



Gladstone Region Cemetery Plan 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and the Taribelang Bunda people.

We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Gladstone Regional Council is committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion and connectedness, acknowledging that our communities are richer when diversity is embraced.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About the Cemetery Plan 5
- Developing the Cemetery Plan 5
- Objectives of the Cemetery Plan 5
- Our Cemetery Network 6
- Who we are in the Gladstone Region 7
- Planning for the Future 8
- Target Areas 10
 - 1: Capacity 11
 - 2: Suite of Services 12
 - 3. Affordability 13
 - 4. Community Education 14
- Planned Deliverables 16





ABOUT THE CEMETERY PLAN

Gladstone Regional Council (Council) provides a fundamental service to the community, often in the most difficult time of their lives.

The Gladstone Region Cemetery Plan (the Plan) has been developed to inform an action plan for Council controlled cemeteries, crematorium and memorial parkland facilities (the cemetery network) and sets the future direction for cemeteries within the Gladstone Region. The Plan has been drafted within the parameters of *Gladstone Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026*, the *Parks and Open Spaces Asset Management Plan 2020-2025* and the *Strategic Asset Management Plan 2019*. The Plan aligns with Council's overarching vision of Connect. Innovate. Diversify as set out in the *Gladstone Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026*.

DEVELOPING THE CEMETERY PLAN

Council initiated the Plan in early 2020 in the form of a technical report on the cemetery network. The project included engagement with Council staff, engagement with key community representatives, historic data collection, research and capacity and cost modelling. This provided insight into the history of our cemeteries, current interment preferences, ultimate capacity at each site based on projected population growth and mortality rates, and comparative analysis with other local governments and industry leaders. This collation of data has enabled Council to understand the needs of the broader region into the future.

