



**DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL MERSEY VALE MEMORIAL  
PARK 2011-2030**

*The City with Spirit*

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## 1. Introduction

The Devonport City Council Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan has been developed to examine current service provisions, management procedures and consider options for the future provision of services at the Mersey Vale Memorial Park located in Spreyton Devonport.

Of the six (6) cemeteries within the Devonport municipal boundary only Mersey Vale Memorial Park (MVMP) is open for new burials and has a capacity for the next 7 years. A growing need to provide future burial options, and concerns raised by the community and industry highlights the significance of the MVMP and the need to plan effectively for the future.

Taking into consideration the evolution of the cemetery, funeral industry and local government's important role in the provision of services and facilities, the need to establish a long term direction for the care and management of the MVMP is recognised, as well as the ongoing expectations of procedural and operational improvements.

In line with the Devonport City Council Cemetery Management Plan, a number of conclusions have been drawn regarding the MVMP and subsequent recommendations made; to provide a clear and consistent direction for the planning, management and operation of the cemetery.

These operational improvements and strategic directions take into consideration a number of key drivers including:-

- Devonport City Council long term goals, public expectations;
- legislative and regulatory requirements, industry standards and trends;
- consistency with other Councils; retainment of key characteristics of the cemeteries within Devonport; and
- future demands on the provision of cemeteries.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Devonport City Council Cemetery Management Strategy.

The following key recommendations have been identified for the Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan for Councils consideration:

1. Allocate capital and operational funds towards the implementation of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan;
2. Future demand for cemetery facilities and services is planned;
3. Diversify the range of ash interment and remembrance options through the provision of garden ash interments, niche walls, remembrance and reflection hubs;
4. Review the cemetery based fees and charges annually to reflect the operation and management costs, broadening ash interment options and comparative costs of other Councils;
5. Sensitively promote the MVMP as a place capable of meeting the diverse burial needs of residents and ratepayers;
6. Improve the range and distribution of public information regarding the MVMP, development and operation through the establishment of appropriate documentation, a communication strategy and ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders;
7. Recognise the heritage value and conservation management of former Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons' graves located at MVMP;
8. Improve the existing and future amenity through the installation of seating, rubbish bins, taps, parking, shelter, fencing, landscaping and trees;
9. Establish a range of clear and concise policies, procedures and service levels for the management and operation of Devonport Cemeteries;

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan is to examine the existing issues and formulate a strategic direction which will serve the economic, social, environmental and cultural/historical needs of the City into the future.

Key outputs of the Master Plan include;

1. The examination of current service provision and management procedures, identification of opportunities for operational improvement and recommendations;
2. Consideration of options for the future provision of the facility and services, including the identification of land for development of cemetery facilities and burial options to meet future demand;
3. Identification of short, medium and long term design, maintenance and operational options based upon community and industry trends and need;
4. Development of an operational action plan to implement identified improvements and enhancement;
5. Development of service levels for ongoing maintenance;
6. Implementation of policy and procedures in accordance with Australian Standards and relevant legislation.

Council's role is as a provider, operator and facilitator, from initial planning to the day to day running of the MVMP.

### 2.1 Policy Context

Council's Strategic Plan identified a need to better manage and plan its cemeteries. The development of this master plan identifies a number of key issues identified through analysis of the existing management of the facility. An overarching document 'Cemetery Management Strategy' has been developed to provide a framework to guide the development of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan. Recommendations have been formulated through engagement with key stakeholders, including industry, Council and the general public. Key issues raised by the community and industry representatives relate to the short, medium and long term management, operation, design and amenity of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan.

### 3. Principles and Objectives

The following principles have been identified to guide the development of the Master Plan. They relate to the long term goals nominated in the Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030:

- A. Diverse options for burial should inform sustainable approaches to land use when planning for future demand for cemeteries** (*Devonport Strategic Plan, Long Term Goal 1*)
- B. Sound planning will ensure future demand is met and is integral to our work. The infrastructure priorities to support the development of our unique city are planned and appropriately funded** (*Devonport Strategic Plan, Long Term Goal 2*)
- C. Cemeteries are important historical repositories of the economic, social, cultural and political life of a community.** (*Devonport Strategic Plan, Long Term Goal 4*)
- D. Active and purposeful community engagement and participation is integral to our work** (*Devonport Strategic Plan, Long Term Goal 5*)
- E. Information management and communication enhances Council's operations and delivery of services** (*Devonport Strategic Plan, Long Term Goal 5*)

## 4. What We Heard

To ensure the Community and stakeholders were involved, consulted and worked collaboratively with Council to inform and guide the future of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park, a range of engagement strategies were implemented;

A survey was conducted with the wider community. Distribution was via Council networks and a selected mailing list; the survey was also made available to the public via Council's website and at Council's Customer Service Counter.

