CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery
Conservation Plan

Report prepared for
Cairns Regional Council

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Maxim Consulting Services Pty Ltd
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Conservation plan
McLeod Street Cemetery, Cairns

Introduction

The heritage listed McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery, Cairns, was used from 1877 until 1949 for interment. In subsequent years it was largely neglected until the mid 1980s when the then Cairns City Council resolved to develop a more pro-active management strategy. A Conservation Proposals document was developed in 1988 (Grimwade 1988) which was to provide the basis for its revitalisation over ensuing years. In 2012 Cairns Regional Council determined that after some twenty-four years that document needed updating: legislation had changed, there was a new local government administering the site and community needs and aspirations had changed dramatically.

Maxim Consulting Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the development of Conservation Plan to guide Council and community action from 2012.

Fig 1. Location map (see red arrow). Not to scale. Base map Courtesy Google Earth. c.2008

Property description

Original gazettal describes the place as Cemetery Reserve 274, section 36, Town of Cairns, County of Nares, district of Cook (Johnston, 1976:1).
Lot 813 C1987 (see plan overleaf at fig 2)
Heritage listed as Place ID 600383. McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery, 127 – 145 McLeod St, Cairns North.
Team
The study team commissioned by Council comprised: Gordon Grimwade, historical archaeologist and heritage site manager and Peter Maxwell, Conservator.

Both have been involved in various aspects of the cemetery’s conservation since 1988 when Gordon Grimwade completed the Conservation Proposals report (Grimwade 1988). Peter Maxwell subsequently undertook a range of conservation works relating to metal railings and fittings. Gordon Grimwade was frequently involved in providing technical and policy advice and overseeing stone conservation after spates of vandalism during that period.

Terms of reference
In summary, the terms of reference included the need to:

- Identify current threats to the cemetery fabric and recommend actions to address them;
- Identify maintenance needs and processes;
- Provide guidelines for standardised plaques/memorial markers, taking into account systems already in place at other CRC cemeteries;
- Assess security issues;
- Assess perimeter fencing of the site;
- Schedule short, medium and long term conservation works;
- Outline an induction program suitable for CRC cemetery maintenance crews, so that they understand the heritage significance of the site and how this impacts on maintenance;
- Provide a timetable for future reviews of the CMP;
- Identify interpretive themes and opportunities at the cemetery;
- Review the 1988 decision to rename the cemetery the ‘McLeod St Pioneer Cemetery’.

Study methods
Site visits were made to assess the current situation and to identify specific issues. In specific instances, focus meetings were held to discuss specific issues with key Council staff; for example, tree root damage was discussed with Council’s arborist.

Visits were made to the Cairns Museum/ Historical Society to establish the extent of their records relating to the cemetery. Cairns Regional Council archival records were
reviewed over several days to, primarily, provide updated information in respect of the period 1988 to present.

Various meetings were held with key stakeholder groups including representatives of Cairns & District Family History Society (CDFHS), Cairns Historical Society, National Trust of Qld (FNQ Branch) and Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc.

**Previous research**

The initial research in respect of the cemetery’s formative years was undertaken as part of the *Conservation Proposals* (Grimwade 1988) document that formed the basis for management of the site for the following twenty-four years.

Wide ranging research has been undertaken subsequent to that study. Notably this has included extensive genealogical research evident in the records of the CDFHS.

In addition several technical research papers and journal articles were produced. These have included Faezeh Parkes’s comprehensive student history project on stonemasons Melrose & Fenwick, 1989 and articles relating to cemetery conservation; for example, ‘Goats in the Cemetery’ (Grimwade 1989). Marie Nemec’s publication in 2002 of *Walking through McLeod Street Cemetery*, was a major contribution both to the records of the cemetery and to improving public access.

Research for the preparation of educational aids, such as *A Visit to the McLeod Street Cemetery* was undertaken by Ailsa Payne in conjunction with the Cairns Historical Society in about 1990.

**Acknowledgements**

The assistance provided by staff of the Cairns Regional Council and in particular, Ms T. Golding-Clarke, Ms L. Buckley, Mr B. Wilson, Mr P. Taylor, Mr J. Clarke, Mr P. Strother and his team and Martyn Street cemetery personnel is gratefully acknowledged.

Mss. Cynthia Edwards, Aileen Park and Dell Deed (Cairns Family History Society); Ms Suzanne Gibson, Dr Nicky Horsfall and Dr Dawn May (Cairns Historical Society), Dr Jan Wegner (National Trust of Qld FNQ Branch) and Ms Mary Low (Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc – CADCAI) assisted with constructive commentary on aspects of cemetery history and utilisation of the cemetery as a contemporary heritage resource.
Site history

Cairns history
For many centuries the Barron River floodplains on which Cairns was to subsequently develop was home to several Aboriginal clans. Gimuy-Yidinji country is traditionally around the southern area of Cairns with Freshwater Creek forming their western boundary and the Barron River forming their northern boundary. The Djabukai people claim that their traditional country is located to the north and west of Cairns. There are a number of tribal groupings who speak dialects of Djabukai including the Djabuganydjji, the Nyagali, the Guluy, the Buluwanjaggari and on the coastal strip, the Yirrigandji. The Yirrigandji people also claim the Cairns coastal strip extending up to the Lamb-MacAlister Ranges as their traditional country. The Yirrigandji’s territorial claim overlaps that of the Gimuy-Yidinji people from Skeleton Creek north to the Barron River.

Lieutenant James Cook and his crew are believed to be the first Europeans to sail past and name Trinity Inlet in 1770.

During the early nineteenth century British survey ships sporadically travelled up and down the Queensland coast, primarily mapping the coastline and shipping channels. With the exception of these early mariners the first Europeans to reach the Cairns region were undoubtedly bêche-de-mer fishermen. For example, J. S. V. Mein claimed to be operating a bêche-de-mer station on Green Island in 1858 (Jones 1976:14). Certainly by the late 1860s such activities were commonplace, and contact, peaceful or otherwise, with coastal Aboriginal groups was increasing.

It was not until 1873, however, that a systematic attempt was made to explore coastal lands north of the then most northern port of Cardwell. George Dalrymple led an expedition to survey the north-east coast and identify land suitable for agriculture and potential harbour sites. During that voyage the party explored Trinity Inlet and ‘anchored for the night close to the left bank inside the entrance . . . and formed camp on a patch of ground close to the beach; water was discovered about 200 yards along the beach westward and 100 yards inland, in a native well’ (Dalrymple 1874:631). His party encountered a number of Aborigines in outriggers; however they disappeared at the sight of the party.

Cairns was established in 1876 as an access port for the Hodgkinson Goldfield. The first party landed and camped in the area of Dalrymple’s earlier camp as he had recommended:

*Good water can be got anywhere in the neighbourhood of the settlement by sinking a few feet, and within a few hundred yards of the tents are native wells carrying permanent water and a swamp from which the indispensable element of excellent quality and quantity will always be obtainable . . . Although the blacks have not yet made their presence known . . . there are everywhere evidences that we are now occupying one of their favourite fishing grounds, where they in mobs of hundreds were accustomed to feast on shell-fish and other dainties . . . Less than a fortnight since a detachment numbering about 150 were seen . . . in the vicinity of the black police camp. They were not molested; but having doubtless discovered the proximity of the white man, they made a hurried retreat, leaving behind them sundry shields, wooden swords and other articles of offensive and defensive war material, which were afterwards found and*
During the late 1970s the city started a dramatic transformation to take a lead role in infrastructure left in its wake was utilised, demolished or left to decay. The city was re-established as a sugar and mining service centre.

Expansion was gradual and, at times, hampered by the coastal dunes and swales that now go largely unobserved beneath the urban expansion north to the Barron River and which incorporates the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery.

For part of World War Two, Cairns was at the forefront of the Pacific conflict with evacuation of much of the region as the conflict increased. After the war the infrastructure left in its wake was utilised, demolished or left to decay. The city was re-established as a sugar and mining service centre.

During the late 1970s the city started a dramatic transformation to take a lead role in northern tourism. Infrastructure expanded to meet this new demand. An international airport opened in 1984. The declaration of the Great Barrier Reef (1981) and the Wet Tropical Rainforests (1988) as World Heritage Areas provided major impetus for development. Major tourism projects such as Skyrail (August 1995) and the Reef Casino (1996) attracted additional residents and increasing visitor numbers.

In the early years of Cairns the McLeod Street Cemetery was serving the needs of a fluctuating population as its viability as a port was challenged by Port Douglas. Those shaky beginnings resulted in the town having a population of 1000 in 1885. In 1971 the population was around 33,000, long after that particular cemetery had been abandoned, and although the local authority boundaries had changed, the 2010 population exceeded 160,000.

**Site history**
The tenuous foothold on Trinity Bay that marked the arrival of European settlers in 1876 called for diverse public facilities ranging from wharves to roads, schools, medical services and, inevitably, a cemetery. Initially a cemetery was developed on the Esplanade near the site of the Cairns Base Hospital but was soon abandoned in favour of a new 5-acre site (section 36) among the coastal swales and dunes along what was to become McLeod Street. An additional 5 acres (section 35) was added in October 1877 (QHR entry 600383), which later became the Ergon electrical workshop and Cairns office.

Bodies from the first cemetery were apparently reinterred in the McLeod Street cemetery. In an editorial footnote to Johnston’s *The Public Cemetery – McLeod Street Cairns* the Cairns Historical Society newsletter editor noted section 36 was surveyed into twenty allotments each of 1 rood, and a noting on the plan indicates “allotments 1 to 5 and 16 to 20 have been fenced in and used as a cemetery”. This would appear to suggest that portion of the cemetery reserve had already been put to use for burials prior to the latter part of January 1877 (Johnston 1976:2).
Johnston however was unaware that a contract to fence the Esplanade graves was sought several years later. On 26 February 1885 tenders were called for, in part, 'fencing graves on Esplanade' (Cairns Post 26 February 1885:3).

The first Cemetery Trust was gazetted in 1877. Messrs James Pyne, Robert Skiffins (publican), Robert Jackson Craig (Clifton & Aplin’s agent, Smithfield), James Burke (publican), W R Hunt (publican), W. DeFrane (Smithfield businessman), James Duncan (auctioneer) and P. McKinlay (storekeeper) were appointed trustees (Johnston 1976:2 and Jones 1976:108).

For several years the site seems to have been poorly maintained, probably due to the absence of road access: ‘We have not yet heard of these trustees having once met since their appointment, and the cemetery presents the same disgraceful appearance it was wont to before public attention was called to it, and action taken in the matter’ (Cairns Post 1 May 1884:2).

That article stirred the Trust into action and publicity. Three weeks later it was reported:

A meeting of the Trustees of the Cairns Cemetery was held on Tuesday last.
Present - Messrs. Smith (in chair), Ryan, Severin and Hartley. On the motion of Mr. Severin it was resolved: "That application be made to the Government for a grant of £500 ($1000), under sections 24 and 25 of the Cemetery Act of 1865, for the establishment of the Cairns general cemetery." It was also agreed on the proposition of Mr. Ryan - "That the rules and regulations of the Drayton and Toowoomba cemetery, published on page 1455 of the Government Gazette of December 31st, 1881, be adopted and forwarded to Government for approval and publication. The resignation of Mr. Burke was received and will be forwarded to Government. (Cairns Post 22 May 1884:2).

In the ensuing months the Trustees developed a set of rules and regulations governing the cemetery and began commenting on the need for a new site on the basis that, ‘the town is rapidly extending, and it has always been found objectionable to have burial grounds in the town’ (Cairns Post 29 May 1884:3).

The regulations were published in the Gazette of 5 July 1884 and a Sexton appointed soon after. Later that month it was announced the Trustees would be seeking a more suitable burial ground while work was also focussed on improving the McLeod Street facilities including a ‘sawn hardwood fence’ (Cairns Post 17 July 1884:2). Tendering for the fence was invited the following month (Cairns Post 7 August 1884:3) with Davis & Clark being awarded the job for a cost of £1 12s 9d per rod (about 65cents/metre), and two pairs of gates for £13 4s 6d ($26.45) (Cairns Post 21 August 1884:2).

The momentum was maintained for months to come with a contract being issued for clearing and, as noted earlier, for fencing graves in McLeod Street Cemetery and on the Esplanade with ‘two rail sawn hardwood fence(s)’ (Cairns Post 26 February 1885:3).

Early in March J. Koddam’s tender of 29s per rod (approx 58 c/metre) for the grave fencing was accepted. Messers Cole and Metzlaff (sic) £25 ($50) tender secured them the job of clearing the cemetery. Meanwhile one of Cairns’ four licensed surveyors, T. Behan, was engaged to map the extant graves. His task was apparently modified later in the year when it was decided to focus on allotting areas for various denominations and to survey ‘one third of the graves … as the whole would entail too heavy an outlay’ (Cairns Post 11 June 1885:2).
Problems with drainage at the cemetery had been raised at various times and, although there had been discussions about finding a new cemetery site little had been done. In March 1885 Trustees Ryan and Hobson went so far as to recommend closure of McLeod Street cemetery and that a new site should be found (Cairns Post 19 March 1885:2).

The search for an alternative site extended into the following year but eventually a new site near the Botanic Gardens was agreed upon. It is unclear if that was the present Martyn Street site or another location but the debate continued about alternative sites for some years. In the meantime McLeod Street continued in use, despite continuing concerns.

*Mr Fred. T. Wimble* (trustee) reported that he had that day investigated the state of the cemetery; and had found it to be in a most lamentable condition, many of the bodies being only a few inches from the surface.

The matter was fully discussed, and it was resolved that a letter should be written to the Colonial Treasurer, asking for a grant of £500 to form the new cemetery and the road thereto, Mr. Wimble saying that he considered it a positive duty on the part of the Government to assist a young town like Cairns in such an important matter as this (Cairns Post 7 April 1887).

By April 1887 the McLeod Street cemetery was the subject of a lengthy article in the Cairns Post, which read, in part:

A question of the very gravest importance has arisen in our community, and one that demands the serious consideration, not merely of the authorities in Cairns, but also of the Government. We allude to the situation and insanitary condition of the local cemetery. From a statement that had been made to us by a resident of this town we, in company with one of the trustees, proceeded to the burial place to ascertain if the reports as to its bad state which had reached us were true, and discovered that the facts had been under-stated. We do not know who is responsible, for the choice of the site, but whoever fixed upon the present locality must have been imbecile to a degree, or else utterly without regard for the health or finer feelings of posterity. It seems doubtful, if the whole district had been searched, whether a moister (sic) or more otherwise unsuitable spot could have been found. Almost the whole of the enclosure is under water, and some of the graves, which have been washed flat, are only discovered when you tread on them and slip knee deep in sandy slush. We had been informed that there were coffins only eighteen inches from the surface, and with a cane we sounded several graves. Some were over three feet, some eighteen inches, and some only fourteen inches from the surface, and all were, more or less, a quaking mass of sand and water. Apart from the sentimental side of the question, and the fact that such a condition of things must be extremely painful to the feelings of the survivors, is it not a dreadful thing that such a state of affairs should exist in a town of ten years standing? Should a dangerously infectious epidemic, of the nature of typhus or other malignant disease, break out amongst us, the interments would, it may be presumed, be made in this ill-favoured spot, and we leave it to our readers to imagine what the consequences would be to the inhabitants (Cairns Post 7 April 1887:2).

The comments apparently went without public response from the Trustees. The Cemetery Trust of 1887 included Messrs. Patience (chairman), Walsh, Street, Severin, and Hartley and at their meeting of early November carried a motion:

That the question of crossing across Lily Creek and road to cemetery be brought before the Municipal Council, with a request that the Council come to the assistance of the Cemetery Trust in making same.
It was resolved, on the motion of Mr. Severin, seconded by Mr. Walsh—"That Mr. Behan be instructed to survey three acres in the new cemetery, two adjoining, and one at some distance (for pagan ground), and that tenders be called for clearing and grubbing same (Cairns Post 16 Nov 1887:2).

Dr Koch, Cairns’ resident medical officer, was asked to report upon the McLeod Street site. He noted, ‘It is fenced all around but only about one half has so far been utilized as a graveyard. The soil of the cemetery reserve is rather coarse sand.’ (Morning Post 1 March 1898:3)

His report went on to express concern that water percolating through the cemetery could contaminate the various wells sunk to tap the available groundwater. He also noted that the wet season water table often precluded burials at the correct depth. Dr Koch recommended finding a new cemetery site.

Little seems to have happened despite Koch’s concerns. The Cairns Morning Post of 22 December 1898 reported that council was anxious to find a more suitable site.

Ald Tills submitted a notice of motion “That the present cemetery be closed, and that a more suitable site be selected.” He asserted that the cemetery question was an old sore, and it was time it was healed. A more unsuitable site than the present one could not be found in the district.

The Mayor said the other cemetery site was five miles out of town, and for those who could afford a funeral by train it would be all right (sic).

Ald Tills - All I know is that we have had the essence of the dear departed in our tea long enough.