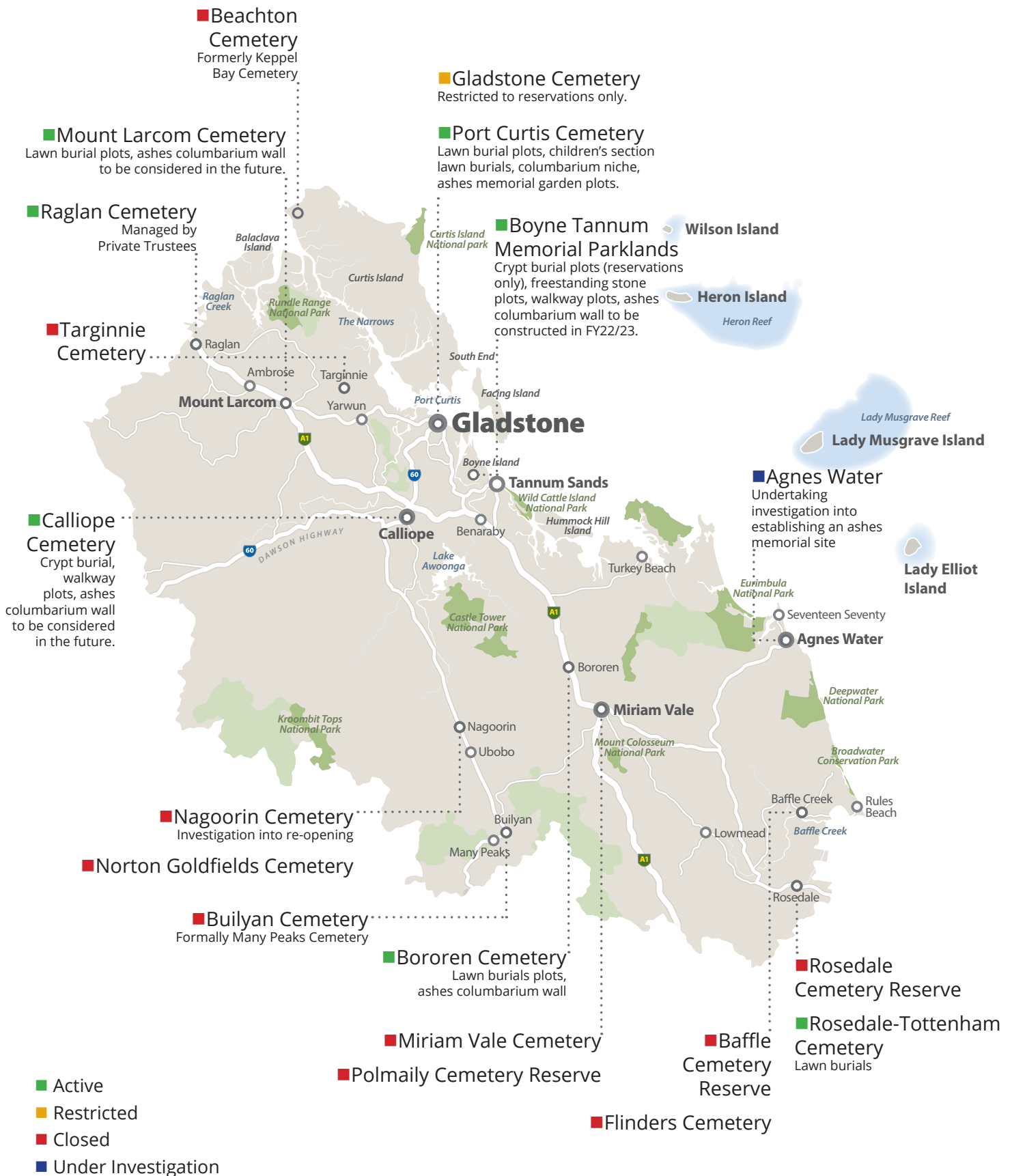
OBJECTIVES OF THE CEMETERY PLAN

Data collected in the review of the cemetery network has been used to develop guiding principles to enable Council to:

- Meet the needs of the community
- Offer services which are affordable for all
- Ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet future demand in a way that is efficient and financially sustainable for both the community and Council.

We are committed to delivering cemetery services which meet the needs of the community and are affordable for all.

OUR CEMETERY NETWORK



WHO WE ARE IN THE GLADSTONE REGION



POPULATION

Currently **64,186**
Projected to reach 75,000
by 2041. Annual growth
rate is 0.7% p.a.



AGE

10% of the population is
65+ years



MORTALITY RATE

Mortality rate is 0.47%
of the population
309 deaths p.a.



FUNERARY PREFERENCES

69% cremation
26% burial
5% outside region



RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

71% Religious
29% No religion



ETHNICITY

77% born in Australia
4% New Zealand
3% UK
1% Philippines
1% South Africa
1% India



MOST POPULATED SUBURBS

Clinton (5,921)
Tannum Sands (5,145)
Calliope (5,101)
New Auckland (5,085)
Boyne Island (4,760)

Highest population growth is
in Calliope at 1.1% p.a.



CONCENTRATION OF 65+ RESIDENTS (% OF AREA POPULATION)

Rosedale (21%)
Agnes Water (19%)
Bororen (18%)
Mount Larcom (15%)
Raglan (14%)

CEMETERY LIFE CYCLE

The Plan acknowledges that cemeteries are unique assets. They have similar characteristics to parks in terms of maintenance, however unlike parks, cemeteries have a life cycle which determines the level of visitation and therefore the level of service required by Council.

Defining each of the region's cemetery sites in the context of life cycle provides insight into:

- Required checks for adequacy of funding in Council's Long Term Financial Plan for land and infrastructure
- Level of prioritization for expenditure, resourcing and maintenance and
- Focus for heritage value opportunities and community connection.

CONCEPT



Initial identification of need or opportunity and the identification and acquisition of new land for cemetery use.

ESTABLISHMENT



Planning for the development of new greenfield sites and acquired land.

ACTIVE



The operation of cemeteries that have high visitation and interments and a wide range of services.

TRANSITIONAL



Lessening requirement for infrastructure, continued but declining interment and services, medium visitation.

PERPETUAL



The maintenance of cemeteries which have minimal space available, low visitation rates and require ongoing maintenance and focus on heritage.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The key message reverberating from metropolitan areas around Australia and indeed, globally, is the shortage of burial space. Our region is fortunate to have sufficient developable land at most existing cemetery sites to meet long term demand.

Council recognises that each locality within the region is unique with different population demographics and funerary preferences. Cremations presently account for 69 per cent of funerals in the region, which is on par with the Australian metropolitan average of 70 per cent. Strong growth in the region's cremation numbers over the past decade followed the establishment of the crematorium at Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands in 2007. Prior to 2007, cremations accounted for just 7 per cent of funerals. Strong community preference for cremation has prompted Council to review its suite of services across all cemeteries to ensure ashes options are available.

In planning for the future, Council has also reviewed the location of its cemetery sites to ensure they will meet the needs of the community. In some locations, principally Agnes Water and the Boyne Valley, Council is reviewing its cemetery services with a potential to install capacity.

