

NSW Government Cemetery Reforms

January 2013

On 2 April 2012 the Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, announced significant reforms to cemetery management in NSW. The reform program has been progressing rapidly with the following outcomes achieved or underway.

Rookwood Necropolis

Five denominational trusts (Anglican, General, Jewish, Muslim and Independent) at Rookwood Necropolis have been dissolved and amalgamated into the **Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust (RGCRT)**.

Rookwood Necropolis is now managed by the RGCRT and the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT). The Rookwood Necropolis Trust, which manages the common areas of Rookwood, now has a three-person Board comprising a senior officer from each of the RGCRT and CMCT, and a Ministerial nominee as Chair. A Memorandum of Understanding covering management of the common areas has been agreed to by RGCRT and CMCT.

In establishing the RGCRT the Minister directed that the area know as Lot 10 at Rookwood be allocated 50 per cent for Muslim burials and 50 per cent for Jewish burials. Work has commenced to have Lot 10 ready accept burials by April 2013.

The Minister announced the Trust board to manage the RGCRT. Bob Wilson is the Chair, and the Trust board members are Patricia Lloyd, Barry Collier, Nick Pappas, Ahmad Kamaledine, Richard Seidman and Robyn Hawes .

Northern Sydney Cemeteries

The trusts established to manage the Crown cemeteries in northern metropolitan Sydney have been dissolved and amalgamated to form the **Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (NMCT)**. The Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery, Macquarie Park Cemetery, the non-Catholic components of the Field of Mars Cemetery and the Frenchs Forest Bushland Cemetery are now managed by the NMCT.

The Minister announced the Trust board to manage NMCT in early December 2012. Bruce Tanner is the Chair and the board members are Robert McCotter, Kim Sanford, Bill Lee, Margaret Conley, Lyn Morehen, and Rossetta Trovatello.

Southern Sydney Cemeteries

The trusts established to manage the Crown cemeteries in southern metropolitan Sydney have been dissolved and amalgamated to form the **Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust** (SMCT). The Botany Cemetery and Crematorium, known as the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park, and the Woronora Cemetery are now managed by the SMCT.

The Trust board to manage the SMCT was gazetted on 18 January 2013. The Board Chair is Anthony Simpson and the Board members are Anthony Lee, Paul Rappoport, Ivona Kadlec, Michael McMahon, Les Bursill and Elizabeth Fitzsimmons.

The NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Board and new legislation

An overarching NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Board with statutory functions and powers will be established under a consolidated Cemeteries and Crematoria Act covering all NSW cemeteries. The Crown Cemeteries Advisory Committee was wound up in April 2012 and has now been replaced by an Interim Board with an advisory role including assisting with development of the new legislation.

In December 2012 the Minister announced the appointment of the Interim Board. The members are **Bob Wilson** (as Chair of the Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust), **Hon Leo McLeay** (as Chair of the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust), **Bruce Tanner** (as Chair of the Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust), **Anthony Simpson** (as Chair of the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust), **Bronwyn Kelly** (representing Local Government), **Andrew Smith** (representing Private Cemeteries), **Susan Budd** (as ex-officio representative of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure), **Sally Barnes** (as ex-officio representative of the Office of Environment and Heritage), **David Harley** as the Minister's nominee with expertise in reform strategy and **David Knoll** as the Minister's nominee with expertise in legislation and governance. The Interim Board is chaired by **Craig Sahlin**, Executive Director – Reform in the Department of Primary Industries. There will also be a member representing the funeral Industry.

Other reforms

The Liverpool General Cemetery Trust has been dissolved. The Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has been appointed to manage the general portions of the Liverpool Cemetery. The Trust will be required to manage this part of the cemetery as a general cemetery. The Trust now manages the whole of Liverpool Cemetery.

A Review of the Governance Framework of Crown Cemetery Trusts has been conducted. A Board Chairs Group and a Senior Managers Group, both drawn from the four major Crown cemetery trusts in Sydney, have been established to implement the agreed actions arising from the Review and to collaborate in development of common policy approaches for all Crown cemetery trusts.