring decision making for the cemetery network is guided in respect to past, present and future generations.
- Resourcing to maintain endorsed service standards.
- Maintaining existing partnerships and establishing new partnerships to ensure long-term planning is reflective of community's needs and expectations.

■ Success measure

- Cemetery sites are protected and maintained.
- Increase in the number of appropriate partnerships.
- Cemetery network allowing for the needs of future generations ensuring continued connection to place.

2.

Valuing our diversity

Guiding principle 2

INCLUSIVE of beliefs, faith and customs, recognising the diversity of the Sunshine Coast.

Our cemeteries are a reflection of the rich diversity in our communities. We are committed to providing a cemetery network that supports beliefs, faith and customs.

We believe every person should have access to diverse and inclusive interment options, reflective of our community's needs. We are dedicated to supporting the connection that people have to place.

Objectives

- **Ethical, equitable and inclusive services**
 - Council's cemetery network offers equitable access for the community
 - Available choices support personal beliefs, faith and customs
- **Cemetery services match community expectations and preferences**
 - Continued awareness and response to cater for the community's changing diversity



Image: Harmony Day 2019



■ Council's role

Council's role is to support the community through effective planning and provision of cemetery services that:

- are equitable and accessible
- are inclusive and strengthen cultural heritage, local character and identity – contributing to a sense of place.

■ Our commitment

- Policy and planning that permits choice and observance of beliefs – guided by social justice principles.
- Monitoring socio-demographic change to inform planning and implementation
- Establishing feedback mechanisms enabling community to inform provision of service.
- Providing channels which enables the community to communicate their diverse needs.

■ Success measure

- Cemetery services that provide diverse and inclusive options.
- Informing and engaging with our community in a timely and genuine manner to recognise the diversity of the Sunshine Coast.
- Review and consider population data as it becomes available for the planning of the cemetery network and services.

3.

Sustainable cemeteries for the future

Guiding principle 3

SUSTAINABLE provision of services that balance the social, environmental, economic and cultural needs of the community.

We are dedicated to reducing our ecological footprint and environmental impacts while supporting our community's needs and expectations.

We are committed to creating meaningful places that are sustainable for generations to come - places that foster connectedness, health and wellbeing.

Objectives

- **Ethical, equitable and inclusive services**
 - Optimise use of existing cemetery network
 - Explore and investigate alternate solutions and methods
- **Protection of environment**
 - Responsible and effective long-term planning and management of resources
 - Balance need with commitment to reduce ecological footprint
 - Construct, manage and maintain cemetery network to minimise environmental impacts
- **Balance affordability**
 - Ensure value for money
- **Support for community infrastructure**
 - Provision of sustainable social wellbeing - encouraging community connectedness, physical and mental health, and community resilience



Image: Kulangoor Cemetery

■ Council's role

Council's role is to embed sustainability principles into our planning, systems and processes to ensure we are delivering and maintaining services, products and resources for future generations.

■ Our commitment

- Efficient use of existing cemetery network capacity.
- Planning to respond to future capacity needs.
- Sustainability principles will guide and inform decision-making, planning, service delivery and resource management.
- Shared custodianship through collaborative, proactive and enduring partnerships with community, business and other government agencies.

■ Success measure

- Sufficient capacity secured for future generations.
- Provide a pricing structure and affordability to best utilise the cemetery network.
- Feedback from community indicates they feel supported and services meet needs and expectations.
- Delivery of services within resource allocations.

4.

Responsive innovation and technology

Guiding principle 4

RESPONSIVE to the preferences of a growing and changing community.

We are committed to delivering service excellence with respect, compassion, integrity and trust.

We will continue to foster strong connections with our community, actively listening to the community's collective voice to provide options that are meaningful to them.

We will invest in smart and creative solutions and technologies in our commitment to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement.