Ald Brown - Not since the brewery was shifted.

The Mayor said he was an advocate for cremation, but as things stood at present cremation was out of the question (Morning Post 22 Dec 1898:5)

In May 1899 Alderman Tills reported having found a suitable site on the Hop Wah Road (Mulgrave Road) (Morning Post 24 May 1899). No further action on that proposal is apparent.

At a semi-public meeting (so called as the meeting was only advertised in one of the local newspapers of the time) the Mayor expressed concern about horses and goats being seen in the cemetery; broken headstones and graves falling in. ‘The place was a regular Golgotha’ (Morning Post 5 Dec 1899).

Concern was expressed by the meeting over the disrepair of the cemetery; the poorly laid out paths and the need for a caretaker’s cottage. One wag noted that in the absence of a balance sheet from the trustees for 1895 he could only assume ‘1895 must have been a very healthy year, as apparently no one had died’ (Morning Post 5 Dec 1899).

In its editorial the Cairns Morning Post launched a scathing attack on the meeting and the Mayor in particular. The editor claimed ‘no goat (with the exception perhaps of the Mayor) has been able to gain access to the cemetery for years past’. That same editorial did admit that the fence was unpainted, the paths zigzagged and the graves were shaded by overhanging ti-tree’ (Morning Post 5 Dec 1899).

Nonetheless there were substantial but unrecorded changes made to the Board of Trustees.
On 3 February 1900, the vacancy of Sexton was advertised. The position attracted a wage of £2-0-0d per week.

By May 1900, the cemetery was reportedly much improved.

Instead of being a wilderness of high grass with a few headstones visible above the top, the place now presents the appearance of being the burying ground belonging to a civilized town. All the grass has been cleared away and roads made through the place. A gravel drive has been formed from the main gates through the cemetery, and altogether it may be said that Cairns has no need to be ashamed of the last resting place of the dead (Morning Post 5 May 1900:5).

Nearly a year later the Morning Post delivered a further accolade to the Trust and to the Sexton, William Parsons.

The main entrance is metalled from the gate to the opposite fence, thus forming a really good pathway for pedestrians and for carriage traffic. On both sides of the walk variegated hedging has been planted which now looks well and healthy. Rising over this hedging, crotons of all colors are growing and produce a very charming effect, there being probably over one hundred of these beautiful shrubs planted in all. Along the main fence, parallel with the main road leading to the entrance gate, many fine shrubs and flowering trees have been planted, and are now making good headway and in a short time will make the home of our dead a really beautiful place. The graves are kept free from spear grass and weeds and couch grass was recently obtained from the south by the Secretary and planted by the Sexton all over the grounds (Morning Post 19 April 1901:2).

Thereafter, the local newspapers provide infrequent references to the cemetery although substantiating reports that the Sexton once lived in a cottage at (Lot 7 Section 27) 174 McLeod St (Morning Post 30 May 1902:2) where the squash courts now stand.

Notably, however, the Cairns Town Council at their meeting of 13 October 1903 discussed a proposal for Council to take over the management of the cemetery or vote an annual subsidy of £50 ($100) towards upkeep (Morning Post 19 April 1902:2). Although there was general agreement that Council should take over the McLeod Street cemetery it was referred to the Parks and Garden Committee for a report.

The outcome of that report was the transfer of trusteeship approval on 19 April 1905 (Queensland Govt Gazette Vol LXXXV No 82 29 Sept 1905) although Johnston reports that the transfer did not occur until 1923 (Johnston 1976:1).

No records of the Cemetery Trust, apart from the Register of Deaths for the period 1887-1949 and an alphabetical list of burials from 1887-1919, are extant. Approximately two thousand five hundred and one burials took place at McLeod Street. The first recorded was that of Thomas Machonica on 16 October 1887. The first funeral against which a grave number is shown is that of Edith Thompson on 19 December 1887 in grave 239. Neither grave can be specifically determined now. The last burial was that of ninety-year old Jane Sage Bradford, who was buried alongside her husband on 4 September 1949 (Register of Cairns General Cemetery). George Bradford, Blacksmith of Sachs Street (Grafton Street), was buried 21 February 1916.

In February 1913, T. Adamson was appointed Sexton (Cairns Council Minutes 18 February 1913). A year later he was awarded a weekly salary of £3-10-0d ($7.00) plus
an extra five shillings (50c) for Sunday funerals (Cairns Council Minutes 17 February 1914). Later that year it was reported that a new cemetery fence had been erected ‘at a cost of £141-11-0d ($283.10) including two gates’ (Cairns Council Minutes 13 October and 17 November 1914).

Archives of the various Cairns Councils are incomplete and make infrequent reference to the McLeod Street cemetery. References after 1916 appear to refer to the Martyn Street cemetery. McLeod Street was used only infrequently after 1916 – usually for interments, like Jane Bradford, in family plots.

Since the early 1960s there were successive attempts to decide what use the cemetery should be put to. These discussions were often precipitated by complaints about the condition of the cemetery from residents or descendants of those now buried at McLeod Street Cemetery. In 1965 plans were put forward to remove 260 headstones still standing either to a special site at the Martyn Street cemetery or to rows on the south west boundary of the McLeod Street reserve (C.C.C. 1965 File C 5/9). Legal complications prevented any proposed re-use of the site proceeding.

The site was mowed and trees planted in the 1970s in an effort to reduce the maintenance problems of the site. On at least one occasion metal grave markers were collected and piled up to avoid damaging the mower. Pines and Melaleucas were planted in what had otherwise become a two-hectare patch of rank grass and self-sown wattle regrowth.

Over the same period the files of the Cairns City Council record a steady flow of enquiries from the public seeking to trace their ancestors’ graves or to simply provide council with biographical data. One example is that of the family of Agnes McIntyre who died in June 1911.

*The late Agnes McIntyre and her husband with one son arrived from Scotland (in approximately 1882) and eventually settled in Freshwater. The Government built a station and post office and appointed Agnes as station mistress. She was paid the princely wage of £1 per week and was given a block of land on which to build a home. Her husband Donald built a four bedroom home on the site. Donald and their sons were all in the employ of Qld Railways. The eldest son Alex, died in the 1914 war. Peter, who died in 1969, took part in the Gallipoli landing (Robins 1984:1).*

The significance of the McLeod Street Cemetery site to the people of Cairns and to those descendants who have since left the district was well documented on Council files. In 1988 over fifty letters were received by Council seeking the preservation of the site as a pioneer memorial cemetery. Some offered additional suggestions such as ‘turning a section into a fragrant, sensory garden with particular appeal to (the) visually handicapped’. Others suggested fencing the area, restoring the headstones and adding more trees and shrubs. Some sought to have the work undertaken without undue expense. One suggestion was that no more that $75,000 should be spent (C.C.C File 1/10/4).

In June 1987, the (then) Acting Director of Parks and Recreation proposed four options for the cemetery:

a) Place all the stones on a columbarium type wall
b) Lay all the gravestones flush in the ground for easy maintenance.

c) In addition to (b) place a brass plaque showing name, date of birth and date of death for those in unmarked graves.

d) Restore the existing tabloids in the same sites they currently occupy plus topping up all the unmarked grave sites and erecting a brass plaque as in (c).

In 1988 the Cairns City Council, under the leadership of Mayor Keith Goodwin, commissioned a heritage assessment to guide future management of the cemetery. A report *McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery Conservation Proposals* was produced in July 1988 (Grimwade 1988) and formed the basis for substantial conservation and community involvement for several years.

The key achievements stemming from that report and subsequent initiatives included:

- Repair of broken headstones;
- Removal of numerous trees that had damaged several graves;
- Provision of a path diagonally across the cemetery;
- Fencing the perimeter;
- Identification of many former burials;
- Provision of internal lighting;
- Erection of a commemorative rotunda; and,
- Formation of a ‘Friends of McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery Committee’.

The latter, ably led by Marie Nemec for several years, developed a range of guides for both the public and, more specifically, teaching aids for visiting school groups. ‘The Friends’ were responsible for major additions to the personal records of those interred within the cemetery and the significant public utilization that is evident post 1990.

Regular use of the cemetery has been made for escorted and unescorted tours and although that has diminished in recent times the Cairns Family History Society has planned a major interpretation event at the cemetery in late 2012.

The cemetery has been maintained at varying levels of effectiveness post 1990 but has suffered from less frequent attention most recently due to cutbacks in funding and not from lack of personal commitment of those involved in the practical aspects.

Vandalism has dogged the site intermittently as noted elsewhere and was a particular concern of Council’s in 2010/11 resulting in the decision to fence the area.

**Physical evidence**

A survey conducted in June 1988 revealed that of the 2501 burials understood to have occurred at McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery two hundred and ninety one graves were still identifiable. Of these, seventy-one did not have headstones. Trees were causing serious structural damage to forty-seven of the graves. Numerous headstones had been broken or had fallen from their plinths.

Subsequent conservation and restoration works rectified tree damage to most of those graves identified as being at risk, and repaired most of the damaged headstones.

Over the years, the epitaphs from the extant graves have been recorded by the Cairns Family History Society. They provide useful genealogical information including, in some
cases, place of birth and of death. Some epitaphs record cause of death which provides a useful resource for medical historians and demographers.

Alex Corbett and Martin Brennan, died 14 November 1887, and Peter Cullender, died 3 June 1894, are three of the several men killed during construction of the Cairns to Herberton railway.

Philip Garland’s headstone indicates that he died, aged 60 years, on 27 February 1901. The additional inscription ‘inserted by his fond friends M. Ryan and A. Ryan’ indicates possibly useful leads for anyone seeking to research this colourful, pioneer, beche-de-mer fisherman.

The popular Doctor Edward Koch, died 28 June 1901 aged 57 years, and is buried with his wife, Ruth, who died 3 February 1914 aged 58 years. They are buried in a well-marked grave in the southern corner of the cemetery. Dr Koch was a highly respected medical officer who migrated to Queensland from Germany in 1876. He moved to Cairns in 1884 where he established a sound reputation for his quinine based ‘fever mixture for malaria etc’. His recognition of the role of the mosquito in spreading malaria reputedly saved many locals from contracting this, then endemic, disease (Johnston 1968a: 1 & 1968b:1).

John Leopold Wretling, died 11 October 1902, is commemorated by a headstone erected by the Worker Newspaper Trustees, to whom he left his estate.
Much useful historical information is engraved in the headstone of ‘Herbert Crawforth Hallowes (Surgeon), son of the late Rev. Brabazon Hallowes of Clapwell Hall, County of Derbyshire, England. Died Cairns 15th August 1912, aged 56’.

The stark reality of conflict between the pioneering families and local Aborigines is brought out by the inscription to George Hobson an Irish settler killed on 19 July 1890 at ‘Myola, Upper Barron’ (sic). The reference to Myola, a small settlement near Kuranda on the banks of the Barron River, is particularly interesting for the term 'Upper Barron', by the twentieth century, was being applied to a section of the catchment upstream from Atherton, well away from Myola.

The Redden family grave not only indicates the earliest marked grave at the McLeod Street cemetery but serves as a poignant reminder of the infant mortality of the late nineteenth century. Six-year-old Rebecca Redden’s death on 30 May 1878 was followed by two years old William in 1882; one year old Margaret Jane in 1884 and Margaret Ann, also two years old, in 1889. Margaret Redden died on 10 October 1904, aged 61 years.

Some epitaphs raise more interesting questions than they solve. Why did the Cairns Hospital Board choose to erect a headstone ‘in grateful memory of Thomas Newton’, a 41 year old miner from Perth W.A. who died on 1 June 1907? Perhaps he had bequeathed his estate to the Board.

Charles Tynan’s grave remained a mystery for some years. He had been employed in the Victorian Department of Education until his death in Cairns. Using the resources now available on the National Library’s ‘Trove’ website it was found that he had died while apparently convalescing in Cairns.

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**CHARLES TYNAN.**

BALLARAT, Sunday.

At the meeting of the executive committee of the State School Teachers’ Union, held on Saturday at Geelong, sympathetic references were made to the death of Mr. Charles Tynan, secretary to the Education Department, and it was decided to have the body removed from Cairns, in the far north of Queensland, where it now lies, to the family vault in the Ballarat Cemetery. The friends of the deceased gentleman, it is understood, have acquiesced in this mark of respect on the part of the teachers (The Argus 28 Sept 1896:6).

**OBITUARY.**

MELBOURNE Tuesday

Charles Tynan, Victorian Secretary, of Education has died at Cairns, Queensland, while on a trip for the benefit of his health (Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate 19 August 1896:3)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS

Sir, Some time ago two Ballarat gentlemen, on a trip to North Queensland, called at the Cairns Cemetery to see the grave of Mr Charles Tynan, late inspector of Education Victoria. Inquiry of the caretaker of the cemetery elicited the information that the grave was No.672, and an iron peg with that number on it was all there was to indicate the last resting place of the genial gentleman so well known throughout this state. It is considered that there ought to be no difficulty in raising funds to erect a tombstone, railing &c. A tombstone cannot be obtained at Cairns. It will therefore be necessary to procure one in Melbourne or in Townsville. A gentleman who resides in Cairns has promised to supervise the erection. I shall be happy to receive subscriptions -

Yours &c.


(Argus 8 October 1908:4)
Many other epitaphs, when combined with documentary resources such as burial records and newspaper records, provide useful insights into the social history of early Cairns and, in Tynan's case, links with other parts of the country. The death of at least one pioneer butcher from sclerosis, in his mid forties, and our knowledge of the boisterous lifestyle enjoyed at early Smithfield, suggests many settlers lived and played hard in an uncompromising environment.

The significant contribution made by others to the development of the north is now largely forgotten and yet offer interesting insights into Cairns' multi-cultural past. One such burial is that of the Reverend Joseph Tear Tack (c1848 – 1901), a Chinese Missionary, whose grave is no longer marked.

Historian Kevin Wong Hoy, in a paper presented at the 'Rediscovered Past' conference run by CHINA (Chinese History in North Australia) Inc in early 2012, noted:

(1)Laid to rest soon after 3 August 1901 in the mixed denominational section of the Pioneer Cemetery, Cairns, was the illustrious Rev Joseph Tear Tack (c. 1848 – 1901), Wesleyan Methodist minister who had been appointed to lead the Chinese Mission in north Queensland after fulfilling similar positions in Victoria, NSW and the NT as well as being seconded to the Foreign Missions deputation for NSW and Qld. In the years just before his death, Rev Tear Tack and his family had lived in northern Australia for almost five of them, particularly in Darwin, having only latterly become residents of Cairns.

Rev Tear Tack, originally from southern China, converted in Australia firstly to Presbyterianism and later to Methodism, working as a catechist and minister for 25 years. Because of his extensive career within the church and his being the first missionary appointed to Queensland, his contribution to Chinese Australia arguably holds both state and national significance. While currently an unmarked plot, an appropriate monument for the Rev Tear Tack's grave should reflect, without prejudice, the significance of this man of the cloth.

Wong Hoy's thoughts reflect not only on the life of a significant and tireless worker in North Australia but draw attention to the probability that others, once highly regarded for their work, now lie, forgotten, in the cemetery.

Stonemasons

The majority of gravestones were prepared by the Townsville company of Melrose and Fenwick. Their skills were widely sought after in North Queensland as evidenced by an article in the Cairns Morning Post in 1902. The company were contracted to supply tombstones for the graves of both Father Corcoran and Mrs H. McVernon. The Morning Post wrote that 'both young men (Melrose and Fenwick)...expect to be in business for many years to some and therefore make it their constant consideration to execute any orders entrusted to them in such a manner that their completed transactions may be a big recommendation for future confidences'. By 1902 Melrose and Fenwick had already provided headstones for K. Aumuller, J. M. Ryan, J. Furste, J. Byrnes, J. McLean, R. Stewart, R. MacNish, R. S. Cummings and several others (Cairns Morning Post 23 May 1902:2)

Although initially operating from Townsville they established an agency in Cairns with A. J. Draper who was also Secretary of the then Cairns General Cemetery Trust. They later opened a workshop in Sheridan Street, Cairns.

Other stonemasons represented in the McLeod Street cemetery include Simmonds, Brisbane (Garland's grave); G. Dawe, Melbourne (Tynan's grave) which, at least to 1997,
was the only recorded example of his work found in Queensland (Kerr 1997:2); and Downes, Brisbane (John Marmane's grave). J. H. Simmonds worked from a Brisbane base from the 1880s to the 1910s (Kerr 1997:6). Downes worked throughout Queensland and northern NSW for twenty years from 1897 and was a partner with Melrose and Fenwick between 1910 and 1912. Before 1897 he was the manager for J. Petrie & Sons (Kerr 1997:2).

E. L. Thumm, also of Brisbane, advertised his arrival in Cairns ‘about the end of January 1903’ in the Cairns Morning Post of 5 December 1902 (page 5) to undertake ‘any monumental work’. He operated along Queensland’s Eastern seaboard between 1897 and 1902 (Kerr 1997:7). Thumm produced the headstone of former Cairns and Brisbane Mayor Richard Ash Kingsford, who on died 2 January 1902.

