

RECONCILIATION MEMORIAL EAST KEMPSEY CEMETERY

How the Project Began

The Reconciliation Memorial project at East Kempsey Cemetery commenced in response to enquiries from local Aboriginal families seeking information to assist in locating unmarked graves of family members dating from the early 1940's.

Responsibility for the cemeteries was transferred from church groups and trustees to Kempsey Shire Council in 1967. In 2006 a partnership was formed with the Aboriginal community to establish the "Lost but not Forgotten Memorial".

As a result of this partnership a survey of the ground using non-destructive radar was used to recognise unmarked burial sights that had not been marked with headstones. Dozens of graves, some up to 90 years old were detected. To acknowledge the



presence of the graves, a memorial boulder and plaque was placed near the site. The boulder and plaque were unveiled by the Mayor of Kempsey Shire Council at the time, Councillor Betty Green, and Dunghutti Elders on 19 December 2006.

The Project Continues

Following on from the success of the installation of the memorial at the first scanned site in 2006, further steps have been taken to scan this section of the East Kempsey Cemetery. In a joint effort between Kempsey Shire Council and H & H Accredited Training Australasia Inc the following works are being undertaken, with the works due to be completed by June 2009.

- Laying of concrete borders around the perimeter of the site.
- Establishing a rainbow serpent pathway through the area.
- A large timber cross constructed by the Aboriginal Connection Building Company with the assistance of Guri Wa Ngundagar.
- Famous artist Richard Campbell painting a significant Aboriginal dreamtime story on the timber cross.
- Planting of kangaroo paw plants and grass trees.
- A memorial wall in remembrance of those resting in peace.
- Statues of angels guarding over this site and beautifying the area.
- Two (2) bench seats to be installed.
- Timber surrounds around some of the smaller graves.
- Planting of Lillipillies either end of the project.

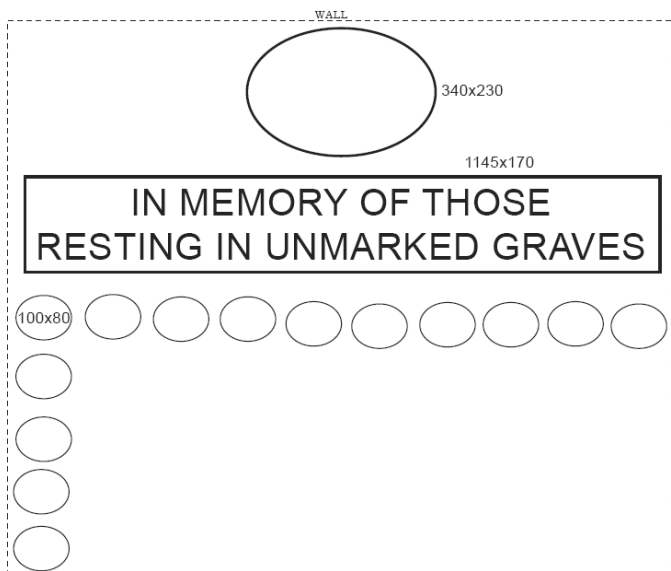




Stage one included barricading the site, appropriate signage, marking areas which will have external borders, and design of the rainbow serpent path. The next stage will incorporate concrete borders being placed around the 81 gravesites. The gravesites will be marked in clusters as this is the most practical method of externally acknowledging the sites.



This project is of very spiritual significance. There are many Aboriginal people who do not know where family members are buried in the cemetery. The memorial will create a remembering place and bring them some comfort through recognition, respect and acknowledgement of their loved ones.



Memory Plaques

Oval shaped plaques will be available for family members to place under the main bronze plaque which will have the wording "IN MEMORY OF THOSE RESTING IN UNMARKED GRAVES". If you would like to purchase a plaque (at \$90 each) please contact Council's Customer First Centre on 6566 3200.

We need Your Help

Over the years, any temporary markers on graves in this section have disappeared with only one headstone surviving. One other monument has been erected in recent times by a family member able to identify the location of an old grave. The process of identifying existing burial sites is important as Kempsey Shire Council is keen to allocate new burial space alongside existing burials in the cemetery.

Over half of the names for unmarked graves that date from the 1940s to 1967 have been identified and it is hoped that many more will be found through volunteers assisting staff in research. If you have any information of persons who may have been buried in the East Kempsey Cemetery in an unmarked grave or would like further information on the project, please contact Jennifer Colling or Tracey Edwards on 6566 3200 or email ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au or visit Council's website at www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au.



Acknowledgements

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