

# CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

for communities of Central Desert Shire

Working toward Best Practice

2012 - 2017



two ways :: one outcome

Effective November 2012

Review conducted November 2012

Next Review to be conducted April 2013

**We aim to achieve best practice in Cemetery management across all Shire communities.**

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## **Overview**

This 5-year Cemetery Improvement Plan aims to improve service levels at all cemeteries located in the Shire over time.

The Plan is reviewed, updated and presented to Council every 6 months for ratification.

The Plan outlines the service level standards that are sought in the next 5 years. These reflect the shared goal of residents and the Council to continue developing core services in communities.

Goals take into account the aspirations of residents and relevant legislative requirements, whilst realistically reflecting the availability of funds, resources and labour to undertake development works. In some cases, cemetery improvements may be delayed due to other pressing development needs in communities, such as landfill improvements.

## **Local Board Involvement**

The input of local community members to the planning and development of cemeteries is critical. From the inception of this process, Local Boards are to be actively included in all planning and reviews.

## **Relevant Legislation**

NT Cemeteries Act

NT Local Government Act

The NT Cemeteries Act lists all regulatory requirements that must be met for a public cemetery.

The NT Local Government Act appoints Central Desert Shire Council as the manager of all public cemeteries in the Shire region, as per Part 12.2, section 184 "Public cemeteries":

- (1) A public cemetery situated in a Council's area is under the care, control and management of the Council.
- (2) A Council has, in regard to such a cemetery, the powers of a Board of Trustees under the Cemeteries Act."

## **Cemetery Locations**

Public cemeteries exist at Atitjere, Engawala, Laramba, Pmara Jutunta, Nturiya, Ti Tree Town, Yuelamu, Yuendumu, Nyirripi and Lajamanu.

There are no public cemeteries at Wilora, Willowra, all outstations and other locations in the Shire.

## Service Levels

Four (4) prioritised service levels have been identified for cemeteries:

Service Level 1	Site Planning, Road Access, Fencing and Grave Digging
Service Level 2	Shade Structures, Seating, Waste Bins and Water Supply
Service Level 3	Signage and Burial Plot Information
Service Level 4	Landscaping and Pathways

## Priority Actions

The following priorities have been identified within each Service Level.

SERVICE LEVEL	ACTION
1	1. Local Board consultation
	2. Staff training and development
	3. Cemetery fenced with secure gate
	4. All-weather access road and car park
	5. Open-grave stabilisation device
2	6. Shade structure - portable then permanent
	7. Seating
	8. Waste bins
	9. Water supply
3	10. Signage
	11. Burial plot information
4	12. Pathways
	13. Landscaping

**Service Level 1: Site Planning, Fencing and Grave Digging**

Actions at this level are to ensure a perimeter fence and gate are installed to protect and identify the cemetery site. An adequately sized area is to be designated as a car park. An open grave shoring device is to be used for WH&S purposes to ensure the grave area is safe during times of funerals.

Service Level One Targets	Anticipated Time Frame
<b>Council &amp; Local Board consultation</b>	
Council approves overall Cemeteries 5-Year Plan	12 monthly review
All Local Boards fully involved in planning for cemetery layout, infrastructure and management.	6 monthly review
<b>Staff Development</b>	
Staff are trained in the safe digging of graves, concreting, levelling and other appropriate skills	Ongoing as required
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going
Plant & equipment pre-checked to ensure operational and safe	On-going
<b>Fenced with Secure Gate</b>	
Survey area, determine fencing materials required and obtain quotes	2012/13
Order and erect fencing in accordance with Technical Specifications	In same financial year as funding obtained
<b>All-weather Access Road and Car Park</b>	
Develop a car park and access road as per Technical Specifications	2013/14
<b>Open-Grave Stabilisation Device</b>	
Obtain and use appropriate device as per Technical Specifications	2012/13

Open-Grave Stabilisation Device



**Service Level 2: Shade Structure, Seating, Waste Bins, Water Supply and Signage**

Actions at this level are to improve the overall facilities at the cemetery. This includes providing a portable shade structure at the cemetery until an appropriate permanent shade structure is constructed to standard by competent personnel, as per Technical Services specifications. Waste bins are to be placed at the entry gate or shade structure, and emptied regularly as a part of routine waste management. Seating will be installed under the shade structure and a water supply provided to assist family members who wish to tend to individual graves.


