



# DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL CEMETERY STRATEGY 2011-2030



September 2011

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The Devonport City Council Cemetery Management Strategy and Mersey Vale Memorial Park (MVMP) Master Plan have been developed to examine current service provisions, management procedures and consider options for the future provision of cemetery services. Thus acknowledging the practical requirements of planning, budgeting, maintenance and future development are inextricably linked to the thoughtful and caring facilitation of deeply emotional events in the lives of residents and rate payers.

Six cemeteries exist across the city; Council does not own or manage all of these sites, however each presents different management issues which need to be considered. Only Mersey Vale Memorial Park (MVMP) is open for new burials and has 7.5 years left in the site for conventional burial. A growing need to provide future burial options, and concerns raised by the community and industry highlights the significance of the Mersey Vale Memorial Park and the need to plan effectively for the future, and promote and preserve the past.

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 Devonport's cemeteries is recognised; as well as the ongoing expectation of procedural and operational improvements.

In line with the purpose of the Strategy, a number of conclusions have been drawn and subsequent recommendations made; to provide a clear and consistent direction for the planning, management and operation of the cemeteries throughout the City of Devonport. 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;
- retention of key characteristics of the cemeteries within Devonport;
- future demands on the provision of cemeteries; and
- affordability.



The following key recommendations have been identified for Councils consideration:

1. Allocate capital and operational funds towards the implementation of the Devonport City Council Cemetery Management Strategy and 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 and any other acceptable alternative identified;
4. Meet the diverse burial needs of residents, ratepayers visitors and stakeholders;
5. Improve the range and distribution of public information on cemetery planning, development and operation through the establishment of appropriate documentation, a communication strategy and ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders;
6. Recognise the heritage value and conservation management of its cemeteries through specific site assessments and conservation plans;
7. Actively seek funding to implement conservation outcomes and promotion;
8. Promote the heritage significance of specific sites through interpretive signage, maps, brochures and online information;
9. Engage the community in meaningful activities through establishing the Friends of the Cemetery;
10. Improve the existing and future amenity of all cemeteries;
11. Establish a range of clear and concise policies, procedures and service levels for the management and operation of Devonport Cemeteries.



## 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Devonport Cemetery Management Strategy is to examine Devonport cemeteries with a holistic approach and formulate a strategic direction which will serve the economic, social, environmental and cultural/historical needs of the City into the future. The initial intent was for the development of a master plan for the Mersey Vale Memorial Park, however, the scope was broadened to include all Devonport City Cemeteries owned and operated by the Council as endorsed by the Council Cemetery Working Group.

Key outputs of the strategy include;

1. The examination of current service provision and management procedures, identification of opportunities for operational improvement and recommendations;
2. Identification and integration of all Devonport cemeteries into one strategic document;
3. Consideration of options for the future provision of cemetery facilities and services, inclusive of the identification of suitable land for development of cemetery facilities and burial options to meet future demand;
4. Development of a master plan for the Mersey Vale Memorial Park(MVMP), to identify short, medium and long term design, maintenance and operational options based upon community and industry trends and need;
5. Development of an operational action plan to implement identified improvements and enhancement;
6. Development of service levels for ongoing maintenance;
7. Development of policy and procedures in accordance with Australian standards and relevant legislation.

The Strategy defines Councils role as a provider, operator and cemetery manager, from initial planning to day to day running of cemeteries within Devonport boundaries.



## 1.1 Policy Context

In June 2009, Council adopted the Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030. The Plan was developed with community involvement, and led to the identification of the following long term goals:

- 1 Living lightly on our environment
- 2 Building a unique city
- 3 Growing a vibrant economy
- 4 Building quality life
- 5 Practicing excellent local government

Cemetery facilities have a role to play in meeting these long term goals as they are often the most enduring link to a community's past because overtime they do not undergo as much change as the rest of the urban landscape. At the same time, they are complex cultural landscapes and a personal place for people to remember their loved ones.

Monuments, structures, and funerary practices reflect historically divergent economic and social differences within a community. Many local cemeteries often contain the graves of the most influential people of the community, as well as the least powerful, represented in "pauper graves", which is a discontinued practice today.

Council's Strategic Plan identified a need to better manage and plan its cemeteries.



To ensure community and industry trends and needs are represented Council resolved (Res 353/09) to form a working group to oversee the development and implementation of this Strategy. Membership of the Working Group includes elected members Aldermen Bill Wilson (Chair), Brian Cole and Justine Keay; various relevant Council Staff participate on the Working Group. The Strategy has been developed by staff of Devonport City Council.

The Strategy identifies a number of key issues identified through analysis of the existing management of cemeteries. A key direction of the Cemetery Management Strategy is the development of a Master Plan for the Mersey Vale Memorial Park (MVMP). 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.