Port Curtis Cemetery continues to be recognised as the region's largest burial cemetery since Gladstone Cemetery was restricted to existing reservations only. More than 55 per cent of burials from the region take place at Port Curtis Cemetery. It has significant long term capacity to meet burial demand for 90+ years.

Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands is recognised as the region's largest ashes cemetery receiving almost 70 per cent of ashes interments from around the region. This location also has significant long term capacity to meet ashes interment demand for 100+ years.

TARGET AREAS

Council is committed to balancing the needs and preferences of the community with sustainable, efficient and affordable cemetery services. To achieve this, some funerary services, locations and the methods for increasing capacity have been reassessed.

Four target areas have been identified to improve Council's cemetery services.



Capacity: Early strategic planning of the region's cemetery assets will ensure burial capacity in the long term to meet interment trends.



Affordability: Balancing affordability, accessibility, financial sustainability and service expectations across our cemetery network.



Services: Understanding interment trends enables Council to meet the needs of the community through our suite of services.



Community Education: Greater community awareness and understanding of the region's cemeteries and the services offered will create a stronger community connection.



OUR CURRENT CAPACITY

	Cemetery	Current Statistics	Interments per year[1]	Current Capacity (years)	Ultimate Capacity[2] (years)
1	Port Curtis Cemetery	81% burial	55	4	90
		19% ashes	13	21	105
2	Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands	24% burial	15	0 [3]	0
		76% ashes	42	7	107
3	Calliope Cemetery	90% burial	12	7	65 [4]
		10% ashes	1	1	148
4	Mount Larcom Cemetery	100% burial	8	1	83
		no ashes options currently	n.a.	n.a.	102
5	Bororen Cemetery	50% burial	7	3	78
		50% ashes	6	3	99
6	Rosedale-Tottenham Cemetery	100% burial	2	12	126
		no ashes options currently	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
7	Raglan Cemetery (Private Trustees)	100% burial	2	>100	>100
		no ashes options currently	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
8	Gladstone Cemetery	Restricted to Reserved Interments only / maintained site			
9	Nagoorin Cemetery	Closed / maintained site – Potential to reopen for burials			
10	Builyan Cemetery	Closed / maintained site			
11	Targinnie Cemetery	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>[1] Maximum annual interments recorded over the past 3 years</p> <p>[2] Ultimate Capacity reflects future staging of developable land within the entire site</p> <p>[3] Burial capacity is restricted to reservations only</p> <p>[4] Subject to soil testing investigations for earth burials</p> </div>			
12	Miriam Vale Cemetery				
13	Flinders Cemetery (Rosedale)				
14	Baffle Cemetery Reserve				
15	Beachtown Cemetery (Sea Hill)				
16	Polmailly Cemetery Reserve (Bororen)				
17	Stirrat Street Cemetery (Rosedale)				
18	Norton Goldfields Cemetery				



1. CAPACITY



Early strategic planning of the region's cemetery assets will ensure burial product capacity in the long term to meet interment trends.

Outcome

Supply and Demand modelling and capacity forecasting enables Council to be more proactive and resilient to peaks and troughs in mortality rates and resident population rather than reactively needing to deliver new assets in a reduced timeframe to replenish supply or restrict an interment option in one or more locations.

Context

Presently, a number of cemetery sites have less than five years capacity in current stages based on forecast mortality rates and funerary preferences.



Objectives

1. Meet short, medium and long-term projected demand across the cemetery network
2. Ensure adequacy of funding in Council's Long Term Financial Plan for capacity expansions
3. Understand Ultimate Capacity of each site
4. Understand the need for cemetery services in communities without reasonable access to an active cemetery.

Success Measures

- Council's Long Term Financial Plan includes all planned assets (upgrades and new)
- Availability of services for each site 100 per cent of the time.

2: SERVICES



Understanding interment trends enables Council to meet the needs of the community through our suite of services.

Outcome

Balancing community expectations with interment options within a reasonable distance of a township in a way that is sustainable and efficient for both the community and Council.

Context

Sixty nine percent (69%) of funerals in the Gladstone Region involve cremation. Some of the region's cemeteries do not offer ashes interment options. Identifying and responding to community needs and aspirations for interment preferences is an important step in Council's cemetery planning.



Objectives

1. Understand adequacy of the mix of burial and ashes interment offerings
2. Ensure services are being utilised by the community.

Success Measures

- Improved take up rates of services with current low take up rates (eg. Walkway plots)

3: AFFORDABILITY



Balance affordability, accessibility, financial sustainability and service expectations across our cemetery network to meet the needs of the community.

