

Douglas Park Memorial Park: Social Impact Assessment

Benima Pty Ltd

Prepared By: Professor Roberta Ryan and Trish Oakley

May 2025

Table of Contents

1	Background to the project	2
1.1	Introduction	2
1.2	Planning Process	4
1.3	Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements	5
1.4	The Site	6
1.5	Douglas Park Village	7
2	Social impact assessment.....	9
2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	SIA Methodology.....	10
2.3	Principles.....	11
2.4	SIA Authors.....	15
3	Sydney's burial land shortage	17
3.1	An overview of burial land shortage in Greater Sydney	17
3.2	Implications for the SIA	23
4	Population growth in the South-West and Illawarra.....	26
4.1	Introduction	26
4.2	South West Sydney Growth area	26
4.3	Illawarra Shoalhaven area.....	28
4.4	Implications for the SIA	29
5	Social Baseline	31
5.1	Introduction	31
5.2	Social locality map.....	31
5.3	Wollondilly Local Government Area	35
5.4	Social infrastructure	39
5.5	Implications for the SIA	39
6	Stakeholder engagement: Faith and industry.....	42
6.1	Introduction	42
6.2	Faith and industry consultation	42
6.3	Outcome of engagement with Faiths and Industry.....	44
7	Engagement: community	46
7.1	Engagement methodology	46
7.2	Summary of engagement findings	47
7.3	Community survey analysis.....	49
7.4	Implications for the proposal	51
8	Mitigating social impacts	52
8.1	Government guidelines.....	52
8.2	Social impacts and benefits and mitigations.....	53
9	Conclusion	62
Appendix 1	Curriculum Vitae.....	64
Appendix 2	Demand for Burial Space by Denomination	67
Appendix 3	Faith Engagement Outcomes	77

Consultant Declaration Form

CONSULTANT DECLARATION

PROJECT DETAILS	
PROJECT NAME	Douglas Park Memorial Park- Concept Plan and Stage 1
Application number	SSD- 68287712
Address of subject land	430-490 Douglas Park Drive, Douglas Park
Lot / DP	Lot 2 in DP 250359.
APPLICANT DETAILS	
Applicant name	Benima Pty Ltd
Applicant address	
REPORT DETAILS	
Name of report this declaration relates	Social Impact Assessment (SIA)
Report reference no.	
Report date	27 May 2025
Company name (inc. ABN / ACN)	Forward-Thinking Pty Ltd
Author name	Professor Roberta Ryan
Author qualifications	BA Hons, B Soc Hons, Grad Dip, Public Policy, PHD Current
Author address	Unit 3006, 1 Kings Cross Road, Darlinghurst NSW 2010
DECLARATION BY CONSULTANT	
Name	Professor Roberta Ryan
Registration no.	
Organisation registered with	Forward-Thinking Pty Ltd
Declaration	The undersigned declares that this Social Impact Assessment (SIA) • has been prepared in accordance with the following policy, guidelines, or legislative requirements: - Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment 2023 • contains all available information relevant to the environmental assessment of the development, activity or infrastructure to which the Engagement Report relates; • does not contain information that is false or misleading; • identifies and addresses the relevant Planning Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) for the project; • identifies and addresses the relevant statutory requirements for the project, including any relevant matters for consideration in environmental planning instruments to which the Engagement Report relates; • contains a consolidated summary of the proposed or necessary mitigation measures
Signature 	
Date	27 May 2025

1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

1.1 Introduction

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been prepared by Forward-Thinking Pty Ltd on behalf of Benima Pty Ltd for a combined Concept Plan approval and Stage 1 detailed works for a new multi-denominational cemetery at 430-490 Douglas Park Drive, Douglas Park (Douglas Park Memorial Park - Concept Plan and Stage 1).

The site is located at 430-490 Douglas Park Drive, Douglas Park within the Wollondilly Local Government Area (LGA). The site is irregular in shape with a total size of 16,7940m². It is legally described as Lot 2 in DP 250359. The site is mostly vacant with scattered vegetation and a single, residential dwelling with driveway accessible from Douglas Park Drive. The site comprises two street frontages, to the east is Mitchell Place and to the west is Douglas Park Drive.

This report accompanies a State Significant Development Application that seeks approval for a combined Concept Plan approval and Stage 1 detailed works for a new multi-denominational cemetery. Concept approval is sought for the use and operation of the site as a cemetery with a maximum, staged capacity of up to 37,107 burial plots including a crematorium, chapel, administration building, vaults, remembrance sanctuaries, general site layout and all associated groundworks, roads, parking, pathways, landscaping and ancillary buildings. Refer to Figure 1.