## 2. Overview of Devonport

Devonport is a City with a population in excess of 25,000 people and is situated in the centre of Tasmania's North Coast. Population projections prepared by Essential Economics indicate that the population of Devonport is forecast to continue to experience modest growth of 0.4% per annum between 2006 and 2021. Devonport is the central hub of northern Tasmania, providing services for the residents of the immediate area and surrounding regions. Devonport is a focus of tourist activity, with the Spirit of Tasmania ferries linking the city to Melbourne.

Devonport's industry is focussed on a number of key sectors comprising retail trade, manufacturing, health and community services, property and business services and education. Given Devonport's geographical location and natural resources, other important sectors are agriculture, transport, logistics and tourism.

Devonport City Council's Vision, as articulated in Devonport's Strategic Plan 2009-2030 is for Devonport to be a thriving and welcoming regional City living lightly by river and sea.



- **Strong, thriving and welcoming regional City** – Devonport is a regional leader with a strong economy. It is a great place to live, work and play.
- **Valuing the past, caring for the present, embracing the future** – We have been shaped by a rich cultural heritage and enthusiastically embrace the challenges and future opportunities.
- **Engaging with the world** – We have an outward focus and send quality products and experiences to the world. We welcome all people to share the beautiful City and all it offers.
- **Living lightly by river and sea** – We live lightly on our valued and natural environment of clean rivers, waterways, beaches, rich agricultural land and coastal landscapes so future generations can also enjoy this special place.

### 3. Principles and Objectives

The following principles have been identified to guide the development of the strategy. 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. Outcomes

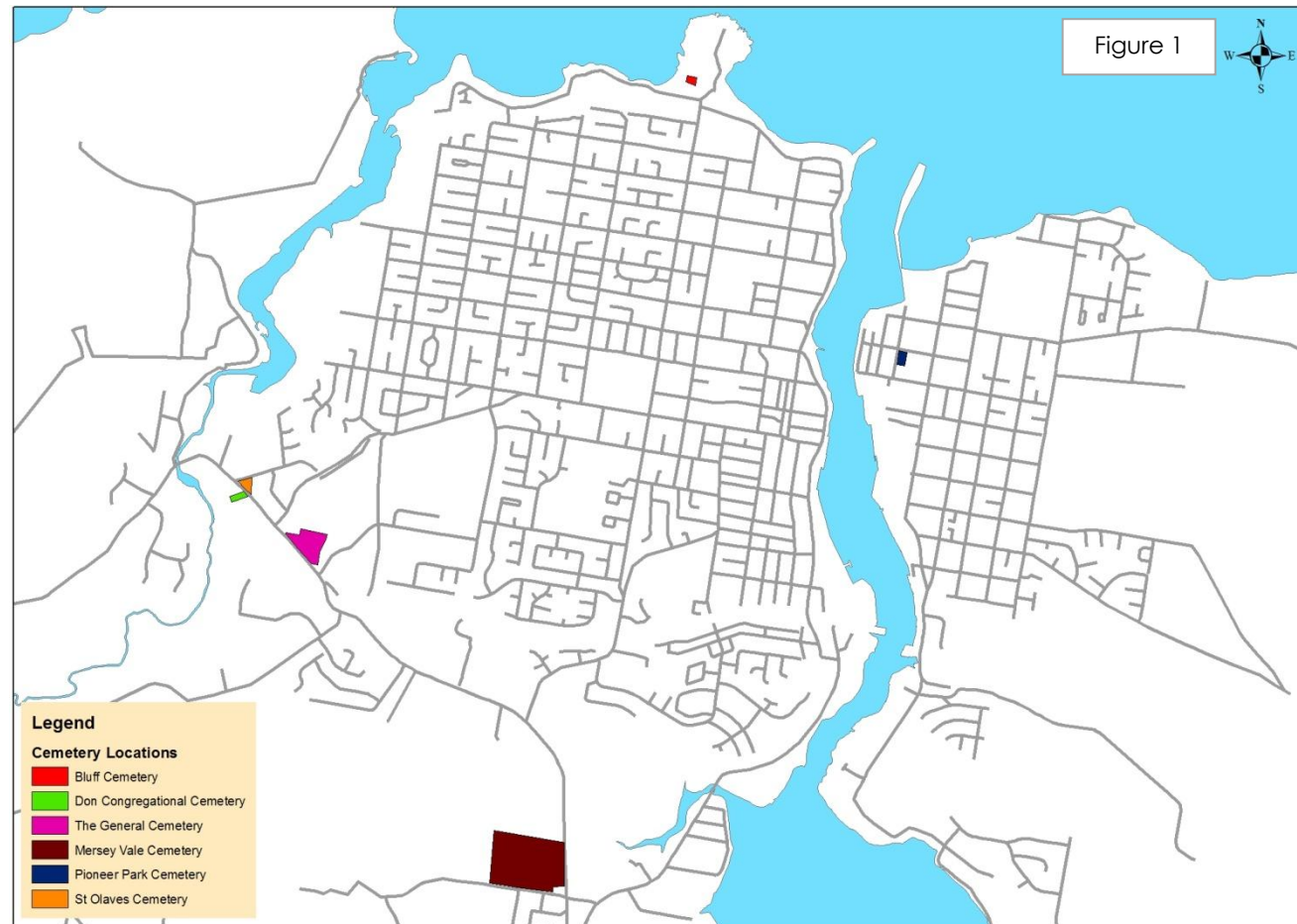
After implementation of the Cemetery Management Strategy and development of the MVMP Master Plan, the following outcomes will describe the future of Devonport Cemeteries.