Objectives

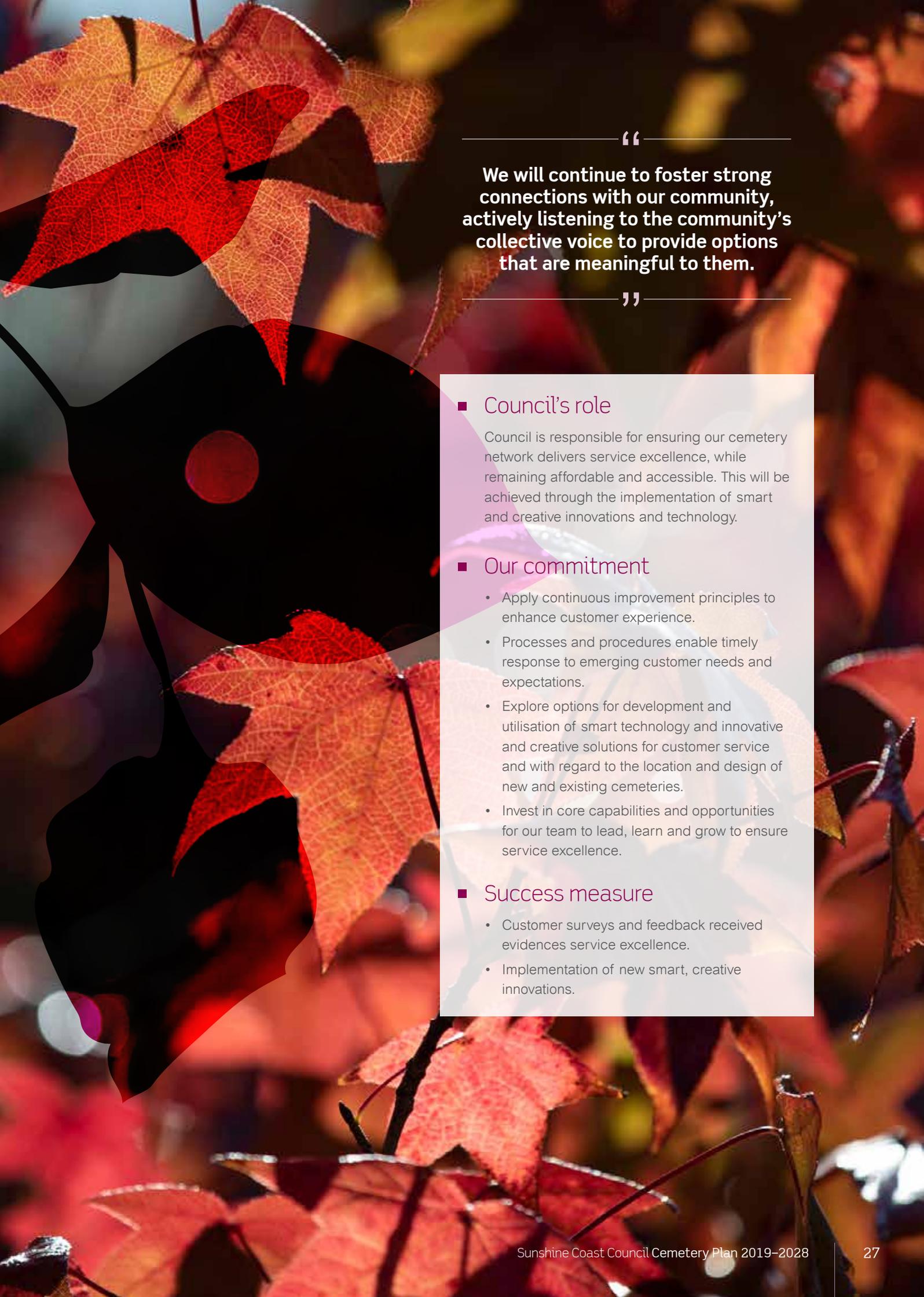
• Customer experience

- Service excellence founded in compassion and empathy
- Flexible customer services tailored to the uniqueness of each customer
- Consider a range of options to meet customer affordability and accessibility

• Creative innovation and smart technology

- Utilisation of smart technology and systems to better serve our community
- Explore and investigate contemporary solutions for enhanced accessibility





“
We will continue to foster strong connections with our community, actively listening to the community’s collective voice to provide options that are meaningful to them.
”

■ Council’s role

Council is responsible for ensuring our cemetery network delivers service excellence, while remaining affordable and accessible. This will be achieved through the implementation of smart and creative innovations and technology.

■ Our commitment

- Apply continuous improvement principles to enhance customer experience.
- Processes and procedures enable timely response to emerging customer needs and expectations.
- Explore options for development and utilisation of smart technology and innovative and creative solutions for customer service and with regard to the location and design of new and existing cemeteries.
- Invest in core capabilities and opportunities for our team to lead, learn and grow to ensure service excellence.

■ Success measure

- Customer surveys and feedback received evidences service excellence.
- Implementation of new smart, creative innovations.





Strategic and legal considerations

Good governance is essential to ensure council acts ethically, meets legislative compliance and decisions are made in the interest of the community and key stakeholders.

Strategic alignment

The *Cemetery Plan 2019-2028* supports the implementation of the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023*, *Community Strategy 2019-2041* and *Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017*.

The **Corporate Plan** provides the directive for council services to deliver service excellence through:

- Respecting and valuing our customers
- Flexible and customised solutions for our customers
- Regular and relevant engagement with our community
- Service quality assessed by our performance and value to customers
- Assets meet endorsed standards for sustainable service delivery

Council's **Community Strategy** provides the long-term framework for how our community will advance their aspirations for a strong, healthy, smart, connected and inclusive community where - *together we thrive*. The Cemetery Plan seeks to provide services, products and places that support our community's social wellbeing.

