

# Future of Cemetery Services

## FACTSHEET – 1

### Project Overview

Council is seeking early community input on future of cemetery serviced for the community. We are planning ahead to ensure services continue to meet the needs of a growing and changing community.

Polson Cemetery can provide services for ashes interments and memorial gardens in the longer term, and while there is still space available for traditional burials, the site cannot be expanded further due to its location. Maryborough Cemetery has significant long-term capacity, with enough land available for burials for hundreds of years at current rates.

We're asking:

- ✓ Should we build a new cemetery in Hervey Bay to support long term traditional burial services?
- ✓ Should we utilise the Maryborough Cemetery, which has significant capacity (hundreds of years), or other regional cemeteries?
- ✓ Or are there other options that better suit community values and needs?

This is your opportunity to help shape respectful, fair and sustainable burial and memorial services for our region's future.

### Background Information

Council is responsible for managing cemetery and memorial services across the region, including facilities in Maryborough, Howard, Tiaro, Nikenbah, Munna Creek and Hervey Bay. As the region continues to grow, demand for burial and memorial services is evolving.

Community expectations around end-of-life options are also shifting. There is increasing interest in cremation, natural burials, ashes memorialisation, and environmentally sustainable practices, alongside traditional burial. Council recognises that these services are deeply personal and often connected to cultural, spiritual, and family traditions, making it essential to approach future planning with sensitivity, transparency, and respect.

Given the complexity of planning new cemetery infrastructure, Council is seeking **early community input** to better understand local needs, values, and preferences. This engagement process will help guide decisions about whether to invest in new cemetery facilities, enhance existing services, or explore alternative options for memorialisation across the Fraser Coast region.

## Current Cemetery Services

Council manages a number of cemeteries across the Fraser Coast, including:

- Polson Cemetery (Hervey Bay)
- Maryborough Cemetery
- Nikenbah Natural Cemetery (natural burials)
- Howard Cemetery
- Tiaro Cemetery
- Munna Creek Cemetery

Cemetery Location	Traditional Burials	Ashes Interments (Walled)	Ashes Memorialisation (Gardens)	Natural Burials
Howard Cemetery	✓	✓	✗	✗
Maryborough Cemetery	✓	✓	✓	✗
Polson Cemetery and Columbarium	✓	✓	✓	✗
Tiaro Cemetery and Columbarium	✓	✓	✗	✗
Munna Creek Cemetery	✓	✓	✓	✗
Nikenbah Natural Cemetery	✗	✗	✗	✓

Please note – Council also manages Deborah Cemetery (Netherby) and Nikenbah Cemetery – these cemeteries are limited to special circumstances only – for burials.

On average, 220 burials take place across the region each year, with around 100 in Hervey Bay and 120 in Maryborough.

### Why can't Council expand Polson Cemetery, & will it still be available for future use?

Polson Cemetery cannot be expanded due to surrounding land use, environmental factors, and physical site constraints. However, it will continue to offer memorialisation and ashes interments for the long term—well into the next 100 years. While there is still burial space available, Council is planning early to ensure future needs are met.

## Understanding the Costs

Planning a new cemetery is a significant investment and requires consideration of financial impacts:

- **Estimated \$8 million in upfront costs**, including land purchase, planning, infrastructure, landscaping, and facilities.
- **\$157,200 in annual operating costs**, including maintenance and staffing.
- **\$285,000 in average annual revenue** from burial-related services (e.g. plots, reservations, plaques).
- **63-year payback period**, meaning it would take 60 years to recover the upfront investment through fees.

These costs would be in addition to the ongoing maintenance of existing facilities. Council is exploring whether this investment is feasible and in line with community priorities—or whether

it would be more sustainable to use existing regional facilities. The future of our cemetery and memorial services must consider both our personal values and beliefs as well as financial costs and sustainability.

## Exploring the Options

Council wants to explore a number of options with the community:

1. **Build a new local cemetery in Hervey Bay** to ensure local access for burial services and sites.
2. **Expand and improve access to existing cemeteries** like Maryborough, which has long-term capacity.
3. **Expand other memorial options** like, natural burials, memorial gardens or ashes interment.
4. **Explore options for private providers** to deliver new cemetery services
5. **Adopt a blended approach** that reflects the region's diversity and evolving needs

## Key Themes We're Exploring

- Community identity and tradition
- Accessibility and fairness across the region
- Cost and long-term affordability
- Cultural, religious and spiritual needs
- Environment and sustainability
- Alternative options for remembering loved ones

## Why should I be involved?

This is a community conversation – we welcome input from all residents and stakeholders to ensure Council understands the community's expectations, preferences and values.

## How can I have my say?

You can participate by:

- ✓ Completing the online survey
- ✓ Visiting a community drop-in session
- ✓ Accessing information and tools on the Engagement Hub:  
[frasercoast.engagementhub.com.au/cemetery-services](https://frasercoast.engagementhub.com.au/cemetery-services)

### Who do I contact?

Should residents wish to discuss the project with Council staff please contact?

### Community Development & Engagement

(enquiries relating to the engagement, incl. stakeholder sessions, surveys or engagement website)

- [community@frasercoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:community@frasercoast.qld.gov.au)
- 1300 79 49 29

### Strategy and Sustainability

(enquiries relating technical or background information)

- [strategysustainability@frasercoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:strategysustainability@frasercoast.qld.gov.au)
- 1300 79 49 29

## Engagement period:

**23 June – 21 July 2025**