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 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

## 4.1 Study area

The study area for the Devonport Cemetery Strategy includes three cemeteries owned and operated by Devonport City Council (*Old Don Congregational Cemetery, The General Cemetery and Mersey Vale Memorial Park*), one maintained and owned by the Heritage Trustee of the Diocese of Tasmania (*St Olave's Anglican Cemetery*), one owned by the Heritage Trustee of the Diocese of Tasmania and maintained by Devonport City Council (*Pioneer Park Cemetery*) and one maintained by Devonport City Council located on Crown Land at the Mersey Bluff Headland (shown in figure 1).



## 4.2 Cemetery history and site analysis

This section identifies the history and examines each cemetery under the care, control and management of the Devonport City Council. Site specific issues are identified and examined.

- Devonport Mersey Bluff Pioneer Cemetery
- East Devonport – Pioneer Park Cemetery inclusive of the old Wesleyan Burial Ground also known as the Public Cemetery, Municipal Cemetery, and the General Cemetery.
- The General Cemetery (also known as the Devonport Cemetery)
- Old Don Congregational Cemetery
- St Olave's Anglican Cemetery
- Mersey Vale Memorial Park included in Mersey Vale Master Plan

The cemeteries below are not included in the Devonport City Council Cemetery Strategy, however, may be of interest to residents, historians and individuals researching genealogy in the area.

- Forth Pioneer Anglican Cemetery
- Forth Congregational Cemetery
- Forth Methodist Wesleyan Cemetery
- Kindred Cemetery
- Lillico Beach Cemetery
- St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Forth
- Our Lady of Lourdes, the original resting place of former Prime Minister Lyons, Devonport. Final resting place Mersey Vale Lawn Cemetery.

Additional information regarding the above cemeteries can be found at <http://tascoastalcemeteries.com/cemtries.html>.

The Tasmanian Family History Society, Mersey Branch has produced two excellent resources, (In Loving Memory Series – The General Cemetery, Devonport and A Cemetery that Was – Devonport Mersey Bluff Pioneer Cemetery) and has given permission for information from these publications to be reproduced in the Devonport City Council Cemetery Strategy. Copies of these publications are available for purchase at the Devonport City Council Customer Service Centre in Best Street, Devonport or by writing to the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc – Mersey Branch at PO Box 267,



#### 4.2.1 Devonport Mersey Bluff Pioneer Cemetery

<b>Status</b>	Closed	<p><b>Identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken and deteriorating head stones</li> <li>• Existing stones have been moved from their original location</li> <li>• Poor presentation of site including a lack of appropriate fencing and landscaping</li> <li>• No preservation or protection program</li> <li>• No interpretive signage or memorial to signify the past pioneers</li> <li>• No linkages to other places of interest on the Bluff headland</li> <li>• The Cemetery is included in the Mersey Bluff Urban Design Framework</li> </ul>
<b>Local/State/National Significance</b>	Local significance	
<b>Title details/lot No. Site Characteristics</b>	Located at the Mersey Bluff Headland	
<b>Address</b>	Mersey Bluff, Devonport	
<b>Land Area Public open Space classification</b>	Formal Parkland	
<b>Cemetery type</b>	Monumental	
<b>First recorded burial</b>	October 25 1887 - Mr. Thomas Lloyd	
<b>No. of recorded burials</b>	Over 450 known, some headstones are missing due to deterioration	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	Nil	
<b>Denominations</b>	Non denominational	

#### Historic and heritage value - Mersey Bluff Cemetery - Devonport

"In 1887 the Council purchased 13 acres of land on the corner of what is now Bluff Road and Coles Beach Road (formerly Laycocks Road). Prior to this the dead were ferried across the river to be interred at East Devonport or conveyed to the Congregational Cemetery Church at the Don. *It would appear that one of the first burials at the new cemetery was on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1887 of a Mr. Thomas Lloyd.*

The facility serviced the needs of Formby (Devonport) residents, including many early pioneers of Devonport whom are buried there along with some who have state wide significance, notable examples being:

- George Renison Bell (discovered tin mine at Zeehan);
- John Jacques (first lighthouse keeper of the Bluff Lighthouse);
- Beaumont Laycock (initiated the cemetery construction and an Overseer of Council);

- Foster Leek (proprietor of the iconic Foster Leek Tea Rooms and Museum);
- John Luck, David Cocker, Caleb Hillier and Robert Masterman – who were pioneer businessmen and builders;
- Wife and son of Bartholomew W. Thomas –pioneer farmer;
- George Williams and Harry Wood – Boat builders;
- Mrs Michael Lyons the mother of the former PRIME Minister Lyons.

