

# ARAKOON CEMETERY MANAGEMENT PLAN



**Lighthouse Road, Arakoon**

**Adopted by Council  
9<sup>th</sup> January 2001**

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**Entry to Arakoon Cemetery.**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

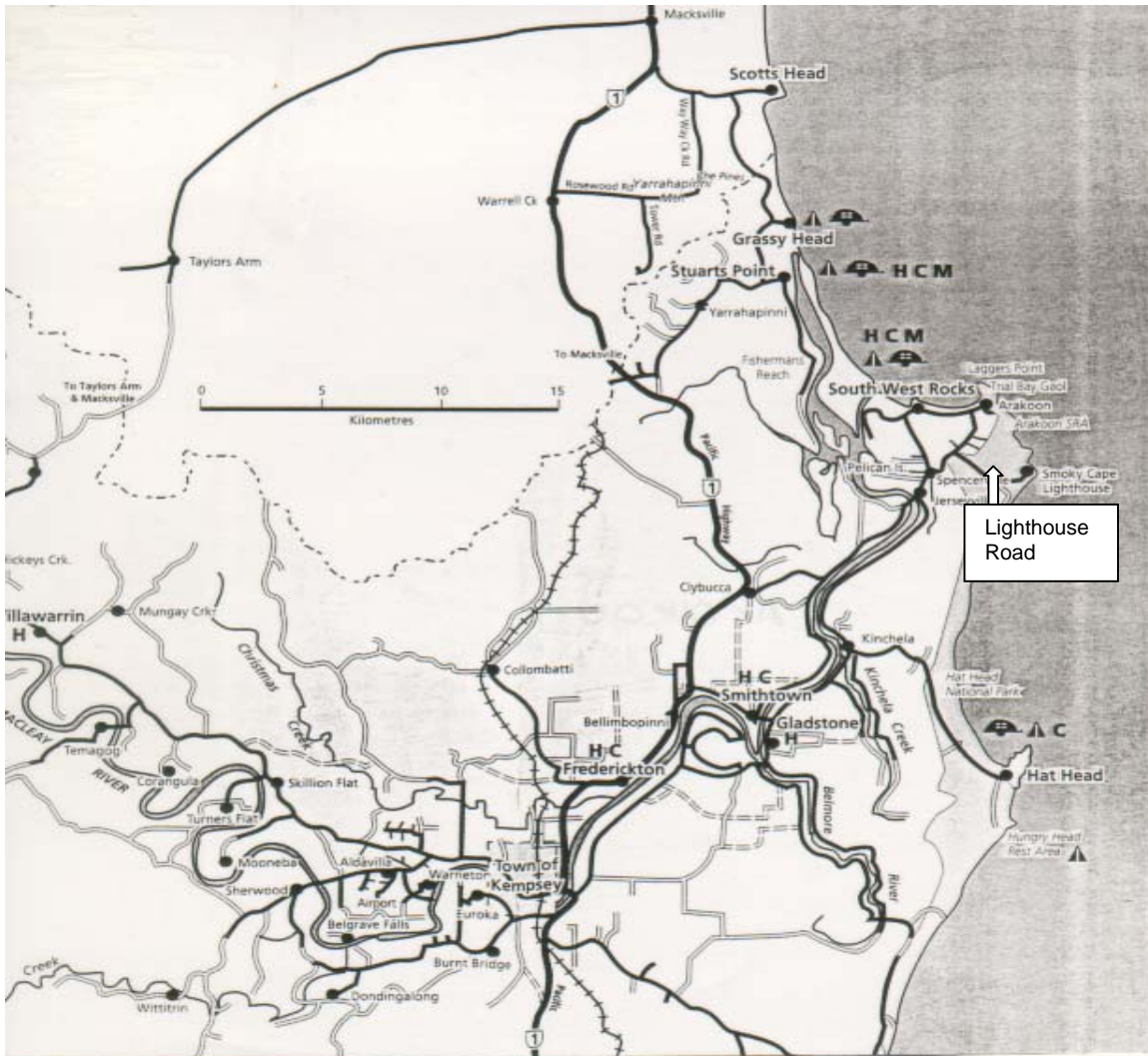
Arakoon Cemetery is located off Lighthouse Road, Arakoon. The cemetery is set in a bush land setting.

### 1.2 Where this Plan Applies

The Arakoon Cemetery is located at Lighthouse Road, Arakoon, DP 754396, Parish of Arakoon, County of Macquarie.

