

**PLAQUES, MEMORIALS & MONUMENTS POLICY**

- Intent** To advise Council's approach to the management of requests for the installation of commemorative plaques, memorials and monuments in public spaces in the Cairns Regional Council, avoiding duplication of the memorial facilities and services provided by cemeteries in the region.
- To ensure the design and placement of memorials and plaques is consistent with the community interest.
  - To ensure the placement of memorials and plaques does not result in particular locations reaching saturation point, or interfere with the intended purposes of the region's parks, gardens and open spaces.
  - To ensure that memorials and plaques do not impact negatively on the future maintenance expenditure of Council.
  - To ensure the placement of any memorials and plaques does not present a safety risk now or in the future.
  - To provide a compassionate and consistent approach to the placement of temporary road-side memorials on local government-owned land.
- Scope** This policy covers all plaques, memorials and monuments proposed for any public space within the Cairns Regional Council area, including temporary road-side memorials on local government owned land. All such plaques and memorials will be required to conform to this policy.

**1. BACKGROUND**

Requests are often received by Cairns Regional Council from individuals and organisations for permission to place memorials or plaques to an individual, organisation or event within public spaces within the Council area.

Public open space areas are an important community resource and memorials, monuments and plaques need to be carefully considered to ensure that they do not impact negatively on these spaces.

It is recognised that a particular location may become saturated with plaques and memorials, and in that case, it would be appropriate to consider strict limitations or a moratorium of future installations at a particular location or area.

In addition to requests for permanent memorials or plaques, members of the community may also request to place temporary memorials on local government owned land as part of the grieving process following the loss of life. Commonly these memorials are road-side and the loss of life has been a result of a motor vehicle accident. These memorials can be viewed as a road safety message. While Council does not discourage the establishment of such memorials, it has an obligation to manage the road reserve to ensure such memorials do not cause a distraction to road users, present a hazard to road users or fall into disrepair and become unsightly.

A Tree Dedication Scheme, involving the placement of plaques, was discontinued in December 2009, on the basis of issues raised in a review of the scheme. These issues included maintenance, costs, aesthetic considerations and space limitations. The tree dedication scheme was part of the Partnership Cairns initiative, governed by the Inbound Sponsorship general policy.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

**Plaque:** A flat tablet of metal, stone or other material which includes text and/or images which commemorate a person or an event and which is affixed to an object, building or pavement. The text may also provide historical text or information relevant to its location.

**Memorial:** An object established in memory of a person or event.

**Monument:** Similar in meaning to 'Memorial' for the purposes of this policy. May describe a statue or structure which is built for commemorative purposes.

**Public Open Space:** Includes community land, road reserve and operational land owned by Council and other land in Council's care, control or management.

**Note:** An artwork or other feature intended primarily to enhance public spaces and not designed as a memorial is not considered a memorial for the purpose of this policy.

In this policy, the term 'memorial' will be used to describe plaques, memorials and monuments.

## 3. PROVISIONS

### 3.1 Application and assessment process

Requests for memorials to Cairns Regional Council will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Council, following assessment by a panel comprised of the Manager Cultural Services, the Team Leader Creative Partnerships, the Arts and Cultural Planning and Development Officer, Project Officer, Infrastructure Services and a representative of Parks & Leisure.

Applications must be made in writing to the Memorials Panel, addressing the criteria outlined in sections 3.1.1 - 3.1.5 below and should include the preferred site or location, proposed text or images and any other pertinent information. Only sites that have relevance to the person, group or event being commemorated should be nominated.

Any existing plaque or memorial cannot be taken as a precedent for future approvals.

Applications should be addressed to:

The Memorials Panel  
C/- Cairns Regional Council  
Cultural Services Branch  
PO Box 359  
Cairns Qld 4870

The Memorials Panel will assess applications for memorials against the following criteria:

#### 3.1.1 Community amenity value will be enhanced by the memorial

Any new memorial must be demonstrated to be of lasting value to the community for social, cultural, historical, educational or aesthetic reasons and add to the existing community amenity of the proposed location, within the context of the current use of the area.

### **3.1.2 The location and design of the memorial is appropriate**

Approval for a particular site will only be granted if consistent with Council's master plan or strategic development framework for that site. The Cairns Regional Council has final approval of appropriate sites and will determine the exact location of any plaque or memorial.

No new plaque, memorial or monument will be considered on esplanades in the Cairns Regional Council area, including the Cairns Esplanade and Northern Beaches.

No new plaque, memorial or monument will be considered for the Cairns Botanic Gardens, which includes Flecker Gardens, Centenary Lakes, Tanks Arts Centre and Mount Whitfield Conservation Park.

The Cairns Regional Council will oversee the design, manufacture and installation of the plaque, memorial or monument. This service is inclusive in costs of the memorial as specified.

Design and wording of memorials must be approved by the Council, and will be in line with Cairns Regional Council Corporate protocols for use of the Council logo etc.

Any proposal for a memorial that incorporates sculptural reliefs or may be considered an artistic work will need to be endorsed by the Cairns Regional Council Public Art Advisory Group prior to formal Council consideration.

### **3.1.3 Appropriate consultation is undertaken**

Applications should include evidence of community consultation on the memorial's purpose, location and design, in the form of at least three (3) letters of support from relevant or affected interest groups and organisations, including a letter of support from the appropriate divisional Councillor.

