

# **2025-2030** CEMETERIES ACTION PLAN





# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and thank them for their care of the land, water and sky and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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# Introduction

Dubbo Regional Council (DRC) is a local government organisation operating 22 cemeteries across the Dubbo Region.

The Council was formed in 2016 through a merger of the City of Dubbo and Wellington Council as part of a widespread council amalgamation program and covers an area of 7,500 sq.km. Dubbo Regional Council consists of the city of Dubbo, the township of Wellington and the villages of Geurie, Wongarbron, Ballimore, Eumungerie, Mumbil, Euchareena, Stuart Town, Mogriguy, Elong Elong, Brocklehurst, Gollan and Goolma.

DRC is accountable to the state government via a regulating body (Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW) and to the people of the Dubbo Region. We are therefore pleased to share with you our strategic vision and action plan for 2025-2030.

The purpose of this strategy is to inform our customers about how council are going to work to deliver quality services for residents, businesses and our communities. By placing our customers at the heart of everything we do, and engaging both our staff and customers in planning for the future, Council will design and deliver cemetery services that not only meet, but anticipate, our customers' diverse and evolving needs.

## LGA at a glance

**Population 57,298** (2024 ERP)

**22 Cemeteries**

**~55 Hectares**

**160 Burials per year**

**30 Ashes interments per year**



# About Us

Our 22 cemeteries spread across the Dubbo Region, have been here for generations. Many of these cemeteries are sites of cultural and historical significance, and DRC proudly preserves the shared history of our communities for the benefit of future generations.

DRC is responsible for the care and long-term maintenance of our distinctive cemetery locations and funds activities through fees charged to fulfil its obligations under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 and other legislative and local government requirements.

We provide burial and memorialisation services to meet the needs of all the communities we have the privilege of working with.

DRC recognises the social, environmental, technological and economic changes occurring within our community. We are developing sustainable memorial options, embracing modern innovations to ensure that the services offered to the community today are meaningful, whilst continuing to innovate for tomorrow.

We look ahead to ensure the rich and diverse cultural traditions that take place on our sites can adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world.

We invite feedback and input into our projects and initiatives, giving the community the opportunity to understand and contribute to our decision-making processes.

DRC embraces the diversity of the communities we work within. We come from a range of backgrounds and age groups, and bring different perspectives to our work, united by a clear commitment to providing compassionate service.

## Our Vision, Purpose and Values



### Progressive

Be Curious, Courageous and Committed

- Challenging the status quo
- Finding better ways
- Seeking change and innovation



### Sustainable

Balanced Approach to Growth and Opportunity

- Financially sound
- Social equity
- Conscientious leadership and governance
- Environmentally responsible



### One Team

Working Together

- We take care of each other and ourselves
- Partnering to deliver better outcomes
- Fostering positive experience
- Investing in people



### Integrity

Accountable for Our Actions

- Valuing and acknowledging our cultures
- Leading by example
- Open and ethical practices
- Upholding our commitments