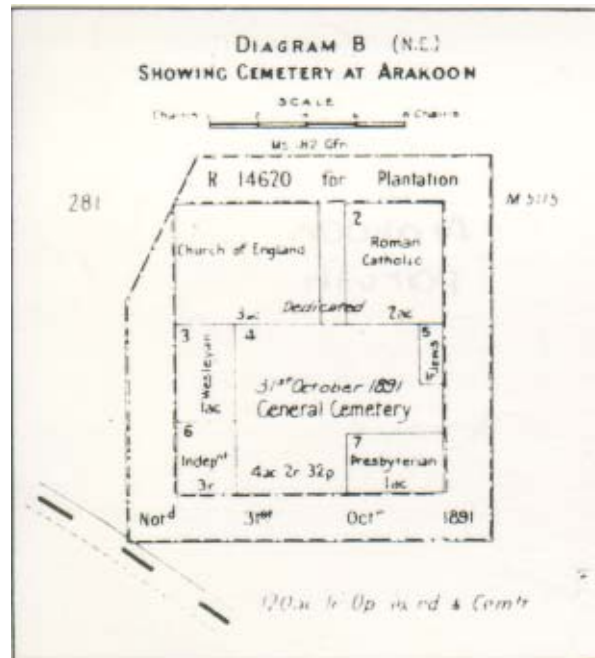
The Arakoon Cemetery is a Crown Reserve No. 14621

#### 1.2.1 Regional Location Map

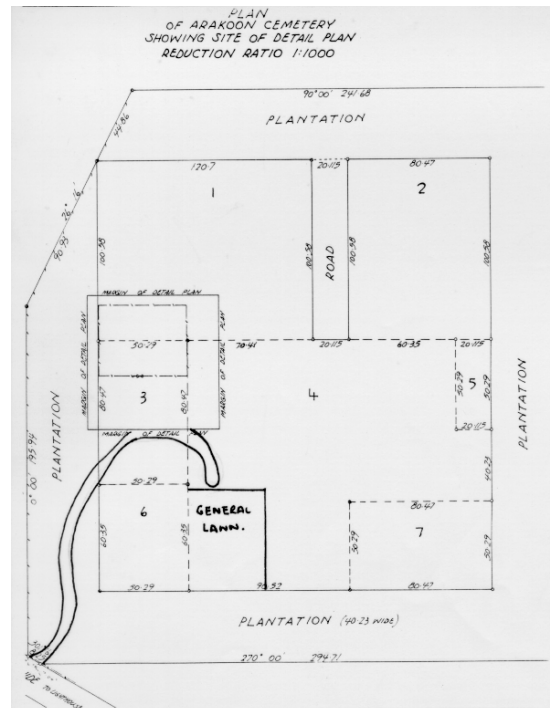


### 1.2.2 Plan of the Cemetery

Copy of Parish Map with Arakoon Cemetery original gazettal.



Copy of Arakoon Cemetery today.



### **1.3 Previous Planning Strategies on the land**

18 March 1997	DCP No 24 – Access and Mobility
16 June 1998	DCP No 25 – Advertising Signs in Kempsey Shire
21 July 1998	DCP No 28 – Leasing of Public Areas for Restaurants and Cafes
1 July 1993	Classified – Crown Land
1 July 1993	Plan of Management – Not Applicable – Crown Land

### **1.4 Summary of History of the Cemetery**

The history of the Cemetery is chronologised as follows:-

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EVENT(s)</b>
?	First known burial conducted
31 <sup>st</sup> October 1891	Reservation of cemetery gazetted
1960's	Cemetery was transferred to Councils Control
1985/86	Columbarium wall was constructed.
1996	Ashes Garden was constructed.
1997	General Lawn Cemetery was constructed
1998	First Interment in General Lawn took place.
1999	Water tank installed
2000	Extension of Columbarium Walls
2002	Information Signs erected.



**General Section of the Cemetery.**

## **2.0 CURRENT PRACTICES AND SERVICES**

**Aim:** Councils aim in undertaking maintenance is to control grass and weeds around gravesites. Maintenance of headstones is not part of Councils maintenance regime due to the professional requirements of such an undertaking and Councils limited funding.

### **2.1 Horticultural Maintenance**

#### **2.1.1 Mowing**

Mowing of the cemetery is undertaken at regular intervals by day labour staff

#### **2.1.2 Control of Weeds and Problem Species**

Weeds are controlled by treatment with a biodegradable herbicide. Graves are also whipper snipped around when they are mown as part of the maintenance mowing operation.