- The survey was advertised regularly in the Advocate and a signboard was located outside the Mersey Vale Memorial Park entrance inviting visitors to participate. Outcomes of the survey were collated and made available via Council's website and Customer Service Centre.
- Funeral Service Providers were invited to participate in a small focus group session.
- Letters received from the public regarding the MVMP were sent an invitation to complete the survey.
- Parents/carers of children buried in the children's cemetery were invited to complete a survey.
- Complaints received from the public either by letter or verbally to staff.
- Verbal feedback from visitors to the MVMP via operational staff.
- Council staff and the Council Cemetery Working Group.

### **The survey results identified the following trends and issues;**

- The majority of the 82 surveys received were from Devonport residents who either visit the MVMP to attend a funeral or come to visit a grave. Of those who do visit, attend the MVMP usually once every three months; 20% of respondents attend more than once a month.
- All respondents value the site as a place which is important to the community and a personal place to reflect and remember loved ones whilst experiencing loss and grief. Other important elements identified are the open green space and the place to learn about recent and past generations.
- Visitation to the site increases on those special days of the year including Christmas, Fathers Day, Mothers Day and birthdays. During these peak periods of visitation it is identified that an improvement in amenity would enhance the effectiveness of the facility including signage, seating, emptying of rubbish bins and access to taps for vases.
- Some respondents also indicated that frequency of visitation might increase if poor drainage which results in boggy conditions was improved.

- Most respondents identified a need to extend the concrete plinths program to existing plaque areas; and to upgrade facilities at the site including existing infrastructure such as toilets and lack of paths which may improve access.
- The children's cemetery has been subject to ongoing maintenance and vandalism issues. Respondents were asked what suggestions they might have to help address these issues. Many comments received indicated that objects left on children's grave could possibly attract vandals and animals and that this is a subject that should be carefully considered.
- The majority of respondents felt a garden as a place for peaceful reflection would be the most valuable solution to identified issues at the children's cemetery, closely followed by plinths to replace existing graves and the addition of lighting.
- Overall respondents have concerns relating to ongoing management of wildlife namely wallabies, rabbits and plovers, poor drainage and access when wet, a lack of fencing, signage, seating and rubbish bins.
- The majority of respondents who answered identified that they would have their final resting place at the MVMP. Whilst most prefer to be buried, a further 19% indicating they would like their ashes scattered, but a memorial plaque on site appears to be welcomed. 18% of respondents indicated that they would prefer a cremation with a plaque at MVMP. The vast majority indicating that this is due to having previous family members already located at the Park.

A copy of the questionnaire and comments received is provided in Appendix 1. Council staff wishes to acknowledge those individuals who contributed to the survey, as this has been instrumental in determining future strategic direction and management of the facility.

### **Focus group session with Industry Representatives**

Along with information about possible future design features and amenity, feedback was also invited by industry representatives regarding the limitations of the existing site, current operational practices, inclusive of burials and grave maintenance.

- Participants who attended the industry focus group identified the following;
- The existing design and conditions of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park is poor, due to poor drainage, layout, poor accessibility to graves, lack of memorials, current memorial options inadequate to meet changing community demand and expectations;
- Current car park is under utilised due to location, lack of seating, signage and aging infrastructure;
- Ongoing concerns regarding sunken plaques and general poor drainage of the site;
- A need to increase concrete plinths and improve burial practice and new grave allocation;
- Expectations of clients can be improved through revised allocation of funeral times;



- A need to review fees and charges;
- Burials have reduced over the past twenty years;
- Memorialisation is increasing in demand;
- People would prefer to use the Private Memorial Garden than a community facility;
- Private crematorium increases the life of the cemetery.
- Over the past few years Council has identified the following trends impacting on Council managing and operating cemeteries;
- Increased expansion of local government's role including grave digging and responding to information requests;
- Increased focus on family history searches;
- Increased request for memorials;
- Increased requests for plaques to be raised;
- Changing expectations of services provided to clients;
- Expectation for services to be available after hours.

