


WALLAROO CEMETERY

MANAGEMENT PLAN

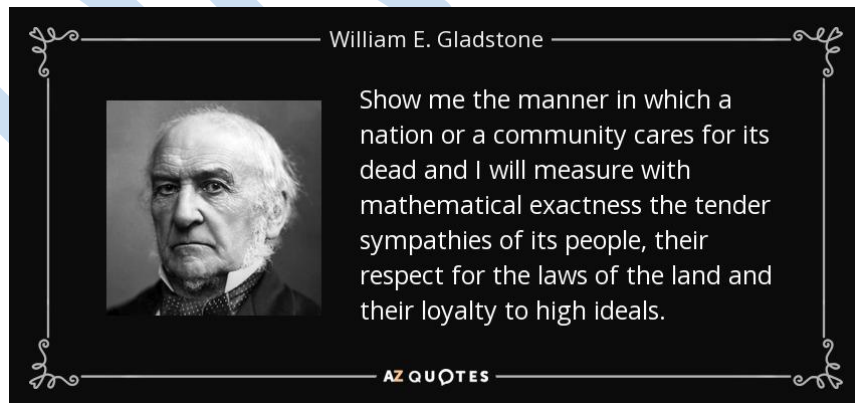


changing
P L A C E S

report prepared for: 
COPPER COAST
COUNCIL

April 2021

DRAFT



William Ewart Gladstone served as Prime Minister of Great Britain on four separate occasions, starting in December of 1868, during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Wallaroo Cemetery Management Plan

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Scope

Being mindful of the need to balance its community service obligations with appropriately conducting the business of supplying services related to the disposition of bodily remains and related memorialisation, the Copper Coast Council (CCC) engaged Changing Places to develop individual Cemetery Management Plans for each of its four cemeteries.

Commentary on amenity, landscaping and the condition of the cemetery, graves, monuments and other buildings, was to include a general description along with more detail in relation to the key factors in need of attention, along with suggested rectification actions. Related costings will be developed with CCC staff, rather than by engaging third party consultants.

Each of the four individual site reports plans should be read in conjunction with the fifth report... the Cemetery Management Plan for the Copper Coast. That plan would address overall issues, rather than repeating specific site details.

The engagement was awarded in February 2020. Implementation was delayed until 2021 by COVID travel restrictions.

References

In addition to stakeholder responses to inquiries, key references were

- Cemetery Management Policy (5 May 2020)
- Copper Brought Them Here Volume One (April 2017 Revision)
- Dressing the Graves 2019
- The Copper Coast Council web site
- Yorke Peninsula Heritage Survey 1997

Process

Prior to preparing this report, consultations took place with a variety of stakeholders (see **Appendix A**). Some related council records and documents were reviewed. The desk top review material was considered in conjunction with observations made during the site visit and the responses received in relation to subsequent inquiries.

Since its appointment to conduct this review, Changing Places has

- visited the area for three days in February 2021
- attended a meeting of the Cemeteries Working Party
- conducted face to face interviews with a variety of internal stakeholders
- discussed matters with CCC's two main client funeral directors and a local monumental mason
- gained general insight into SA cemetery operating environments from representatives of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority and CCASA
- clarified matters as necessary with internal and external stakeholders
- prepared and submitted a draft of this report and responded to feedback.

All the stakeholders were most helpful. Significant assistance was received from Andrea Thomas, Katrina Borlace and Matthew Rose. Substantial insights into local history were provided by Robyn Knight and Liz Coole. Whilst all their input was appreciated, Changing Places remains responsible for the content of this report.

1 Introduction

The goal that is being addressed within this management plan is: *“To provide dignified, functional interment facilities, whilst acknowledging the cemeteries heritage, that are compatible with their environment and capable of meeting the evolving needs of the community.”*

This management plan concisely identifies existing issues, sets out potential rectification strategies and the means by which the CCC can appropriately enhance the provision of cemetery facilities. It considers the needs of the community and the expectations for arrangements to be conducted with dignity and accuracy, within settings that are aesthetic and affordable.

The management plan is:

- intended to be understood by all stakeholders including clients, the general community, the funeral industry and government authorities
- flexible to enable it to be used as a contemporary management tool, reflecting community trends and the need to tailor projects to budgets within an achievable time frame.
- a concise and succinct statement of the strategic direction of the Council, which identifies the means of achieving goals and objectives.

