



## THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

<b>SUBJECT:</b> Cemeteries & Columbaria		<b>PROCEDURE REFERENCE NUMBER</b> MUP-009
<b>DATE APPROVED</b> 31 July 2025 by Bishop-in-Council		<b>VERSION 1</b> Original Version
<b>IMPLEMENTATION DATE</b> Immediate	<b>REVIEW FREQUENCY</b> 3 Yearly	<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW</b> Bishop-in-Council

### 1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance to the Diocese on the management of cemeteries, including columbaria and memorial gardens.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Anglican Diocese of Grafton and all ministry units that manage human remains.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**“Interment”** – The placement of human remains (either bodily remains via burial, or cremated remains via ash interment) below ground or in above ground structures.

**“Interment Right”** – a right that is granted by a cemetery operator to a person or persons to a specific burial place or place for ashes. This right may be perpetual or renewable.

**“Cemetery Operator”** – The holder of a cemetery operator licence, in this case the Corporate Trustees of the Diocese of Grafton.

**“Regulator”** – Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW

### 4. PROCEDURE

#### 4.1 Background

The NSW Government passed the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2022*, establishing a statutory interment right and increased consumer protections for the holders of interment rights. This policy covers the obligations of the Diocese in managing cemeteries given this new regulation.

#### 4.2 Cemeteries Process

##### 4.2.1 Contract for Interment Right

Interment right applications may be submitted by individuals planning in advance or by family members and loved ones following a death. All enquiries should be directed to the parish office for initial consultation.

Following confirmation of interment arrangements, the parish must execute a Contract for Sale of a Perpetual Interment Right with the applicant using the standard template (Annexure A). This contract establishes:



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- i. Specific conditions governing the interment
- ii. Consumer protection rights and obligations
- iii. Clear pricing structure for the interment right
- iv. Details of any additional parish services (funeral ceremonies, memorial services, etc.)

The contract must explicitly itemise all costs, including the base interment right fee and any optional services provided by the parish. No additional charges may be imposed beyond those specified in the signed contract.

The parish wardens are designated as authorised diocesan representatives with authority to execute interment right contracts on behalf of the parish.

### 4.2.2 Order of Interment

Upon execution of a Contract for Sale of a Perpetual Interment, a binding legal agreement is established that guarantees the right to interment. The interment may be conducted using any method approved and offered by the parish.

Before any interment can proceed, an Order of Interment must be completed and submitted. This mandatory document serves multiple critical functions:

- i. **Legal Authorization:** Provides formal approval for the interment to proceed in accordance with state legislation
- ii. **Planning Coordination:** Facilitates proper scheduling and preparation of interment services
- iii. **Record Management:** Ensures accurate documentation and maintenance of interment records
- iv. **Chain of Responsibility:** Establishes clear accountability throughout the interment process

The Order of Interment form is provided in Appendix B.

A copy of the completed Order of Interment must be distributed to all parties involved in the interment process, including but not limited to:

- i. Funeral directors
- ii. Memorial craftspeople (plaque engravers, monument installers, etc.)
- iii. Parish staff responsible for interment coordination
- iv. Any other service providers engaged in the interment

This distribution ensures all parties have the necessary authorization and information to fulfill their respective responsibilities in compliance with established procedures.



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### 4.2.3 Interment

Once the above two steps are completed, interment can take place.

## 4.3 Record Keeping

### 4.3.1 Parish Records

Parishes must maintain comprehensive records for all interments by:

- i. Recording each interment in the official Burial Register at the time of service
- ii. Retaining original documents including the Contract for Interment Right and Order of Interment
- iii. Submitting copies of completed interment documentation (Contract and Order) to the Registry immediately following each interment.
- iv. Following retention schedules as specified in REG-003 Retention of Records for all interment-related documentation.

All records must be submitted promptly after interment to ensure compliance with registry requirements and maintain the integrity of parish burial records.

### 4.3.2 Registry Records

The Registry shall keep the following electronic records on interments:

- i. A Register of Interments
- ii. A copy of all Contracts for Interment Right
- iii. A copy of all Orders of Interment
- iv. A Register of Complaints (detailed in section 4.5)
- v. Details of all cemeteries within Diocese

All of these records must be kept up to date, in order to provide to the Cemeteries regulator upon request.

## 4.4 Annual Reporting

Each year, the Cemetery operator must report on the activities of all cemeteries throughout that year. An annual Activity Report must be submitted to the regulator. This report includes details on interments conducted during that year and active cemeteries run by the Diocese. The Registry will submit this on behalf of the operator.



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### 4.5 Dispute Resolution

#### 4.5.1 Complaints Management

The *Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2022* requires cemetery operators to have complaints management procedures. The Registry will manage complaints centrally. Complaints are to be sent to the Registry at [admin@graftondioocese.org.au](mailto:admin@graftondioocese.org.au).

The Registrar has primary responsibility for responding to complaints. The Registrar (or delegate) will investigate the merits of the complaint with the complainant, the parish, and any other relevant parties.

In dealing with complaints, the Diocese must:

- i. Provide written acknowledgement of receipt of a complaint to the complainant within 7 days after the complaint.
- ii. Give a written response to the complaint to the complainant within 30 days of the date on which complaint was received.
- iii. Information on how to escalate complaints to the regulator
- iv. Hold (both on the Diocese website, and in information provided to consumers by parishes) information about the complaints process, including the information from i., ii. and iii.

#### 4.5.2 Complaints Register

The cemetery operator is required to keep a register of all complaints received. The Registry will keep a register, which must include the following information:

- i. An identification number for the complaint.
- ii. The date the complaint was received.
- iii. The matters raised by the complainant.
- iv. Any interactions with the complainant in connection with the complaint.
- v. The date the Registry gave the complainant a written response to the complaint.
- vi. Whether the complaint was resolved.
- vii. Details of the outcome of the complaint.
- viii. Any other relevant information.



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## **5. REFERENCES**

### **5.1 Relevant Policies of the Diocese**

- i. REG-003 Retention of Records

### **5.2 Relevant Legislation, Regulations, and Standards**

- i. Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013
- ii. Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2022