### Our Vision

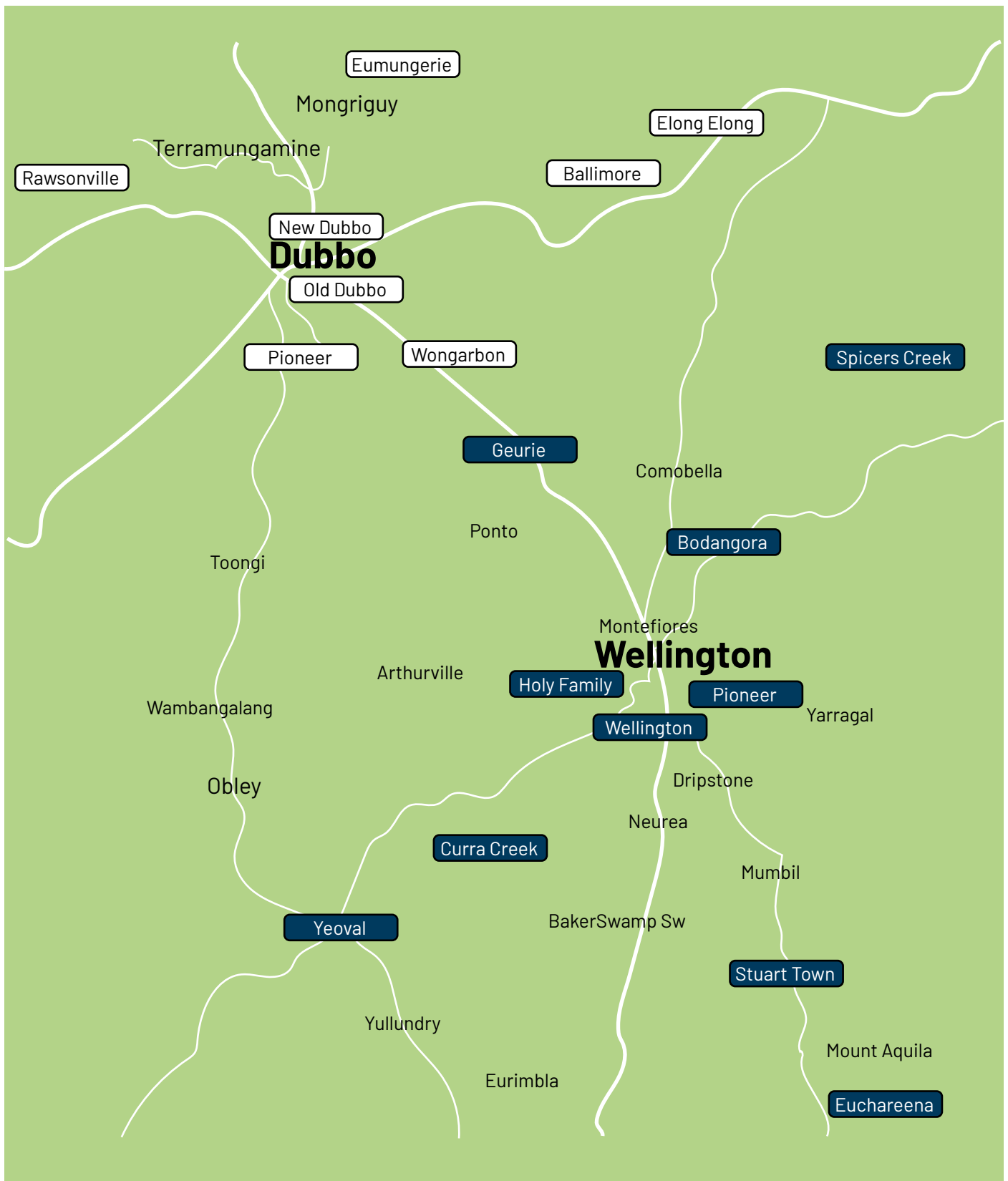
Creating Community for Today and Tomorrow