This plan has been prepared in consultation with community representatives, Copper Coast Council staff and councillors, local funeral directors and monumental masons.

2 Applicable legislation, regulations and charters

In the management of its cemeteries CCC will comply with the

- SA Burial and Cremation Act 2013
- SA Burial and Cremation Regulations 2014
- SA Heritage Places Act 1993
- SA Heritage Places Regulations 2020
- SA Local Government (General) Regulations 2013
- SA Local Government Act 1999
- Standards Australia - Headstones and cemetery monuments AS 4204:2019
- The Burra Charter (for Places of Cultural Significance) 1999

3 Site overview

a) Cemetery history

The cemetery is a part of Narungga Land and CCC recognises the Narungga people as the traditional and continuing custodians of the land.

The land for the Wallaroo cemetery was laid out and records began in 1864 and the reserve granted in 1866. It was initially run by a Cemetery Trust and passed to the Corporation of the Town of Wallaroo in 1888. The Town operated as a local government area between 1874 and May 1997. It then merged with the District Council of Northern Yorke Peninsula to form the District Council of the Copper Coast. That Council changed its name in 2017 to Copper Coast Council (CCC).

Between 1861-64 there were 14 adult and 114 children buried in a small unofficial cemetery, near what is referred to as the Wallaroo Sheep Run. The current Wallaroo site commenced interments in 1864.

The history of the cemetery is most readily sourced from Copper Brought Them Here (Vol. One) pages 13-14:

"In 1917 the fifteen year old Wallaroo town Hall burnt down destroying the cemetery records. Thus early records and site plans are non-existent. Over the years records of the cemetery have been painstakingly built up, but there are still many gaps for sites of graves and names of people buried within in the cemetery. Local historians are puzzled by the unusual layout of the very old graves and now know that until 1888, access to the cemetery was from a now closed road extending from Alexander Street in the town of Wallaroo southwards to the west of the burial ground.

...A memorial wall was erected in recent times to receive the cremated remains of former residents.

Wallaroo Cemetery has a fascinating number of deceased souls, particularly because of the international shipping activity at the port. There are Chinese and Japanese memorials to dead seamen. As well, Swedish and Finnish sailors from the many sailing ships are also to be found there. Epidemic victims who died within the confines of the isolation ward at Wallaroo Hospital and many special characters who once lived in Wallaroo are buried in this historic cemetery."

Given the dearth of accurate information about the cemetery on Google, it would be useful to the community to have extracts from the book accessible (and acknowledged) in the CCC cemetery web site section.



A significant RSL memorial cairn and adjacent flagpole are in a prominent entrance position. The memorial serves to remember forever, service given to our country. It provides a focal point for community commemorative activity and a point of reflection for cemetery visitors.



The CCC has recently received an application, from the RSL Wallaroo Sub Branch. It seeks permission to erect, without cost to Council "a small but meaningful memorial to all who have served our Country and sadly have taken their own life, losing the battle within!"

The proposed wording on that memorial is simple but poignant: "Dedicated to all those who served our Nation and were overwhelmed by the battle within. Lest We Forget"



Photo supplied by Peter Sims (RSL Wallaroo Sub Branch)

The additional cairn would be in fitting with the cemetery environment. It may also serve as a stimulus for the erection of a token memorial on site, to enable families to remember people who are deceased but without human remains interred in the cemetery.

a) Location & title details

The cemetery is located at 11040 Spencer Hwy, Wallaroo SA 5556. Its frontage is clearly delineated by a row of pine trees. The street boundary fence is wire mesh with galvanised poles and rails. The cemetery is clearly visible from the road.



Spencer Highway frontage south of the main entrance.

VALUER GENERAL 3010196004 - ASSESSMENT A66301

VALUER GENERAL 3402598854 - ASSESSMENT A2090

CR or Title	Owner	Custodian	Section	Schedule of Interests/Conditions
CT 81180	GD Young & Others		2247 / 2248	In trust to be used at all times as public cemetery
CR 6017628	The Crown	Copper Coast Council	Lot 601	Land dedicated for parkland Council property purposes GG 3/7/2008

The title situation reflects site history. In the next aerial photo, the red line marks the outer boundary of the Wallaroo Cemetery.

The yellow line marks Section 2247. That land is held under the trust that needs to be extinguished. Whilst it contains some of the graves, it also includes open space. As CCC is managing the cemetery, including section 2247, it would be sensible to address the title technicalities.