The same newspaper (page 6) carried an advertisement by L. Severin, ‘furnishing and general ironmonger, ship’s chandler, stone and monumental mason and general contractor’ although his work is not immediately identifiable from a random sampling of extant headstones.

‘J. S. Cooktown’ appears on the headstone of cordial manufacturer Joseph Shadforth who died of meningitis on 8 March 1890. There is uncertainty as to who ‘JS’ might be as the letters bear obvious similarity to the initials of the deceased who was a prominent Cooktown businessman. Pugh’s Almanac of 1902 however lists ‘John Sullivan’ as a Cooktown timber merchant who supplied ‘white granite for building or monumental purposes’ (Pugh’s Almanac 1902:81).

**Gravestone materials**

The variety of materials and the forms used in grave marking reflect changing social attitudes to death and, importantly, to the availability of materials and the changing socio-economic status of residents of Cairns. Concrete, sandstone, polished granite and marble proved popular at various stages. The choice of material was clearly governed not by local resources but by the social standards of the times. Marble, for example, is an unsuitable material in the wet tropics: polished granite is far more durable (R. Steene, pers comm. 1988). Sandstone is even less able to withstand the rigours of the wet tropics although few examples, fortunately, were used at McLeod Street.

Many graves are surrounded by iron railings, which show evidence of diverse ornamentation. In the case of the graves of Fathers Corcoran and Cahill two different styles of iron railings have been used. This apparently occurred when the graves were undergoing maintenance several years ago.

Many headstones have engraved epitaphs with lead lettering infills. Some are slowly losing the lead lettering through climatic damage and chemical processes (red discolourations).

**Symbolic forms**

Elsewhere a variety of upright slabs have been used including rectangular, gothic, semicircular and semicircular with shoulders. Both the Celtic and the Roman crosses are evident. Columns, pillars and obelisks feature among later graves as do urn and draped urn sculptures. There is an early example of an altar style of horizontal slab and an altar with sarcophagus top as well as slab and desk slabs.

A large number of graves have concrete surrounds. Some are cracked by tree root intrusion, others by exfoliation due to corrosion of iron reinforcing, while others have
been vandalised. A few graves have ceramic scroll top tile surrounds. If timber were ever used to identify a grave no evidence of that remains. Only archaeological excavation could clarify that possibility.

**Layout**
The style of graves is also a reflection of religious groups: the Catholics generally favouring the more elaborate headstones. One Chinese grave is modestly marked in hewn granite and another, ‘Hebrew’ (*Register of the Cairns General Cemetery page 42*), that of Kattie Bennett, is sited with the headstone to the northeast: most of the other headstones face approximately southeast.

The physical layout of the cemetery differs from the neatly regimented rows of graves shown on the official plan. Several of the older graves are incorrectly aligned.

Efforts to identify the maximum possible number of graves involved a major exercise in 1989/90 using metal detectors. The cemetery was systematically combed to identify grave markers that remained sub-surface but in their correct positions. Those intact markers standing vertically and facing east/southeast were considered correctly placed and were recorded accordingly. Markers that were lying flat, were broken or otherwise clearly misaligned were noted but rejected as probable discards.

The positively identified graves were subsequently marked with concrete plinths and brass plaques.

It is possible that more advanced ground penetrating radar or similar techniques, now more widely available, could identify additional graves. The sandy soils offer advantages for successful application of this style of technology although there is a low probability of much remaining in the form of skeletal material or coffins given the variable water table and high soil acidity.

![Fig 3. Schematic layout of burials by denomination (plan by courtesy Cairns Family History Society)](image_url)
Vegetation

Early plans and photographs of the cemetery indicate the area was devoid of tree cover. In the mid twentieth century native Acacia re-colonized the area along with guinea grass and other weeds, which were jointly of major concern by 1988. They had been supplemented by plantings of pines and *Melaleuca* during the 1970s. In 1989/90 the acacias and several of the latter were removed to prevent further damage to the graves. As noted elsewhere there was to be a progressive removal and replanting program implemented although that did not happen.

A proposal to redefine the ‘original entrance’ was made in the 1988 report (Grimwade 1988). This was implemented and now leads to the information rotunda. Unfortunately this work was not preceded by extensive archaeological investigation as Council was, understandably, concerned about such work being undertaken within a cemetery. When the irrigation system was installed, however, the present access was found to have been a later, and not the original, access. That entrance lies further north and had, apparently, been in-filled with burials early in the twentieth century. A slight east west rise in the ground level identifies its position.

Little corroborating evidence was revealed in respect of the cemetery fencing. Such a feature would, inevitably, have been replaced at times due to deterioration. There are various newspaper reports of wooden fences and ‘K- wire’ being used to fence the perimeter. A wooden paling fence was constructed along the boundary with the Ergon access track and the railway reserve in 1990 while the street frontages were marked with pine posts and railings. These were removed in April 2012 to make way for a new metal railing fence and lockable gates.
Significance assessment

Criteria
The criteria for assessing heritage values, according to the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, includes evidence that it meets at least one of the following:

- **Criterion A:** The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of history.
- **Criterion B:** The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of cultural heritage.
- **Criterion C:** The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of history.
- **Criterion D:** The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.
- **Criterion E:** The place is aesthetically significant.
- **Criterion F:** The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
- **Criterion G:** The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
- **Criterion H:** The place has special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in history.

The criteria are similar for assessment at the National, State and Local levels. The level of importance is the variable element.

In addition to the above are also the notions that the nature and degree of significance should be assessed. Both of these are essentially assessments of comparative significance, or of the relationship between the place and other places, which are either like or unlike it.

The nature of the significance of a place relates to its relative significance on a local, state or national level.

The degree of significance assesses each relevant category against two further criteria: representativeness and rarity. Representativeness is used to indicate that an item or place is a good example of an important class of significant items or environments, illustrating clearly the attributes of significance (Criterion D); Rarity is used to indicate that an item represents a rare, endangered or unusual aspect of our history or cultural environment and has few parallels elsewhere (Criterion B). Thus a place, which has historical significance, might be representative of the historical development of a region, but might not be rare, in that other similar places might also exist in the region. It could, however, be rare locally, if no other similar examples exist nearby. An outstanding place might be both representative and rare on a national scale.

Site registers
To the uninitiated there a daunting plethora of heritage registers on which sites may be registered as places of heritage value.

At the National level there are the:
- National Heritage Register;
- Commonwealth Heritage Register; and,
- (the former) Register of the National Estate.
At the State level there are the:
- Queensland Heritage Register; and,
- National Trust Heritage list.

At the Local level there is the:
- Cairns Regional Council Heritage Register (new register pending consent).

The National Heritage Register includes those places that are ‘of outstanding significance to the nation’. Management Plans are required for all such places and attract possible funding opportunities from the Commonwealth Government.

The Commonwealth Heritage Register covers those places that are owned by the Commonwealth Government; that is, they are on Commonwealth land. It imposes certain duties of care on the agency that manages such sites.

The Register of the National Estate is the original Commonwealth heritage listing. It is now retained primarily as a database of heritage places across the country and has little status.

The Queensland Heritage Register includes sites considered important to the State of Queensland. Their management, including conservation and adaptation, is subject to the requirements of the Queensland Heritage Act 1992.

The National Trust Heritage List is maintained by the National Trust of Queensland as an indicator of places considered to have significance to Queensland. While it was, for some years, the only statewide list it has no legislative basis.

The Cairns Regional Council is required to maintain a Heritage Register of sites of local significance. It provides a reference source for planning but it cannot, like all heritage registers, be considered to be a definitive list. An updated register awaits Council endorsement.

**Comparative sites of significance**

There are forty-four cemeteries/burial grounds across Queensland listed on the State heritage register or as archaeological sites. Two are within the Cairns Regional Council jurisdiction: McLeod Street cemetery (ID 00383) and the Alley family graves (ID 601141), Gordonvale.

**Significance assessment**

As this document is a conservation plan for the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery it is discussed here in terms of the Queensland Heritage Act under which it has previously been assessed and found to meet listing requirements for entry on the Queensland Heritage Register.

The Queensland Heritage Register considers the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery to be significant by virtue of:

- **Criterion A:** The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of history.

  *The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery survives as a unique historical record of the multi-cultural social, economic and political life of early Cairns, and is an unusual illustration of the major events which shaped the development of Cairns and Far North Queensland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*
The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery continues to demonstrate its importance in the early historical record of Cairns primarily through the initiatives of local community groups and individuals research genealogical information, researching individual burial sites and making those records more accessible in the process.

Accordingly it is recommended that the words:

*The ongoing efforts of the local community and individual efforts further strengthen that importance.*

be added to this criterion to reflect the recent, and on-going, efforts to strengthen this attribute.

- **Criterion B:** The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of cultural heritage.

  *Criterion under review*

The cemetery contains a range of headstones, reflects a common layout and development and, while of interest in an overall context, cannot be claimed as being sufficiently important to achieve threshold listing at the State Register level.

Accordingly it is recommended that the words:

*Not recognized as meeting this criterion.*

replace the current comments regarding this criterion.

- **Criterion C:** The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of history.

  *Not recognized as meeting this criterion.*

The considerable efforts made by local historians and genealogists in recent years has proven the potential of the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery to contribute significantly to the understanding of history and to identify aspects of a far wider historical connectivity with other parts of Queensland and even beyond. Several significant stonemasons were involved in creating the monuments at McLeod Street and in one case, Melrose & Fenwick, stimulated a comprehensive study of their history. The difficulties of selecting and managing such a site in the late nineteenth century are well able to support the premise that there is potential to yield invaluable information.

It is recommended the current assessment is reviewed and the statement relating to Criterion C rewritten as:

*The attributes of McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery to demonstrate its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of history have been demonstrated by the extent of genealogical data and personal histories now available in the public domain. The information relating to stonemasons, grave technology and symbolism that has been generated as a result of work undertaken in the past two decades has significantly contributed to an increased understanding of burial heritage.*

- **Criterion D:** The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.

  *In the formal arrangement of gravesites, denominational divisions and types of memorials, the cemetery reflects late 19th and early 20th century public taste and social perceptions about burial and memorial.*

Research since this significance assessment was prepared has strongly reinforced this assessment.
It is recommended that it remains unaltered.

- **Criterion E:** The place is aesthetically significant.  
  *The place has aesthetic value, which contributes to the Cairns townscape.*

The argument about aesthetic value is a challenging one at the best of times. It is a particularly subjective criterion and must be looked at in the context of State value when being evaluated against the Queensland Heritage Act. The diverse graves set on a corner block and shaded by a variety of trees are certainly evocative and jointly contribute to a pleasing vista. However, the vegetation now present is an addition subsequent to closure of the site as an active burial place. The trees that contribute to the charm are, in fact, invasive and damaging. While shading the diverse memorials they are also damaging them as reflected in a significant proportion of this study. Under the circumstances it is considered that the McLeod street cemetery does not meet threshold values in respect of this criterion.

Accordingly it is recommended that the above statement is replaced with:
  *Not recognized as meeting this criterion.*

- **Criterion F:** The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
  *Not recognized as meeting this criterion.*

- **Criterion G:** The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
  *Criterion under review*

Public response to the extensive conservation works undertaken in the period 1988 – 2000 and the continued expressions of public pride and support for the cemetery site to be maintained indicates the place has an exceptionally high level of association for residents of the Cairns District. Recent discussions indicate a growing sense of recognition that the site has special association for ethnic minority groups. While it is difficult from the present records to identify ethnicity to any great accuracy it is known that there were many Aboriginal and Islander burials, that nearly ten percent were of Chinese settlers and that many other nationalities are represented within the two thousand five hundred known burials. The Cairns and District Chinese Association Inc (CADCAI) has expressed interest in revitalizing the celebration of festivals, like Ching Min, at the cemetery, as part of their recognition of venerating the ancestors.

The Cairns and District Family History Society, Cairns Historical Society and the National Trust of Queensland (Far North Branch) are among groups known to have expressed strong association with the site over several years.

Public comment in the local media frequently reinforces the view that the wider community considers the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery as a signature landmark in the region.

Accordingly, it is recommended the entry should read:
  *The place is known to hold a strong association with the three leading heritage groups active within the Far North and with the Chinese community for cultural and spiritual reasons.*
• Criterion H: The place has special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in history.

Not recognized as meeting this criterion

Numerous burials within the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery are associated with people who made important contributions to Queensland’s regional history. They include Richard Ash Kingsford (politics); Phil Garland (pioneer trepang fisherman and one of the first settlers); Peter Cullender, Alex Corbett and Martin Brennan (two of several men killed during construction of the Cairns-Kuranda railway); and, most importantly, Dr Edward Koch (medical officer who pioneered malaria research). The stonemasons represented at the cemetery include several eminent and commercially significant tradesmen of the period including Melrose & Fenwick; J.H. Simmonds, Brisbane; G. Dawe, Melbourne; and Downs, Brisbane.

The conservation efforts from 1988 on were largely inspired by the then Mayor Keith Goodwin and Councilor Rose Blank who were among the nine Far North Queensland local government politicians, a local nun and the pilot killed in the Mt Emerald air crash on 11 May 1990.

There is reason for considering State significance of the site based simply on the burial of Edward Koch whose memorial in Cairns is listed elsewhere on the Queensland Heritage Register (ID 601681). In addition the Cairns to Kuranda rail link (ID 600755) was a major engineering feature of its time. Most of those killed during its construction were interred in McLeod Street Cemetery. The enduring efforts of Keith Goodwin and Councillor Rose Blank are largely recognized by the work on revitalizing the cemetery from a neglected burial ground to a significant social and spiritual site of state significance.

It is recommended that the entry is modified to read:

The place is recognized to have strong association with one of the pioneers of malaria prevention, Dr Edward Koch who is buried within the cemetery along with many of those who died while constructing the Cairns to Kuranda railway are also buried at McLeod Street. The cemetery is also closely associated with the achievements of two elected Cairns City councilors killed in the Mt Emerald air disaster in May 1990 - Mayor Keith Goodwin and Alderman Rose Blank – to reinvigorate the significant works conducted in the late twentieth century.

Overall statement of significance
The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery was the second burial ground in Cairns. Despite extensive arguments about its suitability, it has endured as the resting place of over two thousand five hundred people of diverse ethnic and occupational backgrounds. The place has historical connections with the region and contains examples of many notable and prolific stonemasons, which demonstrate a diversity of symbolism. The potential for genealogical research and historical evaluation has been amply tested and proven in recent decades. McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery holds strong association with several individuals and groups who contributed to the development of Queensland.
General management issues

This section of the report considers:

- current threats to the cemetery fabric and recommends actions to address them;
- maintenance needs and processes;
- guidelines for standardised plaques/memorial markers, taking into account systems already in place at other CRC cemeteries;
- security issues;
- perimeter fencing of the site.
- induction program suitable for CRC cemetery maintenance crews, so that they understand the heritage significance of the site and how this impacts on maintenance;
- timetable for future reviews of the CMP; and
- a review of the 1988 decision to rename the cemetery the 'McLeod St Pioneer Cemetery'.

The remaining issues sought in the terms of reference are dealt with in more detail in subsequent sections of the report

- Short, medium and long term conservation works; (see Conservation issues); and;
- Interpretive themes and opportunities at the cemetery (see Interpretation).

Current threats to the cemetery fabric

Various threats can be identified in respect of the cemetery fabric and include an, albeit subjective, evaluation of likelihood of materialising. They include:

**Vandalism.** The graves have been damaged several times since 1988. The wilful destruction of graves raises the public ire because it is seen as a thoughtless act of desecration and wilfully destructive of significant features of the heritage fabric of the region. In fact the frequency of vandalism has not been excessive but when it has occurred it has been dramatic and, as an understandably emotionally charged issue, has received wide publicity. Prompt action to rectify such acts is critically important. It is widely accepted that slow responses can encourage repeat offences. **Risk factor:** moderate, but lower once the cemetery is secured by a full fence and closure overnight.

**Infrastructure deterioration.** As demonstrated in the historical records, the cemetery was poorly located from the outset. The addition of uncomplimentary, although well-intentioned, plantings in the late 1970s/early 1980s and the growth of invasive *Acacias* prior to that exacerbated the situation. Encroaching roots threaten several graves and the safety of introduced paving (1990s). Management strategies are discussed later in this report. **Risk factor:** moderate, but significantly lower once a tree replacement strategy is implemented and the paving block paths are removed or modified (see later).

**Redevelopment.** A threat to the retention of the cemetery as a memorial park and heritage feature lies in the increasing demand for inner urban space for residential and commercial development. While this may be a perceived threat in some quarters any such proposals would meet strong public opposition and would be unlikely to receive support within Council. **Risk factor:** exceptionally low due to public and corporate sensitivity.