The Cemetery became full around the time of the First World War and was closed in 1922, other than for burials in family plots. Due to ongoing degradation and maintenance issues, the Cemetery was converted to parkland c1963 and the remaining headstones were relocated together in one corner.

It is unclear whether burials took place throughout the full extent of the original cemetery reserve which extended as far as Eugene Street in the south and to William Street in the east, however, current maps only show a small burial ground, although there are records that indicate several hundred burials there.

*“By 1962 the Bluff Cemetery had become neglected with vandalism and grazing cattle, many of the headstones were destroyed or in a fragile state. In 1964 or 1965 Council placed advertisements in The Advocate advising that it was intending to demolish the cemetery and remove monuments and tombstones and have the area laid out as a park. The site was cleared in 1966, no record of removal of headstones is recorded and their fate (no record of removal of headstones is recorded) remains a mystery.” (Publication, 2003)*

#### 4.2.2 East Devonport – Pioneer Park

<b>Status</b>	Closed	<p><b>Identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilisation of some stones required</li> <li>• Increased risk to stones which are laid on their back</li> <li>• Front hedge minimizes sense of open space</li> <li>• No interpretive signage</li> <li>• No protection or preservation program</li> <li>• Well maintained parklands</li> </ul>
<b>Local/state/national significance</b>	Local significance	
<b>Title details/lot No. Site Characteristics</b>		
<b>Address</b>	17 Thomas Street, East Devonport	
<b>Land Area Public open Space classification</b>	Sub Regional, Family/Social/Recreational	
<b>Cemetery type</b>	Monumental	
<b>First recorded burial</b>	1857 – Mr Isaac Stevens	
<b>No. of recorded burials</b>	Difficult to ascertain due to missing and deterioration of headstones	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	Nil	
<b>Denominations/parish</b>	Heritage Trustees of the Diocese of Tasmania	

#### Historic and heritage value – Pioneer Park- East Devonport

There are two known cemeteries, which were originally established in Pioneer Park, the above table relates to the remaining headstones located in the parkland. The two cemeteries being Church of England Cemetery, known as 'Torquay-God's acre' (North West Post, 1888) and Wesleyan Cemetery located along Wright Street. In 1965 these sites were considered an eyesore and the town council decreed that something needed to be done. (North West Post, 1887) Due to vandalism and neglect, many headstones were damaged and smashed, and the sites were bulldozed and converted to parkland. The remaining headstones which were salvaged are currently located at the corner of Church and Drew Streets, East Devonport. The earliest remaining headstone is dated 1857 and is that of Isaac Stevens, who built Torquay's first jetty, hotel and many cottages in Pardoe and Thomas Streets. The headstones which escaped the bulldozer's blade were re-erected with no regard for previous family grouping.

The East Devonport Cemetery headstones cannot be effectively described as a cemetery even though they may be within their original site. They have become a cultural feature in one corner of the open park but remain the property of the Church to which they belong. The number of burials exceeds the number of surviving headstones and it is fortunate that two burial registers cover the interments.

The East Devonport Pioneer Park Cemetery, (also known as East Devonport Cemetery and Church of England Cemetery) is located next to St Paul's Church of England, which was built in 1876 and opened for services in July 1879. At the time of building the City was divided into two townships one being Formby and the other Torquay. The Cemetery became disused and was offered to Council for development into a reserve by St Pauls and All Saints Parish Council on 25 August 1969.

The names of those interred in the East Devonport Pioneer Park Cemetery are inscribed in gold lettering on polished timber and placed in St Pauls Church of England. A commemorative cairn to honour the pioneers for the area is located within the nearby park area. A concise list of those buried in the original cemetery is available upon request.