Outcome

To reduce the reliance of the cemetery portfolio on general rates income, which offsets some cemetery services being offered below cost. Services, which are deemed to be unaffordable for customers if Council transitioned to offering the service at cost, will be reviewed.

Context

Council is accountable to the community for the management of the region's cemeteries, both operationally and financially. The cemetery portfolio currently relies on general rates income to offset Council offering some cemetery services at below cost.



Objectives

1. Create opportunities for cost efficiencies
2. Reduce reliance on general rates income.

Success Measures

- Lower reliance on general rates income to fund operating and capital expenditure of the cemetery portfolio.
- Cost neutral cemetery portfolio within 10 years by end of the 2032 Financial Year, tracked annually.

4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION



Greater community awareness and understanding of the region's cemeteries and the services offered will create a stronger community connection.

Outcome

To deliver an education program which achieves better understanding of our cemetery sites and offerings at those sites.

Context

Opportunities exist for Council to foster greater connection and understanding of its cemetery network.

Most interment options across the cemetery network are multi-interment, however, take up rates of multiple interments are low. As the plot is purchased once, multi-interment creates cost savings for customers. It also allows better capacity planning.

Within Council's cemetery network, adult burial plots take up to four interments per plot with combinations of one to four urns, one to two coffins, one coffin and three urns (coffin below) or two coffins and two urns (coffin below). Ashes interment options include columbarium niche, which take single interments (Port Curtis) or both single and double interments (Bororen). Freestanding stone ashes plots at Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands take four interments, and ashes walkway plots at Calliope and Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands take two interments.

Greater interaction with, and understanding of, the region's cemetery spaces can also be achieved through conservation and heritage opportunities.



Objectives

1. Support Funeral Directors with information on the full suite of Council's funerary services.
2. Preserve the heritage value and conservation of historic components of Council's older cemeteries.

Success Measures

- Implement Community Education plan.

PLANNED DELIVERABLES

Council's vision for our cemeteries is to deliver cemetery services which meet the needs of the community and are affordable for all.

In undertaking capacity and cost modelling and focusing on the four target areas, Council has identified a number of opportunities to enhance the delivery of cemetery services across the network. Identified opportunities will be progressed through Council's Investment Decision Framework.

A summary of Action Items from the Plan is provided below:

No.	Target Area	Cemetery	Action Required	Description
1	Strategy	All	Rescind 2016 Cemetery Strategy through Council	The Regional Cemeteries and Crematorium Management Strategies – Balancing Community Service Obligations with Commercial Realities undertaken by Changing Places in 2016 will be superseded by the strategy contained within the Gladstone Region Cemetery Plan (January 2022). The 2016 strategy was adopted by Council and therefore will need to be rescinded.
2	Strategy	All	Update of Parks and Open Spaces Asset Management Plan	The Gladstone Region Cemetery Plan (January 2022) will be used to inform updates of the Parks and Open Spaces Asset Management Plan.
3	1 - Capacity	All	Council endorsement of the Cemetery Hierarchy	Endorse the proposed Cemetery Hierarchy which defines the region's cemeteries by life cycle stage. This, in turn, assists with determining the level of infrastructure, maintenance and service required.
4	1 - Capacity	All	Review the Cemetery and Crematorium Policy and Corporate Standard for Reservations.	Review of the Cemetery and Crematorium Policy and Corporate Standard to incorporate outcomes of the Cemetery Plan.



5	1- Capacity	All	Review of Cemetery and Crematorium Corporate Standard	Lawn Beam Standard is to be reviewed to consider dimensions and placement of lawn beams to ensure efficient use of land.
6	1 - Capacity	Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands	Improve drop zone, and line marking of the overflow carpark.	A project is underway to improve the drop zone at Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands and to improve capacity in the overflow car park through delineator markers. A multi-criteria analysis was undertaken to determine the most appropriate solution for the current issues at this site.
7	1- Capacity	Calliope	Assess potential investment in toilet amenities.	Calliope is classified as a District cemetery under the proposed cemetery hierarchy, which triggers toilet amenities under the embellishment schedule. This project will be assessed through Council's Investment Decision Framework.
8	1- Capacity	Mount Larcom	Install a double-sided lawn beam.	A project is underway to install a double-sided lawn beam which is required as a matter of priority. This will create approximately 5 years capacity.
9	1- Capacity	Bororen	Undertake further investigation for the installation of double-sided lawn beams.	New double sided lawn beams are required at Bororen, which has less than three years burial capacity. Investigations are underway into considering the business case to proceed with installation of additional lawn beams. X-ray imaging of the site was undertaken to determine the location of unmarked graves.
10	1 - Capacity	Nagoorin	Undertake further investigation into reopening Nagoorin Cemetery.	Investigations are underway into considering the business case for re-opening Nagoorin cemetery to burials. X-ray imaging of the site will be required to determine unmarked graves. Community engagement will be undertaken.
11	1 - Capacity	Agnes Water	Undertake further investigation into establishing an ashes only memorial site at Agnes Water.	Investigations are underway into considering a business case for establishing an ashes only memorial site at Agnes Water. Community engagement will be undertaken.
12	1 - Capacity	All	Master Plan for each site	Master Planning of each active cemetery will be undertaken. This will enable better capacity and infrastructure planning.
13	1 - Capacity	All	Review data retrieval of multi-interments.	Most cemetery offerings are multi-interment. Understanding take up rates for multi-interment plots enables better capacity planning.

