

I n t e r O f f i c e  
M E M O R A N D U M

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**TO:** *All Councillors*  
**CC:** *HCC Senior Staff*  
**FROM:** *Director Infrastructure Services*  
**SUBJECT:** *2012/2013 Delivery Plan - Late submission from the Friends of Wilberforce Cemetery*  
**DATE:** *19 June 2012*

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Council has received a late submission from the Friends of Wilberforce Cemetery identifying the outstanding actions recommended in the Conservation Management Plan. A full copy of the submission is attached.

Whilst the Conservation Management Plan identifies additional work, this is one of many conservation plans and management plans for Councils parks and reserves that identify and recommend further works. Implementation is limited by available funding and capital works are undertaken on a prioritised basis.

In 2009/2010, \$183,000 was spent on implementing the priorities of the conservation management plan. These works included the ground penetrating radar to pick up existing graves, drainage works and road works. The cemetery was then reopened for burials in July 2011 and over the last year there has been one burial and five plots reserved. Due to the current low demand, the remaining recommendations are not seen as a priority at this stage, and no change to the 2012/13 Budget is recommended.

Council will continue to investigate a number of issues identified in the conservation management plan, including issues identified in the submission relating to road access and carry out ongoing maintenance as required. Council staff will specifically take action to reinforce the previous work undertaken to block tracks through the Wesleyan section of the cemetery.



Jeff Organ  
Director Infrastructure Services

Att.

Hawkesbury City Council  
12 JUN 2012

PO Box 7154  
Wilberforce NSW 2756  
Tuesday, 12 June 2012

Mr. P. Jackson  
General Manager  
Hawkesbury City Council

Dear Mr. Jackson

**Re: Request for Funding in Budget to progress work on Wilberforce Cemetery, as specified in Wilberforce Cemetery Conservation Management Plan, as Approved by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2008**

The Friends of Wilberforce Cemetery very much appreciate what Council has already achieved in the Lower Section of Wilberforce Cemetery, in compliance with recommendations in the Council-approved Conservation Management Plan for Wilberforce Cemetery.

We are aware that Council has many other projects to work on, so we have not, until now, asked for further work to be done on the Cemetery, apart from having the Top Section (previously known as the "Wesleyan Section") re-zoned. We respectfully request, now, that funding be allocated in Council's Budget at its Extraordinary Meeting of Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, so the remaining recommendations in the said Management Plan can be put into effect. These remaining projects all relate to the Top Section of the Cemetery.

The work Council has done on the Lower Section of the cemetery has it looking cared-for and quite beautiful. Sadly, in contrast to this, and to the adjoining reserve, the unfenced Top Section looks very shabby, nothing like the dedicated land of a cemetery, and with vehicle tracks running through it.

Still to be addressed are the following Recommendations in the Conservation management Plan: -

**1. 1.6.19 – Statutory Protection (page 8)**

Policy 54(6) and

8.2.1 – Zoning Page 103



SCANNED

We understand that the recommendation to amend the zoning of the Top Section (formerly called "Wesleyan Section") to "Special Uses (a)", to have all the Cemetery property zoned the same, has been approved by Council.

## 2. Unmarked Graves

Before any work can proceed, it needs to be ascertained if there have been any burials in this Section by examining the area with ground-penetrating radar equipment, as was used in the Lower Section. This Recommendation was made in 1.6.5 – Unmarked Graves, Policy 7 (Page 4), as was Policy 6 for the Lower Section. This investigation was only carried out in the Lower Section at the time. (See also 8.2.3 on Page 103 – Ground-Penetrating Radar investigation)

## 3. 8.2.4 – Grave Markers

If any unmarked burials are found during the Ground-Penetrating Radar investigation, these are to be marked.

## 4. Misused Top Section

In 1.5.7 – Former Wesleyan Area (Page 3), reference is made to the Top Section as “At present it is a lightly treed area used primarily for access to adjacent residential properties.”

Council’s attention has been drawn, on numerous occasions to the need to block off the tracks through this Section of the cemetery. It appears that nothing has changed, and vehicles still drive over the cemetery property with impunity.

A solution to this problem is contained in the approved Plan, in 8.2.2 (Page 103) – Access which reads as follows: -

“Formalise Clergy Road on the south eastern boundary of this area to provide vehicular access to properties in Church Road and Old Sackville Road who currently reach their garages via the track through the Former Wesleyan Area of the Cemetery.”

As Wilberforce Cemetery is now Heritage- listed, if Council is unable to fund this work, perhaps a grant could be obtained to enable this road formation to go ahead. It would seem that a formalised road was intended for this part of Clergy Road around 1986, when the extensive bushland which then existed was removed and the adjoining subdivision took place. Council identifies the location of the Cemetery with Clergy Road Street Number 39, up to approximately 50.

Formalisation of this part of Clergy Road would give access to the rear of St Johns Anglican Church also, so there would be no more traffic through the Cemetery, thus restoring it as the peaceful area it should be. Speed bumps could be placed on this road to slow down any traffic.