**Under-utilisation.** McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery has proved a popular city park for casual visitors, genealogists, researchers and school groups. There is a perception that use has diminished in recent years, although no statistics are available to prove or
disprove this point. A return to a stronger commitment to properly utilise the site will overcome these perceptions. Improved levels of maintenance and enhancement of the interpretative rotunda, combined with a commitment to encourage its use as an educational resource, will significantly reduce this risk. *Risk factor:* moderate, but can be significantly lower with commitment from Cairns Regional Council and the re-establishment of a Friends Committee or similar group.

**Maintenance**

At present, two gardeners, operating on an annual maintenance budget of $20,000, maintain the cemetery. This theoretically enables mowing to be effected every three weeks in the dry season and fortnightly in the wet season. They spend two days there each visit trimming the vegetation, whipper snipping and raking up debris and broken glass, blowing down the paths, cleaning up around the memorial rotunda, herbicide spraying for weeds and, in the dry operate a manual irrigation system within curfew hours (P Strother, Horticultural Supervisor, Central District, CRC – pers.com. 2012).

Additional work, such as pressure hosing of the paths and repairs to infrastructure attract additional, internal charges. Those costs have to be met from savings, elsewhere as and when they can be identified.

The works team, in discussion with the consultant, identified a range of issues affecting the quality of maintenance services including:

1. The irrigation system does not reach across the entire site. The area near the (southern) boundary with the Ergon Energy works depot does not receive irrigation cover. This needs examination and rectification. **Priority: High.**
2. Gravelling of graves. The practice of topping up some graves with Quinkan gravel was discontinued several years ago. The practice should be re-instated both for aesthetic qualities and as a weed control method. It also appears to have discouraged the practice of grave tops being used as sleeping spaces by itinerants! **Priority: High.**
3. Pine needles are piled under pine trees or around nearby graves rather than taken away. They are a safety (slip and trip) hazard, visually unattractive and

![Fig 4. An extreme case of pine needle build up.](image)
have a deleterious effect on the graves. Pine needles should be removed at least bi-monthly for an estimated additional two man-days work. **Priority: High.**

4. The mower strikes low plaques when obscured by leaf litter. Desktop plinths also suffer from vegetative build up and need regular cleaning to assist in their long-term preservation. Regular removal of leaf build-up would overcome this issue. Allow an estimated additional four man-days work initially and an additional one day bimonthly. **Priority: High.**

5. The beach almond trees are a major concern during mowing. The 25–30mm diameter nuts are potential hard, round missiles when flung from the mower blades. The gardeners reported several instances where the seeds have been hurled out at potentially injurious speeds. The offending trees should be replaced as part of an overall tree replanting strategy. In the interim, consideration should be given to using a catcher mower, which may, however, be difficult to negotiate around individual graves, or raking up the offending seed drops. Consider the use of safety warning signs when mowing is in progress. **Priority: High.**

6. The path across the cemetery is a trip hazard due to uneven surfaces. Tree roots have disturbed the pavers in several places making it difficult for walking and for cyclists. As noted below, this feature was added in 1990 and should either be removed and lawn re-established or repaired. **Priority: Critical.**

![Fig 5. Pavers have lifted in several places rendering the diagonal path a trip hazard. Urgent repair work is required.](image)

7. Grave perimeters have been repeatedly sprayed with glyphosate weedkillers (eg *Roundup*) to reduce the risk of mower damage to those features. Unfortunately in the sandy soil of the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery this has left the ground exposed during the wet season and erosion dips have developed within the spray lines. In those areas where erosion exceeds 10–15mm soil should be imported and spread to the original ground level. Soil used for this purpose should be a sandy loam firmer in consistency to that naturally found at the cemetery. That will be more stable and identify that a modification has been made. Spraying should radiate no more than 100mm from grave surrounds or tombstone bases. **Priority: High.**
8. There is a vegetation build up around the headstones supported on sloping desktops, which precludes the free flow of moisture. The graves affected in this way should be cleaned regularly (see also the suggestion below that this could form part of an annual community activity in association with Ching Ming festival). **Priority: High.**

8.

![Image of a headstone with vegetation build-up](image)

Fig 6. Pine needles are accumulating around desktops and preventing free flow of water during rain. Regular cleaning would prevent this problem.

8.

9. Park benches are generally in poor condition with most mould stained or with damaged timbers. One has a loose seat bar, which could result in a user falling off. The benches should be repaired or replaced. Removal is not recommended as visitors often use them. **Priority: High.**

9.

![Image of a park bench showing damage](image)

Fig 7. Park benches typically show lack of regular maintenance.
10. Maintenance levels are basic and, while the team involved take obvious pride in their work, additional time could be taken to trim shrubs, remove litter (both natural leaf litter and human discards), clean and maintain park furniture and remove weeds from within the graves to better present the cemetery to the public. Increased day-to-day maintenance would also help reduce the need for major expenditures in the longer term. An annual budget of $35,000 is recommended. **Priority: High.**

11. Copies of relevant Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are held at the works depot. Staff are conversant with their role. Copies, or at least summaries, should be kept in the maintenance vehicle in the event of an accidental chemical spill etc. **Priority: Moderate.**

Discussion with Ms Mary Low, CADCAI, regarding the future recognition of the high percentage of Chinese burials within the cemetery, over ten percent, resulted in the suggestion that the annual Chinese Ching Ming Festival (variously 'Tomb Cleaning Festival' or 'Clear Bright Festival'), could be used to encourage the wider community to assist in maintaining the cemetery. This annual festival is widely held in China, Southeast Asia and Taiwan and, given the way in which Cairns has embraced Chinese New Year in recent years, could further strengthen multi-cultural participation in the maintenance of the cemetery.

**Guidelines for plaques**

A standard style of plaque was implemented as part of the works programmes initiated in the early 1990s. These were engraved bronze each measuring 100 x 50mm and mounted on concrete plinths set into the ground at the site of identifiable but hitherto unmarked graves. At the time they were recommended as the most suitable and durable

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**Fig 8.** A non-standard metal plaque lies loosely on top of a concrete plinth. The plaque has loosened because the plinth shows severe signs of deterioration and the use of an unsuitable adhesive.
material available. Within a decade of their manufacture, it was noted that the black infill lettering became hard to read due to tarnishing. Over twenty years later, this has become more pronounced.

Regular cleaning may have prevented some of the deterioration of the name plaques but to attempt recolouring now would be probably be prohibitively costly in terms of time and resources. In addition, the adhesive initially used to secure them to the concrete has generally held up well, given the fact they are located in a wet tropical environment but several are loose or have fallen off and not replaced. They appear to have been applied using a poorer quality adhesive. Some plaque loss has been exacerbated by the erosion of the top surface of the concrete plinths. The concrete mix was too sandy and not allowed to cure long enough (L. Delai, stonemason: pers com 2012).

In considering a standard for the future we are aware that the Cairns Family History Society has proposed a scheme of progressively providing graveside biographical data of those interred within the cemetery. This approach will depend largely upon the use of ‘QR codes’ (square patterned devices capable of being read by smart phones) and linked to a website offering a range of biographical information for those interested. As this is closely associated with the interpretation opportunities afforded by the cemetery, further discussion is undertaken in the section ‘Interpretation opportunities’ later in this report.

Security issues
Open access to the cemetery has proved an infrequent problem with vandalism. When this has occurred the results are extensive, expensive and have attracted public outrage. The erection of the boundary fence is expected to significantly reduce vandalism.

The rotunda has been a popular venue for homeless people to gather for parties during daylight hours in particular. Littering has been the immediate and most conspicuous outcome. Broken glass has to be removed quite frequently, imposing substantial pressures on the limited maintenance budget. Partygoers do not have access to toilet facilities and openly use the adjacent shrubbery for this purpose. The new fence may be a deterrent, although daytime access will not be restricted.

Police patrols are at a level commensurate with dealing with the misdemeanour of drinking in a public place. The Police have suggested to council officers that their task would be effected more easily if the shrubs lining the rotunda entrance were removed. Those plantings were suggested as part of the 1989/1990s conservation and adaptation works on the basis that they replicated the original entrance plantings. As noted earlier that information was derived from a Cairns Post article in 1901 and confirmed, it was thought at the time, by comments by several older local residents who independently identified the position of the ‘original entrance’. The original access was identified only when the irrigation was installed in about 1990. The present plantings are therefore incorrect and could be replaced with lower border plantings.

Additional lighting to decrease the attractiveness of the cemetery to the homeless has been suggested at various times. This has been rejected in the past on the basis that it would be unpopular with adjacent property owners. It would also add to operational expenses. That view is upheld.
Recommendation
With the new fence now completed it is recommended that security issues are reviewed in early 2013. This should indicate the effectiveness of the overnight closures.

Perimeter fencing and internal paths
Following several incidents of vandalism in the period to 2010, Council agreed to replace the kopper log barrier on McLeod and Grove Streets and the Ergon/Queensland Rail picket fence with an 1800mm high metal railing fence and to fit lockable gates at the rotunda entrance and on the northwest corner on Grove St. That fence was completed as this Conservation Plan was being developed.

The current intention is to open both sets of gates each morning and close them each evening at 6pm to improve cemetery security. Although the gates at the northwest corner are primarily for maintenance access there has been a long-standing practice for pedestrians heading east along Grove St to cut diagonally across the cemetery onto McLeod St. This was reflected in the construction of the paved walkway constructed as part of the early 1990s conservation and restoration works.

As the intention is to open the Grove St gates for pedestrians during daylight hours there is justification for retaining and repairing the paved walkway which, at present, has several hazardous spots in it as a result of tree roots lifting the pavers.

However, given:
- the safety issues associated with the lifted pavers;
- the possibility that this could recur in the future;
- the fact the path is an adaptation and not an original feature (as far as we know there were no internal paths beyond those at the entrance points); and,
- the costs of maintaining the path,
Recommendation
It is recommended that a cost benefit analysis should be undertaken to consider whether the pavers should be removed and lawn re-instated or repaired in the damaged sections (about 18 – 20 metres). It should be noted that pavers were used in preference to more substantial hard-standing because this was an adaptive reuse of the site. Either way, this is a critical issue for Council as it has site safety implications.

It has been suggested that the removal of the pavers will limit wheelchair access. This is correct but access for wheelchairs is severely limited even with the path in place. Very few graves lie adjacent to the path, a point that was carefully considered when deciding on its route. To provide wheelchair access to the majority of the cemetery would require major changes that would have severe adverse impact on heritage values. Wheelchair access to the rotunda has been provided in the past and, as discussed elsewhere, is considered an essential element to be retained.

Induction program for maintenance crews and volunteers
The present maintenance crew has worked at the cemetery for some time and although they have some appreciation of the heritage values of the place they have only limited familiarity with the implications of listing on what can and cannot be done within the listed area.

There have been offers from the public to assist with cemetery conservation issues and, along with the possibility of an annual event at Ching Ming, this raises the issue of training for those involved in such activities. Inadvertent damage can be caused through well intended, but ill advised, maintenance. Irreversible damage has, for example, been reported in other cemeteries when volunteers have taken to headstones with bleach and scrubbing brushes or attempted headstone repairs.

Recommendation
A short course, 1 – 2 days duration, should be provided to the crew and to others associated with its maintenance. The course should be run by suitably skilled practitioners familiar with management of heritage listed cemeteries and include:

- Acceptable levels of maintenance;
- Identifying when external approvals for works are required;
- The value of regular mowing;
- Recording and reporting vandalism;
- Heritage values of the place.

Timetable for reviews of the CMP
Conservation management plans are developed with regard for current needs and circumstances. They are changeable factors and reviews to date such documents are essential to ensure best practices are applied.

Recommendation
The CMP should be kept under continuous review and major variations and additions offered as required. Major reviews should be effected every five years.

A current CMP should be provided to the CRC team charged with its management, the maintenance section; Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP); the Friends of the Cemetery group (if reinstated as recommended elsewhere) and/or Cairns Historical Society, Cairns and District Family History Association and the Far North Queensland Branch of the National Trust of Queensland. It should be available to interested members of the public, possibly through Council’s website.
**Review the name: ‘McLeod St Pioneer Cemetery’**

The name, McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery was debated at length in 1988/89. The name was finally adopted on the basis that it strengthened the fact it was an early cemetery and inferred that it was no longer operational but now held a new role for Cairns as a park of contemplation and memorial to those who helped establish the town. It was equally recognised that many ‘pioneers’ are actually buried at the Martyn Street cemetery. The addition of the word ‘pioneer’, rather than ‘former’, was also seen to have enhanced marketing opportunities as it immediately suggests potential interest for genealogists, tourists and school groups.

**Recommendation**

The name has been part of the Cairns’ community for over twenty years. Unless there is a strong desire within Council to change the name to ‘McLeod St Cemetery’ it is recommended that the present name is retained.
Conservation issues

This section of the report discusses a range of conservation issues relevant to conserving the heritage fabric of this listed site.

In broad terms it relates to the conservation of the graves and surrounds, their spatial arrangement and the overall retention of significant associated elements.

To assist with developing practical management strategies, key actions are prioritised in accord with the following:

PRIORITY A
*High priority tasks that should be implemented immediately*

PRIORITY B
*Important issues that will enhance site integrity and the visual amenity. Complete within 12 - 18 months.*

PRIORITY C
*Highly desirable actions that will significantly enhance the visitor experience and re-establish some of the integrity of the place that has been impacted on in recent years. Complete within 2 years, or earlier if funding opportunities arise.*

The key issues discussed below are summarised in the table at the end of this section by priority.

Cemetery mapping

PRIORITY B
Existing mapping of the graves appears to be based on an initial survey undertaken for the 1988 project. In subsequent years additional graves were identified and marked with concrete plinths. It is unclear whether or not all were subsequently plotted on the master plan.

All added plinths should be checked and the names recorded on the master plan.

Graves

The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery contains over 2500 burials. Some plots contain multiple burials, some are marked by headstones, some with markers placed on site in the 1990s and others that remain ill-defined and nameless.

Headstones are produced in granite, marble, concrete and sandstone. If wooden markers were ever used, none remain.

Mould and lichen

PRIORITY A

Mould and lichen growths are a feature of many headstones and serious growths can be treated by simply applying dilute *Wet ‘n’ Forget* by backpack spray. The recommended dilution rate of 1:6 should be followed, although severe contamination may benefit from a slightly higher concentration. Pressure spray application is unacceptable. *Wet ‘n’ Forget* does not require any subsequent rinsing or treatment. In fact such practices will render the application ineffective. A light brushing with a soft brush may be desirable.
after two to three months to remove flaking material. Further applications may be desirable in cases of heavy infestation. In any event, the desire to return monuments to a pristine condition should be avoided. This is an old cemetery and shiny memorials detract from its ambiance.

Treatment should be only be considered to prevent serious etching of inscriptions, which can occur, particularly on poorer quality marbles. There is evidence that some lichen exude an acid that can etch the surface. Damage is usually slow, but irreversible, and the decision as to whether to leave or remove needs to be taken with due regard for the severity and nature of any lichen colonisation of gravestones.

Some sources advocate low pressure water cleaning and others suggest the use of ammonia. On no account should such methods be adopted to clean headstones or grave surrounds. Similarly, medium or hard bristle brushes should also be avoided. Only the softest of brushes should come into contact with headstones.

Broken headstones

PRIORITY A

Headstones usually break as a result of vandalism, accidental impact or from falling tree limbs. Their repair is a highly skilled occupation and should not be attempted other than by an experienced stonemason.

In brief, the repair technique involves core drilling of the damaged sections, the insertion of stainless steel rods (at least 180 mm long where practical) into both pieces, securing them with Megapoxy and ensuring a sound smooth finish using a mix of ground matching stone and Megapoxy.

It is not a task to be tackled by the unskilled, nor is the use of standard masonry drills, or Portland cement bonding acceptable.

In the event of a broken headstone being identified the following steps are to be undertaken:

1. Photograph the damage, preferably with a scale measure included in the image;
2. Measure and sketch the pieces to assist the stonemason to quote on repairs, particularly where the mason and the graves are distant from one another. NB do not forget to record the thickness of the stone. This record should include identification of the stone type and its overall condition; for example, ‘granite, polished black, good condition’ or, soapy marble, heavily scarred and crumbly edges’. This data should be added to a cemetery database for future co-ordinated management.
3. Gather the fragments to suitable location. This might be on top of the grave or to a central repository until repairs can be effected. If fragments are removed ensure that they are securely bagged and labelled with clear indications of which
grave they have come from. It is critically important that the damaged grave can be positively identified, particularly if an immediate repair is unlikely.

4. An appropriately authorised officer should obtain a quote from a suitably skilled tradesman.

5. The damage should be repaired as soon as practical, particularly if vandalism is the root cause. Untreated vandalism tends to attract further vandal attacks.

In some instances it may not be possible to safely reinstate a headstone in its original vertical position. The procedure proposed in the 1990s conservation works was to place the fragmented headstones (repaired to the extent possible) on concrete sloping desktops positioned within the grave (Cairns City Council drawing 6668). The stone was lifted above the concrete on neoprene (inert) washers to allow water to run off rather than pool above the stone.