Lot 601 contains all the graves adjacent to the street frontage. Section 2247 includes the historic graves, which were aligned with a now closed road, that extended from Alexander Street in Wallaroo to the cemetery.

The rectangular 'active' area of the site currently used for cemetery purposes is loosely framed by a variety of trees on three sides and the double row of pines along the street. That rear line of trees roughly dissects Lot 2247.



Image supplied by CCC, enhanced by Florence Jaquet Landscape Architects

b) Capacity and activity

Like Greens Plains West, despite operating for more than 150 years, this site still has considerable capacity available for interments.

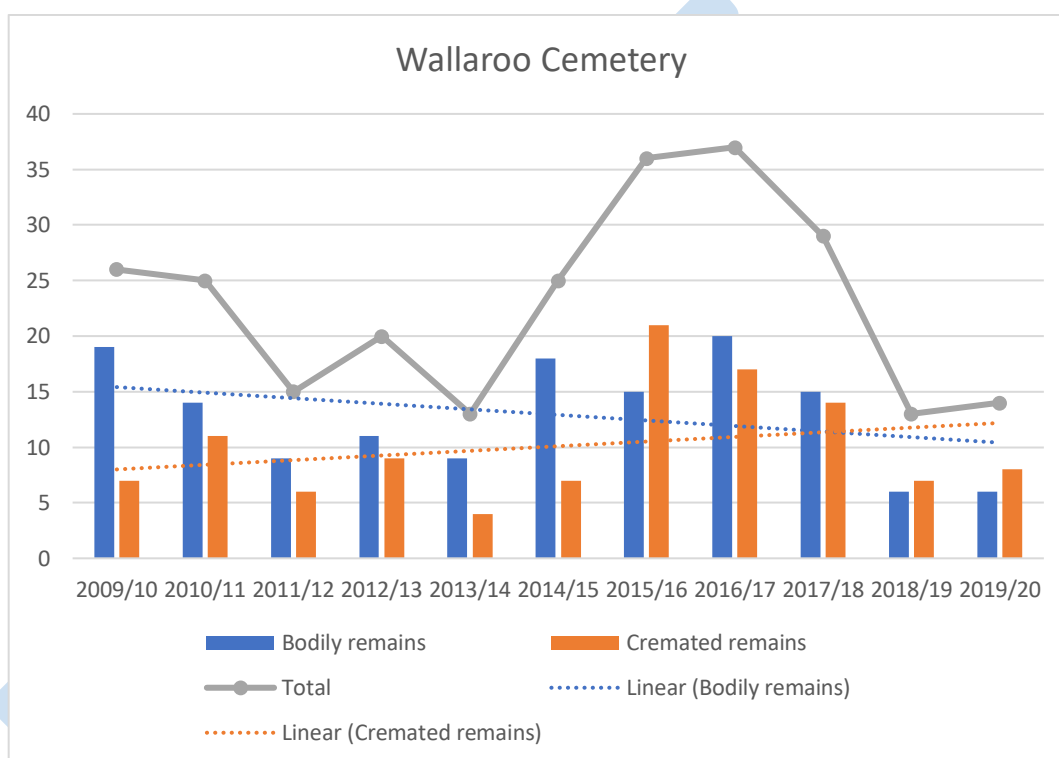
It is likely that the composition of activity in Wallaroo is an indicator of what is likely to happen throughout the Copper Coast. Whilst it is only in the last two years that the cremated remains activity has been greater than bodily interments, the trend is clear. In the eight months to 28th February 2021 Wallaroo had 6 cremated remains and 5 bodily interments.

That trend will likely be accentuated by the recent opening of the Central Region Crematorium.

Year Opened	Site area		Ave. interments last 11 years		Available graves	Site life Years
	Ha	M2	Bodily	Ash		
1864	19.83	198,320	13	10	400	Within fence 20-30

Traditionally, cremation was associated with sizable travel expenses for transferring the coffin to Adelaide. As a result the locals often would just have been buried because that is what their family did. Cremation is now a less expensive alternative.

If CCC does not recognise this likely trend and improve its cremation memorial options, then it is likely that cemetery revenues will fall. Consequently the inter-generational costs of maintaining these important facilities will be increasingly under-funded.



c) General description

The site is relatively flat, neat and tidy. Soils are predominantly clay and sand. There is usually a narrow 300mm layer of topsoil, then 100mm of limestone, followed by a mixture of limestone and soil. That mixture is referred to as calcrete. It is a calcium-rich hardened layer in the soil.