### 4.2.3 The General Cemetery

<b>Status</b>	Closed to further burials except under existing exclusive burial rights	<p><b>Identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original layout needs to be maintained</li> <li>• Early deterioration of some headstones</li> <li>• No interpretive, directional signage or burial information on site</li> <li>• Site lacks privacy from adjacent industrial properties</li> <li>• Entrance of site requires enhancement</li> <li>• Art Gallery Storage Facility to be developed adjacent to site</li> </ul>
<b>Local/state/national significance</b>	Local significance	
<b>Title details/lot No.</b>		
<b>Address</b>	Stony Rise Road, Devonport	
<b>Land Area</b>	Sub Regional, Family/Social/Recreational	
<b>Public open Space classification</b>		
<b>Cemetery type</b>	Monumental	
<b>First recorded burial</b>	1922, Lizzie Taylor	
<b>No. of recorded burials</b>	1743 known – Difficult to ascertain due to missing and deterioration of headstones	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	Several	
<b>Denominations/parish</b>		

#### Historic and heritage value - The General Cemetery – Devonport

The town of Devonport, the result of the amalgamation of the twin towns of Formby and Torquay in 1890 did not have a major cemetery until the opening of the “New General Cemetery” late in the year 1922. Prior to this the dead were interred in one of the three small Torquay burial grounds; the Bluff Cemetery at the Mersey Bluff or at either of the two small cemeteries at the Don. Burials commenced at the Cemetery which was on the outskirts of the town, late in 1922, the first being Lizzie Taylor. (Publication T. F.-D., 2001)

#### Site Characteristics- The General Cemetery – Devonport

This Cemetery is located in the City’s outer precinct, alongside the road which operated as the main highway along the coast until the early seventies. It is the largest of the three cemeteries along this road and is within a few hundred metres of St. Olave’s and the Congregational Cemetery.

The 2.8 hectare site has tree lined boundaries on Stony Rise Road and Lawrence Drive. The north and east boundaries are adjacent to a mix of bushland reserve and industrial properties with no foliage on the fence lines to the industrial blocks, including Council’s Operations Centre.

The site is on an east facing incline with the entry at the elevated eastern boundary off Lawrence Drive.



#### 4.2.4 St Olave's Anglican Cemetery

<b>Status</b>	Closed to further burials except under existing exclusive burial rights	<p><b>Identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No interpretive signage</li> <li>• Little to no landscaping</li> </ul>
<b>Local/state/national significance</b>	Permanently Registered/Tasmanian Heritage Register	
<b>Title details/lot No. Heritage Register Ref</b>	Title 124726/2 Property Id 6347515 Title 124726/1 Property Id 6347515	
<b>Address</b>	200 Stony Rise Road Devonport	
<b>Land Area</b>		
<b>Public open Space classification</b>	Sub Regional, Family/Social/Recreational	
<b>Cemetery type</b>	Monumental	
<b>First recorded burial</b>	1902, Irene Cole	
<b>No. of recorded burials</b>	Unknown – Difficult to ascertain due to missing and deterioration of headstones	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	None	
<b>Denominations/parish</b>	Heritage Trustees of the Diocese of Tasmania	

#### Historic and heritage value - St Olaves Anglican Cemetery – Devonport

The building is a significant element in the urban streetscape and includes a small cemetery from the early 1900s. St Olave's Anglican Church is of historic cultural heritage significance because of its association with the general community as a religious and townscape landmark and its ability to demonstrate the principle characteristics of a weatherboard federation carpenter gothic church building. The church is a small weatherboard building on a stone foundation, with a low-pitched gabled roof, and has been restored. It remains in fine condition with some headstones still remaining in the surrounding burial ground.

The first known burial was Irene Cole, 10th January 1902, age 9 months. The Anglican Church was built in 1877 in the centre of the old settlement and was later relocated, by a team of bullocks, to its present location in 1901. At some time in the early 1900 it became known as St Olave's Church and became part of the Devonport Parish.

The ground around the church was immediately used for a burial ground. In 1960 a decision was made by the Devonport Parish to restore the building. The church is a small weatherboard building on a stone foundation, with a low-pitched gabled roof, and has been restored. It remains in fine condition with some headstones still remaining in the surrounding burial ground.

### Site Characteristics - St Olaves Anglican Cemetery – Devonport

This is the smallest of three cemeteries located in the city's outer precinct, alongside the road which operated as the main highway along the Coast until the early seventies.

St Olaves Cemetery is located within the sloping grounds of the small St Olaves church on the south eastern corner of Stony Rise Road and Lapthorne Close. It is barely 50 metres away from the Old Don Congregational Cemetery across the road on Stony Rise Road and occupies a nominal area of 280m<sup>2</sup> land.

The Cemetery accommodates a small number of graves on the eastern side of the church building beneath a grove of mature trees. The trunks of some of the trees press against the stone work of the memorials.

Graves are quite old and laid out in a regular pattern on the lawn. Maintained by the Anglican Church, the site has few embellishments aside from a gravel driveway and car park which accommodates church building users and visitors to the site.

Properties on the road to the south have been developed in recent years for light industrial and warehouse establishment while the block adjacent is currently undeveloped. Domestic dwellings border the property to the east.