The Stage 1 works comprise the following (refer to Figure 2):

- All preparatory site works including vegetation protection, enhancement and removal, demolition of existing structures, bulk excavation for burial zones, general ground works and utility service augmentation;
- Vehicular access / egress from Douglas Park Drive with separate vehicular egress only to Mitchell Place;
- Construction of internal roads, pathways and parking areas for approximately 118 car parking spaces inclusive of 1 hearse car parking space;
- Perimeter memorial pedestrian pathway with remembrance sanctuaries;
- Burial zones with a maximum capacity of 15,447 comprising shallow, single and triple layered burial plots;
- Construction of single storey chapel, single storey administration building and single storey storage shed and garage;

- Site landscaping, fencing, lighting and entry signage; and
- The cemetery operating hours, including public access, will be between the hours of 6:00am and 6:00pm, 7 days a week. The opening hours of the Chapel and Administration Building (including café) will be between 8:00am and 5:00pm, 7 days a week.

The burial zone preparation works within Stage 1 will be carried out sequentially within each burial zone and will be based on the demand for burial plots.

For a detailed project description refer to the Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Ethos Urban.



Figure 1 - Concept Site Plan

Source: Arcadia Landscape Architecture



Figure 2 – Extent of Stage 1 Works

Source: Arcadia Landscape Architecture

1.2 Planning Process

In July 2020, the Applicant obtained an approval from Wollondilly Shire Local Planning Panel for a concept plan (DA/2018/780/1) for a cemetery on the site comprising about 27,000 burial plots.

The Applicant is now seeking concept approval for the use and operation of the site as a memorial park, with a maximum capacity of approximately 37,107 burial plots overall to be delivered in stages. The Stage 1 works comprise burial zones with a maximum capacity of 15,447 comprising shallow, single and triple layered burial plots.

The concept plan includes the layout of the site, as well as a crematorium, chapel, vaults, remembrance sanctuaries, and associated groundworks and infrastructure.

Approval is also sought for the Stage 1 works, which involve the detailed design of the burial plots as well as a chapel, an administration building, a caretaker building and associated infrastructure on the southern

portion of the site.

The administration building includes a café with an entrance on Mitchell Place.

1.3 Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

The Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements for the Douglas Park Concept Plan and Stage 1 (Application number SSD-68287712) were issued on 4 April 2024.

The SEARS relevant to this SIA are listed below.

Concept Proposal

24. Social Impact

Provide a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

The following table outlines how the engagement has complied with the SEARS.

Table 1 Compliance with SEARS for Concept Proposal

Requirement	Response	Where addressed in SIA
Social Impact Assessment:		
Provide a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) prepared in accordance with the <i>Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects</i> .	SIA has been prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects.	Addressed in Chapters Two, Five, Six, Seven and Eight.

Stage 1

22. Social Impact

Provide a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

The following table outlines how the engagement has complied with the SEARS.

Table 2 Compliance with SEARS for Stage 1

Requirement	Response	Where addressed in SIA
Social Impact Assessment:		
Provide a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for Stage 1 prepared in accordance with the <i>Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects</i> .	SIA has been prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects. See the Engagement Report (2025) prepared by Kate Robinson Consulting (KRC) has informed this SIA and has complied with the SEARS.	Addressed in Chapters Two, Five, Six, Seven and Eight

1.4 The Site

The site subject to the SSDA is located at 430-490 Douglas Park Drive, Douglas Park within the Wollondilly Local Government Area (LGA), described as Lot 2 in DP 250359.

The site is irregular in shape with a total size of more than 16,000m². The site slopes approximately 12 metres from west to east.

The site is mostly vacant with scattered vegetation and a single, residential dwelling with driveway accessible from Douglas Park Drive. The site comprises two street frontages, to the east is Mitchell Place and to the west is Douglas Park Drive.

A summary of the surrounding development context is provided below:

- **North:** North of the site contains the Hume Motorway which runs from Melbourne to Sydney. Further north is dense bushland and the Nepean River. Approximately 1.4km north of the site is Douglas Park Train Station.
- **East:** Directly east of the site, comprises large lot residential development lining Michell Place. Dense bushland is located further east adjacent to more low-rise residential dwellings adjacent to Cataract River.
- **South:** South of the site is a large allotment which locates the Saint Mary's Towers Retreat Centre. The Centre is surrounded by primarily vacant land with scattered vegetation.
- **West:** West of the site, land comprises dense bushland¹.