Weed control is undertaken between September and November each year prior to the growing season.

### **2.2 Rubbish Removal**

Garbage bins are located around the cemetery. The rubbish is removed by the day labour staff at regular intervals and before and after special occasions such as Mothers and Fathers Days, Christmas, Easter and Anzac Days.

### **2.3 Water Supply**

The Arakoon Cemetery is not connected to the town water supply. A water tank has been provided at the cemetery to meet this need.

### **2.4 Power Supply**

There is no connection to a mains power supply.

### **2.5 Fire Control**

Fire can have disastrous effects on cemeteries. Local fire authorities are to help with the prevention of fire damage to cemeteries by ensuring that there are adequate firebreaks around the boundaries and within larger sites. A fire control plan will be put in place to manage this emergency and will be undertaken by the NSW Rural Fire Service.

### **2.6 Roadways**

Roadways that make up part of the cemetery should be maintained in a weed-free condition and devoid of public safety hazards.

## **3.0 HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **3.1 Current Management Structure**

The current management structure is as follows:-

*Community Services Department Staff*

Director Community Services – Operations overview

Community Services Officer – Handles the day to day management of the cemeteries.

*Operational Services Department Staff*

Co-ordinator– supervises day labour staff

Head Grave Digger – Day labour staff

Assistant Grave Digger – Day labour staff

### **3.2 Future Management Structure**

Councils cemeteries are currently being maintained by Day labour staff.

Currently Council maintains eight (8) cemeteries. During the past two summers the gravediggers have had the assistance of an additional employee to assist with the maintenance.

If Council is to increase the level of service at the cemeteries there is a need to look at its human resources.

## **4.0 FINANCE**

### **4.1 *Financial Resources***

An examination of cemeteries financial reports indicates that income is only sufficient to allow for basic horticultural management with occasional capital works funded. Unless a more substantial funding base is achieved cemetery management cannot hope to further its objectives.

Various funding options available to Cemetery services are provided below:-

#### **4.1.1 *Direct Allocation***

Kempsey Shire Council funds the continual maintenance of the cemeteries from its annual operating budget. This budget is allocated in July of every year. The 2000 / 2001 operating budget is \$172,000 for all of Council's cemetery services.

#### **4.1.2 *State Government Allocation***

Cemeteries which are Crown Reserves or community land may receive recurrent allocations from State government and may be eligible to apply for funds from particular sources.

#### **4.1.3 *Grants and Loans***

Governments make grants and loans available from time to time under such schemes as the National Estate Grants Program and the Heritage Assistance Program. In New South Wales, many small cemetery conservation projects have been assisted financially by these means. Outright grants are becoming less common, and most government agencies expect organisations applying for funds to raise a significant proportion of the amount they need, usually at least \$ for \$.

Under some funding schemes, applicants can obtain loans at attractive rates, sometimes with deferred repayments.

The New South Wales Department of Land and Water Conservation administers the Public Reserves Management Fund from which some grants are made available for regular operating costs of some cemeteries which are Crown Reserves, allocated on a recurrent rather than an annual basis.

#### **4.1.4 *Sponsorship/Donations***

Relatives of those buried in a cemetery could be approached to assist with the conservation of their forebear's graves. They may also be prepared to donate funds for memorial gardens, walls or seats.

#### **4.1.5 *Merchandising***

While the cemetery may not seem to offer many merchandising opportunities, there is scope for the production, for sale, of volumes of biographical information about people in their respective cemeteries, and this is another avenue which may be developed further.

Examples from Waverley Councils biographies are linked to themes such as “Crime and Punishment” and “Arts and Literature” and complement guided tours of the cemetery conducted by that Councils’ Local History Librarian.

#### **4.1.6 Burial Fees and Other Fees for Services**

Attached at Appendix A is a schedule of fees levied for burials, placement of ashes, administrative fees for monumental works, and other cemeteries services.

## **5.0 COMMUNITY NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS**

Many cemeteries today can fulfil multiple purposes as places of burial and remembrance, genealogical research and passive recreation. A visitor survey is a useful way that will help to define the needs and expectations the local community has for there cemetery.

### **5.1 Visitor Profile**

As part of the process of undertaking the Cemetery Management Plan for the Arakoon Cemetery a Visitor Survey was produced and advertised extensively in the Shire. A copy of the Survey is attached at Appendix B.

