



## **ANNUAL Report 2022-23**

It is with pleasure that I present the 2023 Annual Report for the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust. While the year has passed quickly, a great deal has been achieved. I would like to highlight some key areas.

### **Trust Members**

During the year we received the resignations from Rosemary Isaac and David Atkinson AOM. Both were long serving members of the Trust, each bringing their own set of valued skills and expertise. New members welcomed to the Trust were Jane Wexler, Susan Farrell and Ray Slade who have enthusiastically offered their assistance as required.

### **Strategic Planning**

The Trust recognised the need to set clear direction relating to both Warrnambool Cemetery and Tooram Memorial Park and as such took the initiative to hold a strategic planning workshop. With the assistance of facilitator, Annie de Jong (CEO Ballarat Cemeteries), Trust members brainstormed challenges and opportunities to ultimately determine 6 key focus areas being:

- Human Resource Management
- Governance
- Equipment
- Tooram Memorial Park landscaping
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Sustainability

These key areas were the focus in the development of a business plan and budget that will take the Trust into coming years.

### **Information Management**

#### Xero

Information Management has been a key focus over the year. Firstly, with the introduction of Xero, financial management has been greatly improved in terms of accountability, efficiency and the ability of the Trust to have ready access to financial reporting.

#### Chronicle

In addition, the previous introduction of Chronicle has resulted in the consolidation of online data systems for the management of plot/niche sales and interments. This has demonstrated many benefits in terms of data security, accessibility and community engagement. Members of the public can now access Chronicle through the Warrnambool Cemeteries website to identify plots available for purchase or to search for data relating to those deceased.

## Community Engagement

In addition to the introduction of Chronicle, the Trust have introduced a number of other strategies to enhance community engagement.

- A Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Department of Justice and the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust. This MOU has enabled Community Correctional Services to effectively assist with grounds maintenance at the Warrnambool Cemetery.
- A social media platform 'Facebook' was launched to help improve information relating to Warrnambool cemeteries available to the public. It is pleasing to note that the level of interest is gradually increasing, informing the public about matters of interest or developments.
- In a further endeavour to meet community needs, the Trust made the decision to increase funeral times to 4pm during daylight saving times.
- As an initiative of Warrnambool Rotary a Memorandum of Understanding between that organisation and the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust has been signed for the purpose of developing a memorial for those babies who have died under 20 weeks gestation.

## Tooram Memorial Park (TMP)

A significant achievement over the past year has been the consolidation of TMP. The shelter has been completed, memorial gardens well established and Section E opened as an additional option for burials. Due to redesigning and remapping needed for the memorial gardens uptake on this option for interment has caused delays. The new design is expected to be embraced in coming years.

## Staff

Whilst staff turnover always presents its challenges it has enabled the Trust to re-think needs in that area. Adding value to our human resources the Trust increased the hours of the Administrative Assistant, employed staff with specific landscaping skills, provided in-house training and introduced regular staff meetings.

## Finances

### Profit and Loss

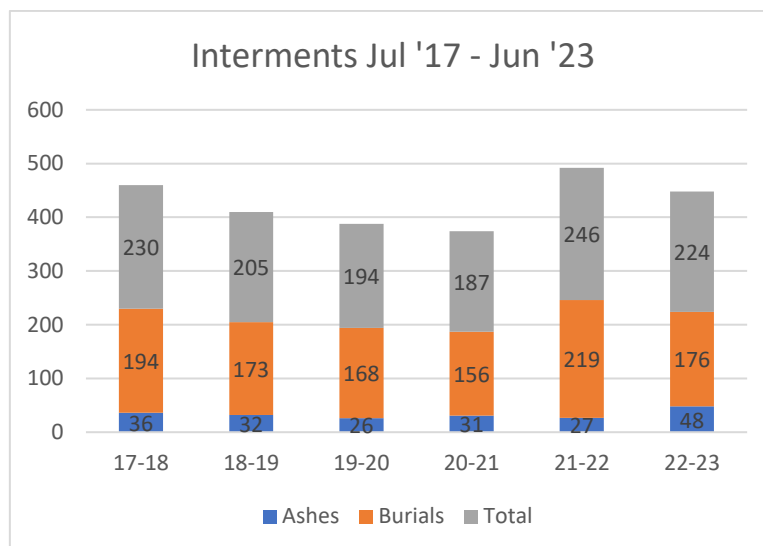
Whilst significantly lower than the previous year, it is pleasing to report that the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust has once again been able to report a profit for 2022-23. Despite an increase in income, major costs over the past year predominantly related to capital works, repairs and maintenance and resulted in a small profit of \$39,936 being recorded. This outcome would not have been so favourable had the Trust not received various grants totally approximately \$94,000.

### Asset register completed

In compliance with accounting standards the Trust now has a completed Asset Register, listing all items greater than \$5,000. This will greatly assist with financial management of assets into the future.

## Interments

While the total number of interments over the year was significantly lower than 2021-22, it is noted that 2022-23 data is relatively like previous years. Of note however is the increase in the number of interred ashes, highlighting community trends for this type of memorialisation.



## Future

It is expected the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust will continue to focus on areas relating to identified key strategies areas over the 2023-24 financial year. This will include:

- Increased financial management with budget and business plan alignment
- Installation of a disability access ramp
- Ongoing landscaping at Tooram Memorial Park
- Establishment of the Lost Babies Memorial
- Introduction of sustainability strategies
- Promoting community engagement through Chronicle

## Thankyou

Many thanks to each and every Trust member who have freely given their time, energy and expertise in the management of Warrnambool cemeteries. Not only have you focused on the essential governance matters, each member has generously given their time to the many operational matters than assist the staff in their roles.

Sheryl Nicolson

Chair – Warrnambool Cemetery Trust