Council's **Environment and Liveability Strategy** focuses on maintaining liveability and good quality of life for future generations. Provision of key social infrastructure such as cemeteries supports the community's health, safety and wellbeing. The Cemetery Plan continues to ensure this necessary infrastructure is equitably provided for the community.

Legal considerations

This document will be applied in accordance with Australian Law and does not permit council to contravene these laws.

The most relevant legislation relating to the management of cemetery services includes:

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Land Act 1994*
- *Land Regulation 2009*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003*
- *Coroners Act 2003*
- *Cremations Act 2003*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*

Statutory documents

Cemeteries are regulated through council's local laws. The relevant statutory documents include:

- *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011*
- *Subordinate Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2016*
- *Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities, Infrastructure and Roads) 2011*
- *Subordinate Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities, Infrastructure and Roads) 2011*

Provisions within these local laws enable council to also establish policy, guidelines and procedures regarding the operation and use of cemeteries within its network.

The Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014 also provides a mechanism to recognise and protect the historical and cultural value of its cemetery network.



Next steps

The Cemetery Plan provides the strategic direction for the cemetery network and service.

An action plan will provide specific details outlining the cemetery network's key priorities, timeframes and potential funding.

Measure and evaluate

Council is committed to a culture of continuous improvement. The supplementary action plan will provide outcome measures that contribute to achieving respectful, inclusive, sustainable and responsive cemeteries. A number of outcomes and supporting indicators will be developed to achieve the targets, goals and deliverables.

This approach ensures that outcomes are aligned with the long-term theme based targets and goals within the Cemetery Plan; enabling progress to be monitored and evaluated. Comprehensive data collection and assessment will be undertaken annually, allowing for regular and meaningful reporting and action plan refinement.

Ongoing partnership and engagement with our community and stakeholders will be an important element of our successful delivery of the Cemetery Plan, ensuring that our cemetery network reflects the community's needs and expectations.

Conclusion

The future of the Sunshine Coast cemetery network is one of service excellence, customer care, smart and creative innovation and flexibility - to ensure that the community's needs and expectations are met.

Over the next 10 years, the Sunshine Coast cemetery network will deliver respectful, inclusive, sustainable and responsive services and products for our community.

By investing in our cemetery network, we are investing in the future - the future of strong, connected, resilient and engaged communities.





“
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”

Glossary

Burial right - a right entitling a person or persons to whom it is granted the exclusive right of interment in a specified burial site.

Capacity – the space available for burials and ash interments within a cemetery.

Cemetery Catchment – Area and population from which a cemetery typically facilitates interments and visitations.

Cemetery Lifecycle

Planning – Conceptual planning for future capacity, products and services seeking to meet community needs and expectations.

Establishment – Acquisition, design and construction of additional capacity through expansion of the cemetery network and/or within existing cemeteries.

Active – a cemetery containing sufficient capacity to meet anticipated need.

Transitional – a cemetery with limited capacity remaining.

Perpetual – a cemetery which may only be accessed if there is an existing reservation or ability to reopen an established grave.

Cemetery network – the aggregate of all cemeteries within the Sunshine Coast Council local government area which service the community.

Continuous improvement – the process and ongoing effort to improve products and services.

Family managed burials – burial of a body facilitated by family or next of kin where the family chooses not to use a funeral director.

Interment (burial) – means the act of placing a dead body in a grave.

Master plans – a long term dynamic planning document that provides guidance and conceptual layout to manage future growth and development.

Mortality rate – the total number of deaths per year, per 1000 people of the population, generally provided for a region such as the Sunshine Coast local government area.

Natural burial – return of a human body to the environment in the most natural method possible. Burials generally occur in a biodegradable coffin, casket or shroud in a bushland or similar environment typically with no memorial marking the location.

Social Justice – is a concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society.

Social capital - broadly refers to those factors of effectively functioning social groups that include such things as interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, shared values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity that help to facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Place making – an integrated approach to working with communities to create meaningful, activated spaces which encourage visitation by members of the community.

Data sources

South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017

.id, the population experts.

Sunshine Coast Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017

Draft Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041

Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019–2023

Queensland Government Statisticians Office



Image: Woombye Cemetery

About the methods

In preparing the *Cemetery Plan 2019-2028*, the following methods were utilised in informing the guiding principles, identifying the key challenges and opportunities and determining resultant actions and outcomes that will direct the Sunshine Coast cemetery network and services over the next 10 years.

Methodology Process:

Contextual research

Research was undertaken to understand current and future needs and expectations, emerging preferences and key challenges and opportunities, current and projected demography, relevant policy and legislative positions and requirements, comparative analysis with other local governments and leading organisations', consultation with internal and external stakeholders.