Service Level Two Targets	Anticipated Time Frame
<b>Shade Structure</b>	
Determine appropriate shade structure as per Technical Specifications and obtain quotes	2012/13
Order and erect shade structure	In same financial year as funding obtained
Install concrete floor to shade structure	Within 24 months of structure erection
<b>Seating</b>	
Determine appropriate bench style seats as per Technical Specifications, for installing under shade structure.	2012/13
Order and install seats	In same financial year as funding obtained
<b>Waste Bins</b>	
Install a double wheelie bin holder with concrete slab adjacent to the entry gate and supply two wheelie bins	3 months
<b>Water Supply</b>	
Determine most cost-effective and/or appropriate type of water supply at the cemetery – a reticulated garden tap with stand and concrete splash pad, or a water tank (approx. 1000 litres) with tap.	2012/13
If existing funding not adequate, obtain quotes for preferred option.	2012/13
Order and install water supply	Within 12 months of funding allocation
<b>Signage</b>	
Determine an appropriate Cemetery name by consulting with community members and the Local Board.	2012/13
Install cemetery name signage	2012/13
Install directional signage from community to cemetery	2012/13
<b>Staff Management</b>	
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going
Staff are trained in construction and concreting, using appropriate plant and equipment and other skills	2012/13, then on-going

**Service Level 3: Burial Plot Information**

Actions at this level are aimed at improving the facilities at the cemetery to make it easier for people to find the location of deceased people.

Service Level Three Targets	Anticipated Time Frame
<b>Burial Plot Information</b>	
Keep up-to-date the Shire's cemetery register, including all information required by the <i>NT Cemeteries Act</i> .	Ongoing
Develop a layout plan of the cemetery that identifies the location and ID number of each burial plot (required by NT Cemeteries Act).	2012/13
Install markers with ID numbers at all used burial plots (required by NT Cemeteries Act).	By end of 2013/14
<b>Staff Management</b>	
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going
Staff are trained in relevant skills	2012/13 then ongoing

*Screen shot of CDSC Cemetery Register*

Cemetery Register - Central Desert Shire Council										
Community		ENGAWALA								
Cemetery		MAIN								
 <small>two ways :: one outcome</small>										
ENGAWALA, MAIN CEMETERY										
Date Register Updated	PLOT INFORMATION							SURNAME	First Name	Skin Name
	Plot No.	Map Ref	Cemetery Ref		Used Y/N	Location (GPS)				
			Row #	Grave #		East'g	North'g			
	1				Y	134 27.305	22 48.812	TILMOUTH	Albie	
	2				Y	134 27.303	22 48.816	TURNER	Ada	
	3				Y	134 27.302	22 48.818	WEB	Paddy	
	4				Y	134 27.301	22 48.820	TURNER	Molly	
	5				Y	134 27.300	22 48.824	TILMOUTH	Maggie	
	6				Y	134 27.298	22 48.830	PURVIS	Katie	
	7				Y	134 27.296	22 48.832	JINKIN	Diny	
	8				Y	134 27.296	22 48.832	TURNER	Athur	
	9				n					

***Service Level 4: Landscaping and Pathways***

Actions at this level are primarily aimed at improving the overall ambience of the community cemetery by creating pathways and landscaping.

Service Level Four Targets	Anticipated Time Frame
<b><i>Landscaping</i></b>	
Plant appropriate trees & shrubs for arid zones	By end 2016/17
<b><i>Pathways</i></b>	
Install appropriate pathways	By end 2016/17
<b><i>Staff Management</i></b>	
PPE (safety wear) for all staff	On-going
Staff are trained in basic horticultural and landscaping techniques and other appropriate skills	When required

## Technical Specifications

### *Local Board Consultation*

**Aim:** Empower and include Local Board in cemetery management decisions.

**Actions:** Cemetery Improvement Plan tabled at Local Board meeting every 6 months; check actions completed in previous 6 months; determine if/why any actions not completed on time; review priorities for next 6-12 months (within budget and staffing constraints); review cemetery management practices; ensure Burial Register up-to-date.