Fig 11. Sloping desktop for severely damaged headstones. Cairns City Council d/n 6668.
This practice worked satisfactorily except that leaf litter has been allowed to accumulate on the desktops thus impeding drainage. The continued use of the desktops is **recommended** with the proviso that maintenance needs to include the regular cleaning of debris from the surfaces.

**Lead and gilded lettering**

**PRIORITY C**

Some headstones have missing or damaged lead lettering. Repair or replacement is an individual issue for each case. This is a complex task that, if considered **absolutely essential** should only be undertaken by a skilled mason. While loose lettering can sometimes be gently repositioned by a skilled craftsperson, replacing missing lettering raises complex conservation issues.

The headstone has to be laid flat or strongly supported to effect the re-leading process, and the exposed surface, including the lugholes, must be clean. All too often lettering has fallen out because the surface stone has weathered. The process is often noticeable on older graves where the lead lettering lies proud of, rather than flush with, the stone face. Some marbles are particularly susceptible to weathering. Replacing lettering tidily in such conditions verges on the extremely improbable.

If the text is still legible, no further action should be taken. If it is getting difficult to make out the text it would be better to document the inscription and have a miniaturised version of the text engraved or printed on metal (see later guidelines) and attached to the rear of the grave as near to ground level as possible to minimise visual intrusion.

Gilded or painted lettering is usually associated with granite but examples can be found across the entire range of stonework in cemeteries. Once again repairs need to be tackled by skilled tradesmen. If regilding or repainting is considered necessary, it should be in similar style and form using the same colours as used initially. Painting or gilding previously undecorated lettering (or painting where lead lettering has fallen away) is unacceptable as it significantly modifies the originality of the monument.

**Unmarked graves**

**PRIORITY C**

The 1988 study noted a high percentage of graves were unmarked. Subsequent research located many of those interments. As a result, concrete plinths with name plaques were designed for use at those sites.

Cairns City Council drawing 6668 also covered the plinth design, although there appears to have been a further style introduced in about 2000 for which drawings are unavailable.

The plaque itself was an engraved brass 100 x 50 mm glued to the top of the plinth. In most cases the plinths and plaques remain in situ. Some, however, have fallen off and are not visible on site. In several cases the plinths were made of sub-standard concrete. The concrete has eroded leaving an unusable exposed aggregate surface.

In such cases new plinths and plaques are required. It should be possible to re-identify the burials from the various, if somewhat piecemeal, records held by Cairns Regional Council in four archival boxes, the contents of which are appended to this report.

Experience suggests the following modifications should be made in the manufacture of any new concrete plinths:
1. the upper surface should be trowelled smooth and
2. should be of a stronger mix than previously used.

An alternative is to use black granite blocks with a polished upper surface discussed in detail in the interpretation section. Such plinths have better longevity prospects and at comparable costs.

There have been suggestions made that the plinths should be sunk flush to the ground level. This was considered previously and rejected by the management team as it was felt the sandy soil and grass cover would soon cover them. There was some concern that they might be a maintenance problem and a safety hazard. Neither have been a problem and recent discussions with the maintenance crew confirm their ability to work around the raised plinths. Accordingly it is recommended that the raised plinths continue to be used in either concrete or marble.

The use of brass plaques has, despite widespread investigation at the time, proven less than satisfactory. Legibility has been impaired over the twenty-two years of their use. Cleaning may alleviate some of those issues but a range of cheaper but effective materials are now available and should be considered as alternatives.

The future use of individual plaques and, in consequence, any replacement plaques, is more appropriately examined as part of an integrated interpretation plan and is detailed in that section.

**Grave surrounds**

**Non metalliferous**

Concrete, sandstone, marble and tile edging strips were used in a high proportion of the graves. Many were displaced from their original position due to graves settling or slumping, intrusion of tree roots, mower damage, vandalism, wear and ground movement. Concrete surrounds have suffered from spalling (concrete cancer) as they were reinforced with ferrous metal that has since rusted.

Repairs to such damage are time consuming and generally of low priority. Concrete surrounds affected by spalling would need to be reconstructed, a practice not recommended as a ‘best practice’ on heritage structures. Minor damage of this nature needs to be handled by a professional stonemason as it involves cutting out the rusting metal and sealing the exposed areas. Even then there is no guarantee further damage will be arrested.

In some cases it may be possible to realign the damaged surrounds but the cause of the disturbance should be considered first. For example, an intrusive tree root may be cut away but the possibility that it might redevelop and disturb an adjacent section needs consideration (see discussion of tree root removal).

In most other cases the distortion is historic. It is not an ongoing process. Slumped graves have now stabilised and the only problems of this nature are likely to be associated with a local flood event or aesthetics.

If the situation has stabilised, intervention should be considered only if it is a safety issue or affects the monument’s integrity. In the event of flood damage, any eroded area should be backfilled using a good loam and any grave surrounds professionally reset within that context. Grass should be planted if the fill is in a previously lawn area. Any
scoured area within the grave should be filled with coarse gravel. Quinkan (volcanic) gravel has been used in the past and its continuing use is recommended, as it is easily identifiable as being a later addition to the site.

In some cases corner decorative features may have been dislodged. In such cases consider refitting by a stonemason using the dowel and *Megapoxy* methods discussed in respect of broken headstones. The quality of the product needing repair should be considered in such events.

*Metalliferous*

**PRIORITY A (particularly in re items stored at Martyn Street)**

Many of the graves have metal railings fitted to them. In the period prior to 1988, *Acacia* trees grew rampantly across much of the cemetery. Their branches grew between the railings and distorted several fences. These were repaired, where feasible, during a metal conservation project conducted by Peter Maxwell circa 2001.

Any subsequently damaged railings should only be repaired by a welder/blacksmith expert in dealing with wrought and cast iron and subject to oversight by a metals conservator. Such materials have become embrittled by their age and their form and unskilled work on them can lead to irreparable damage.

Several graves have only partial railings still present while others have been reconstructed using panels purloined from other graves. There is a wide range of railings stored in a shed at Martyn Street cemetery that came from McLeod Street at various times. **This material is taking up space and should be reinstalled as appropriate on the graves at McLeod Street. Some urgency is needed in this regard as the Martyn Street storage is needed for other purposes.**

*Fig 12. Part of the collection of grave surrounds and headstones held at Martyn Street requiring reinstatement.*
Grave ornaments
PRIORITY C
Vases and artificial flowers are found on some graves and grave markers at times. The same conditions applied at other cemeteries within the Council’s jurisdiction should apply at McLeod Street, particularly where the ornaments provide opportunity for mosquito larvae to develop.

In two cases, small ornaments have been added to the graves, presumably by descendants of the deceased. Purists might argue these are unsightly additions and should be removed. However, these symbolic gestures demonstrate that there are those within the community moved to offer some personal recognition of the deceased and should remain as long as they are reasonably intact, do not offend and are safe.

Grave painting
PRIORITY B
Few graves currently show evidence of recent, unsympathetic painting although that practice was evident previously. It is one that should be discouraged both for conservation and aesthetic reasons. There have been instances in the past where silver paint has been applied to rusting metal grave fences. The potential for sandstone graves and concrete surrounds to be painted also exists. Sandstone suffers an increased risk of exfoliation if painted, while the former look incongruous and all become unsightly when the paint peels away, usually as a result of poorly primed surfaces. Paint does little to protect core materials used in grave furnishings.

Stone coatings
PRIORITY A
The practice of coating gravestones with silicone-based compounds is not recommended. Some silicone products actually exacerbate the problems they are meant to cure – mould reduction and exfoliation in particular (Pratt 1997:3). They form an impenetrable barrier trapping moisture within the stone rather than allowing it to ‘breathe’ naturally. In the worst cases the silicone has the comparable effect to creating a glasshouse around the stone. Moulds enjoy such an environment and can grow vigorously, particularly in tropical environments.

Vegetation

Trees
PRIORITY A
The issue of tree damage in the cemetery following a series of well intentioned but ill-advised plantings in the 1970s has been a major concern for some years. Most of the larger trees have developed extensive and invasive surface roots that distort and damage grave markers.

A proposal to thin some of the *Melaleuca* sp. (paperbarks) and *Pinus* sp. (pines) and to remove all *Acacia* sp. (wattles) was adopted in 1988 and implemented in the following major conservation works. A selective removal and replanting using more suitable species was considered but not fully implemented.

There has been noticeable further damage to several graves and, most particularly, to the paved areas within the cemetery. Further selective culling or tree surgery is needed. Such work should be undertaken in consultation with suitably trained tree surgeons or arborists. The haphazard removal of roots may cause instability and result in the tree...
dying or being torn out during a storm. As a rule of thumb no modifications should be undertaken within the tree protection zone (TPZ).

An inspection of the Cemetery was undertaken with Council Arborist, Pieter Taylor. The following key issues were discussed:

- Progressive culling of the damaging mature trees should be undertaken on a prioritised basis;
- A concurrent replanting scheme should be implemented from the outset and maintained for the long term. Replacement programs should not simply be aimed at removal of existing unsuitable trees but ensure ongoing shade is afforded for visitors;
- Replacement plantings should be carefully chosen with the primary aims being the provision of shade for visitors, minimal impact on graves and ease of maintenance;
- Tree replacement work should be preceded by well directed public advisories so that the community is well aware of what is intended;
- Tree roots can be trimmed provided there is controlled impact within the TPZ (see box text);
- Root barriers may resolve the issues of trees redeveloping damaging activity after pruning and may be a way of dealing with some of the problems with the concrete paver areas;
- The high water table in the cemetery is a major factor in the development of the extensive surface rooting vegetation;
- There is a dead tree south of the pagoda entrance, about five metres from the McLeod Street frontage that should be removed immediately;
- Several trees have developed double leaders/trunks and should be among the first to be removed as they are inherently weak;
- At least two *Melaleuca* immediately south of the rotunda should be removed immediately. One is affecting a grave and the other could soon damage the rotunda;
- All tree removal should be undertaken by professional tree loppers holding AQF Level 4 or preferably, 5 certification; and,
- Mowing activities have damaged numerous tree roots. This exposes trees to disease and, if the trees are not identified for immediate removal, the areas between the exposed roots should be filled with soil and the exposed roots covered with up to 50mm of soil and the area regrassed.

**TREE PROTECTION ZONE (TPZ)**

Refer to AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees for Development Sites and to AS4373 – 2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees

Controlled trimming is acceptable within the TPZ.

An approximation of this area is determined by measuring the tree diameter (one option is to measure the circumference and divide by 3.1416) at 1.4 metres (about chest height). Multiply this by 12 to get the TPZ radius, which is then measured from the midpoint of the trunk at ground level.

Example: a tree has a diameter of 120cm at 1.4 metres above ground level. The TPZ is $120 \times 12 = 1440\text{cm} (14.4\text{m})$; that is the TPZ is all that area 14.4 metres from the midpoint of the trunk.

Structural root zone (SRZ).

No trimming is acceptable within the SRZ.

Measure the base diameter (just above trunk flare). SRZ is $(\text{diameter} \times 50)^{0.64}$. Using this formula a tree with base diameter of 2.6 metres requires an SRZ of 4.94 metres measured from the centre of the trunk (NB not from the outside).

If work is required on the root system within this zone an arborist should be consulted. Removal of tree roots within this zone may cause instability or injure the tree.
**Grass**

**PRIORITY A**

The lawns are in reasonable condition although the issue of lack of irrigation near the Ergon site needs investigation and upgrading.

Mowing needs to be undertaken more frequently in the wet season than the scheduled fortnightly cutting schedule. An increased maintenance regime is considered important and has been detailed elsewhere.

Sensitive weed and several other broad leaf weeds are well established in parts of the grounds and should be removed by selective spraying.

The application of glyphosate weed killer needs to be more constrained in future to avoid large areas of bare ground being exposed around the graves and name plinths. The aim of applying weed killer outside the graves is to avoid the need to mow right up to the, sometimes fragile, grave edging. It should be possible to spray out to about 100 mm from the grave edges and avoid mower strikes on the surrounds.

![Image of a grave where excessive use of weed killer has avoided mower damage but is now causing erosion issues. This headstone should be placed on a sloping desktop to avoid excessive contact with the ground and progressive immersion into the ground.](image)

**Other plantings**

**PRIORITY B**

A review of appropriate plantings along the access track to the rotunda should be considered.

Plantings, if any, in that area should be low shrubs or groundcover simply to soften the edges of the access. The concept of the 1988 planting proposals replicating early twentieth century plantings has since been found to have been built on a false premise.

Council’s landscape architect should be consulted to determine a suitable planting regime in the context of possible resurfacing/redesign of the rotunda access path.

**Rotunda**

**PRIORITY A**

The rotunda is in reasonable condition.
In some sections the walls are stained and need cleaning. It appears there have been probably unassociated spates of graffiti being applied to the rotunda walls. These instances have been dealt with by overpainting using an unrelated grey paint with a result that there is an unsightly two-tone patchwork of colour over most of the walls. The rotunda should be repainted in a suitable neutral colour.

A section of tile is missing from the right front side, near the commemorative plaque to Mayor Goodwin in the 1990 air crash. A suitable, colour-matched, replacement should be fitted.

The paved approach track to the rotunda provided disabled access and possible vehicle access. It has suffered from soil movement and limited root development and is no longer sufficiently even for wheelchair access. The ramp access into the rotunda is particularly uneven and hazardous to disabled visitors.

An alternative surface needs to be considered. The highest priority is to the ramp into the rotunda. Invasive tree roots need to be dealt with in accord with the principles identified in the section above relating to vegetation management. The ramp should then be reconstructed using an exposed concrete aggregate finish.
In the medium term the entire paved approach to the rotunda should be replaced with a three metre wide exposed aggregate concrete surface outlined with porphyry or similar stone to soften the visual aspects.

This part of the cemetery was an approved adaptive element, (circa 1989/90), and provided to reflect the original access. As noted elsewhere, this was subsequently proven not to be the case and further adaptive work does not need, nor indeed should it be seen, to reflect what was once considered a prior layout.

The plaque set on a concrete plinth part way along the north side of the rotunda access should be removed. It incorrectly states ‘These gardens replicate those existing in 1901. They flanked both sides of a metalled pedestrian and carriage pathway’.

A revitalisation of the rotunda is essential and discussion of that forms part of the subsequent discussion of site interpretation and public presentation. Landscaping associated with the rotunda in particular and the cemetery in general should be undertaken with the guidance of the Landscape Designer and the Arborist with Cairns Regional Council.

**SUMMARY OF PRIORITY TASKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Summary action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Mould and lichen on gravestones</td>
<td>Spray with Wet ’n’ Forget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broken headstones</td>
<td>Repair remaining broken headstones. NB there are elements at Martyn St cemetery that belong on unidentified graves in McLeod St cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metalliferous grave surrounds</td>
<td>Complete conservation and restoration. Check Martyn St Cemetery store resources as a priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stone coating</td>
<td>Ensure no silicone coatings are applied to stonework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>Cull invasive trees as required and replant as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grass</td>
<td>Trim more frequently in wet season, apply selective weedicides, reinstate grass in areas of damaged tree roots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rotunda</td>
<td>Clean and repaint. Repair disabled access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Cemetery mapping</td>
<td>Update spatial data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave painting</td>
<td>Ensure repainting is strictly controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other plantings</td>
<td>Replant species as advised by horticultural staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lead and gilded lettering</td>
<td>Specialist but low-priority task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unmarked graves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non metalliferous grave surrounds</td>
<td>Repair only as necessary due to extent of the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave ornaments</td>
<td>Apply similar rules as in other cemeteries in respect of floral tributes etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpretation opportunities

The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery affords excellent interpretation opportunities best harnessed by developing an integrated approach from the outset. The rotunda provides a physical focus for orientating visitors and providing contextual information. A further level of specific, and personally focused, information is, or can be, offered at each gravesite if appropriate. For those who may wish to access information about the site but not actually visit, then the web and more traditional print media are deserving of attention.

This section looks first at the on-site interpretation opportunities and then at off site presentation. In developing the concepts contained in this Conservation Management Plan we are aware, for example, of an initiative of the Cairns & District Family History Society to add QR codes to selected graves that will enable ‘smart phone’ users to access considerable biographical data on the deceased.

This innovative process has the advantage of offering a relatively modern technique to access more information than can be realistically provided on a conventional interpretive sign. However, on its own it has limited application as it relies upon the visitor having a ‘smart phone’ in their possession.

The integrated use of QR codes is seen as a valuable technique, although there have been concerns expressed to the authors that their use is rapidly being superseded by even more advanced technology. Be that as it may, communications technology advances with such rapidity in any case it is considered they can play an important role at McLeod Street in the foreseeable future. If one waits for a stabilised, ‘ideal’ technology, then nothing will happen.