#### 4.2.5 Congregational Cemetery/Don Cemetery – Devonport

<b>Status</b>	Closed to further burials except under existing exclusive burial rights.	<p><b>Identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continues to be visited by people paying respects</li> <li>• Monuments of different styles, original layout remains at risk of being damaged</li> <li>• Instability of some monuments</li> <li>• Many examples of wrought and cast iron work</li> <li>• Fences and railing need to be realigned to ensure they survive along with the headstone</li> <li>• Access quite good – one central entrance</li> <li>• No planned conservation or preservation work undertaken</li> <li>• Risk of increased vandalism if site left looking disused</li> <li>• No interpretive signage</li> <li>• Little to no landscaping</li> <li>• No fencing</li> <li>• Character of place at risk of being eroded due to lack of conservation</li> </ul>
<b>Local/state/national significance</b>	Permanently Registered/Tasmanian Heritage Register	
<b>Title details/lot No. Heritage Register</b>	Registered site, ref: R8548, FILE 10-66-80HC 211091/1 Property ID 6388640	
<b>Address</b>	207 Stony Rise Road Devonport	
<b>Land Area</b>		
<b>Public open Space classification</b>	Sub Regional, Family/Social/Recreational	
<b>Cemetery type</b>	Monumental	
<b>First recorded burial</b>	17 October 1865, Elizabeth June and Jane Hodgkiss	
<b>No. of recorded burials</b>	Unknown - Difficult to ascertain due to missing and deterioration of headstones	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	None	
<b>Denominations/parish</b>	Various	

#### Historic and heritage value - Congregational Cemetery / Don Cemetery – Devonport

The Congregational Cemetery is a small burial ground, with the older headstones dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. The Cemetery is one of the oldest in the State of Tasmania. ((Jeffrey), 2000). At rest in this historical patch of ground are many of the Don Pioneers, many of these men and women were the original pioneers of the City of Devonport and its surrounding district. The Cemetery occupies one acre of land, granted by James Fenton in 1864 and contains many headstones and graves of local significance, for example members of the Henry family, including John Henry CMG, member of Parliament, member of the Australian Federal Convention which framed the Australian Constitution. Henry Carter, a prominent Devonport pioneer and landowner; Senator Alexander Lillico; Stephen Priest, a prolific builder, in Devonport's early history are also buried at the site.

### First Known burial

*I regret having to announce a fatal accident that occurred on Monday, the 17th inst. A Miner's wife named Hodgkiss was coming down to the Don Stores. She lived up the tramway but on the opposite side of the river and had to cross the latter on a tree. She was accompanied by her two children, aged three years and seven months respectively. She appears to have left the youngest while she took the eldest across and it is supposed from the appearance of the tree that she slipped off and both sank to rise no more. The river was searched all day and about 6 o'clock in the evening her body was found, but up to the present time the little girl has not. An inquest was held on Wednesday, before C. Friend Esq. and a jury, Mr. M. Philbrock, foreman and after the examination of witnesses, a verdict of found drowned was returned. Today the funeral took place in the new cemetery, which was used for the first time. A sad and melancholy commencement. (Cemeteries: North West Tasmanian Coastal Cemeteries, 2005)*

*The Examiner Tuesday 25th October 1864*

### Site Characteristics

This Cemetery is one of three located in the City's outer precinct, alongside the road which operated as the main highway along the Coast until the early seventies. The Cemetery has a standard layout of headstones organised in straight lines. Some variety exists in monument form with more elaborate headstones in sandstone and marble, some with elaborate figurative carvings and iron surrounds. Later twentieth century headstones demonstrate the simplification in burial practices with predominance of simple granite headstones with cement surrounds.

The property has a short boundary on Stony Rise road with the longer boundaries bordering with an unimpeded view, an engineering firm on the northwest and an undeveloped but cleared block on the south east. The rear boundary is flanked by trees between the property and the Bass Highway. The .35 hectare (3500m<sup>2</sup>) site has a service road of gravel in the centre for 90% of the block length.

The block rises up from the road to near the centre and falls away towards the rear of the property. There is a cross fall also. Traditional memorial graves line either side of the access road to a maximum depth of 9-13 (nominal) individual sites each side. There are bare patches of grass haphazardly interspersed between the grave sites suggesting that either old memorial have been allowed to disintegrate or the site was never filled to capacity.

The maintenance associated with memorials in this Cemetery ranges from fair to poor. Vandalism appears to be occasional.