14	1 - Capacity	All	Implement a Capacity Tracker and process document to track capacity utilisation into the future	Continue supply and demand modelling of the cemetery network. This will assist with identifying short, medium and long term capacity increases required across network to meet projected demand.
15	2 - Service	Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands	Install a Columbarium Wall	A project is currently underway to install a columbarium wall adjoining the tea house at Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands. This project recognizes the growing trend for both cremation and ashes interment in the region's cemeteries.
16	2 - Service	Calliope	Undertake further investigation for the installation of a Columbarium Wall	There is a single ashes option at Calliope cemetery, being walkway ashes plots. Investigations are underway into considering a business case for installing a columbarium wall.
17	2 - Service	Mount Larcom	Undertake further investigation for the installation of a Columbarium Wall	At Mount Larcom, cremated ashes are being interred in burial plots which impacts capacity for that service. Investigations are underway into considering a business case for installing a columbarium wall.
18	2 - Service	Bororen	Undertake further investigation for the installation of a Columbarium Wall	At Bororen, the current columbarium wall is reaching capacity. Investigations are underway into considering the business case to install a new columbarium wall.
19	2 - Service	Port Curtis and Bororen	Review ascetics of the existing columbarium wall.	The review will identify ways to improve the ascetics of the existing columbarium walls at Port Curtis and Bororen.
20	2 - Service	Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands and Calliope	Review of ascetics of ashes walkway plots.	The review will identify ways to improve ascetics of walkway plots at Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands and Calliope.
21	3 - Affordability	All	Review Fees and Charges	Implement a full cost price model with a view to achieving a cost-neutral position by FYE2032 (subject to Council budget decisions).
22	3 - Affordability	Calliope and Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands	Discontinue further crypt installation.	The crypt burial product installed at Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands and Calliope has been reviewed and determined to be financially unsustainable to continue to install. Boyne Tannum Memorial Parklands will be an ashes-only cemetery going forward, with the exception of existing burial plots. At Calliope, soil testing will need to be undertaken on the balance of land to determine if the site is conducive to earth burials.

23	4 – Community Education	All	Community education of our suite of services with multi-interment options	Community education is required to improve knowledge and understanding of Council's suite of services. Burial plots take up to four interments including two coffins and two urns. Ashes interment options include columbarium niche, which take single interments (Port Curtis), or both single and double interments (Bororen). Freestanding stone ashes plots take up to four interments and ashes walkway plots take two interments.
24	4 – Community Education	Gladstone, Calliope South and all Closed Cemeteries	Investigate potential for community volunteer group	Assess the potential for community education and possible volunteer group dedicated to the preservation and conservation of important monumental graves. Maintenance of monuments is the responsibility of the family, with Council being responsible for the maintenance of the site. With many families passing, monumental graves are at risk of ruin.
25	4 – Community Education	Flinders, Beachton and Norton Goldfields	Investigate Heritage Listing of these cemeteries	Consideration will be given to adding these sites to the local heritage register. All other historical cemeteries in the portfolio are local heritage listed.

Council is entrusted with caring for the final resting places of our loved ones in cemeteries across the region. One of Council's Guiding Principles for its cemeteries is to ensure interments are dignified, remains are treated with respect and the final place of rest is peaceful and tranquil.

This Plan will guide Council's delivery of cemetery services across the region to ensure that our cemeteries are appropriately planned, built, used and maintained for the long term.

This Plan will ensure that Council continues to meet the needs of the community, offers a suite of services which are affordable for all and provide peaceful places to celebrate the lives of those lost, but not forgotten.

For more information on our region's cemeteries, services and fees, visit www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/cemeteries





www.gladstone.qld.gov.au