On-site interpretation

Within the rotunda

In developing an overall integrated interpretative approach the focus should be on developing a more user-friendly focus for the rotunda. It was originally conceived as an information venue in which burial information would be accessible.

With over 2500 burials, but only 291 marked graves noted in 1988 (Grimwade 1988:12), subsequent research by the Friends of the McLeod St Cemetery and others resulted in placement of around 200 metal panels identifying additional site-specific burials.

The octagonal rotunda incorporates eight radiating concrete wing walls each of which is 1600mm wide angled into the centre point which is currently open space about 1600mm wide. The walls are rendered concrete and capable of holding display panels to a maximum desirable width of 1200/1500mm and height of 900/1000mm based on comfortable viewing area. For discussion purposes panel numbers are sequential and clockwise from the standard ingress point (see fig #).

Present content

The first panel has an advisory sign inviting visitors to contact Council for information relating to the site. Eleven wall panels listing burials by name were positioned within the rotunda (panel locations 2 -7, 10 -14). A plan of the cemetery was included on panel
8, along with details on the locations of the graves with headstones. Panel 9, in part, includes a list of amended information and two photographs of Cairns. Additional framed pictures of early Cairns were also included in the rotunda, at panels 15 and 16. All signage is in reasonable condition given its age and environment, although the concrete walls have been subjected to some graffiti.

In the course of our investigations several people commented on the present information panels. Those comments included:

- while the information is extensive it is difficult to interpret;
- the cemetery plan is not aligned consistent with the property itself. Visitors with limited expertise in map reading find it difficult to pick a specific gravesite;
- the ad hoc position of many graves precludes a simple grid reference system working easily. Some attempt has been made to grid the plan on the rotunda wall but that has not been translated to the cemetery itself by marking the alphabetical (East – West) and numerical (North -South) at the perimeter of the cemetery;
- the alphabetical list includes several burials prefixed by a red cross. The clue to what this represents is to be found on one of the framed lists on which the red coloured cross has, unfortunately, faded (red is quickly affected by ultra-violet light and is best avoided in any external signage);
- the absence of a succinct history of the McLeod Street cemetery;
- the denominational layout is not identified;
- the photographs of early Cairns are interesting but their link with McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery is not evident; and,
- no contextual history of the region is included.

These comments, along with the Family History Society’s expressed wish to include more biographical data on individuals, discussions with representatives of the Cairns Museum, Cairns Historical Society and National Trust of Queensland (FNQ Branch) and with Council staff reflect a widely held desire to see the cemetery presented to encourage greater use. These comments materially assisted in developing the overall interpretation concept outlined below.

**Proposed content**

The following proposal, read in conjunction with fig 15, offers a more functional interpretative resource within the rotunda. It is recognised however that visitors
entering via the disability access ramp, between panels 8 and 9, will experience obvious variations in viewing sequence. This has been minimised to still provide the best possible coherent and logical viewing sequence.

Apart from the name lists, the panels should be well illustrated. No single text box should exceed 200 words and photographs, many of which can be sourced from the Cairns Historical Society, should be of large format. The aim is:

- to orientate the visitor;
- to provide them with an understanding of cemeteries and, particularly, their values and symbolism;
- to recognise the role of heritage listings; and,
- offer sources of further information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Welcome, introduction. What the rotunda contains. Graveside information. Use of QR codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cairns history</td>
<td>Brief history of Cairns, images of early settlement, McLeod St cemetery history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Name panel 1</td>
<td>(see notes below this table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Name panel 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Name panel 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Name panel 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Name panel 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cemetery layout</td>
<td>Denominational layout, burial practices (Christian, Chinese, Jewish, Hindu etc). Symbolism of grave decoration. A selection of biographical accounts of some internments with photos, sketches, grave photos, newspaper clippings etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Biographies 2</td>
<td>A selection of biographical accounts of some internments with photos, sketches, grave photos, newspaper clippings etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Name panel 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Name panel 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Name panel 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Name panel 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Name panel 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Name panel 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Further information</td>
<td>Heritage listing explained. Further information: CRC sources, Family History Society, Cairns Museum and Cairns Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRE</td>
<td>Cemetery plan</td>
<td>A scaled plan of the cemetery showing all known graves orientated to match with actual cemetery. Possibly floor mounted (for largest reproduction) or on a central flat top raised area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. The existing name panels have some spelling errors identified through later research, do not easily identify the locations of known graves and use a font larger than is necessary on such signage. A font size of 24 - 28 point, using upper and lower case, would be more easily read than the existing fully capitalised list. The style of font should be consistent with the overall upgraded interpretation in the rotunda. The addition of an extra column showing a location grid reference, where known, is recommended.
Onsite interpretation external to rotunda

In developing external interpretation, several principles need to be acknowledged from the outset. First, this is still perceived as a cemetery and should continue to be respected as a sacred place and not as a theme park with signage scattered across it. The rotunda assists in the process of raising visitor awareness of this important aspect.

External signage should therefore be:
- unobtrusive;
- have low impact on the heritage values of the place; and,
- should enhance the visitor experience.

Any graveside interpretation should provide information relating to a specific grave and to assist in understanding the occupational, and ethnic diversity of early Cairns. Such information should provide an appreciation of the ages and causes of death of as many as possible but without intruding on personal sensitivities.

The cause of death may be added as a discretionary field. In this regard we note that previous signs were sometimes too explicit with one indicating ‘cervical cancer’ as the cause of death when ‘cancer’ would have been sufficient. In another case ‘alcoholism’ was an identified cause along with ‘sclerosis of the liver’. The latter was considered adequate and less sensitive to descendants.

The use of QR codes as part of this process should be seen as a supplementary part of this process and not as the only way in which to access biographical details. While an increasing number of cemetery visitors may have smart phones there are others, particularly in the older demographic range unfamiliar with such devices.

It is recommended that plaques should continue to contain both the basic biographical data provided on earlier markers; that is, name, occupation, born (year), place of birth, died (year), place of death and, progressively, a QR code for additional information to be accessed.

A typical sign may read:

**Stephen McNamara Miner**
**Born c1829 Ireland**
**Died 1897 Cairns**

It should be produced in a standard 24-point san-serif font (for example, Arial, Geneva, Helvetica, Lucida sans). Once the font has been selected it should be maintained as the standard.

In the event a QR code is provided, it should be placed to the right and should not exceed about 50 x 50 mm. This is based on the core size being 0.5” (12mm) square and enlarged by 0.5” (12 mm) for every foot (300mm) further from the normal camera position (see <blog.getsharesquare.com/wild/how-big-should-my-qr-code-be/>).
QR codes provided by increasing numbers of retailers in signage and newspaper advertisements to assist customers access catalogues etc are usually about 30 x 30 mm. While the argument has been made that QR codes need to be larger to ensure they can be read by less sensitive in-phone cameras, the provision of large QR codes is visually intrusive and, like it or not, still seem not to be understood by a significant proportion of the population. Few people randomly questioned as part of this project had any idea what they were.

With those features in mind future plaques – new or replacements - could be produced on either:

- natural coloured anodised aluminium EN5005 H14 AQ at least 1mm thick with the lettering printed in black (as it is least likely to fade). Metal Signs & Labels is one such Queensland based supplier, or on;

- Alucabond, a composite material comprising two outer layers of aluminium with a mineral filled core. This has recently been used for outdoor interpretative signage and can be printed locally in Cairns by, for example, Expressway Signs. Metallic sunrise silver with black printing would be the preferred option as black has the best shelf life.

The recommended size for the new (QR code inclusive signs) is 148 x 52.5 mm allowing eight signs to be printed on an A4 (210 mm x 297 mm) sheet.

The signs need to be secured using Sikaflex 11FC to a suitable support. While recognising that QR codes need to be positioned in such a way as to allow visitors to align their cameras close to and parallel to the code there are overriding issues in respect of preservation of heritage values of the cemetery that must be considered above all else.

Trials of the various materials described above should be conducted to ensure the manufacturing processes reproduce QR codes with sufficient clarity to be capable of being read by a smart phone ‘App’. Enquiries made with both local and international contacts suggest that this is innovative technology and needs trialling before full-scale commitment.

Securing the signs directly to a gravestone, where they exist, is a possibility but is generally considered undesirable as adhesives may leave residues or cause local staining if the signs are removed later. The ideal position on a grave would be at about 1200 mm above ground level, which would also have strong adverse visual impact.

On this basis it is preferable to mount the markers on a detached support adjacent to the rear of the grave. While mounting them at the foot of the grave may appear logical, it is widely considered to be an intrusion as the original fabric is visually affected by such an addition. Side mounting is similarly visually intrusive and presents a greater trip risk for passers-by and difficulties for lawn maintenance.

A proposal to use 200+ mm long 12mm 316 stainless steel rods with a sloping plate, approx 150 x 100 mm, welded to the top has been made but is considered unsuitable as the rods can be easily bent out of shape, they could be torn from the ground and used as weapons by vandals, the protrusion of the plate would be a safety hazard and the sign is too large to blend in satisfactorily.
An alternative would be to mount the signs at the rear of the gravestone on a granite or concrete support extending 200mm above ground and set flush with the rear of the grave surrounds. The support post would be anchored into the ground and have a face angled at 60° from the vertical. This slope is considered the best for reading and would be easily aligned for a mobile phone camera. Granite has the advantage of durability, visual attractiveness, capacity to withstand minor whipper snipper impact and be a minimal trip hazard.

Each post would be in uniform black granite with desk top, polished face 340 (height at top of sloped area) x 170 x 50 giving a face area of 170 x 55 mm, with drilled base to take two stainless steel securing rods. An indicative cost of $80 each including securing pins has been provided at this stage.

Professional installation, on a concrete base, would be an additional $15 to $20 with plaques costing between $15 and $30 each depending upon material, size and quantity.

As an alternative, reinforced concrete posts with a smooth, sloping top could also be considered although aesthetically they would be less pleasing. They would need to be of higher quality than those produced for previously unmarked graves in the early 1990s. Many of them have lost their brass plaques and weathered to exposed aggregate over twenty-plus years as they used poorly mixed concrete. A finish comparable to that required by the War Graves Commission is required. The cost is expected to be comparable to those in granite. It is recommended that whichever system is used, they are installed by suitably skilled personnel.

For burial markers where no headstone exists it has been the practice to use concrete plinths as per Cairns City Council Plan 6668. This design could be modified although, as noted elsewhere, a higher standard of plinth is essential. Again, as noted in the above, if produced in concrete they would need to be finished to a level comparable with that required by the War Graves Commission. Alternative options using granite should also be considered as that is more durable, has a better bonding surface when polished and is aesthetically more pleasing.

Suitable granite bases, which would offer uniformity with those recommended above to be added behind existing headstones, would also feature sloping desk tops. Each would have a polished face 340 (height at top of sloped area) x 150 x 200 mm giving a surface area of 200 x 160mm, with drilled base to take two stainless steel securing rods and are estimated to cost $120 each, including stainless steel securing pins. Professional installation, on a concrete base, would be an additional $15 to $20 with plaques costing between $15 and $30 each depending upon material, size and quantity.

Progressive replacement of the weathered plinths and the supply of plaques for those now missing is the highest priority. It is recommended that name plaques should be replaced as QR codes are developed with the code on the same plaque and not added as an adjacent plaque. This would be neater. If granite, the preferred material, is adopted then the older plinths should be progressively replaced.

**Website**

The Cairns Regional Council website provides limited information on burials at the pioneer cemetery. It includes the following generic information:

*McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery*
Location: McLeod Street, Cairns. Located alongside the Kuranda-Cairns railway line, this cemetery is classified as a registered Pioneer Cemetery and is managed by the Council subject to conditions from the Environmental Protection Agency.

There is an information rotunda within the grounds providing information on location of graves and those buried. Not all graves in the cemetery have headstones. No plaques may be added to, or restoration works permitted.

If you are a school or interested persons and would like to learn more about this historic cemetery, including a fact sheet and student questionnaire please contact Council.

This information needs some minor corrections and clarifications:

Para 1 should read

Location: McLeod Street, Cairns. Located at the intersection of McLeod and Grove streets, alongside the Kuranda-Cairns railway line. This cemetery is heritage listed on the Queensland Heritage Register and the Cairns Regional Council heritage list and is managed by the Council subject to conditions determined under the Queensland Heritage Act.

In respect of the final paragraph the availability of the 'fact sheet' and 'student questionnaire' needs to be verified and a more specific contact point identified.

Hours of opening should be specified once the fence is completed.

Other interpretative material

Print media should not be overlooked in future interpretation. There is still a significant part of the community – particularly in the older age groups - who prefer printed material, and that should be catered for in any interpretative planning.

A brochure was produced in the 1990s. A similar brochure should be considered with text updated and possible printing at a higher standard.

Educational aids for visiting school groups should also be considered. Possibilities of Education faculty students at James Cook University being involved in their development should be explored.

It may also be possible to interest students from James Cook in media and/or history to consider preparation of short documentary films or web-based media relating to the cemetery. Photographs, news clippings, interviews and sketch imagery could be used to produce a useful promotional clip on the cemetery.
Conservation policies and actions

The following policies should be adopted as a basis for the ongoing management of the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery in accord with best practice management of a State heritage-listed, former cemetery:

Policy 1 Heritage values management
The significance of the place is formally recognized by the Cairns Regional Council as a foundation on which to maintain and develop the resource for the benefit of present and future generations while suitably venerating the lives of past residents.

During the late twentieth century, the former Cairns City Council undertook wide-ranging improvements to the cemetery including the construction of a rotunda, identification and marking of additional graves (in conjunction with local community groups) and regular maintenance. It is recognised that those resources require ongoing maintenance and expansion consistent with the attributes of the site and emerging technologies.

Action
Cairns Regional Council formally recognises the historical significance of the Pioneer Cemetery and reflects this with an appropriate budget to ensure adequate maintenance and resources are committed for the site to be appropriately utilised.

Policy 2 Legal compliance
Works conducted within the heritage-listed area, including future developments, shall be undertaken with due regard for this Conservation Plan, the current state heritage legislation and the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter.

These policies and ancillary actions are endorsed as the basis for site management in the foreseeable future. The greatest heritage significance is in the intactness and layout of the entire cemetery. In this regard, the extant spatial distribution of memorials and their ongoing care and maintenance are critically important.

Action
Cairns Regional Council endorses the conservation and interpretation policies, recommendations and practices identified within this document and will liaise with the Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to have the proposals contained herein incorporated in a suitable exemption certificate.

Policy 3 Site interpretation and presentation
The cemetery is important in interpreting and understanding human participation in the development of Cairns. Its values as an interpretive facility should be enhanced to provide a resource which balances original use with recognition of the roles played by those buried within the cemetery grounds.

The cemetery is a place of contemplation and learning as well as being a memorial recognizing the contribution of many residents of early Cairns. The rotunda will be upgraded in accordance with this Conservation Management Plan and as funding permits to provide for core orientation and interpretation. Individual graves will be identified with additional personal information as opportunity arises.
**Action**
Cairns Regional Council staff will identify and seek suitable funding opportunities as they arise to ensure the proposed tasks are implemented.

**Policy 4 Maintenance**
Cairns Regional Council recognizes the need for regular physical maintenance and will maintain the resource to its best endeavours.

A review of the existing maintenance regime indicates a more frequent program is needed to ensure the prompt removal of litter and vegetation refuse, to tidy the individual graves and to identify and undertake minor repair work as required. The various park benches, for example, have an unkempt look about them and need cleaning, minor repairs and repainting and the rotunda paintwork is patchy.

**Action**
Cairns Regional Council will review current budget allocations and consider increased maintenance commensurate with the site’s values and community importance.

**Policy 5 Community involvement**
Cairns Regional Council recognizes the value of community participation and encourages the formation of revitalized Friends of the McLeod Street cemetery to support in its responsibilities.

For over a decade the Friends committee undertook a lead role in the management, use and presentation of the cemetery. The committee should be revitalized and developed as a role model for other cemeteries in the region. Community involvement is highly desirable in assisting Council with management of assets of this type as was demonstrated in the 1990s, and the successful re-establishment of such a group could provide the catalyst for other communities to develop a ‘hands on’ involvement with other cemeteries.

Any such Committee should be guided and supported by Council but should not be seen to have a direct management role. Council should maintain its overriding responsibilities with the appointment of at least one employee and/or elected member on the Committee.

Discussions with Chinese community representatives has led to the suggestion that, given the high percentage of Chinese burials within McLeod Street, the Ching Ming Festival could be used to encourage wide community participation in annual maintenance work.

**Action**
Cairns Regional Council and staff will facilitate the re-formation of a Friends Committee. CRC should provide secretarial support and have representation on that committee (the representative may be an elected member of Council, an employee or a nominee appointed by Council or a combination). Membership should include representatives of the Cairns Historical Society; Cairns and District Family History Society; far North Queensland Branch of the National trust of Queensland, CADCAI and any other community group, or individual, whose contribution can be expected to enhance on-going care and use of the site.