## 4.2.6. Mersey Vale Memorial Park

<b>Status</b>	Open for burial and ash interments	<p><b>Identified Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife continually access the site destroying flowers</li> <li>• Past practice of placing plaques within the excavation zone results in added maintenance lifting sunken stones</li> <li>• Power line easement restrictions</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>• 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>• Current land to be expended in 7.5 years for conventional burial</li> <li>• Lack of ash interment options</li> <li>• Vandalism and security at children's cemetery</li> </ul>
<b>Local/State/National Significance</b>	National significance ( <i>Former Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons grave located at the site</i> )	
<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 plaques	
<b>No. of reservations</b>	568 reservations	
<b>Denominations</b>	Various	

## Historic and heritage value

*Joseph and Dame Enid Lyons' grave at Mersey Vale Memorial Park is a simple memorial site created in 1986, thirty years after the death of Joe Lyons. At the request of his wife, Joe Lyons' remains were re-located from our Lady of Lourdes churchyard in Devonport. The burial place for Joseph Lyons, former teacher, Tasmanian Treasurer, Premier of Tasmania and Prime Minister of Australia who died in office in 1939. His wife, Dame Enid Lyons, former trainee teacher, mother of eleven children, went on to become the first female member of the House of Representatives and first woman in a Federal Cabinet. From 1916 the couple lived with their extended family at Home Hill in Devonport; property was donated to the Devonport City Council and National Trust of Tasmania before Dame Enid's death in 1981. (Tasmanian Heritage Council, 2011)*

**(Tasmania Heritage Register Entry, Tasmanian Heritage Council, Jan 2011)**



## 5. Burial space, limitations and options

The Mersey Vale Memorial Park (MVMP) is the only Devonport Cemetery where new burials can occur, unless a reservation at the General Cemetery. There is a pressing need to increase the burial spaces at the MVMP. Opportunities exist to extend the life of the MVMP through adopting alternative ash interments and extension of the site in coming years.

A review of burial statistics for the past 25 years, indicate that the number of people who pass on each year has increased, however, the number of burials at the MVMP has declined. This indicates more people are being cremated and choosing an alternative final resting place, however, decreased ash interments have identified inadequate supply of ash interment and memorial options to address the changing trend and demand.

### 5.1 Burial space and options

The existing lawn area of the MVMP will be expended by 2016 with a requirement to identify future land for development. A geotechnical report undertaken as part of the planning process identified significant areas of rock shelf in the upper undeveloped section of the site. Ongoing development of the existing bushland areas will have to occur at least two years in advance to allow construction of roads and drainage, consolidation of plantings and establishment of car parking and amenities. The Mersey Vale Memorial Park Master Plan identifies and examines issues and trends impacting on the operation and strategic direction for effective planning, management and operation of the facility. The specific areas for examination include:

1. Burial space limitations and opportunities;
2. Demographic analysis and population growth;
3. Risk management;
4. Public information development and dissemination;
5. Capital development and maintenance;
6. Devonport City Council cemetery resourcing;
7. Policy and procedures.

Furthermore, a conceptual Master Plan has been developed for the MVMP based upon identified need and demand.



## 6. Legislative Requirements

Cemeteries in Tasmania are subject to State Legislation: Burial and Cremation Act 2002. This Act makes provision for the establishment and management of crematoria and cemeteries, to provide for, and regulate, the handling and storage of human remains, to amend certain Acts and to repeal the Cremation Act 1934.

In addition, each council is enabled under the Local Government Act 1993 to make a by-law with respect to cemeteries. A cemeteries by-law enables a council to regulate and control the management of cemeteries on land owned by, or under the control of, the council.

The interrelationship of legislative and operational requirements is complex. All policy and procedures will be required to be clear and concise to be compliant with legislation and regulations and transparent to staff, customers and external agents.

## 7. Heritage and Conservation of Cemeteries



The Local Government Act 1993 does not include any specific cemetery legislation. As such the conservation and heritage management of cemeteries is covered by a range of legislations, charters and guidelines developed by the Tasmanian Heritage Council.

In terms of heritage and conservation there are a number of Australian Standards and Conservation Charters which apply to the management of cemeteries including (2) relevant strategic frameworks:

1. Burra Charter – provides standards and processes relevant to the conservation of the cultural values of historic places.
2. Natural Heritage Charter – provides process and standards for managing native vegetation and the natural environment.



The Tasmanian Heritage Council provides universal guide for the implementation of heritage assessment and the conservation management of local cemeteries. In any cemetery conservation the Tasmanian Heritage Council recommends, that all features of the cemetery both cultural and natural, must be taken into consideration.

The significance of a cemetery or grave site needs to be identified as early as possible; work undertaken should be done by appropriate professionals. Restoration work is an expensive exercise; it is recommended that Council seek additional funding to restore and re-instate sites.

The cemetery has research value as an index to the town's social and religious history, and for its layers of biographical information. Information yielded may include local and regional burial practices, aspects of a community's religious affiliations, economics and population statistic, changes in health and lifestyle changes or values and tastes from the late twentieth century.

A place with historic heritage significance in Tasmania may be entered in one of five statutory lists or registers, according to its level of significance. These five lists are common in all Australian states and territories, and have replaced the former Australian Register of the National Estate (RNE) and National Trust classifications.