1.5 Douglas Park Village

Douglas Park is a hamlet-scaled centre catering for the limited convenience needs of the mainly single-story dwellings that surround it. Douglas Park includes a primary school and rail station.

There is potential for infill residential development on large existing residential allotments and land zoned R3 Medium Density Residential adjacent to the rail line. There are vacant premises on commercial zoned land in the centre, and potential for infill and intensification of commercial land.

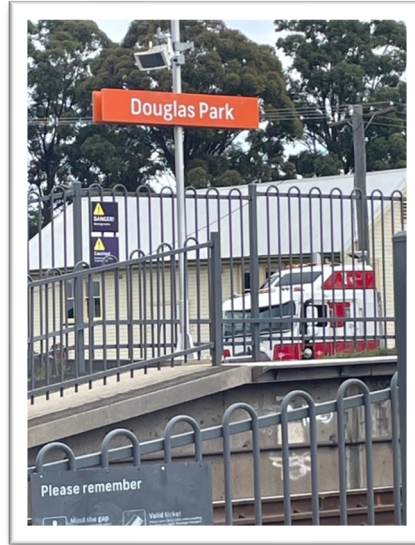
The current layout of the commercially zoned lots and the road network does not readily cater for a diversity of commercial and employment opportunities.

However, Douglas Park enjoys a number of 'points of difference' which create an opportunity for future intensification. This includes the Nepean River with its high biodiversity and scenic views. There is also a railway station, community hall and sports facilities will assist sustain activity in Douglas Park as the region grows².

¹ Ethos Urban; Douglas Park Concept Plan and Stage 1 Detailed Works; February 2024

² Ibid

Figure 1 Images from Douglas Park Village (source: Forward Thinking)



2 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

Forward-Thinking has been engaged by Benima Pty Ltd to prepare a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to be included in the SSDA.

Projects can affect people in many ways, both positively and negatively. A SIA aims to identify, predict, and evaluate likely social impacts arising from a project and propose responses to the predicted impacts.

This SIA has been prepared in line with the methodology and requirements for an SIA and SIMP outlined in the Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects July 2023 (SIA Guidelines)³. As illustrated in Figure 2, the SIA assesses projects from the perspectives of people, which means developments are more likely to be socially sustainable.

Figure 2 Social elements of value to people (source: Department of Planning and Environment, SIA Guidelines)



³ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023/GD1944%20SIA%20Guideline_NEW%20VI_14_02_23.pdf

Figure 3 Social Impact Assessment Approach



2.2 SIA Methodology

Social impact assessment involves defining, identifying, and evaluating the expected social impacts and benefits of a site on the surrounding social locality, and working towards the articulation of benefits and the mitigation of expected negative impacts.

Importantly, engagement with local residents and stakeholders will be a foundation of the SIA. Following engagement with residents and other stakeholders, the SIA will provide a description and analysis of the key issues.

Once the issues analysis has been completed, Forward-Thinking worked with the project team to develop a Mitigations Table, outlining strategies for managing key issues. The Mitigations Table is a central feature of the SIA to be lodged as part of the SSDA with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

Key elements of the SIA include:

- The rationale for the project from a social planning perspective, including an analysis of the shortage of burial space in Greater Sydney's, a demographic analysis of the social locality, and analysis of population and a social infrastructure growth in the social locality (using ABS Census data, site visits, desktop research, and engagement with service providers).
- A literature review, engagement with representatives from the largest Faiths, in terms of congregation size, and with the funeral industry to explore the memorialisation needs of the faiths and requirements of the industry.
- Stakeholder and community engagement are detailed in Chapters Six and Seven of this Report.
- The identification and analysis of social impacts both positive and negative, using the categories and impact assessment framework outlined in the SIA Guidelines, assessment of the magnitude and likelihood of impacts.

2.3 Principles

The SIA Guidelines identify several principles that underpin the preparation of a Social Impact Assessment. Adhering to these Guidelines and ensuring that the approach to collecting, assessing and analysing information complies with the principles is key to a robust SIA.

The table below presents the alignment of the proposal with these principles and where they have been addressed in the assessment.