Cairns Regional Council will actively pursue the suggestion that the Chinese Ching Ming Festival held in early April could be used as means of encouraging community participation in an annual clean up of the grounds.
Policy 6 Inter-agency cooperation
Council will continue to work constructively with the Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) and the Queensland Heritage Council (QHC) to develop mutually acceptable outcomes.

While Council has management responsibilities for the cemetery, activities are constrained by its listing on the Queensland Heritage Register. It is essential for Council to work closely with DEHP in any development of the place to ensure the highest standards of heritage place management are maintained. It is equally important that DEHP officers recognize the wider community values of the site and work cooperatively to ensure that every opportunity is taken to enhance those wide-ranging values. Prompt responses to management issues are essential for all parties.

Action
Cairns Regional Council and DEHP personnel shall work cooperatively to ensure heritage standards are maintained and that the associated goals are achieved with minimal bureaucratic hurdles.

Policy 7 Adaptation of features of low significance
Trees planted within the cemetery during the late twentieth century are unsuitable species. Their progressive replacement will be undertaken in a manner that continues to offer shade to visitors and does not damage the cultural integrity of the cemetery content and layout.

The trees currently growing within the cemetery are unsuitable intrusions with no inherent heritage values. The Melaleuca and Pinus spp were planted in the 1970s and while they afford pleasant shade for visitors the trees are having adverse impacts on many of the identifiable graves. The ‘almonds’ have a safety problem as the hard seeds can be projected at high velocity by lawn mowers.

A comprehensive removal and replanting scheme should be developed by the Council’s Arborist and Landscape Architect as a priority, preferably in close consultation with a suitably qualified heritage place manager. The program should be a progressive one aimed at gradual replacement of the mature trees. The complete and immediate removal and replanting of all trees should not be considered under any circumstances. Diseased and vulnerable trees should be the first to go. The pines currently growing in the ‘alien section’ – the northwest corner can, in general, be left for a later stage but needles and cones from them should be removed more frequently. They are unsightly even when swept into piles, and it has been suggested by some specialists they have a deleterious effect on the soil and on marble gravestones in particular.

Action
Cairns Regional Council should move promptly to ensure the removal of dead and damaging trees, bearing in mind that they are also safety hazards to visitors. An ongoing tree replacement program should be initiated and effected. CRC should ensure the program is well publicised to minimise public misunderstanding.

Policy 8 Internal paths
The existing internal paths are adaptations dating from the 1990s. In recognition of the recent perimeter fencing of the site, their negligible heritage values, and their uneven surfaces they will be progressively repaired or replaced. The narrow, diagonal, paved walkway will either be removed, re-grassed and returned to its original condition: lawn or, repaired to minimize safety concerns presently
evident. The rotunda access will be reconstructed and narrowed using an exposed aggregate concrete finish. The border plantings will be replaced by low plantings. The disability access to the rotunda will be repaired with more suitable materials.

The diagonal path has a continuing practical value in facilitating walkers passing through the cemetery. As it has been decided to keep the side entrance (NW corner) open during daylight hours not only for maintenance vehicles but the public the path retains some functional values. The uneven nature of its surface makes it both a visual intrusion and a safety issue that needs immediate attention.

**Action**
Cairns Regional Council should either effect essential repairs or remove the diagonal paved path as a HIGH priority task due to safety concerns. The area should be re-grassed if the pavers are removed. The approach to the rotunda should be redesigned and the paved area replaced with an exposed aggregate concrete surface in the next two years. In the meantime, urgent attention should be taken to refit those paving blocks that are misaligned due to safety issues. The disability ramp should be repaired using more user friendly, visually pleasing, materials.

**Policy 9 Records**
Since 1988 there has been substantial research undertaken in respect of burials at McLeod Street. Much of this is in printed form and some retained on CRC electronic archive systems. No consolidation has been undertaken, with the result that the information is disjointed and diverse. Biographical data is, for example, partially retained on a large format spreadsheet and available in more limited form on Council's website.

Grave records are similarly diverse. The original records from 1988 exist in hard copy as do separate later assessments of grave damage and repairs. They are also uncoordinated and not available on the web.

A consolidated database should be developed that incorporates biographical data, grave descriptions and conservation actions taken. It should include capacity for ongoing additional data to be added.

**Action**
The vacation employment of a university student (history or computer science) should be considered. The aim should be to coordinate the material currently held in four archival boxes (see appendix) into a functional record capable of continuing benefit.

**Policy 10 Interpretation**
The interpretation in the rotunda is useful but hard to follow and has the scope to be enhanced. Much of the information offered is dated, disjointed or irrelevant. A proposal to introduce QR coding to selected graves is under development.

The development of ‘on grave’ QR coding should be encouraged as a supplementary information source but not as a stand-alone system. The devices must be considered as an opportunity to access additional data that cannot be made available using more conventional methods such as metal plaques.

**Action**
A comprehensive revision of the interpretation within the cemetery is needed. The interpretation within the rotunda should be linked closely with proposed interpretation within the cemetery itself.
Conclusion

The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery was developed as a major heritage site in the late twentieth century. The efforts made, during the 1990s, to develop it from a neglected, disused cemetery were largely as a result of the energies of the late Mayor Keith Goodwin and the Friends of the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery under the leadership of Mrs Marie Nemec.

For various reasons those efforts have dissipated in more recent times, and although the cemetery itself continues to retain a significant role in the presentation of Cairns’ history, it justifies refocussing. Improved security, enhanced maintenance and more meaningful interpretation are critical issues which have been discussed in this document and provide the opportunity to reignite interest in the site.

While the cemetery can never be a ‘self sustaining heritage place’ – few ever are – it can once again value add to the cultural heritage attributes of the city and region as a whole.
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Dalrymple, G., 1874, 'Narrative and reports of the Queensland north-east coast expedition 1873' (report to Queensland Parliament), Govt Printer, Brisbane.


Jones, D, 1976, Trinity Phoenix, Cairns Centenary Committee, Cairns.


Parkes, F., 1989, 'A History of a Northern Monumental Mason Firm: Melrose & Fenwick Pty Ltd', (Unpub History assignment 125pp), History Department, James Cook University, Cairns Campus, Cairns


Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land.

Christina Rossetti 1830- 1894
APPENDIX

Cairns Regional Council documentation associated with McLeod St Cemetery

Four archive boxes hold a range of invaluable archival material relating to the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery the contents of which are scheduled below
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parkes, Faezh</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>A history of a Northern Monumental Mason Firm: Melrose &amp; Fenwick Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Unpub James Cook Univ</td>
<td>A comprehensive student project on one of the main stonemasons represented in the cemetery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anon</td>
<td>n/d</td>
<td>Pioneer Cemetery graves; Order according to Grave numbers in Map 6660A</td>
<td>? Friends of McLeod St cemetery</td>
<td>Copies of a table of burials with some annotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell, Peter and Young, D.</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>West End Cemetery Townsville Conservation Strategy</td>
<td>Hist Research P/L Adelaide</td>
<td>Conservation plan for a major Townsville cemetery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plaques for headstones</td>
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<td>Has ref #525130in footer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of McLeod St Pioneer cemetery (FMcLSC)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minutes 06/08/2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comments re rotunda painting and refurbishment, painted grave cleaning issue, concrete plinths that have deteriorated, self guided tour of White Hills Bendigo cemetery, letter re Sprenger graves</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMcLSC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minutes 12/02/2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mainly relates to a grant application (2 copies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon</td>
<td></td>
<td>untitled</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 copies of an untitled schedule of names, grid ref CCC plan 6660, survey plot Grave ID pp 3-13, with McLeod St Pioneer Cemetery headstones Index attached (No., Name)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bognuda T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Email to Rachael Small re Ernestine Katherine Condron</td>
<td></td>
<td>Re brass plaque</td>
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<td>Various</td>
<td></td>
<td>Metal conservation project costs to 9 Oct 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>Various schedules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gordon Grimwade &amp; Assoc (GG&amp;A)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation issues McLeod st Pioneer Cemetery. Appendices to Conservation Proposals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Issues related to tree maintenance, vegetation on plinths, vegetation on graves, landscaping, collapsed graves, grave repairs – detached fittings, vandalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitchell, B/Small R</td>
<td>4/10/2001</td>
<td>Request for project assistance Green Reserve</td>
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<td>Memo re assistance from Conservation Volunteers</td>
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<td>Anon (CCC?)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Maintenance plan 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summarises maintenance practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author/Department</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>28/11/2001</td>
<td>Small R</td>
<td>Grant application QHTN has been adopted</td>
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<td>27/11/2001</td>
<td>Beard T</td>
<td>Funding of metals conservation</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Various correspondence re Conservation proposals amendments</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>FMcLSC</td>
<td>Minutes of meeting 10 July 2001</td>
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<td>Various correspondence re the metals conservation workshop</td>
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<td>GG&amp;A</td>
<td>Quote for repairs to headstones</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Family History Socy</td>
<td>Grant application to Reef Casino Comm Benefit Fund</td>
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<td>3 July 2000</td>
<td>Gaming Machine Comm Benefit Committee (GMCB)</td>
<td>Approved grant $15000</td>
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<td>15 Dec 2000</td>
<td>CD FHS Inc</td>
<td>Approval letter to P Maxwell</td>
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<td>12/10/1999</td>
<td>FMcLSC</td>
<td>Minutes of meeting 12 Oct 1999</td>
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<td>17/2/2000</td>
<td>GG&amp;A</td>
<td>Inspection of stone repairs</td>
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<td>9/5/2000 &amp; various</td>
<td>GMCB, JCU, CHS etc</td>
<td>Correspondence in support and acknowledgement of grant application</td>
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<td>various</td>
<td>CD FHS Inc</td>
<td>Cert of Incorporation (8/6/1989), Constitution of Cairns &amp; District Family History Socy and financial report to 30 June 1999</td>
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<td>15/4/1999</td>
<td>FMcLSC</td>
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<td>CCC allocated $40K to</td>
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<td>2 ring binder Michael Dwyer Grave relocation</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>be used before 30/6/1999, discussion about where funds would be used</td>
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<td>Various</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Correspondence and reports relating to exhumation of grave on Barron R Kamerunga</td>
<td>Limited relevance to McL St</td>
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<td>King &amp; Co</td>
<td>26/7/94</td>
<td>Legal opinion re burials on private land</td>
<td>Useful commentary re ownership of graves on private land</td>
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<td>Caloundra City Council</td>
<td>3/12/02</td>
<td>Council regulations re burials on private land</td>
<td>Useful commentary re ownership of graves on private land</td>
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<td>CCC Works Committee</td>
<td>19/6/02</td>
<td>Request to bury future bishops in S. Monica’s cathedral</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>27/6/03</td>
<td>Permit to excavate Const Dwyer’s grave</td>
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<td>Anon</td>
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<td>Loose sheets identifying grave form nomenclature</td>
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<td>Various</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>Database forms for all marked graves in McLeod St cemetery</td>
<td>Material compiled as part of initial study of cemetery in 1988 forming part of Grimwade 1988 report to CCC with several later insertions with additional bibliographic information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td><em>Pioneer cemetery management documents</em></td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>The McLeod Street pioneer Cemetery A Cairns City Council and community conservation project</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>DL brochure outlining the conservation project of 1980s</td>
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<td>G Grimwade</td>
<td>Autumn 1998</td>
<td>From Cemetery to Park: a case study of the McLeod St cemetery, Cairns</td>
<td>Aust Parks &amp; Rec’n</td>
<td>Outlines the conservation process of the project initiated in 1988</td>
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<td>G Grimwade</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td><em>(Extract from Conservation Proposals)</em> pp2, 22-25</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Marked ‘original handout to teachers’</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
<td>20/11/01</td>
<td>2 copies of cadastral map with mark showing a lone grave at Hedley Cl, Cairns</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>No further info on these duplicate maps</td>
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<td>Various</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Various correspondence re the metals conservation work undertaken by P Maxwell</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>A range of costings and reports associated with the project also discussed in Box 1 contents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Blue 2 ring binder</strong></td>
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<td><em>McL St PC design File Misc data</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Nd (post 1990)</td>
<td>Index of 38 topics covered within the binder</td>
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<tr>
<td>G Grimwade</td>
<td>25/7/88</td>
<td>McLeod St PC Information paper</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Info sheet distributed at public consultation meeting</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
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<td>Feedback form for meeting attendees</td>
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<td>Cairns post</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>Cairns wins important conservation award</td>
<td>Cairns Post</td>
<td>Article re CCC winning John Herbert Conservation Award</td>
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<td>nd</td>
<td>p/cpy of a possible rotunda design</td>
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<td>G Grimwade</td>
<td>C1988</td>
<td>Schedule of plaque engravings</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Grave No/register, name, order date, delivered, installed</td>
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<td>2 colour photos of signs advising CCC intention to preserve cemetery</td>
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<td>unknown</td>
<td>16/8/89</td>
<td>Note re electricity locks at cemetery</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Process to unlock electricity board at cemetery</td>
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<td>K Goodwin</td>
<td>5/9/89</td>
<td>Letter suggesting grow some butterfly attracting vines in cemetery</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Possible varieties list attached</td>
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<td>Various</td>
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<td>Completed feedback form for meeting attendees</td>
<td>CCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>G Grimwade</td>
<td>3/7/89</td>
<td>Plaques requested ex</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>List of plaques ordered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>28/7/88</td>
<td>Registration list at public meeting 730pm 28 July 1988</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix F suggested gravestone terminology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E Herbert, Siteplan</td>
<td>28/6/89</td>
<td>Sketch plans for show display re McL St C</td>
<td>Siteplan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anon</td>
<td>8/5/90</td>
<td>List of chemicals to be used for conservation</td>
<td>NB The chemicals suggested are NO LONGER recommended for use</td>
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<td>CFHS</td>
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<td>Pioneer &amp; Settlers Register to 1920 blank proforma</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
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<td>Pioneer Register 1877 to 1949 blank proforma</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Sept 88</td>
<td>McLeod St Cemetery Routed signs and fencing, Drawing 6654</td>
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<td>Tenni/Simms</td>
<td>Feb 1989</td>
<td>Letters re proposal to place rotunda over two graves of Tenni family</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>G Grimwade</td>
<td>11/7/89</td>
<td>Fax re proposed litter bins</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Oct 1988</td>
<td>Drawing 6660. McLeod St &amp; Grove Sts corner Existing headstone index</td>
<td>Includes 2 copies of plan and 310 entries. NB Redundant plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Jun 1989</td>
<td>Drawing 6660A. McLeod St &amp; Grove Sts corner Existing headstone index. Includes a schedule of names.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RCS Ltd</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>Information from RCS</td>
<td>A series of numbers probably grave numbers but out of context</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>G Grimwade/RCS</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>Biographical record sheet</td>
<td>Personal details and plaque delivery info for those for whom plaques were prepared</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>12/1989</td>
<td>Peripheral info re nomination for John Herbert Award, Nat Trust of Qld</td>
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<td><strong>Green 3 ring binder</strong></td>
<td>May 1992</td>
<td><em>McL St PC conservation action</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Askin &amp; Hausmann</td>
<td>19/6/87</td>
<td>McLeod St Cemetery</td>
<td>Proposal to develop pioneer wall or restore individual graves</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Malcolm &amp; Hausmann</td>
<td>27/8/87</td>
<td>McLeod st cemetery</td>
<td>Brief recent history, 3 dev’t options</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>Stewart J, NTQld</td>
<td>16/5/88</td>
<td>canvassed McLeod st cemetery</td>
<td>seeks restoration according to NT guidelines</td>
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<td>unknown</td>
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<td>2 photos of K Bennett &amp; A Gentles damaged graves</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Grimwade</td>
<td>19/7/88</td>
<td>canvassed McLeod St Pioneer Cemetery, Cairns: Conservation Proposals</td>
<td>full report with appendices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td></td>
<td>canvassed Papers elating to public meeting to discuss proposals, inc</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>invitation, background notes, formation of MCLStPC Advisory Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>14/9/88</td>
<td>canvassed The most difficult decision: remove and dispose of trees within</td>
<td>specification for removal</td>
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<td>existing graves</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 photos of tree removal needs and action and damaged graves</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cairns Post</td>
<td>28/4/1990</td>
<td>canvassed Restoration techniques pioneered at cemetery</td>
<td>article refers to use of Structural Adjustment Package funds and use of 'innovative' practices for grave repairs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>C20/2/89</td>
<td>canvassed McL St grave identification press release</td>
<td>proposed use of military i/c metal detectors to locate graves on 22 Feb</td>
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<td>RCS (G Grimwade)</td>
<td>1/9/91</td>
<td>canvassed McL St PC Recommendations for grave railings</td>
<td>outlines a policy and method for grave railing repair</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>canvassed Grave Conservation guidelines</td>
<td>policy relating to individual graves. Inc plan 6668 for plinths</td>
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<td>Qld Art Gallery</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>canvassed Contract services for Conservator P Maxwell</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>canvassed McL St PC Individual Grave Conservation recommendations</td>
<td>identifies a procedure for grave conservation works and repair needs for Emma and Florence Hoare, an unidentified grave and Nils and Elsie Christiansen</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>c1989</td>
<td>canvassed 9 colour prints of repair works by trainees</td>
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<tr>
<td>K Goodwin</td>
<td>22/12/89</td>
<td>canvassed Nomination for John Herbert Award and copy of award 1990</td>
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<td>A. Payne, Cairns Hist Socy(?)</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>canvassed A Visit to the McLeod St Cemetery</td>
<td>student work book draft</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Dec 88</td>
<td>canvassed Brochure McLeod St</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Dec 89</td>
<td>Brochure McLeod St Pioneer Cemetery</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>24/5/90</td>
<td>Minutes of Pioneer Cemetery Committee Mtg</td>
<td>Record the passing of Mayor Goodwin and Ald Blank in air crash</td>
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<td>Various</td>
<td>Dec 89</td>
<td>Letters of support in re nomination for John Herbert Award</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
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<td>Plan 6650 A &amp; B picket fence</td>
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<td>Plan 6651 Log barrier fence</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6652 Timber sign railway frontage</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6653 timber sign Street frontages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>6654 Site plan routed signs and fencing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>6655 trees to be removed</td>
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<td>6656 Directional signs to locate cemetery</td>
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<td>6657 Locality plan</td>
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<td>6658/59 Original gate survey</td>
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<td>6660 Existing headstone index &amp; plan</td>
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<td>6660A Actual grave location &amp; index</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6661 Sprinkler Irrigation plan</td>
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<td>6662 landscape plan</td>
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<td>6663 Concrete &amp; timber bench seat</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6664 reduced copy of sexton's original burial plan</td>
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<td>6665 Probing grid (metal detectors used)</td>
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Bound copy of entries relating to plaques on graves.

