

Why do we need a new cemetery?

Residents of Queanbeyan, Jerrabomberra and Googong are currently serviced for their burial and ash interment needs at the Queanbeyan General Cemetery on Lanyon Dr, Queanbeyan. This cemetery will run out of available plots within the next two to three years in its current form. There is very limited capacity to extend this cemetery. As at mid-July 2020, the Lanyon Dr Cemetery had 608 plots remaining.

The combined population of Queanbeyan, Jerrabomberra, Googong and surrounds that are being serviced by the Lanyon Dr Cemetery is 46,880 in 2020 and is expected to increase to 62,624 by 2036. It is critical that the community is provided with adequate cemetery facilities to service future generations. The new Memorial Park is proposed to service the community for the next 50-80 years.



How did Council choose a site?

Council commenced searching for a suitable site for a new Memorial Park/Cemetery in 2009. The search criteria included:

- Suitable land availability
- Proximity to city and urban areas, 10-15km radius
- Allow for future urban infill growth and greenfield developments at Googong and South Jerrabomberra
- Proximity to main roads
- Able to accommodate separated exit and entrance
- Minimum site of 35 hectares of memorial park, including buffer zones, access roads and facilities
- Topography predominately flat to slight undulation
- Consistent subsoil depths to 3.5m deep
- Outside the 100-year river flood zone preferred
- Low water tables desirable, ideally minimum 3.5 metres
- Avoid significant environmental constraints, e.g. Googong Dam, eastern escarpment, E1 & E2 zoned Conservation Lands.

How many locations did Council consider when searching for a site?

Council initially conducted a locality search based on the criteria. Eight specific properties within the selected localities were considered during the search. All but one failed due to environmental/geotechnical assessment or were not available for acquisition.

Who will the new Memorial Park service?

The proposed Memorial Park will service the population of Queanbeyan, Jerrabomberra, Googong and surrounds. It will be a general, multi-denominational facility catering for all religions, cultures and beliefs. ACT residents will be able to purchase space in the cemetery and equally Queanbeyan residents may choose to use cemeteries within the ACT or other regional towns.

Will the site include a crematorium?

No. The Planning Proposal being prepared for the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment specifically excludes a crematorium on the site.

Will ashes be placed onsite and will they be affected by wind?

Ashes will be interred at the new Memorial Park, like all other cemeteries across the Queanbeyan Palerang region. Ashes are either placed within a Niche Wall or in a Columbarium, buried within a garden, bushland or within a burial plot. Ashes placed in walls or columbarium are contained within a sealed container and when buried they are within biodegradable bags. Council does not allow ashes to be scattered over the surface.

Has Council considered the social impact of establishing a new Memorial Park?

Yes. In July 2017 Council resolved to include an independent Social Impact Assessment into the process. A Social Impact Report was prepared by consultants, Coffey, in 2018 and an independent Social Impact Assessment was conducted, by Elton Consulting, in 2019. Both documents are available on Council's website for viewing.

Will there be any noise or visual impact?

The project is currently in the early land-use planning stage and as part of the studies, a Noise Impact Assessment was completed. Visual impact will be addressed during the development application and design phase, however, all feedback provided by the community will be taken into consideration during the design. Extensive tree planting, screen planting and a low level of lighting would ensure the rural setting is not adversely impacted.

Will there be large buildings?

Any building on site would be designed to reflect the rural character of the surrounding setting. While it is not envisaged that any large structures would be built, if the planning proposal is approved, there would be a need for "farm style" machinery and equipment storage and possible chapel. We expect that the existing homestead will be retained and used for management of the site.

Are we able see plans of what it will look like?

If the Planning Proposal is approved, detailed layout plans, architecture and landscape plans will be prepared during the development application phase. These plans will evolve through further community consultation.

It is proposed to develop a Memorial Park within broad open parklands with a strong rural theme. Actual burial sites would be set in landscaped gardens and spaces designed to provide privacy to visitors.

What would be the hours of operation when the cemetery is complete?

Currently Council operates its local cemeteries on a dawn to dusk basis. The gates are locked to the public at dusk and staff only conduct maintenance between 7am and 4pm. Funerals generally take place between 9am and 3pm weekdays. The proposed Memorial Park would work to similar operating hours. A business plan will be prepared prior to operations commencing.

What will be done to prevent loud, anti-social behaviour, especially at night?

Council has not experienced loud or anti-social behaviour at the current active cemeteries in Queanbeyan, Bungendore or Braidwood. The majority of the community is highly respectful within active cemeteries. This is common in close communities where many people have a loved one or know others within the cemetery. Notwithstanding this, Council engages security patrols and utilises CCTV monitoring.

What is the process from here to the operation of the Memorial Park?

- All background studies and the summary report are now out for consultation
- Report with submissions from community engagement and an independent facilitator's report from a community meeting be presented to Council.
- Submit the proposal and all necessary studies including a report on community engagement to the Department for Ministerial approval
- Pending the Minister's approval of the Planning Proposal:
 - Concept designs will be developed whilst engaging with the community
 - A Business Plan will be developed
 - Then the development application (DA) can be prepared and assessed which will include neighbour notification and consultation
 - Then the DA will be referred to the Southern Regional Planning Panel for a decision
- Call tenders for:
 - Construction of Memorial Park
 - Operation of Memorial Park

Who is the Consent Authority?

The first stage of the process is to secure approval for the Planning Proposal. For this, the NSW Minister for Planning is the Consent Authority. If the Minister approves the use of the land for a Memorial Park/Cemetery, a development application is then lodged with Council where it will be processed and referred to the Southern Regional Planning Panel for a decision.

Does Council own the land that the proposed Memorial Park will be on?

Yes. Council purchased the land in 2017 following negotiations with the owner.

Prior to exchanging contracts, Council undertook some preliminary environmental and geotechnical investigations to gain an understanding of whether it was viable to proceed with the proposal. These investigations did not highlight any significant issues and the contracts were exchanged. While the preliminary investigations did not show any issues, a range of other studies and investigations have been undertaken and are now available for public comment.

How is Council paying for this and will my rates be affected?

Council will fund the planning and proposed construction of the Memorial Park via a low-interest loan via the NSW Treasury Corporation. The loan will be repaid from revenue collected from the operation of the Memorial Park. The loan for the proposed Memorial Park has been factored into Council's Long Term Financial Plan and will not require a Special Rate Variation.

Why can't we join with the ACT to use their new cemetery?

Communities generally have an expectation that they will be able to be buried within their local community. Councils and governments have an obligation to plan for the long term provision of critical social infrastructure, including cemeteries, to service the community into the future. It is not reasonable to rely on a neighbouring state or community to provide this service.

Can I give feedback?

Yes. We are currently seeking feedback from the wider community in regards to the Planning Proposal and all the studies completed are on exhibition. Submissions will be received up to 4.30pm on 5 October 2020.

If the Planning Proposal is approved and a development application is lodged, there will be further community consultation and opportunities for feedback.

Why can't Council extend the Lanyon Drive Lawn Cemetery?

There are a number of reasons that the Lanyon Drive Lawn Cemetery cannot be extended. The land across the road on the other side of Lanyon Drive (accessed from Hoover Road) is zoned E1 and is owned and managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service because of its environmental importance. The large property nearby on Lanyon Drive is zoned E2: Environmental Conservation and is not appropriate for a cemetery or memorial park.



Current lawn cemetery

Current bushland cemetery

Land zoned E1:
National Parks
and
Nature
Reserves

Base of Mount
Jerrabomberra

Land zoned E2:
Environmental
Conservation

Poplars Business
Park