### Our Purpose

Lead, Connect, Deliver

### Our Values

# The Cemetery Lifecycle

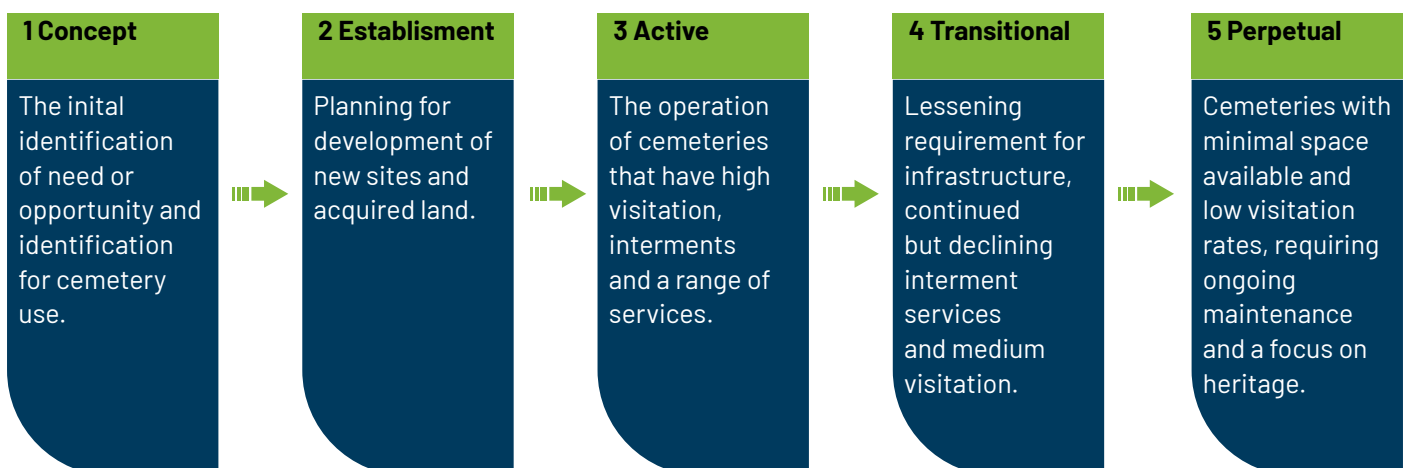


Dubbo operational area



Wellington operational area

#	Site	Lifecycle Stage
1	Ballimore Cemetery	Perpetual
2	Bodangora Cemetery	Perpetual
3	Curra Creek Cemetery	Perpetual
4	Dubbo Pioneer Cemetery	Perpetual
5	Elong Elong Cemetery	Transitional
6	Euchareena Cemetery	Transitional
7	Eumungerie Cemetery	Perpetual
8	Geurie Cemetery	Transitional
9	Holy Family Cemetery	Active
10	New Dubbo Cemetery	Active
11	Nubrigyn, Euchareena Cemetery	Perpetual
12	Old Dubbo Cemetery	Perpetual
13	Rawsonville Cemetery	Transitional
14	Rozelayne – Curra Creek Cemetery	Perpetual
15	Spicers Creek Cemetery	Transitional
16	Stuart Town Cemetery	Transitional
17	Tubba-gah Aboriginal Burial Ground	Active (managed by Dubbo Local Aboriginal Land Council)
18	Uamby – Lahy Pioneer Cemetery	Perpetual
19	Wellington Lawn Cemetery	Active
20	Wellington Monumental Cemetery	Perpetual
21	Wellington Pioneer Cemetery	Perpetual
22	Wongarbon Cemetery	Perpetual
23	Yeoval Cemetery	Transitional





# Strategic Priorities

DRC have identified the follow key strategic priorities to be pursued:

- Governance and Compliance
- Improve Information and Connectivity
- Strategic Engagement
- Sustainable Growth

The strategic priorities have been determined in alignment with the Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan which identified the following Dubbo Region community aspirations:

*5.3: The lifestyle and social needs of the community are supported.*

*5.3.3: People have access to a range of burial and interment options.*

*5.3.3.1 Develop long term management plans for cemetery facilities and ensure required service support.*

## Governance and Compliance

The overarching governance and management of cemeteries is the cornerstone to ensuring short, medium and long-term movement towards financial sustainability and continued community support for cemetery services.

Once solid foundations are in place regarding structures and processes there is an opportunity to then examine more detailed aspects of the services offered, including the pricing of interment services and ensuring that long-term sustainability can be achieved by master planning.

Operation of cemeteries is regulated by a range of legislation, most significantly the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 (CC Act). The Act is the result of the NSW Government's reform agenda for the industry and was passed in November 2013, with the majority of the Act coming into force on 1 November 2014.

Moving forward it is critical that Council's operations continue to align with industry regulation. It is now also an opportune time to review current forms and processes to align with industry standards, particularly given feedback from stakeholders.





## Improve Information and Connectivity

After governance and compliance issues are addressed, there is an opportunity to improve the communities understanding of cemetery operation. Focusing on ensuring operational efficiency and proactively addressing inefficient business practices, most of which are historic legacies.

In recent years significant progress has been made. Data has been painstakingly cleansed and transferred into a new system and a Cemetery Policy is being created. Processes and procedures have been updated and steps taken towards compliance with the specific requirements of the CC Act, Interment Industry Scheme and accompanying regulations.

Community awareness of Council's cemetery activity has also been enhanced by the continued development of the council web site. Cemetery contractors have also been included in mainstream contractor inductions and a new registration process.

Currently, there is still a significant amount of work required to implement the service improvements and to align documented procedures and policies.

## Strategic Engagement

Whilst the ultimate capacity of a cemetery is subject to many considerations and the uptake of burial sites can change rapidly in comparison to the life of the cemetery, understanding the remaining capacity is important. Future master planning is also critical to accurately determining the most effective utilisation of the remaining areas.

Correspondingly, the level of maintenance of these areas also changes. To assist in this direction, the development of master plans will highlight the delineation of areas where greater maintenance may be expected (particularly within the short to medium term periods).

## Sustainable Growth

A number of cemeteries in the DRC area have a rich social history and are of heritage significance to past, present and future generations. Whilst some are now inactive, others continue to operate for occasional burial requirements, incurring ongoing costs for maintenance and occasional improvements such as fencing and repair of infrastructure. In this context, consideration needs to be given to Council's perpetual maintenance obligations and where there may be opportunities to supplement other minimal incomes with further opportunities that can assist Council to meet long-term care needs.