Apart from within the new Catholic section, grave digging is relatively straight forward.

Pathways treated with 3mm crushed rock. The recent graves are aligned in double sided (head to head rows) parallel with Spencer Highway. A section of older graves, more towards the middle of the site, are not parallel with the Highway.

The entrance is framed by pine trees, one of which needs arboreal attention. There is a "masons permit required sign" attached to the fence. There is no sign displaying the cemetery name or interpretative map to assist visitors. A Kernewek Lowender sign explains the logo that is placed upon some memorials.



Main entrance



The street frontage is lined with established pine trees. The street boundary fence is wire mesh with galvanised poles and rails. On the other three sides of the active portion of the site, boundary plantings are in various species. It is fenced with wire. Part of that fence needs repairing.



Within the cemetery, the eye is drawn to the neighbouring Viterra site. It dominates the skyline.

There are a number of soil dumps on the site. Some are placed discretely to the south. Another is in close proximity to the graves.



i) Site amenities

The site has a storage shed adjacent to the entrance. The RSL memorial cairn and flagpole are opposite a wall niche. Both mark the start of rose gardens. Those beds flank the road between the cairn and the wall niches.

The beds end at another wall niche. There is a shelter (with an unsealed, dirt floor), with a modern unisex toilet facility adjacent.



The nature and presentation of seating on the site varies considerably. The blue seat on the boundary carries a commemorative inscription. Ideally that quality of presentation would be consistent across the site. New seats could be self-funding with plaques.



The site is well supplied with bins and is relatively free from rubbish.

ii) Water supply

The cemetery is not currently able to access recycled water. It appears that the available supply from nearest water treatment plant (Port Hughes) is currently fully committed. If plans are being made to extend piping to the golf course, it would be prudent to include a potential future extension to the cemetery, when supply is available.

A sign just inside the gate alerts the public that the water is potable.

iii) Tree remediation

The treed front fence line looks attractive to passengers in passing cars. On closer inspection, it is in serious need of remediation. Some branches are dead. Many of the trees are leaning towards the road and their roots are becoming increasingly apparent upon the surface.

It is evident that some of the root systems are now approaching monuments. Consideration should be given to either

- progressively removing the trees and replacing them with a species suited to the environment or
- having an arborist remove branches and make recommendations into measures to prevent disturbance to monuments eg root barriers.

During consultation external stakeholders indicated support for tree removal. That was consistent with the previous Kadina and Moonta experience.



Within the interment areas, trees and shrubs should not be allowed to be planted within or on top of interment spaces, without written authorisation of CCC. Unauthorised plantings should be consistently removed. Where trees or their roots are impacting or are likely to impact memorials or the walls, they should either be removed or root barriers installed.

i) Garden maintenance

Whilst the rose gardens are neat and tidy and free from weeds, they are not overly attractive. Possibly that is due to the space left between the standard bushes or the lack of lower level planting. Enhanced beds would be more appealing as potential memorialisation positions.

An extended garden bed, filled with conifers, runs north south and has the same concrete edging as the rose beds. Whilst it appears to be of similar vintage, it has been left to run wild. It is clearly visible from the toilet facilities and interment areas.



Garden bed maintenance does not appear to be as vigorously undertaken as it would be in CCC parks and gardens.

d) Access and parking

There are two sealed roads leading into the cemetery from Spencer Highway and one pedestrian gate. There is ample space to park cars within the grounds. A car park should be delineated within a future landscape masterplan.

Concern has been expressed about vehicular traffic over unmarked graves. A post and chain barrier, like that at Green Plains West, would be worthy of consideration.

e) Planning ahead

A landscape masterplan to guide the sequencing interment area development and site preservation approaches, would be worth considering. It should also take into account and highlight the historic features of the site.

In turn, a plan would also facilitate the development of necessary interpretive signage.

4 Plot mapping

Like Greens Plains West, Wallaroo is blessed with what now seems like infinite capacity for interments. In reality, perpetuity is a long time and land is a scarce resource.

One of the risks associated with site utilisation where there is an abundance of space, is that not enough attention is paid to efficiently utilising that space. Cemeteries are there in perpetuity. Consequently when planning new rows and sections, care should be taken to ensure that pathways and roads are not overly wide. Space unnecessarily devoted to paths and roads cannot always be reclaimed for future interments.



