



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Trust Members

At the beginning of the year the Trust received the resignation of long-standing member, Jim Sawyer. Jim joined the Trust in 1998 and proved to be a most active and valued member. Shortly afterwards the Trust welcomed the appointment of Robert Baudinette who, with his strong accounting background has brought a much needed skill to the Trust.

A second longstanding member to resign from the Trust was Ian Cameron. Giving 25 years of service, Ian supported the Trust through many challenging times. One of his most significant achievements was the eventual identification and purchase of land for Warrnambool's second cemetery, Tooram Memorial Park.

The Trust has been proactive in the recruitment of additional Trust members. Awaiting government endorsement, it is proposed these applicants will be valuable replacements for the imminent retirement of 3 further Trust members.

Staffing

Maintaining adequate staffing levels and skills remained a challenge. It is pleasing to report that throughout the year a new manager, administrative assistant and two grounds staff have been appointed, bringing a very stable and competent workforce. It is expected that an additional grounds person will be appointed soon. These developments have meant that regular office hours are available for the benefit of the public and other stakeholders. It also means that ground staff will have the capacity to cover both cemeteries concurrently.

Financials

Whilst end of year financials were not available at the time of this report it is expected that the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust's financial position remains stable. Financial statements indicate:

- Nett profit recorded although marginally down from the previous year
- Total assets are up and
- There is no significant change to financial liabilities.

The Trust were aware of opportunities to improve its financial management and throughout the year implemented some significant changes. They include:

- Revision of the interment fee structure
- Implementation of an asset register
- Appointment of independent external auditors
- Adoption of financial management policies and procedures
- Introduction of Xero

It is expected that these changes will, amongst other things, improve financial viability, facilitate planning and development and increase accountability.

In addition the Trust recognised limitations impacting on its eligibility for funding by some philanthropic trusts. A formal agreement with the South West Community Foundation was developed enabling funds to be auspiced through that organisation.

Interments

At the commencement of the financial year Warrnambool Cemetery was declared to have reached capacity in terms of available new graves. While burials will continue for re-opening of existing graves, no new graves were to be dug. All new graves were to be established at Tooram Memorial Park. As such, throughout the year we saw Tooram Memorial Park slowly evolve with community members taking up the new alternative of low-lying head stones. This format for burial sites was agreed upon by the Trust as a means of creating a more park-like environment for the cemetery.

Contrary to the downward trend over the past few years, interment data for 2021-22 demonstrates a significant increase. With a total of 187 interments for 2020-21 we have experienced an increase of 59 interments, giving a total of 246 for 2021-22. This has purely related to burials, with a slight decrease in the interment of cremated remains. (Appendix 1)

Information Management

Of significance this year was the launch of the new cemetery management system 'Chronicle'. In addition to the deceased search function provided by the earlier system, Chronicle provides a comprehensive system enabling all cemetery functions to be recorded and managed through the one system. This eliminates the need for multiple data management systems, significantly reduces any paper-based systems and maximises data security. Introduction of Chronicle has brought the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust up to standard with other cemeteries throughout the world.

Community Involvement

Throughout the year the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust have actively sought community involvement as a means of better meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Through radio, newspaper and internet feedback from the community has been actively sought, giving us the opportunity to address needs as they arise.

Collaboration with local Rotary clubs has seen further involvement with the enhancement of Warrnambool's cemeteries.

Tooram Memorial Park

From the first burial in May '21, 2020-21 has seen steady evolution of Tooram Memorial Park. While there were some challenging issues relating to inadequate draining, it has been pleasing to see the establishment of peaceful interment sites. A memorial garden was developed for the

interment of cremated remains and has continued to be a popular option for community members. In addition, both options for burials were made readily available and have been widely utilised.

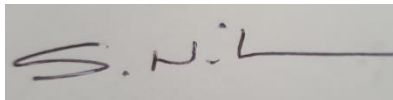
Whilst weather conditions impact on the landscape at Tooram Memorial Park it has been pleasing to see the gradual establishment of grasslands, garden beds and boundary trees. In addition, plans for a shelter have been approved and building contract awarded.

Future

Whilst the past few years have been particularly busy for the Warrnambool Cemetery Trust, the plans are to further progress and enhance the services provided. Some of the key plans for 2022-23 include:

- A facilitated strategic planning session
- Completion of the shelter at Tooram Memorial Park
- Development of a memorial garden for interment of children
- Establishment of alternative interment/memorial options, including niche pillars and family memorial sites
- Further development of bushland and gardens

The Trust eagerly looks forward to implementation of these initiatives to further improve the experiences of our community.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature appears to be 'S. Nicolson' written in a cursive, slightly stylized hand.

Sheryl Nicolson

Chairperson – Warrnambool Cemetery Trust