Preliminary Design Concepts –In addition to community engagement activities, information gathered, research, data analysis, working group outputs, Aldermen workshops, staff input and feedback funeral Industry representatives were invited to review the draft conceptual and action plan prior to the Master Plan being placed on public exhibition for further input and feedback from residents. The working group also visited various cemeteries to inform future strategies and actions.

## 5. Outcomes

After implementation of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan, the following outcomes will describe the future of MVMP:

Outcomes and Issue Identification;

Outcome/ overall objective		Issues to be addressed in this cemetery strategy	Related guiding principles
1	Sustainable long term demand is identified and planned for in Councils long term 5 year Capital program and asset management plans	Future demand/supply, available land use, master planning, Burial options/bush burial, Industry standards	A,B
2	The Mersey Vale Memorial Park is used to maximise efficiency and effectiveness	Future demand, life span of existing site, accessibility issues, Cemetery layout, expansion of concrete plinths , site conditions, parking layout , Pricing-fees and charges, lack of places for reflection Lack of memorial options, sunken graves, drainage, Irrigation, security fencing, signage	A,B,C,D,E
3	Historical management and access to old cemeteries and information is improved for locals, tourists and interstate visitors	Conservation plans, Involvement of professionals, Emergency stabilisation, safety priorities, opportunities for community engagement, treatment and documentation protocol , signage Strategy, Data and record management procedures, communication and promotion	C,D,E
4	A high standard of customer service is delivered	Legislation, industry trends, communication with industry, Burial procedures, grave preparation, presentation and procedure, care of operational staff	D,E
5	Up to date and relevant information regarding cemeteries is readily available and accessible in a range sources and formats	Policy and procedures, Communication	E

### 5.1 Study Area

The study area for the Mersey Vale Memorial Park is shown in figure 1.



5.2 Site Analysis and History

<b>Status Local/State/National Significance</b>	Open for burial and ash interments National significance <i>(Former Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons grave located at the site)</i>	<p><b>Summary of identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only seven years remain for traditional burial</li> <li>• Existing layout creates access issues</li> <li>• Road network does not respond growth of facility</li> <li>• Wildlife continually access the site destroying flowers</li> <li>• Increased maintenance costs associated with sunken plaques</li> <li>• Power line easement restrictions</li> <li>• Limited ash interment options</li> <li>• High cost of niche wall establishment and limited asset life of resource once constructed</li> <li>• Areas of site are unsuitable for regular depth excavation</li> <li>• Irrigation and other maintenance costs as the developed site area increases</li> <li>• Restrictions of site topography</li> <li>• Lack of drainage on the north east of the site</li> <li>• Aging paths and lack of paths throughout site</li> <li>• Lack of general amenity – seating, signage and rubbish bins</li> <li>• Lack of places for reflection and remembrance</li> <li>• No buffer from Mersey Main Road</li> <li>• Existing Council resolution to line the cemetery with tree plantings(Res 344/10)</li> <li>• Existing Council resolution to install plinths to completed lawn sections (Res 68/09)</li> <li>• No shelters in inclement weather</li> <li>• Increased irrigation throughout summer</li> <li>• Trees, hedging and landscaping inconsistent</li> <li>• Limited buffer provided to visitors</li> <li>• Ongoing high level maintenance required for the children's cemetery</li> </ul>
<b>Title details/lot No. Site Characteristics</b>	25.64 Hectares North Boundary Length: 860 Metres East Boundary Length: 330 metres South Boundary Length: 720 metres	
<b>Address</b>	21-39 Stony Rise Road, Quoiba	
<b>Land Area Public open Space classification</b>	Formal Parkland	
<b>Cemetery type</b>	Lawn Cemetery	
<b>First recorded burial</b>	2/3/1968 - Joy Jago	
<b>No. of recorded burials</b>	Unknown – Difficult to ascertain due missing and deterioration of headstones	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	568 reservations	
<b>Denominations</b>	Various	