Collation of findings

Analysis of contextual research findings to understand the key directions for the plan for the next 10 years based on the major drivers of change and strategic direction set out by the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023*, *Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041*, the *Sunshine Coast Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017* and the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017*.



Development of plan

The direction of the plan was based on the overarching vision of the council moving towards 2041 with particular focus on delivering customer-centric service excellence and strong community infrastructure. The guiding principles, commitments and success measures transpired to support the purpose of the plan and council's overarching strategic vision.





Action plan

The goals, principles and objectives of the Cemetery Plan 2019-2028 are achieved through the following actions. Each action considers:

- **Responsibility** – the council branches that will lead and support the implementation of the specific action
- **Funding** – the allocation of resources from within existing, capital or new budget items
- **Timeline** – when the action will be implemented
- **Measures** – how the success in achieving the action is determined

Table 2: Action plan

Action	Responsibility				Goal				
	Lead	Support	Funding	Timeline	Measures	Connecting generations	Valuing our Diversity	Sustainable cemeteries for the future	Responsive innovation and technology
1 Share the Cemetery Plan 2019 – 2028 through council tools and partnership networks	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Number of views on council's website and distribution through partnerships	✓			
2 Master Plan the cemetery network	Customer Response	Partners	Project	Medium	Master plans established for cemetery network	✓	✓	✓	
3 Continue to investigate acquisition of land within the south of the Sunshine Coast to achieve additional capacity	Property	Customer Response	Capital and LGIP	Long	Extension of the cemetery network within the southern Sunshine Coast			✓	
4 Explore the opportunity to extend the cemetery capacity within the existing network	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Medium	Analysis of existing cemetery's to identify potential additional capacity	✓			

5	Implement a long term capital construction and asset replacement program	Customer Response	Partners	Capital works	Ongoing	Program developed and funded	✓
6	Provide improved online access to the community, service providers and stakeholders	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Medium	Online burial records accessible to community Online access for service providers	✓ ✓
7	Explore opportunities to expand the 'Friends of the Cemetery' initiative where possible throughout the network	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Number of partnerships continued and established with Friends of the Cemetery groups	✓
8	Advocate for the review and inclusion of remaining cemeteries in future planning scheme amendments not already identified as Heritage Places	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Cemetery sites are identified as Heritage Places in the current planning scheme	✓
9	Investigate opportunities to activate cemeteries through placemaking principles	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Develop mechanisms to establish visitation numbers for cemeteries. Usage of cemeteries remains consistent with community expectations	✓
10	Report on and profile burial and ashes interments within the cemetery network	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Annual reporting	✓
11	Continue to review council's local laws to support delivery of cemetery services in accordance with the plan	Corporate Governance	Customer Response	Core Budget	Medium	Local Laws reviewed and amended as required	✓

Table 2: Action plan continued

Action	Responsibility					Goal			
	Lead	Support	Funding	Timeline	Measures	Connecting generations	Valuing our diversity	Sustainable cemeteries for the future	Responsive innovation and technology
12 Ensure all abilities access is considered where possible in cemetery design and implementation	Customer Response	Partners	Capital works	Ongoing	New cemetery sites and assets consider access for all abilities	✓			
13 Promote council's cemetery network and services to ensure community awareness and utilisation	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Continued access being made to the cemetery network	✓		✓	
14 Continue key partnerships with the community, local enterprise, industry stakeholders, and special interest groups, sharing knowledge and creating advocacy to assist conservation and delivery of the cemetery network	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Number of engagement sessions held and partnerships established		✓		
15 Investigate options to apply for grants to support retention of historical and heritage values	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Identification of grants available		✓		
16 Develop environmental management plans for the network	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Medium	Establishment of environmental plans			✓	
17 Maintain a fees and charges framework to balance cost recovery with affordability to the community	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Annually	Continued review of fees and charges framework			✓	

18	Ensure products and services offered by council comply with competitive neutrality principles	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Products and services are compliant with competitive neutrality principles	✓
19	Provide appropriate opportunities for team member training, development and upskilling to ensure service excellence	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Continued compliance with mandatory skills and qualifications Customer feedback mechanisms evidence positive customer experiences	✓
20	Modernise products and services offered for cemetery services	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Ongoing	Products and services provided meet community needs and expectations	✓
21	Develop cemetery operational guidelines which support the delivery of cemetery services in accordance with the plan	Customer Response	Partners	Core Budget	Short	Establishment of operational guidelines and supporting processes	✓



Image: Kulangoor Cemetery Outdoor Chapel





www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

T 07 5475 7272 F 07 5475 7277

Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

[@sunshinecoastcouncil](#) [@councilscc](#) [@sunshinecoastcouncil](#)