## 5. 1.6.10 – Columbaria (Page 5)

Policy 24 – “Allow the construction of new columbaria”, and

### 7.11 Columbaria - Policy 24 – (Page 93)

A new columbaria area is needed, as the two existing ones have niches which are too small for the present (standard-sized) ashes boxes. We found this, a while ago, much to the distress of the family concerned, when their deceased relative’s plaque fell off its niche, and the deceased’s ashes were in a plastic bag, presumably because the boxes would not fit. This has probably happened with other deceased persons whose remains were cremated and mounted in these inadequate Columbaria.

The Management Plan has suggested the Columbaria be located somewhere near the centre of the Lower Section. **We disagree with this suggested new location because the uneven, sloping terrain would make access to it difficult for older people.**

Instead, the Friends of Wilberforce Cemetery would prefer to see an attractive new Columbaria located in the Top Section, where the land is relatively flat and more accessible to visitors, and it would enhance the Memorial Garden recommendation, (mentioned below).

## 6. Memorial Garden Recommendations

The Conservation Management Plan recommends that the Top Section of the cemetery be developed as a Memorial Garden, and this is strongly supported by Friends of the Cemetery.

Specific details are as set out in sections of the Plan, as follows: -

### 1.6.6 – Layout

Policy 12 (Page 4)

“Develop a plan to utilise the former Wesleyan section of the Cemetery as a memorial garden.”

### 1.6.11 Memorial Gardens and Walls

Policy 25 (Page 5)

“Allow the establishment of a memorial garden in the former Wesleyan section of Wilberforce Cemetery.”

### 1.6.13 – Planting

Policy 34 ( Page 6)

“Develop a landscape plan for a memorial garden in the former Wesleyan section of Wilberforce Cemetery that incorporates a selection of ground covers, shrubs and trees.”

## 7.12 Memorial Gardens and Walks

### Policy 25 (Page 93)

“Allow the establishment of a memorial garden in the former Wesleyan section of Wilberforce Cemetery. As for columbaria, memorial gardens or walks reflecting changes in burial practices in the twentieth century and allowing monuments for those who have been cremated to be located in an area which commemorates the lives of our forbears.

Memorial gardens and walks provide an opportunity to place ashes within a pleasant garden or bushland setting. Their location and design must be carefully considered to ensure the character of the cemeteries is not adversely affected. The former Wesleyan section of Wilberforce Cemetery provides an opportunity to establish a memorial garden without changing the character of the former St John's Section of the cemetery.”

### 8.2.5 New Memorial Garden Plan

“Develop a plan for a memorial garden in the former Wesleyan area of Wilberforce cemetery. The plan should be developed with consultation with the local community and should include:

1. Location of previous burials (if any) located by ground-penetrating radar investigation.
2. Pedestrian paths through the area
3. Areas for placement of memorials
4. Appropriate plant lists for sections within the area
5. Retention of mature trees at the edges of the area to screen adjacent residential development.”

## 7. Fencing of Top Section

A fence would need to be put in place to protect the Top Section area. All of the cemetery property was fenced in its early days, and the case for security fencing applies equally here, as it does to fencing of the Lower Section. The access to Wilberforce Cemetery from Old Sackville Road lends itself well to an impressive entry gate.

If the church traffic could be diverted by having Clergy Road section formed, then total enclosure of the property would be possible. Jan Barkley-Jack, in the History Section of the Conservation Management Plan, stated that the unnamed road through the cemetery was dedicated as cemetery land on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1896 – the same date as dedication of the Wesleyan Section took place.

## Summary

The Consultants, with Jan Barkley-Jack, have produced an excellent Plan for Conservation and Management of Wilberforce Cemetery. Its partial implementation reflects great on Council for what has been achieved so far. The fact that so many of the deceased's relatives and descendants have recently committed their own funds to restoration of damaged monuments is strong evidence of what this means to the community. This is also evidenced by the purchase of some burial plots in the newly opened sections of the Cemetery.

This is commendable, but all of the work to date has been on restoration of the Lower Section. The Top (ie Wesleyan) Section must now be reclaimed for what it was intended – **as a dedicated, historic Cemetery, not a bushland vehicle access for residential properties.**

Firstly, all traffic through the area should be blocked off without further delay. Secondly, the Top Section should be examined with ground-penetrating radar equipment, (as was used in the Lower Section.) to identify and mark any unmarked graves that may be there. Thirdly, the same secure perimeter fencing should be installed to the Top Section as now exists to the Lower Section. With this in mind, the remaining unformed portion of Clergy Road should be formed and sealed, for the convenience of residents and churchgoers, and to enable the cemetery to be **fenced as one complete entity**, as was the specific intention of our forebears.

The existing Columbaria is not suitably located and is, in any case, not properly constructed for contemporary use. A new Columbaria should be constructed, as part of development of the Top Section as a Memorial Garden. This would certainly improve the utility and appearance of the cemetery.

Finally, the Consultants' recommendation to develop the Top Section as a Memorial Park should be implemented.

We understand that Council previously allocated funds for this restoration work, but deferred it until 2012. We trust that Council will appreciate the need to act now to make this cemetery complete, and give it the dignity and beauty that it deserves.

Friends of Wilberforce Cemetery