## Historic and Heritage Value - Mersey Vale Memorial Park - Devonport

In 1968 Devonport, Latrobe and Kentish Council entered into a three way agreement to jointly establish and operate a central lawn cemetery for the people of the three municipalities. This was a forty year agreement which included the establishment of the cemetery on land in Quoiba which was purchased by the three Councils from the estate of William Henry Constable for the sum of twenty four thousand dollars. Devonport Council operated and administered the Lawn Cemetery for the life of the agreement on behalf of the three Councils. At the end of the agreement Devonport Council took over the sole role of operation and administration of the cemetery. During the life of the agreement none of the Council's were able to establish another Lawn Cemetery.

### 5.3 Site Analysis cont.

#### Existing Site Characteristics

Mersey Vale Memorial Park is located South of Devonport's CBD alongside Stony Rise Road on the eastern boundary and Durkins Road on the southern boundary. The site is flat on the eastern side entry with a steady to significant grade commencing within 90 metres of the boundary. The site continues up to the west into undeveloped bushland before being dissected by a high voltage power line easement, approximately half way up the length of the site. The northern boundary borders an undeveloped but 90% cleared subdivision allotment. The western property beyond the power lines is the Kelcey Tier Greenbelt, also owned by Devonport City Council and is 118.9 hectares in size.

### 5.4 Existing site Issues and Solutions

- Plaques – The use of plaques is common for lawn Cemetery's, allowing the senses to be calmed by virtually unbroken expanses of peaceful green lawn interspersed with fresh floral blooms in neat rows as one visits the site. Time has revealed some shortcomings with this approach for both visitors and maintenance staff. Visitors to the site are dissatisfied with the subsidence and maintenance of plaques which as a result require staff to lift and re-lift plaques as they subside and re-subside. This has been addressed to date in lawns four (4), six (6), seven (7), nine (9), ten (10) and part of lawn eight (8) by moving the plaques to the west, above the excavation line.
- Plinths – Plinths have been installed which provide visitors to adorn graves with mementos and flowers. Introduction of plinths has worked extremely well, addressing many issues including efficiencies in maintenance, subsidence of plaques and general site tidiness.
- Drains - The network of drains adequately accommodate the requirements of three quarters of the site. The quarter of the north east has inadequate drainage with an open drain along the northern boundary and too few drains through the lawn area. The lawn can become un-trafficable in wet weather for both the visitor and vehicles.
- Road network – The original road network no longer services the entire site, presenting access issues for visitors and industry.

- Parking – The provision of car parking is inadequate, the single bottom car park is not used to capacity due to its location. Proposed solution is to reduce the lower car park and provide additional car parking as the site develops. Area identified to continue lawn burial in stages presents a cost effective opportunity to provide an increase in parking as the site develops.
- Paths – Limited provision of paths presents access issues. Existing paths require upgrading.
- Trees, hedges and soft landscaping – An ad-hoc approach has led to a limited capacity to create a private, serene and peaceful ambience.
- Noise reduction – Limited buffers established to reduce the impact of industrial noise adjacent to the site.
- Amenity – Inadequate seating, signage, litter bins and shelter limit the sites usefulness and conformability to the visitor.
- Ash Interment – Limited options provided, it appears to be imperative that a range of ash interment and memorials options be introduced to increase the longevity of the site and choice on interment for the customer.
- Children's Cemetery - Plinths begin to address ongoing maintenance issues, further consultation with families is required to determine sensitive and appropriate solutions.
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## 6. Interment Options

### 6.1 Current Options and definitions

There is a pressing need to increase the burial spaces at the MVMP, which is the only Devonport Cemetery open for new burials. There are limited interment options at the Mersey Vale Memorial Park.

**A.** Lawn burial at the Mersey Vale Memorial Park (MVMP) located in Spreyton.

A standard plaque is placed at the head of the grave. In the older areas of the MVMP, sunken plaques have become a distressing issue for visitors and a challenging management issue. The standard of maintenance is significantly higher in the older areas, given the weight of the plaque, over time they subside and require lifting.

The introduction of concrete plinths to the cemetery has greatly improved the maintenance issue, enabling the placement of flowers and mementos. Like the older areas the balance of the plot is covered with lawn. The lawn is mown as part of routine cemetery maintenance including additional whipper snipping and tidying of graves.