In formatting new monumental rows, it would be preferable not to leave space between the heads of monuments. It serves limited practical purpose and creates another space needing perpetual maintenance. It is also unsafe for use as pedestrian access.

Each of the CCC cemeteries have maintained their individual but different historic approaches to site mapping, plot and row and section marking. Wallaroo's is a good model for the other sites.

The CCC web site provides the community with access to a map of some (not all) interment plots within Wallaroo Cemetery [Wallaroo-1.pdf \(coppercoast.sa.gov.au\)](#) It does name some section areas and includes plot number ranges (rather than showing individual plots).

The map provided within Copper Brought Them Here – Volume One, page 14, appears more complete. It shows more interment rows, niches, the shelter and the toilet and has a compass reference (see **Appendix B**).

Having a simpler map available on the web site and within the cemetery, would assist the community and visitors during the Kernewek Lowender Festival.

5 Aspects of interments

The site is clearly laid out. Most of the recent bodily interment positions are in dual (head to head) rows, facing east/west. Mention has already been made of the potential to create new bodily interment areas. It is critical that the site plan should be marked up showing the specific placement of plots

a) Unmarked graves.

Concerns were expressed in relation to vehicles traversing unmarked graves. Whilst the actual sites of interments before 1917 are likely to be harder to determine, CCC records since then are more complete.

There were also stakeholder requests for unmarked graves to be recognised. It is not feasible for CCC to place significant markers upon every grave. Mounding with crushed rock creates a visual impression and a repetitive unfunded allocation of staff and materials.

Potentially the CCC web site might list or provide a link to names and location data. Interpretative signage could be considered within the grounds.

b) Deteriorating memorials

Whilst the deterioration of monuments is of concern, it is not the Council's responsibility to repair them. That lies with the descendants of the historic holders of the burial licences (interment rights). Where a repair is to be undertaken it should be in accordance with the Burra Charter. It advocates *"a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary to care for the place and make it useable, but otherwise do as little as possible to ensure that its cultural significance is retained"*.

c) Cremation memorialisation

The real challenge for CCC is to harness the trend towards cremations by promoting Wallaroo as an attractive interment option for the community and Kernewek Lowender participants.



In terms of modern cemetery approaches, brick or block wall niches are a thing of the past. Those at Wallaroo are neat and tidy but do not hold a complete set of human remains. It is a Catch 22. With space available in the existing wall, arguably Kadina needs no more

cremation interment capacity. The Catch is that the vacancies reflect an aversion to splitting remains and memorialising in old fashioned, brick or concrete wall niches

In reality, the practical way forward is to

- provide a higher level of care to the entrance drive rose beds. Make them more attractive.
- rejuvenate the conifer garden bed.
- enable interment of remains within the bed to be accompanied by an appropriate marker. Something more substantial than a small plaque placed upon a weathered concrete bed edge, is necessary.
- update the Cemetery Management Policy to enable dual (even family) positions to be sold at all sites (not just end of rows at Moonta).

The entrance rose gardens and the conifer beds are a significant asset, with the potential to meet the community's needs for cremated remains interment locations. Whilst some might say that both are not required, the reality is that the conifer beds

- need refurbishment
- would cater for client families seeking a more westerly position.

The Parks and Gardens team need to be aware that modern cemeteries offer cremation interment locations around trees. That way when the street front trees are replaced, the new trees can be offered as cremation interment locations. These positions can be progressively offered as trees are planted.

There are significant untapped opportunities to broaden the memorialisation range, without making a significant capital investment. Doing so will enable the community to make choices which reflect their tastes, incomes and preferences.

d) Memorialisation policy

The Cemetery Management Policy specifies the size of graves. It does not refer to providing space between the heads of graves in back to back rows.

Those 300+mm gaps need not exist. They waste space, harbour rubbish and by default may facilitate unauthorised plantings.

The way forward is to ensure that future back to back rows are laid out without the gap.

Within the interment areas, trees and shrubs should not be allowed to be planted within or on top of interment spaces, without written authorisation of CCC. Unauthorised plantings should be consistently removed.

e) Headstone lawn beam

The demand for headstone lawn beam positions at Kadina, demonstrates a community preference for beam rather than full monumental positions. That demand is likely impacted by the

- net cost saving: whilst the interment right is dearer than for a monumental position, that marginal cost is more than offset by the reduction in the cost of the memorial.
- ambience of the area: the grass v interment amongst an overwhelmingly 'brown' dirt/rock ambience
- social trends towards less ornate memorial styles: evident even in the newer monumental rows

Acknowledging the community's demonstrated preference pattern and responding to support for the idea during this projects consultative processes, CCC should consider installing a beam at Wallaroo.

