

THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES) POLICY ON CEMETERIES

PREAMBLE

The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) is a non-government community organisation. It was established in New South Wales in 1945 and in 1960 its work was formally recognised by the New South Wales Government when the National Trust (the Trust) was incorporated by an Act of Parliament. The Trust has prepared this Policy for the Conservation of New South Wales Cemeteries as part of its work in fulfilling its objective of 'protecting and preserving for the benefit of the public generally' an important part of the state of New South Wales. The Trust commenced listing cemeteries on its Register in 1946 and has largely completed a survey of NSW and maintains a sites database from which approximately 700 cemeteries have been listed on the Trust Register.

This policy paper deals only with burials in New South Wales which are related to European settlement, including general cemeteries, churchyards, private graveyards and lone burials. All of these are included in the term 'cemetery'. This policy paper and the work of the National Trust does not cover aboriginal burials except where these occur within European cemeteries. This Policy distils the *National Trust of Australia (NSW) Policy Paper on Cemeteriesⁱ* (August 1987, as amended). The Trust continues to uphold the basic values and policies contained within this earlier Policy document.

POLICY

1. The National Trust supports and promotes the use of the *ICOMOS Burra Charterⁱⁱ* in relation to the conservation of cemeteries. In any cemetery conservation or maintenance programme, the Trust considers that all features of the existing fabric of the cemetery must be taken into consideration. The Trust strongly endorses the concept that proper conservation plans should be prepared for cemeteries of heritage significance.
2. The National Trust will act in accordance with the *Australian Natural Heritage Charterⁱⁱⁱ* which is based on an ethos of respect for natural heritage where it exists in cemeteries and burial grounds and acknowledges four fundamental principles, defined in the Charter - intergenerational equity, existence value, uncertainty and precaution. The Precautionary Principle is now enshrined in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999.
3. The National Trust recognises the importance of planning for the ongoing conservation, management and maintenance of cemeteries throughout NSW. The Trust will aim to educate and advise the wider community on the proper care and management of cemeteries and burial grounds across NSW. The Trust has prepared the *Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation^{iv}* which is based on sound conservation principles for this purpose.
4. The National Trust believes that in most instances the authority responsible for the cemetery has an obligation to carry out maintenance in a way which prevents damage or loss of significant elements of the cemetery. Funding for cemetery repair projects which are not part of the normal cemetery maintenance programme is regarded by the Trust as the joint responsibility of the relevant authority, public funds and the relatives of the deceased. The Trust generally supports appeals for approved cemetery conservation projects that are carried out in accordance with accepted conservation principles and an appropriate management plan.
5. The National Trust will maintain a database of burial grounds and continue to list on its Register significant cemeteries. The Trust will also oppose activities and development proposals located in the vicinity of or within cemeteries in NSW that would adversely affect a cemetery's significance.

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ⁱ *Cemeteries: A National Trust Policy Paper*, The National Trust of Australia (NSW), August 1987ⁱ

ⁱⁱ ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999

ⁱⁱⁱ *Protecting Natural Heritage – Using the Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2003

^{iv} *Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation*, The National Trust of Australia (NSW), 2nd Edition, 2009