Four (4) surveys where received from the community relating to this cemetery. One of these surveys related to the original cemetery of South West Rocks / Arakoon which is on private land located at Gap Beach Road, Arakoon. Whilst this may seem as nominal it does represent the different community needs and expectations that exist.

#### **5.2.1 Visitor Characteristics**

The Visitor Characteristics component of the survey shows a breakdown of the community who have an interest in the cemetery and would like to contribute to the make up of it.

##### **5.2.1.2 Group Composition**

Of the people who participated in the survey three (3) of these were male. The fourth participant declined to provide their gender.

##### **5.2.1.3 Place of Residence**

Of the participants that took part three (3) resided at South West Rocks and one (1) at Kempsey.

#### **5.3.2 Patterns of Use**

The following information details how the cemetery is used by the Community.

#### **5.3.2.1 Times of Use**

The survey revealed that one (1) participant visits the cemetery on a daily basis, two (2) on a yearly basis and one (1) visits less than yearly.

All four (4) participants generally stayed for less than 1 hour.

#### **5.3.2.2 Mode of Travel**

The participants all travelled to the cemetery by car.

The participants travelled alone (2), with family (1) and with an organised group (1).

#### **5.3.2.3 Main Purpose of Visit**

The participants visited the cemetery mainly to visit graves (2), attend funerals and undertake research.

#### **5.3.2.4 Likes**

The participants generally liked the open and peaceful nature of the cemetery and the historical content of the site.

#### **5.3.2.5 Dislikes**

Only one comment of dislike about the cemetery was the derelict state. (This refers to the original cemetery at Gap Beach Road.)

#### **5.3.2.6 Preferred Improvements**

The participants believed that the provision of a water tank, improved access and the placement of grass on bare ground are required at the cemetery.

A water tank was erected at the cemetery in the 1999/2000 financial year.



**Columbarium Walls and Ashes Garden.**

## **6.0 ARAKOOK CEMETERY ASSETS**

As part of the plan all of the Cemetery assets have to be quantified and relevant programs implemented for their maintenance and new facilities / assets identified.

### **6.1 Current Assets**

The current assets of the cemetery are as follows:-

- Land component of the cemetery,
- Columbarium Walls,
- Ashes Garden, and
- Bitumen driveways.

### **6.2 Future Assets**

The Arakoon Cemetery is situated on a large reserve area that has not been fully utilised. It will be considerable years before the extension of Arakoon Cemetery needs to be considered or undertaken.

The interment of ashes in Columbarium walls at the Arakoon Cemetery is a regular occurrence. Currently there are two (2) walls at the Cemetery that meet the current specification of ashes containers. These walls are rapidly filling up and it is anticipated that in the next two (2) to three (3) years another wall will need to be erected to meet the demand for placement of ashes in Columbarium walls.

The Cemetery Asset Management Program for all cemeteries is detailed further in Section 10.

## **7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE**

### **7.1 Public Safety**

Cemetery management and staff are committed to a policy of risk management and public liability minimisation. Regular inspections and monitoring of the site should be carried out to identify potential and future risks and hazards. Reports of hazards and incidents are made, and log books of remedial actions taken will be kept.

Any identified public safety hazards should be removed and/or appropriate warning signs and barricades erected as soon as possible.

Adequate levels of insurance to cover public liability should be maintained.

## **7.2 Occupational Health and Safety**

Cemetery managers and staff are bound by the provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* and its Regulations, Codes of Practice and Guidelines.

A number of Australian Standards relevant to Occupational Health and Safety are applicable to cemeteries. These include:

*AS 1470 – 1986 – Health and Safety at Work*  
*AS 4204 – 1994 – Headstones and Monuments*  
*AS 1657 – 1985 – Fixed Platforms, Walkways, Stairs and Ladders*  
*AS 2727 – 1984 – Chain-saws – Guide to Safe Working Practices*  
*AS 2726 – 1984 – Chain-saw Safety Requirements*  
*AS 1716 – 1994 – Selection, Use and Maintenance of Respirators*  
*Draft AS 2865 – 1995 Safe Work in Confined Spaces*

Also relevant to cemetery operations are the following:

*Worksafe Australia Draft Ultra Violet Radiation Standard*  
*New South Wales Manual Handling Regulation – 1991*  
*National Standard NOHSC: 1001 (1990) – Manual Handling*  
*National Code of Practice NHOSC: 2005 (1990) – Manual Handling*

In all works cemetery management and staff must comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* and Regulations. Where the law requires a licence or permit for the operation of plant and equipment, the head Gravedigger (as a representative of Management must) ensures that all workers operating such plant and equipment have the relevant, current licence or permit. Whether or not a licence or permit is required, cemetery management ensures that all operators have been instructed in the safe and correct use of the plant and equipment, that the plant is stable on the ground, and that it is only operated within legally required distances from powerlines.