Rather than relying upon potable water to perpetually 'green' the new section, other cemeteries use drought tolerant grasses.

6 Indicative action programme

The recommended actions derived from this Cemetery Management Plan are summarised in the following table.

Time periods and indicative costs are to be discussed with CCC staff as part of the feedback on this draft report.

Activity	Maintenance		Budget Allocation	
	As Req.	Annual	0-2 years	2 years +
Annual site inspection		√		
Car Park - creation				
Cemetery Policy revision		√	√	
Conifer bed rejuvenation			√	
Creating Ash positions		√		
Entrance naming			TBD	
Fence maintenance		√		
Gate - pedestrian and road	√			
Grass cutting		√		
Grave identification	√			
Grave top up after burial	√			
Interpretive entrance sign			TBD	
Landscape masterplan the site				TBD
Monument completion inspection	√			
Monument foundation inspection	√			
Natural burial positions				TBD
Pathway top ups	√			
Plot map upgrade	√			
Plot next available graves		√		
Plot numbers - consistent method			TBD	
Plot prospective site expansion			TBD	
Road - extended sealed to North			TBD	
Road - internal		√		
Rose bed rejuvenation		√	TBD	
Rosemary bed rejuvenation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rubbish removal	√			
Seats		√		
Seats - progressive installation	√			
Shelter		√		TBD
Shelter - seal its floor			TBD	
Signage re points of interest			TBD	
Signage re section/row/plot			TBD	
Tap installation			TBD	

Toilet	√			
Token memorial			TBD	
Tree inspections		√		TBD
Tree removal (if roots near graves)	√	√		
Tree replacement			TBD	
Tree stump removal	√			
Unmarked grave barriers			TBD	
Unmarked grave crushed rock		√		
Vermin remediation	√			
Wall repairs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Water- plan recycled via golf course			TBD	
Weed remediation	√			

7 Limitation of our Work

General use restriction:

This report is prepared solely for the internal use of the Copper Coast Council. It is not intended to and should not be used or relied upon by anyone else and we accept no duty of care to any other person or entity.

In conducting our work we have relied on the information provided to us by Council and representations made by the Council and management. We have not performed an audit or verification of the information that we have been provided.

The report has been prepared for the purpose set out in the Scope of this document. You should not refer to or use our name or the advice for any other purpose

Appendix A... Contributors

Assistance with provision of information and insights pertaining to this report was received from a variety of sources. Their direct input and co-operation was appreciated.

a) Internal

Andrea Thomas	Records Management Governance Officer
Cathy Vluggen	Copper Coast Councillor
Katrina Borlace	Director Corporate and Community Services
Matthew Rose	Parks and Operations Coordinator
Peter Oswald	Copper Coast Councillor
Roylene Schild	Personal Assistant to CEO
Russell Peate	Chief Executive Officer
Steve Edwards	Maintenance Team Leader.
Tim Neuman	Director Infrastructure Services
Wanita Gregory	Executive Assistant to CEO

b) External

Andrew Skinner	Director: Skinner Family Funerals, Seeley Funerals and Central Region Crematorium
Barbara Schilling	Cemeteries Working Party
Claire Skinner	Manager - Skinner Family Funerals
Clayton Scott	Copper Coast Funerals
Colin Boase	Wallaroo Museum
David Cook	Cook Memorials
Glenys Blacker	Moonta National Trust
Graham Hancock	National Trust representative - Cemeteries Working Party
Iain McQueen	McQueen Funeral Services Pty Ltd
Jim Wheeler	Newtown Bobcats
Liz Coole	Cemeteries Working Party
Marilyn Philbey	Moonta Family History and Resource Centre
Maxine Tulley	President - YP Family History Group
Mike Rusby	President – CCASA, Centennial Park Operations Manager
Robyn Knight	Dressing the Graves Convenor, Vice Chair - Moonta National Trust
Rowley Woods	Cemetery Working Party, cemetery wall restoration volunteer
Robert Pitt	CEO – Adelaide Cemeteries Authority
Shaun Mercer	Goerecke Memorials and Pearse Memorials