**B.** Columbarium walls or niche walls – ashes are installed in a columbarium/niche wall which has a standard plaque and bud vase. The older existing Columbarium wall is now full; a new wall has been created at the top of the site. This is experiencing a slow take up.

**C.** Ash interments – ashes are interred in a rose garden setting. A standard plaque is generally used. The area is maintained to service levels. Ash interments are also available at existing graves of family members. There is limited choice at present for ash interments, the private crematorium opposite the MVMP advised of a greater need to provide options.

**D.** There are no current options for memorials – this is where ashes are generally retained or scattered and a memorial is established at a cemetery. Memorials often utilise a standard plaque and are situated in a garden, feature which promotes a tranquil and serene place for reflection.

**E.** Crypts and mausoleums – coffins are interred in an above ground structure. There is no provision of this kind of facility and no demand has been identified.

### 6.2 Interment Trends and Future Demand

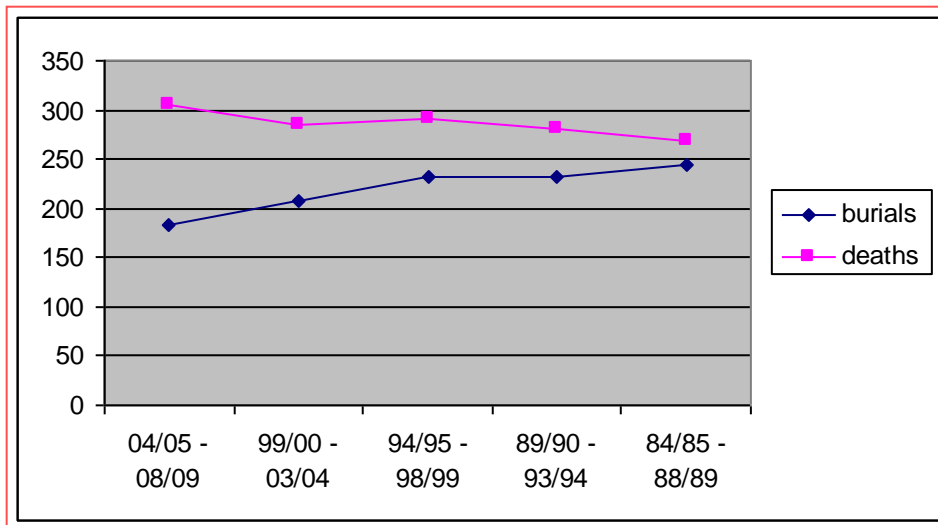
Opportunities exist to extend the life of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park; however it's important to understand what the demand and trends for interment are locally, along with alternative options not already used at the Cemetery.

A review of statistics for the past 25 years reveal that while the population has grown, the choice of the Council cemetery as a resting place is on the decline. However increased ash interments and identified inadequate ash interment options and memorials at the site may be key contributors to this decline.

Given the current municipal population and average life expectancy of 81.4 years, the number of deaths per year is in the order of 306. For the five years 04/05 through to 08/09 184 people chose Mersey Vale for their last resting place through burial or ashes interment.

This is in contrast to the five years 84/85 through to 88/89, where an average of 245 combined burials and cremations were conducted at Mersey Vale. The trend drops steadily across the 25 years to the current number as the graph below indicates.

The pink line shows the increasing rate of death within the municipality corresponding with population increase while the blue line shows the drop in selection of Mersey Vale as the site for burial or interment.





The rate of decline in casket burial is close to that of ashes interment indicating there is no particular trend towards one or the other method. However an increase in use of private Crematoriums for Ash Interment indicates the public's preference to type of facility.

The graph above also shows that of the total number of deaths in the municipality in the period 84/85 – 88/89 council cemeteries accounted for 91% of burials or cremations with a steady decline through the 25 year period to the last five year period, where the percentage has dropped to 60% of all deaths being accommodated at the Council cemetery.

Impacts on the use of the facility within the last 25 years include the opening of two crematoria. One is in Ulverstone and one opposite the site itself. The option of cremation has become more convenient as prior to this; cremations were only available in Launceston. Families frequently choose to take the urn or canister to retain or scatter their relative's ashes in preference to a casket or interment at a community facility.