Not all places that are of heritage significance may be listed or registered. This does not mean the place is not important. It's still good to ensure that it is managed in a way that protects its heritage values and fabric. Regardless of whether or not a place is listed, if it has character, charm and history it may still be seen as being important to an individual, a community or Tasmania as a whole.

The Congregational cemetery at 207 Stony Rise Road (THC 9844) and St Olave's Anglican Church and Cemetery (THC 1358) have been permanently registered and Pioneer Park Cemetery has been nominated for registration on the Tasmanian Heritage Council register.

Council commissioned a report in May 2006 to determine the current state of repair of 3 of the older cemeteries. The report provided advice on future protection and preservation requirements. The Mersey Bluff Cemetery has been studied in detail, stone by stone, while others, Devonport East and Old Don have been given a cursory survey to identify general needs.

This report will assist in developing future service levels for the protection, preservation, presentation and maintenance of historical sites.

There is a growing interest by the public in family and community history, this represents an opportunity to establish a local group of residents in the interpretation, promotion, history tours and up keep of local sites.

## 8. Implementation

The Strategy is a holistic approach to the management of cemeteries across the municipality, and requires a cross organisational approach internally. For effective implementation of the recommendations and outcomes of the Devonport City Council Cemetery Strategy, an internal coordination group will work towards delivering the action plan of the Strategy aligned to operational planning and constraints.

## 9. Bibliography

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## 10. Devonport City Council Cemetery Strategy Action Plan

The action plan describes the steps that need to be taken to fulfil the identified objectives of the Devonport City Council Cemetery Strategy; 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
Sustainable long term demand is identified and planned for in Council's long term 5 year Capital program and asset management plans	Investigate and identify available land to meet future demand/supply	Council	Short term	A-OPEX
	Explore potential partnerships with neighbouring councils and industry	Internal working group	Short term	A-OPEX
	Measure future suitable sites including environmental impact (geotechnical)	Internal working group	Short term	F-OPEX
	Allocate funds towards future development options	Council	Ongoing	F-OPEX
	Meet industry standards through policy and procedures	Internal working group	Ongoing	A-OPEX

<b>The Mersey Vale Memorial Park is used to maximise efficiency and effectiveness</b>	Mersey Vale Master Plan is adopted by Council, implemented and resources allocated annually	Council	Short term	A-OPEX & F/A CAPEX
<b>Historical management and access to old cemeteries and information is improved for locals, tourists and interstate visitors</b>	Develop conservation plans and via significance assessments inform interpretive signage for Devonport Historical cemeteries	City Infrastructure	Short Term	F-OPEX
	Prioritise conservation plans and source external funding	City Infrastructure	Medium Term	F-OPEX
	Develop Master plans for each site.	City Infrastructure	Medium Term	A-OPEX
	Seek advice from specialist conservators for headstones which require emergency stabilisation or conservation	Operations	Ongoing	A-OPEX
	Develop interpretive signage to promote and direct visitors to sites of local significance	Internal working group	Medium term	F-OPEX and external funding
	Relocate the Mersey Bluff headstones on site, fence and install interpretive signage	City Infrastructure	Medium Term	F-OPEX and external grant funding
	Develop maintenance service levels for all Devonport Historical cemeteries	Operations	Short Term	A-OPEX
	Implement services levels	Operations	Ongoing	A-OPEX
	Explore partnerships with Historical Societies to maintain and update records of burial	Community Partnerships	Medium Term	A-OPEX
	Involve the community and establish Friends of the Cemetery	Sustainable Communities	Medium Term	A-OPEX
	Fulfil requirements to maintain and preserve historic grave, including updated documentation of standards and procedures.	Operations	As required	A-OPEX
	Maintain Prime Minister Joseph Lyons Grave in accordance with guidelines developed by the Tasmanian Heritage Council	Operations	Ongoing	A-OPEX
<b>A high standard of customer service is delivered</b>	Deliver services in line with Council Customer Services Charter	Whole of Council	Ongoing	A-OPEX
<b>Up to date and relevant</b>	Maintain Council website with information	Internal	Ongoing	A-OPEX

information regarding cemeteries is readily available and accessible in a range sources and formats	regarding Devonport Cemeteries	working group		
	Develop promotional material to promote all cemeteries in Devonport	Customers and Community	Short term	A-OPEX
	Investigate funding for developing a Heritage trail which includes Devonport Historical Cemeteries	Customers and Community	Medium term	A-OPEX
	Make available published resources about Devonport Cemeteries developed by the Historical Society	Customer Services	Ongoing	A-OPEX
	Identify other local people of significance and promote graves	Friends of the Cemetery, School group, University Internship	Ongoing	A-OPEX