
ADORNMENT OF GRAVES POLICY

Intent The intent of this policy is to specify the type and quantity of adornments and tributes that can be placed by the public on graves, mausoleums and facilities for the receiving of ashes in Council-operated cemeteries. Council's operation of cemeteries is governed by *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011*.

Scope This policy applies to all interments within all Council-operated cemeteries including (but not limited to) those listed below:

- Martyn Street Cemetery
- Forest View Memorial Park Lawn Cemetery
- Gordonvale Cemetery
- Babinda Cemetery
- Nelson Road Cemetery

Definitions

Adornments: Include flowers and ornaments placed on graves, mausoleums and facilities for the receipt of ashes, such as columbarium walls, by visitors to the cemeteries.

Council-approved receptacle: A vase or container which is not ceramic or made of glass and is not able to hold water.

Interment: The act of being interred or buried; including placement into a mausoleum and placement of ashes into a columbarium wall or other facility provided by Council.

PROVISIONS

The policy is designed to ensure the general public can visit the cemeteries and reflect in a safe, tidy and well maintained environment.

Adornments – General

Flowers can be placed on graves/memorials. Fresh or limited artificial flowers are welcome tributes. These should be housed in non-glass or unbreakable containers which, in order to prevent mosquito breeding, must not be able to hold water. Visitors are requested to remove wrapping and rubber bands from floral arrangements before they are left as a tribute. Should the tributes be of value to the visitor, Council requests that such items be removed before they become unsightly or deteriorated.

Council will keep the grounds of the cemeteries operated by the Council neat and tidy by removing withered or deteriorated floral arrangements and any tributes deemed unsuitable or unsightly. This will be carried out at Council's discretion.

The placement of glass vases or receptacles, ornaments, flags, photo frames, candles, toys, wind chimes or other items of memorabilia in standard burial or memorial areas is not permitted and any such items will be removed, at Council's discretion. These items can be a safety hazard for visitors and cemetery staff and present difficulties in efficiently maintaining the cemeteries.

Permanent planting of bushes, flowers or trees is not permitted on grave lots and any such items will be removed.

All tributes shall be placed against the headstone or head of the grave. No tributes are to be placed on any grassed areas.

Cairns Regional Council is not responsible for items placed at the grave site and reserves the right to remove all tributes and plants of any kind from the cemetery when they do not conform to the provisions within this policy.

Adornments – Quantity

To ensure that items do not encroach on the memorial or burial locations of neighbouring families, the different interment types have been designated a limit on the number of permitted tribute receptacles that can be placed at each burial or memorial site. These are specified as follows:

In Lawn Beam Sections, Plaque and Headstone

No more than two (2) Council-approved, receptacles for holding fresh or artificial flowers will be permitted per site. Such receptacles must not be able to hold water. Additional floral tributes may be permitted for no longer than 1 week after the funeral, provided they do not impede adjacent graves.

In Full Monumental Sections

All adornments must be contained within the confines of the monument or until an approved monument has been erected on the gravesite. No more than two (2) Council-approved self-draining receptacles for holding fresh or artificial flowers are permitted to be placed at the head of the grave. Such receptacles must not be able to hold water. Additional floral tributes may be kept at Council's discretion for a period of one week after the funeral, provided they do not impede adjacent graves. Installation of paving or extended footpaths around the perimeter of graves is not permitted as these may create a tripping hazard for visitors.

In Full Lawn Sections (Forest View Cemetery)

One (1) only Council-approved below ground flower-holding receptacle is permitted per grave. Such receptacle must not be able to hold water. Fresh flowers only are permitted in full lawn sections.

On Mausoleum Walls

No more than two (2) Council-approved, flower-holding receptacles for fresh or artificial flowers per vault are permitted. Such receptacles must not be able to hold water. Adornments are not permitted on the ground in front of the mausoleums and will be removed without notice

On Columbarium Walls

One (1) only Council-approved, flower-holding receptacle per niche is permitted. Such receptacle must not be able to hold water. Adornments are not permitted on the ground in front of the columbarium walls and will be removed without notice.

The limit on receptacles is designed to allow families to pay tribute, but also ensures that other families do not feel marginalised or impinged upon by the placement of excessive items upon neighbouring locations. The restriction on water-holding containers is to prevent the possibility of mosquito breeding.

Removal of Adornments for Maintenance

The nature of the flat-lying plaques at cemeteries like Forest View Cemetery means that all tributes may need to be removed, at the discretion of the Cemetery Ganger, to enable mowing and surface maintenance.

The mowing and maintenance schedule operates on a seasonal basis as follows but may vary depending on prevailing weather conditions:

To prepare for mowing and surface maintenance, the removal of adornments will take place on the first day of the working week – normally a Monday.

Pre Cyclone Season Clean-Up

In October each year, cemetery staff will undertake a clean-up of the cemetery grounds and graves prior to the on-set of the wet season. Public Notices will be placed during September each year advising the general public of the pre-cyclone season clean-up.

All items that have the potential to become dangerous flying objects during storms will be removed at Council's discretion.

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This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

**General Manager Community Sport and
Cultural Services**

**ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 23/03/2006
CURRENT ADOPTION: 09/10/2013
DUE FOR REVISION: 09/10/2017
REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:**