It is expected that this trend will flatten out in the future as the trend reaches its median range of take up.

Year	Burials	Interments	Area Expended
2008 – 2009	150	24	1608
2007 – 2008	176	43	1916
2006 – 2007	146	39	1596
2005 – 2006	144	27	1552
<b>Total</b>			6672 m2
Nominal current fill rate per annum =			1668m2

Item	Measure	
Available space for interment niche walls currently	0	No niche wall vacancy
Available spaces for interment memorial garden currently	467	14 years expectancy
Area suitable for Bushland burials	Minimal	Nil
Number of headstones requiring re-positioning above excavation lines	4300	Approximate number

Total site area:	25.64 Hectares
Area developed to date:	10.67
Area expended to date:	9.65
Area expended per year:	.166
Available area in lawn:	1.01
Area consumed by power line easement:	1.26
Available site area:	14.89

Years before current lawn area is expended:	6 Years
Years of life in the site - approximate:	6 Years
Projected site consumption by the year:	2017 AD

### 6.3 Site Constraints and Future Interment Options

The existing lawn area of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park will be expended by 2016 with a requirement to commence development of the existing bushland areas at least two years in advance to allow construction of roads and drainage, consolidation of plantings and establishment of car parking and amenities.

- Site constraints - A recent Geotechnical report identifies significant areas of rock shelf in the upper undeveloped section of the site. This sub soil composition renders the significant section of the site unviable for the prime purpose of the site. While memorials may be set above ground, the development cost of the site for this purpose alone is considered too high for the associated gain. Additional land will be required to facilitate in-ground burial before this site is filled.

Given the data above, the existing lawn area of the site will be expended by 2016 with a requirement to acquire and commence development of new areas at least two years in advance to allow construction of roads and drainage, consolidation of plantings and establishment of car parking and amenities.

Immediate concerns relate to improvement of the drainage to the lower north east of the site and measures to enhance the desirability of the area to families, to enable the area to be substantially expended before development is completed at the west of the site.

There are known areas of the site where top soil over rock seams is too shallow to accommodate casket burial. These areas can be set aside for ornamental areas, memorial garden sites, roads and such infrastructure to make the most of the areas easily excavated.

- Extension of future lawn burial – Space has been identified to continue lawn cemetery areas with plaques and plinths. Improving the drainage to the lower north east of the site is incumbent upon this urgent development. Lawn burial appears to be a preference, however at present no other option is provided. Irrigation, sub soil drainage and additional amenity including efficient and effective maintenance will be required to be considered.
- Monumental lawn burial - An area has been determined within the conceptual design to include a lawn monumental cemetery. This modern approach increases the choice available for burial. A monumental cemetery differs from a lawn cemetery whereby a headstone is installed on the plinth within prescribed parameters. A lawn monumental area is considered a good alternative to lawn cemetery particularly where there is a low-medium burial rate and relative geographic isolation.

- Family Burials, ash interment and memorials - While most gravesites in the Park are dug to accommodate one or two burials, there are advantages to allowing family members to be buried together. The most significant being the family is united, it also decreases the demand for new gravesites; and supports enhanced maintenance of gravesites by families. Opportunities do exist to create exclusive private family gardens within the existing area and consideration in the new. These gardens often have a tree as a centre piece and allow for 4,6 or 8 interment of ashes/memorials and often have sandstone or granite pillars and individual bronze plaques.
- Columbarium/niche walls - The existing columbarium/niche wall is full, this option for ash interment are usually only built when there is an existing or high forecast for ash interment/burial rate. Once installed there are very limited maintenance costs associated, due to their robust nature. An additional advantage is the wall is often installed within a garden setting which can also be used for ash interments. Installed on their own they are often stark. Due to limited burial rates and take up of the current wall, there appears to be limited need to provide additional niche walls.
- Ash Interment and Memorials – Opportunities exist to diversify the range of ash interment and introduce memorial options to the site, and enhance areas which create respectful places for private reflection. Provision of such areas endeavour to offer peaceful, secluded natural settings which are currently lacking; at present there is no real sense of privacy, individuals and families are left to grieve in the open space.