Whenever changes are being considered for older cemeteries, it is important that such changes are made within a clear framework of the historical and heritage importance of the site.

The long-term infrastructure needs of the cemeteries requires careful consideration moving forward to establish the need to replace existing assets, and the development of future assets to meet the needs of the community.

Ultimately this process will be a balance between providing attractive and appropriately well-maintained sites with the long-term costs of implementation and replacement of assets at the end of their useful life.





# Implementation Plan

Strategic Objective	Deliverable	Timeline
<b>Governance and Compliance</b>		
1. Develop long term management plans for cemetery facilities and ensure required service support.	1.1 Develop standalone policies for cemetery use (public), interment and for monumental masonry, to clearly articulate requirements and processes.	Completed
2. Provide transparent, fair and accountable cemetery governance.	2.1 That pricing for core services, particularly plot reservations and interments, be harmonised and slowly increased between the two operational areas to better match the current costs of service operation including long-term perpetual maintenance.	Completed
	2.2 That in reviewing and adjusting pricing, the higher costs for interment in village cemeteries be recognised through higher fees.	Completed
	2.3 Prepare content which highlights key product offerings, their cost and availability, for publication on Council's website and for distribution to Funeral Directors and the community.	Completed
3. Work collaboratively with government and stakeholders on cemetery related issues.	3.1 Utilise advisory guidance and templates produced by CCNSW to review policies and procedures and ensure ongoing compliance with the Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2013 and related legislation.	Immediate
	3.2 Implement a recurring monument safety review process, with guidance to be sought from Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW to develop a process which meets best practice standards	Short-term
<b>Improve Information and Connectivity</b>		
4. Technological capabilities meet the requirements of Council and the Community.	4.1 Review existing cemetery management software with a view to enabling cemetery mapping, public access and ultimately, online bookings to be facilitated and which enables consistent and accurate record keeping/reporting.	Completed
5. Encourage and facilitate two-way communication with and between stakeholders and the community.	5.1 Ensure ongoing customer service training to improve customer relationships at the public interface (ground staff) and administration/management (with funeral directors and industry participants).	On-going
	5.2 Undertake regular review meetings/industry liaison to ensure that grounds maintenance, communication and associated processes can be improved over time and through clear information channels.	On-going
<b>Strategic Engagement</b>		
6. Cemetery options meet the current and future needs of our Community.	6.1 Undertake soil testing at the Wellington Cemetery to establish an indication of current soil depths, utilising this information to inform master planning.	Short-term

# Implementation Plan

Strategic Objective	Deliverable	Timeline
	6.2 Undertake a master plan for the Wellington Lawn Cemetery to confirm estimated plot numbers, future layout and key design directions.	Short-term
	6.3 Undertake a master plan for the New Dubbo Cemetery to confirm estimated plot numbers, future layout and key design directions.	Short-term
	6.4 Monitor burial numbers, and examine the potential for increasing memorialisation options as a revenue source, into the future.	On-going
<b>Sustainable Growth</b>		
7. The growth, development and diversification of the interment industry is supported.	7.1 In the context of master plan reviews or as otherwise pursued, Council investigate options for the provision of public toilet facilities to be available in, or adjoining, New Dubbo Cemetery and accessible during cemetery opening hours.	Medium-term
	7.2 That improvements be made to the main entry points and access arrangements at New Dubbo and Wellington Lawn cemeteries with a view to combining high use access areas with localities for burial and memorialisation.	Medium-term
	7.3 Investigate options for improvement to the main access road through Old Dubbo Cemetery, potentially incorporating formalised parallel parking, landscape and memorialisation opportunities.	Medium-term
	7.4 Provision of new memorialisation options be incorporated into site master plans, with a view to significantly increasing revenues from memorials over the medium to longer-term.	Long-term
	7.5 Review maintenance regimes at all cemeteries, with a view to gradually focusing maintenance on higher use areas and establishing maintenance regimes over lower use areas that enable a more focused approach for similar effort.	Medium-term

## Deliverables are given timeframes as follows:

- Immediate - to be completed in the next year;
- Short-term - to be completed in the next 2 years;
- Medium-term - to be completed in the next 5 years); or
- Long-term - to be completed beyond 2030.
- On-going - where there is no set commencement or completion date and the action recommended forms part of the on-going activities of the service.



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