Allocate any necessary tasks to Local Board members, and add to Agenda for future meetings.

**Specific actions:** Determine size and location of boundary fence (if not yet erected); name of cemetery (for signage); location of shade structure,

### *Staff Training and Development*

**Aim:** Staff manage the cemetery in a safe and efficient manner.

Ensure staff have necessary licences and tickets to operate relevant machinery (backhoe, excavator, bobcat, tractor, slasher). Ensure proper pre-checks completed before machinery operated.

Ensure appropriate PPE worn at all times.

Provide relevant training for digging, stabilisation and back-filling of graves.

Provide training in concreting, erecting fences and other appropriate skills.

### *Cemetery fenced with secure gate*

**Aim:** Cemetery boundaries clearly defined. Vehicles and stock excluded.

**Gate.** Install 1 x pedestrian gate and 1 x vehicle gate as required.

**Fence.** Minimum 4-strand wire fence with star pickets and droppers. Seek funds for 1 metre high chain mesh post and rail or ringlock fence. CDEP Project opportunity.

**Maintenance.** Ensure fence intact 6-monthly. Check gate opens and closes freely. Check gate latch operational.

### *All-weather access road and Car park*

**Aim:** All-weather access for vehicles to arrive, park and leave safely.

**Access track:** Unformed access road/track, graded as required. Where drainage issues occur, upgrade to formed track with table drains and offlet drains. Add gravel sheeting where boggy.

**Car park:** Install fencing, bollards, rocks, drums or other markers to define car park area. Where ground is soft during wet weather, add gravel and relevant drainage. Ensure appropriate size and layout for safe traffic flow.

**Maintenance:** Light grade as required. Check markers every 6 months.



### ***Open Grave Stabilisation Device***

**Aim:** Mourners are safe from ground collapse when standing next to open grave.

**Device dimensions:** Minimum 2400mm long x 800mm wide x 600mm deep, with 300mm lip on all sides. Constructed from sheet metal or similar material. To be used at all burials. CDEP Project opportunity.

**Maintenance:** Check that device remains sturdy every 12 months (rust, welds, bent).

### ***Shade Structure***

**Aim:** Provide shaded area for mourners and visitors, including rain protection.

**Structure:** Floor area minimum 3m x 3m. Solid, permanent posts and metal roof. Add concrete floor when able, 100mm reinforced. CDEP Project opportunity.

**Trees:** Retain, plant or encourage growth of existing shade trees within cemetery boundary.

**Maintenance:** Clean and tidy surrounds as required.

### ***Seating***

**Aim:** Provide comfortable shaded seating for visitors.

**Seating:** Solid, permanent bench seating, minimum 2m long, concreted into ground. Place under shade structure or under shade trees. CDEP Project opportunity.

**Maintenance:** Clean as required.

### ***Waste bins***

**Aim:** Provide bins for small cemetery rubbish.

**Bins:** Two 240-litre wheelie bins located at entry gate and/or shade structure, on concrete pad with stand/s.

**Maintenance:** Empty and clean bins fortnightly or as required. Clean surrounding area of litter.

### ***Water supply***

**Aim:** Provide non-potable water for visitors to clean headstones and wash hands.

**Tank:** 1,000-litre plastic or metal tank on minimum 400mm high base, properly tied down for wind resistance. One outlet tap, spring loaded. Filled by water tank as required.

**Garden tap.** If reticulated water supply close by, install blue-line poly pipe or equivalent, minimum 600mm below ground level. Provide galvanised tap riser and concrete splash pad, minimum 600mm x 600mm. Install standard garden tap.

**Maintenance:** Check tank water level fortnightly (during bin collection). Top up as required. Check tap for leaks/damage.

### ***Signage***

**Aim:** Provide clear directional signage to the cemetery from the community; Show the name of the cemetery at the cemetery gate.

**Directional signage:** 400mm x 150mm black-on-white sign, 'cemetery' signage both sides, on .2m post concreted into ground.

**Cemetery signage:** Standard 1m x 700mm, large font for cemetery name, with 'Managed by Central Desert Shire Council' and logo in small writing in bottom right corner.

**Burial Plot signage:** Place sign near entry gate saying 'Burial Plot map available at Shire Office'.

**Maintenance:** Check directional post is present, upright and stable 12-monthly. Check signs are in place, clean and stable 12-monthly.