Alternative areas have been determined within the old and new site to develop places for rest and reflection. Many other cemeteries include ponds, rock gardens, public art, bush settings and walks, low maintenance landscaping and adequate amenity including seating and shelter. These areas can also be additional options for ash interment, inclusive of places for single pedestals made of sandstone and plaques, or granite bases set in established natural gardens. Memorial rocks and walls which provide for the placement of plaques for those who are not interned at the cemetery currently is also an option; this provides an opportunity to provide families with a place to acknowledge the life of a loved one.

Some cemeteries on the mainland have created such places with thought and creativity such as the wall in a Canberra cemetery which has a tree of life made of iron. The plaques are in the shape of a small leaf which allows the tree to grow and flourish over the years.

Other alternatives include memorial seats, whereby a seat and installation cost is bore by the customer and includes a plaque dedicated to the deceased. Ongoing maintenance is at the cost of council unless the plaque is damaged and requires replacement.

In addition creation of places for the scattering of ashes would address a lack of options for the bereaved.

- Infants and children – The existing area requires sensitive consultation with the bereaved to determine appropriate solutions to existing issues. Once the current area has reached capacity, an area has been set aside within the conceptual plan to establish a new children's garden and cemetery. Broader plinths are recommended to ensure those bereaved have ample space to adorn graves with meaningful mementos. The creation of a memorial for babies within the area is recommended, providing recognition of infants who have died and have not required a formal funeral.
- Green Burial - Green burial (also known as natural or woodland burial) is increasingly being practised in England and parts of Europe and uses land in a less formal and obtrusive manner than conventional burial practice. Green burial involves the use of natural open space, limits

the use of chemicals and encourages biodegradable burial material instead of concrete and metals. Graves within green burial sites are usually marked by a newly planted tree or small boulders. Small plaques may be located near to the grave marker to commemorate deceased.

- Prior to the site being assessed as suitable for green burial, a range of environmental, flora and fauna issues would need to be considered e.g. the potential impact on threatened species and endangered communities. Research suggests that advocates for green burial prefer natural bush settings. The extent of the site lends itself to this approach.

To achieve the goal of enhanced landscaping additional fencing may be required to address the current issues of wildlife.

Funeral trends indicate that cremation will continue to become increasingly acceptable. Some religious groups, however, are understood not to accept cremation.

## 7. Implementation

The Master Plan guides the short, medium and long term direction for the Mersey Vale Memorial Park, inclusive of interment options for longevity of the site and future issues which address ongoing demand. For effective and efficient implementation the recommendations and outcomes of the Devonport City Council - Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master plan will be overseen by an internal working group and aligned with operational planning, and annual budget estimates for consideration by Council.

The action plan describes the steps that need to be taken to fulfil the identified objectives of the Devonport City Council Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan; they are realistic, measurable and attainable.

The plan also ensures the identification of clear responsibilities for Council and staff, and specific timeframes for completing activities and identification of resources required.

**Definitions;**

Timeframes

Ongoing – day to day tasks which are budgeted for annually

Short Term – 1 to 2 years, Medium 2 to 5 years, Long Term – 5 to 15 years

**Resources required**

- **A-OPEX - Annual Operational Expenditure for 2011/12 – staffing or operational resource allocated as part of the annual plan**
- **F-OPEX - Future Operational Expenditure – identified increased requirements for future consideration in annual allocation**
- **F/A CAPEX – Future or 2011-12 Capital Expenditure – identified infrastructure requirements**

An annual review of the action plan will be undertaken by the internal working group, as part of Councils annual planning. Allocation of resources to complete actions will be considered as part of Council annual budget deliberations.

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Short/Medium/Long term/ongoing	Resources Required
<b>Sustainable long term demand is identified and planned for in Council's long term 5 year Capital program and asset management plans</b>	Undertake annual analysis of demand and supply to inform ongoing service levels, maintenance, safety and priority upgrade of assets.	Operations	Ongoing	Opex
	Allocate funds for identified asset maintenance, renewal and creation of new assets.	City Infrastructure	Ongoing	Opex-Capex
	Determine future interment options on current site and undertake flora and fauna investigations.	City Infrastructure	Short term	Capex