Cemetery management, staff, voluntary workers and contractors are made aware of Occupational Health and Safety practices / responsibilities. Regular safety audits for occupational health and safety must be carried out. Necessary safety procedures and measures (eg, OH &S training for staff, and provision of safety equipment) must be put in place.

Cemetery employees are made aware of the danger of UV radiation in the outdoor environment of the cemetery. During times of exposure employees are required to be well protected by clothing appropriate to their particular circumstances. Areas of exposed skin be kept to a minimum and a UV protective cream or lotion applied to exposed areas. Council provides employees required to work in wet weather with appropriate wet weather gear, and ensures that an adequate supply of clean, cool drinking water is available at all times.

## **7.3 Insurance Cover**

Adequate insurance cover should be maintained for the following:

- Public Liability
- Voluntary Workers
- Workers compensation (compulsory)

- Fire and damage to replaceable assets

Necessary monitoring and procedures to minimise health and safety risks to cemetery management, staff and visitors should be carried out, thereby limiting the exposure of the cemetery management authority to litigation. The value of assets should be assessed for insurance purposes and adequate cover for structures and contents maintained. A valuation of conservation works (eg, repairs to vaults) and assets (eg, shed, plant and equipment) should be carried out

## **8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Plans of management must continue to evolve. While they may be endorsed at a particular point in time, they must include provision for review and updating to allow for the fact that some of the plan's recommended strategies will have been implemented, or because circumstances have changed.

Possible changes relevant to a cemetery include the following:

- changes to the physical environment eg, natural disasters such as a major storm.
- changes to the economic environment eg, reduction in available funding as a result of cuts to grant programs, default on lease;
- changes to the organisational environment eg, abolition or restructuring of the management authority;
- changes to the social environment eg, type of stakeholder, for instance, demise of Friends group;
- changes to the political environment eg, change of government, leading to amended policy directions.

Consequently, the Plan needs to be reviewed and amended as necessary after a period of not more than five years. Cemetery management must also continue to be accountable to the community and should monitor and evaluate the Plan's performance and success in achieving its desired outcomes and strategies.



**General Lawn Section. - Opened 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998**

## 9.0 PHOTOGRAPHS OF ARAKOON CEMETERY



***Area available for future expansion.***

## **10 CEMETERY ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

As part of the Management of Change process the Cemetery Services Section of Council has been asked to implement a staged and prioritised program for the establishment and implementation of the Cemeteries Assets.

Several programs have been established. The different programs are as follows:-

### **Maintenance Programs**

The maintenance program is divided into two different programs. These programs are as follows:-

- The Maintenance Program – 4.x 3 months plan looks at how the cemetery is maintained in any given year and is applicable to all cemeteries under Councils care and control and
- The Maintenance Program – 3 x 1 year plan looks at the cemeteries existing assets and what maintenance of these assets needs to be undertaken. Appropriate requests with \$'s are prepared for Councils consideration with the Annual Budget.

Both these programs will ensure the continued maintenance of the current assets.

### **Asset Acquisition Programs**

The Asset Acquisition Program looks at acquiring assets that would benefit the cemeteries. There are two (2) programs that look at acquiring assets and are as follows:-

- Short Term Asset Acquisition Program,- looks at acquiring assets in the immediate future, and
- Long Term Asset Acquisition Program, - looks at acquiring assets in twenty (20) years time taking into consideration any potential growth of services.

These programs are explained further in the following pages.

## **11 APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Burial Fees and Other Fees for Services.

Appendix B – Visitor Survey.

## **12 GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Ashes Garden	A repository where ashes are placed.
Burial	To place deceased body into the ground.
Chronologised	To place in order starting with the first event.
Columbarium Wall	A repository where ashes are placed.
Crown Reserve	A parcel of land that is owned by the State Government of New South Wales and has been given to Council to manage the land.
DCP	Refers to a Development Control Plan that has been placed in by Council.
Gazettal	This is when an item of business is passed into practice by State Government and written notification is given.