### **3.1.4 Sufficient Capital and maintenance funding is available**

The applicant must meet all the costs associated with design, manufacture and installation of the plaque, memorial or monument. In some instances, a contribution toward maintenance will also be a condition of approval. Should the memorial be lost or vandalised, repair and replacement costs would remain the responsibility of the donor.

### **3.1.5 The subject matter of the proposed memorial is appropriate**

Subjects for memorials will be considered appropriate if they fit one or more of the following criteria:

- An individual or association that has contributed significantly to the cultural, political or social aspects of the development of the Cairns region. In determining this contribution, the following factors will be considered:
  - The length of time dedicated to the development of the Cairns region in a particular industry.
  - The extent of not-for-profit work on a community or social cause, such as sport, education, arts, culture, youth, mature age.
  - The relevance of the person or organisation to the proposed site.
- A significant anniversary of an event unique to the region's history and development.
- Historical or other information relevant to the site/location of the memorial.
- No new memorial will be considered which commemorates a person, event or occasion that is already the subject of a memorial in the Cairns Regional Council area unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- An application will not be approved if, in the opinion of Council, the memorial is considered offensive or has the potential to offend.
- A commemorative plaque will not be approved where there is a religious or political affiliation.

### **3.2 Maintenance and de-accessioning procedures**

As it is recognized that some memorials will have a limited lifespan, Cairns Regional Council does not guarantee to retain a memorial after a period of 10 years.

Cairns Regional Council may at any time temporarily remove the memorial for works or maintenance.

The memorial may be permanently removed if the use of the site changes significantly. Where possible, Cairns Regional Council will consult with the original donor.

In the event the memorial is damaged or requires repair and the original donor is not able to be contacted, the memorial may be repaired or removed.

### **3.3 Burials and scattering of ashes**

Burials are not permitted outside of the cemeteries in the Cairns Regional Council area.

The scattering of ashes may be permitted in public spaces within the Cairns Regional Council area, with approval from the memorials panel. Letters of request should be directed to the memorials panel at the aforementioned address.

All requests for burials, scattering of ashes and memorials are to be handled in a compassionate manner.

### **3.4 Tree dedications**

Cairns Regional Council no longer has a process for dedicating trees and placing plaques in public open spaces.

However, there may be occasions when approval may be granted for a family to request that a newly planted tree be dedicated to a loved one, in consultation with the relevant Council manager or team leader. The location would be determined by Council staff, and may be part of a Council revegetation project. A memorial plaque would not be permitted and Council would not be held responsible for loss or damage to the tree. The tree would be planted by Council staff, but family members would be welcome to have a private ceremony at the site of the newly planted tree.

If the tree is part of the Cairns Botanic Gardens, the only person to determine the type and location of the tree would be the Botanic Gardens Curator.

### **3.5 Temporary road-side memorials on local government owned land**

Roadside memorials must be registered with Council. Applicant details must contain the names and contact details of at least two persons. Decisions regarding the lifespan of the temporary road-side memorial will be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the site location.

#### **3.5.1 Location**

A memorial should be located in a position:

- Where it will not distract drivers' attention from the driving task or interfere with the role of any traffic control item.
- Where it will not be hazardous to passing traffic, pedestrians or prevent appropriate repair and maintenance of the road reserve.
- Applicants must be aware of potential risks in visiting roadside memorials and should be aware of safe practices in this regard e.g. stopping clear of the traffic.
- Wherever possible, the location should be chosen to minimise risk.

#### **3.5.2 Construction**

A temporary roadside memorial must be constructed of material and installed in a way that will not cause injury if struck by a vehicle. The memorial size should not exceed more than one cubic metre which is consistent with the Department of Transport and Main Roads requirements.

#### **3.5.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

Council does not accept responsibility for the maintenance of memorials, or any loss, damage, removal or relocation of roadside memorials that may occur due to road maintenance or construction activities.

Neglected or overgrown memorials should be removed by the applicant. Every effort will be made by Council to contact the person/s responsible for the memorial.

Any objection or complaint from nearby residents or from road users regarding any aspect of memorials, including the activity of visitors to the memorial will be carefully considered and if necessary, the memorial will be relocated or removed. Every effort will be made by Council to contact the person/s responsible for the memorial.

Roadside memorials presenting a safety hazard to road and road verge users will be removed.

### **3.6 Exemptions**

For some Partnership Cairns agreements, a community member will provide the costs of new infrastructure and a plaque to recognise their donation. In these cases the request for the plaque will not be subject to the memorial assessment process in this policy. Where the plaque includes a memorial or dedication statement, however, an application must be made to the memorials panel.

## **4. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND PLANS**

Public Art General Policy  
Naming of Bridges General Policy  
Inbound Sponsorship General Policy  
Naming of Parks/Reserves General Policy  
Structures within the Road Reserve Including Subdivision in Strata General Policy  
Department of Transport and Main Roads Roadside Memorials

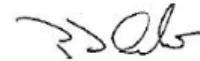
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**This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.**

**General Manager Responsible for Review:**

**Community, Sport & Cultural Services**

**ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 10/11/2010  
CURRENT ADOPTION: 10/07/2015  
DUE FOR REVISION: 10/07/2019  
REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:**



Peter Tabulo  
Chief Executive Officer