Objective	Action	Responsibility	Short/Medium/Long term/ongoing	Resources Required
	Allocate resources to identify suitable land for future Cemetery development, including geotechnical and flora and fauna investigations.	City Infrastructure	Short Term	Capex
	Burial options/bush burials are considered in master planning.	Council & City Infrastructure	Short term	A-Opex
	Ensure Industry Standards and Legislation is annually updated and staff are trained	Operations Physical activities & Legislative	Ongoing	A-Opex
<b>The Mersey Vale Memorial Park is used to maximise efficiency and effectiveness</b>	Meet demand through the installation of plinths, as required	City Infrastructure	Ongoing	F-Capex
	Stage the installation of concrete plinths in older areas	City Infrastructure	Long Term	F-Opex & Capex
	Improve access and vehicular movement through the development of central parking	City Infrastructure	Medium term	F-Capex
	Prepare conceptual design to enhance the current children area. Consult with families to inform recommendation to Council	City Infrastructure & Customer and Community	Short term	Capex
	Plan and create a new children's cemetery including a memorial for infants and consider fencing area	City Infrastructure	On demand	Capex
	Allocate areas which are too	City Infrastructure	Short term	External funding

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Short/Medium/Long term/ongoing	Resources Required
	shallow for burial for memorial gardens, landscaping and scattering of ashes			F-Capex
	Address the identified lack of adequate ash internment and memorial options throughout the park via tree plantings, ornamental rock gardens, and place of reflection	City Infrastructure	Short term	F-Capex External funding Sponsorship
	Introduce Monumental lawn burial options	City Infrastructure	Ongoing	Capex
	Develop guidelines for the placement and removal of objects on grave sites	Operations	Short term	Opex
	Stage the lifting of sunken plaques and respond to individual requests in a timely manner	Operations	Ongoing	A-Opex
	Improve access throughout the site by way of directional signage	City Infrastructure	Short term	Capex
	Improve drainage at existing site north east of site	City Infrastructure	Short term	Capex
	Maintain existing lighting levels and continue to monitor and respond to security of the site	Operations	Ongoing	A-Opex
	Annually review pricing-fees and charges	Operations	Ongoing (February)	Existing operational
	Promote historical cemeteries	Customers and	Medium term	Capex



Objective	Action	Responsibility	Short/Medium/Long term/ongoing	Resources Required
<b>Historical management and access to old cemeteries and information is improved for locals, tourists and interstate visitors</b>	on site	community		
	Develop a conservation plan and service level for the former Prime Minister and Dame Enid Lyons grave in accordance with Tasmanian Heritage Council guidelines	Operations	Short term	Existing operational
	Provide information to the Home Hill Special Committee regarding Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons grave	Internal working group	Ongoing	Existing Opex
	Engage professional conservation consultants to undertake specialised conservation work as required	Operation	Short term	F/A Opex
<b>A high standard of customer service is delivered</b>	Install signage to provide visitors with information relating to the days interment schedule	Operations	Short term	F/A Capex
	Install an information kiosk at office (new technology)	Internal working group	Medium term	F/A Capex
	Consider naming plinth rows to improve way finding at the site	Internal working group	Medium	Existing Opex and F/A Capex
	Deal with complaints per Customer Service Charter and process	Sustainable Communities Manager	Ongoing	Existing Opex
	All enquiries are allocated to areas of responsibility in accordance with legislation and delegation.	Internal working group	Ongoing	A-Opex

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Short/Medium/Long term/ongoing	Resources Required
Up to date and relevant information regarding cemeteries is readily available and accessible in a range sources and formats	Interment options are updated and promoted via Council website and brochures	Internal working group	Ongoing	Existing Opex
	Communicate changes of operation to Customer Services and stakeholders both internally and externally	Internal working group	Ongoing	Existing Opex
	Ongoing review of Interment options to meet changing demands and trends.	Internal Working group	Ongoing	Existing Opex

Document Control						
Date	Version	Modifications	Author	Admin	Adoption	Date Approved
1/05/11	1.0	Initial document	EJE	LHF	NA	
12/07/11	1.1	Internal review of actions	EJE	LHF	NA	
14 /10/2011	1.2	Internal review of actions	EJE	EJE	NA	
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9/11/2011	1.4	Alderman review of final draft	EJE	EJE	NA	



Mersey Vale Master Plan  
Concept

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