Typescript in date order of deaths Apr 1886 to Oct 1887 with attached comprehensive notes re DoB, occupation, date of death and place of burial.

Emails relating to removal of 32 Pinus c. and 6 others and public sensitivity. Plans attached.
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<tr>
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<td>Plan 6651 Log barrier fence</td>
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<td>6653 timber sign Street frontages</td>
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<td>6654 Site plan routed signs and fencing</td>
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<td>6656 Directional signs to locate cemetery</td>
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<td>6658/59 Original gate survey</td>
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<td>6660 Existing headstone index &amp; plan</td>
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<td>List by surname, other name, yr of death ref no. 96pp. 2 copies, 1 bound</td>
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Preliminary

McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery is a heritage listed property at both Queensland and local levels and therefore has special maintenance requirements. This document summarises advice to those responsible for maintenance of the cemetery.

It provides a brief history of the site and discusses its heritage importance before identifying ways in which maintenance should be undertaken. A concluding section discusses how new works should be dealt with.

For more detailed information please refer to the ‘McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery Conservation Plan’, Maxim Consulting Services Pty Ltd, (July 2012); ‘The Burra Charter’, Australia ICOMOS; and the Queensland Heritage Act.

History

The Cairns region had long been home to coastal Aboriginal clans when Europeans first settled Cairns in 1876 as a port for the Hodgkinson Goldfield. Cairns eventually became a commercial and transport centre for the mining and agricultural communities of the Tablelands and Cape York.

A cemetery was initially developed on the Esplanade, near the site of the Cairns Base Hospital, but was soon abandoned in favour of what was to become McLeod Street Cemetery.

Bodies from the first cemetery were apparently reinterred in the McLeod Street cemetery.

The first Cemetery Trust was gazetted in 1877. For several years the site was poorly maintained, probably because there was no road access. Fencing and drainage were major difficulties for the early cemetery managers.

In March 1885 Trustees Ryan and Hobson went so far as to recommend closure of McLeod Street cemetery and that a new site should be found (Cairns Post 19 March 1885:2).

In 1887 the local newspaper wrote at length about the problems faced at McLeod Street:
A question of the very gravest importance has arisen in our community, and one that demands the serious consideration, not merely of the authorities in Cairns, but also of the Government. We allude to the situation and insanitary condition of the local cemetery. From a statement that had been made to us by a resident of this town we, in company with one of the trustees, proceeded to the burial place to ascertain if the reports as to its bad state which had reached us were true, and discovered that the facts had been under-stated. We do not know who is responsible, for the choice of the site, but whoever fixed upon the present locality must have been imbecile to a degree, or else utterly without regard for the health or finer feelings of posterity. It seems doubtful, if the whole district had been searched, whether a moister (sic) or more otherwise unsuitable spot could have been found. Almost the whole of the enclosure is under water, and some of the graves, which have been washed flat, are only discovered when you tread on them and slip knee deep in sandy slush. We had been informed that there were coffins only eighteen inches from the surface, and with a cane we sounded several graves. Some were over three feet, some eighteen inches, and some only fourteen inches from the surface, and all were, more or less, a quaking mass of sand and water. Apart from the sentimental side of the question, and the fact that such a condition of things must be extremely painful to the feelings of the survivors, is it not a dreadful thing that such a state of affairs should exist in a town of ten years standing? Should a dangerously infectious epidemic, of the nature of typhus or other malignant disease, break out amongst us, the interments would, it may be presumed, be made in this ill-favoured spot, and we leave it to our readers to imagine what the consequences would be to the inhabitants (Cairns Post 7 April 1887:2).

By May 1900, the cemetery was reportedly much improved.

Nearly a year later the Morning Post praised the Trust and the Sexton, William Parsons.

The main entrance is metalled from the gate to the opposite fence, thus forming a really good pathway for pedestrians and for carriage traffic. On both sides of the walk variegated hedging has been planted which now looks well and healthy. Rising over this hedging, crotons of all colors are growing and produce a very charming effect, there being probably over one hundred of these beautiful shrubs planted in all. Along the main fence, parallel with the main road leading to the entrance gate, many fine shrubs and flowering trees have been planted, and are now making good headway and in a short time will make the home of our dead a really beautiful place. The graves are kept free from spear grass and weeds and couch grass was recently obtained from the south by the Secretary and planted by the Sexton all over the grounds (Morning Post 19 April 1901:2).

The last of the 2501 burials was that of ninety-year old Jane Sage Bradford, who was buried alongside her husband on 4 September 1949 (Register of Cairns General Cemetery) George Bradford, Blacksmith of Sachs Street (Grafton Street), had been buried on 21 February 1916.

In the 1970s Pines and Melaleucas were planted in what had otherwise become a two-hectare patch of rank grass and self-sown wattle regrowth. Over the same period the Cairns City Council recorded a flow of enquiries from the public
tracing their ancestors’ graves or to simply provide council with biographical data.

In 1988 the Cairns City Council, under the leadership of Mayor Keith Goodwin, commissioned a heritage assessment to guide future management of the cemetery. A report *McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery Conservation Proposals* was produced in July 1988 (Grimwade 1988).

The key achievements and later initiatives included:
- Repair of broken headstones;
- Removal of numerous trees that had damaged several graves;
- Provision of a path diagonally across the cemetery;
- Fencing the perimeter;
- Identification of many former burials;
- Provision of internal lighting;
- Erection of a commemorative rotunda; and,
- Formation of a 'Friends of McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery Committee'.

The latter, ably led by Marie Nemec for several years, developed a range of guides for both the public and, more specifically, teaching aids for visiting school groups. 'The Friends' were responsible for major additions to the personal records of those interred within the cemetery and the significant public utilization that is evident post 1990.

The cemetery has been maintained at varying levels of effectiveness since the 1990s.

Vandalism has resulted in damage to several graves at times. It was a particular concern of Council's in 2010/11 resulting in the decision to fence the area and to develop a new management plan: 'McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery Conservation Plan', Maxim Consulting Services Pty Ltd, (July 2012).

**Heritage values**

There are eight ways in which a place can be registered as a heritage place under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery meets at least five of them. The recent Conservation Management Plan and the existing listing suggest the McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery is important because:

*It survives as a unique historical record of the multi-cultural social, economic and political life of early Cairns, and is an unusual illustration of the major events which shaped the development of Cairns and Far North Queensland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The ongoing efforts of the local community and individual efforts further strengthen that importance.*

*The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of history have been demonstrated by the extent of genealogical data and personal histories now available in the public domain. The information relating to stonemasons, grave technology and symbolism that*
has been generated as a result of work undertaken in the past two decades has significantly contributed to an increased understanding of burial heritage.

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places. In the formal arrangement of gravesites, denominational divisions and types of memorials, the cemetery reflects late 19th and early 20th century public taste and social perceptions about burial and memorial.

The place is known to hold a strong association with the three leading heritage groups active within the Far North and with the Chinese community for cultural and spiritual reasons.

The place has special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in history. The place is recognized to have strong association with one of the pioneers of malaria prevention, Dr Edward Koch who is buried within the cemetery along with many of those who died while constructing the Cairns to Kuranda railway are also buried at McLeod Street. The cemetery is also closely associated with the achievements of two elected Cairns City councilors killed in the Mt Emerald air disaster in May 1990 - Mayor Keith Goodwin and Alderman Rose Blank – to reinvigorate the significant works conducted in the late twentieth century.

**Overall statement of significance**

The McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery was the second burial ground in Cairns. Despite extensive arguments about its suitability, it has endured as the resting place of over two thousand five hundred people of diverse ethnic and occupational backgrounds. The place has historical connections with the region and contains examples of many notable and prolific stonemasons, which demonstrate a diversity of symbolism. The potential for genealogical research and historical evaluation has been amply tested and proven in recent decades. McLeod Street Pioneer Cemetery holds strong association with several individuals and groups who contributed to the development of Queensland.
Maintenance

A high standard of maintenance of the cemetery is important because it is heritage listed, is often visited by members of the public, many people have ancestors buried there and it pays tribute to those who contributed so much to the region.

This section outlines some key points to consider when undertaking maintenance of the site.

Due attention to safety issues should be taken at all times. This includes proper training, wearing suitable protective clothing and minimising public exposure to unsafe or risky situations.

Mowing

Lawn mowing should be undertaken weekly, when possible, during the wet season and every two to three weeks during the drier months unless severe drought has affected grass growth.

Care needs to be taken while operating ride-on mowers near graves, concrete and other markers. Particular attention needs to be taken not to hit any structures. For this reason a combination of ride on mowers, push mowers and whipper-snippers/brushcutters should be used by skilled personnel. Push mowers may work better between individual graves.

Whipper-snippers/brushcutters should be used with plastic cord cutting devices only. Metal blades should not be used. When operating near graves particular care must be taken to avoid cord striking concrete or other stone or ring barking any plantings.

Mowing around some trees has eroded the ground and damaged surface roots. This damage affects tree health. To avoid this happening exposed roots should be covered with about 50 mm of imported soil and the spaces between such roots filled to encourage grass growth and remove the risk of anyone tripping over the roots. Such areas should be reseeded with grass where possible. This work should be undertaken within a year and rectified annually as required, in about November, to encourage optimum grass growth early in the wet season.

The problem of flying debris needs particular care. There are several beach almond trees in the cemetery and the hard, round, golf-ball sized seeds they produce can become dangerous missiles. When mowing in such areas suitable safety measures must be taken. This may include restricting public access, wearing suitable protective clothing and placing suitable warning signs around the work site.
**Weed control**

The careful use of weedicide is acceptable. Within the graves themselves, where weed growth is possible, consider the use of residual herbicides, such as *Graslan*. This should be used with care and in accord with the manufacturer’s instructions. Suitable safety and protective clothing should be worn.

Glyphosate weedkillers (eg *Roundup*) should be applied around individual graves to prevent weed growth within about 100mm of graves. The past practice of spraying wide areas around graves should cease, as it is resulting in erosion of the bare soil. Such spray applications should be undertaken twice a year: at the start of the wet season growth and again at the end of the wet season in April where necessary.

Selective weed killers should be applied to grassed areas that are infested with broadleaf weed and/or sensitive weed as required.

All relevant safety precautions should be taken when applying weedicide.

Apply weedicide in dry weather or nil to light breezes. It may drift and damage important plantings.

**Leaf litter in graves**

Leaf litter builds up in some graves and around some of the headstones laid on sloping concrete desktops. This limits free drainage of surface water during heavy rain and can encourage deterioration of some headstones such as marble and sandstone.

Leaf litter should be removed from graves and from sloping desktops at least annually and preferably twice a year.

**Leaf litter near trees**

Leaf litter should be removed from site. The practice of raking pine needles around the trees has limited value and, although it is tidier than having leaves strewn across the cemetery, can present trip hazards and harm grave markers. Pine needles in particular, rot down slowly and can react badly on graves - particularly marble – as they release acid compounds.

Leaf litter should not be raked into mounds and burnt on-site. This has an adverse local impact on the air quality and leaves unsightly ash marks for some months.

**Trees**

Many of the trees growing in the cemetery are damaging graves or present safety hazards (seeds as missiles, exposed roots, and falling limbs).

Dead trees and limbs should be removed immediately they are noticed. Care needs to be taken to ensure such work does not damage nearby graves or impact severely on the rest of the cemetery. Vehicles should only be used if they can reach the tree without causing wheel ruts or striking other graves.
Machinery should only be used where there is no adverse impact on heritage values.

Graves near any such work must be adequately protected from accidental damage.

As noted above tree roots that have become exposed should be covered in soil.

Trees that are noticeably damaging parts of the cemetery – lifting stone work, cracking graves surrounds etc – should be identified through an annual inspection by horticultural staff and approval sought from the relevant agencies as soon as practical thereafter for their removal. Again, all due care must be taken to ensure the heritage values are not harmed.

Suitable alternative tree species should be introduced and maintained by staff as advised by horticultural specialists.

**Irrigation**
Grass areas should be irrigated at regular intervals as recommended by horticulturalists. Any such irrigation should be undertaken during late evening/overnight to minimise evaporation.

**Litter**
Litter should be removed at least weekly. In the event large quantities of rubbish are reported maintenance staff should remove it within one working day. If litterbins are provided they should be positioned near the two new sets of gates and emptied weekly.

**Damage and vandalism**
Maintenance staff should report any vandalism immediately to management. It is critically important that any vandalism is repaired immediately as failure to do so has been shown to encourage further attacks.

Broken headstones and damage to graves requires specialist attention and should NOT be undertaken by well intentioned, but unskilled, work. Rectifying such efforts often proves more costly.

Graffiti requires specialised attention and should also be dealt with immediately. If the rotunda is subjected to graffiti any affected wall areas should be repainted using matching paint applied by suitable tradesmen. In the past badly matched paint has been used to cover graffiti, resulting in an untidy presentation.

**Seating**
Several seats are provided in the cemetery. They should be repaired immediately and any subsequent damage dealt with promptly. Each seat should be sprayed with *Wet ‘n’ Forget*, or similar product, twice yearly to eliminate mould growth.

Seats should be examined for repainting and major repairs at least every two years.
Paved areas
Tree roots and ponding water easily affect paved walkways. Uneven paving stones present trip hazards and are unsightly. They should be attended to immediately. Maintenance staff should report any specific instances immediately.

Fence
Damaged railings and chipped paint should be attended to ‘as required’. A more comprehensive inspection should be effected twice yearly (see below).

Graves – mould and lichen
The total removal of mould and lichen on graves is neither practical nor desirable. Pristine white marble in a heritage-listed cemetery that was last used over half a century ago detracts from its ambience. There is however, a need to ensure that severe lichen infestation is controlled as growths can erode softer stones such as marble and sandstone.

An annual application of Wet ‘n’ Forget or similar product can go a long way to providing a suitable balance. As the product name implies it should be sprayed on in accord with the manufacturer’s instructions and then left.

On NO ACCOUNT should pressure cleaning, hard bristled scrubbing brushes, chlorines and bleaches be used. Stone conservation specialists should be contracted to deal with severe infestations of mould or lichen.

Grave infills
Inevitable some loss of soil may occur within some graves that do not have concrete caps while some concrete caps may collapse due to structural weakness. It has been the approved practice for some years to use ‘Quinkan gravel’ as infill material. That practice should be reintroduced and effected on an annual basis.

The use of such a distinctive gravel clearly identifies the fact that it was a later repair technique, and not an original action that was undertaken soon after a burial.

Management inspections
Management should inspect the entire cemetery twice a year. The inspection should consider all aspects of the cemetery management including: vandalism, deteriorated graves, tree damage, weed infestation, water leakage, seat maintenance requirements, paved track deterioration and to identify any additional maintenance requirements.

Unspecified maintenance issues
Inevitably there will be times when unspecified maintenance issues are identified. Supervisory staff have a duty of care to ensure they deal sensitively with such issues when in doubt they should refer the matter to a suitably experienced heritage place manager, the Department of Environment and
Heritage Protection or other skilled practitioner, for example, an arborist where tree surgery is considered desirable.

**New Work**

Any proposed modifications to the cemetery should be undertaken only after discussion with the relevant officers of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and with relevant approvals in place.