### ***Burial Plot Information***

**Aim:** Retain accurate, accessible records of people buried at the cemetery.

**Cemetery Site Plan:** Obtain high resolution A3 aerial photo, overlay grid labelled 'A, B, C, ....' on horizontal axis, '01, 02, 03, ....' on vertical axis at 2 metre intervals, for data entry into Cemetery Register. This Site Plan is the 'Burial Plot Map' mentioned above, and should be available for colour photocopying upon request.

**Grave ID Markers:** Concrete cylinder, 600mm high, 100mm diameter, buried next to head of grave, with 100mm protruding above ground level. Engrave and paint grid number on top of cylinder.

**Cemetery Register:** Sits in InfoXpert. Update as new entry or data available. Make accessible to community members as required.

### ***Landscaping***

**Aim:** Site beautification and shade, using low-maintenance arid zone species

**Species:** Agree acceptable species and planting layout with Local Board. Plant and nurture low-maintenance species that can be rapidly weaned off irrigation or maintenance.

**Irrigation:** If reticulated water supply nearby, consider drip irrigation to establish plants. Otherwise cart water to plants as required, pouring into a bunded hollow around each plant.

### ***Pathways***

**Aim:** Formalise walkways between grave rows, to shade structure, to water supply.

**Informal paths:** Use border markers (logs, rocks, other durable material) to delineate paths; place creek sand or gravel on paths.

**Formal paths:** Install concrete paths along high foot-traffic tracks or where boggy conditions. Not a high priority.

**1. Work Method Statement****Assisting a Funeral**

Item	Comment/Action
Performance Indicators	No complaints about Shire's involvement with funerals. All funeral costs recovered from Funeral Director. Cemetery Register and Plot ID kept up-to-date.
General Strategies and Procedures	<i>Managing body before burial</i> xxx
	<i>Digging grave</i> Top of casket to be minimum 6 feet below ground level. Place Open-Grave Stabilisation Device over hole Compact soil as hole is backfilled. Mound minimum 300mm dirt above ground level.
	<i>Office closure during funeral</i> Xxx
	<i>Marking grave ID</i> Consult Cemetery Site Plan to allocate grave ID number. Engrave number on ID marker (retain multiple markers at Depot). Install marker.
	<i>Cemetery Register</i> Update Cemetery Register, available on InfoXpert. Complete all data entry asap after funeral.
	<i>Cost recovery from Funeral Director</i> Xxx
	<i>Completing paperwork</i> Xxx
Recording and Reporting	Record deceased details in Cemetery Register (on InfoXpert). Report funeral in monthly SDC work report.
What to do when it's not working	Consult fellow SSMs for advice. Act on advice. Suggest Work Method or policy changes to Director Works.
Management Review	6-monthly audit of cemeteries and Cemetery Register by Director Works. 6-monthly review of funeral cost-recovery.

**2. Work Method Statement****Cemetery Maintenance**

Item	Comment/Action
Performance Indicators	No complaints about cemetery maintenance. All fires and stock excluded from cemetery plot. Cemetery site neat and tidy. All graves have plot ID markers. Service Level improvement outcomes achieved on time.
General Strategies and Procedures	<i>Exclude fires and stock from cemetery plot</i> Maintain appropriate firebreak around cemetery perimeter. Use Shire or DCI-contract grader. Ensure fence and gate intact and operational, to exclude stock.
	<i>Keep cemetery neat and tidy</i> Cut and/or spray grass as required Level all debris mounds and hazardous holes within site Ensure headstones neat and tidy Where present, ensure water tank topped up, wheelie bins regularly emptied, signs not damaged, shade structure & seating not damaged.
	<i>Other??</i>
Recording and Reporting	Report cemetery condition in monthly SDC work report. Record burial plot location on Cemetery Site Plan.
What to do when it's not working	Consult fellow SSMs for advice. Act on advice. Work cooperatively with CDEP. Suggest Work Method or policy changes to Director Works.
Management Review	6-monthly audit of cemeteries and Cemetery Register by Director Works

See separate documents in InfoXpert for the Cemetery Improvement Plans for each individual community.