Table 3 *Principles required by DPHI and where they are addressed*

Principles	Action	Where the principle is addressed
Action oriented	Defines specific actions to deliver practical, achievable effective outcomes for people	The proposal comes at a time when there is increasingly urgent demand for new burial spaces in Greater Sydney. The NSW Government Report, the 11th Hour Report, publicly released in 2020, warned that public cemeteries in NSW would run out of burial space by 2030. The proposal will deliver urgently required burial space to those Faiths who need it most. It is planned to be delivered in a parkland setting, with pedestrian and cycle links, to enable a recreation opportunity for the local community.

Principles	Action	Where the principle is addressed
Adaptive	Establishes systems to respond to new or different circumstances to support continuous improvement	The proposal has been prepared in consultation with Faiths, the funeral industry, state-wide and local stakeholders, the local Aboriginal community and local residents and businesses. This engagement will continue through the life of the project to continue to establish systems to respond to new or different circumstances to support continuous improvement.
Culturally responsive	Develops culturally informed approaches and methodologies to ensure Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities are engaged appropriately, and their perspectives, insights and feedback are valued.	The proposal has been developed following extensive engagement with the Faiths and industry. This is detailed Chapter Six of this Report. Regarding Aboriginal burials, the <i>Connecting with Country Report</i> prepared by Artefact, recommends ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities to ensure the design and operation of the Douglas Park Memorial Park is sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal communities.
Distributive equity	Considers how different groups will experience social impacts differently (particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups, future generations compared with current generations, and differences by gender, age and cultural group)	While the demand for cremation is growing, currently standing at about 70 percent in Greater Sydney, cultural and religious affiliation is an increasingly important factor contributing to the demand for denominational burial space. Cemetery operators must cater for the particular interment needs of denominational groups to meet the objects of the <i>NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> . The engagement with the faiths, particularly those who were running out of burial space, focussed on their specific interment, memorialisation and other cemetery requirements for the first phase of the design of the proposed cemetery. For more detail, see Chapter Six.

Principles	Action	Where the principle is addressed
Impartial	Uses fair, unbiased research methods and follows relevant ethical standards.	The social impact assessment has been prepared by a suitably qualified professional in accordance with using industry standards and professional ethics. See Appendix One.
Inclusive	Seeks to hear, understand, respect and document the perspectives of all likely affected people. Uses respectful, meaningful and effective engagement activities tailored to the needs of those being engaged (e.g. being culturally sensitive and accessible).	As outlined in Chapters Six and Seven the proposal has been informed by ongoing engagement of stakeholders and the community
Integrated	Uses and references relevant information and analysis from other assessments to avoid duplication.	The SIA has drawn on the findings of the studies that support the concept plan, such as the Design Guide, traffic report, construction impact report, noise and air quality reports, and utilised them to avoid duplication.
Life-cycle focus	Seeks to understand likely impacts (including cumulative impacts) at all project stages, from pre-construction to post-	The proposal has considered cumulative impacts for social and environmental factors from construction to project completion.

Principles	Action	Where the principle is addressed
	closure operation commencement	
Material	Identifies which likely social impacts matter the most for people and/or pose the greatest risk/opportunity to those expected to be affected.	Scoping of the potential social impacts and the discussion of mitigations is presented in Chapter Eight.
Precautionary	If there are risks of serious or irreversible environmental damage (including harm to people), avoids using any limits on full scientific certainty as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental (including social) degradation.	The proposal has taken a precautionary approach to environmental risks. The assessment has drawn on the findings of the studies that support the proposal, such as the traffic report, and utilised them to demonstrate social outcomes for the local and wider community.
Proportionate	Ensures the scope and scale of the SIA, correspond to the scope and scale of the likely social impacts.	The proposal has assessed potential social impacts proportionate to the level of anticipated social impacts.
Rigorous	Uses appropriate, accepted social science methods, and	This SIA has been conducted in line with the methodology and requirements for an SIA outlined in

Principles	Action	Where the principle is addressed
	robust evidence from authoritative and trustworthy sources	the Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects, February 2023 (SIA Guidelines).
Transparent	Explains, justifies, and makes available, information, methods and assumptions, so that people can see how their input has been considered.	This SIA provides a background to the proposal, uses a strong evidence base to analyse potential impacts on the social environment using the SIA Guideline assessment framework, and suggests mitigation measures to alleviate some of the consequences of the development. In line with the SIA Guideline requirements, this assessment has adopted the methodology required by DPHI.

2.4 SIA Authors

This SIA has been prepared by Forward-Thinking's Principal, Professor Roberta Ryan, with assistance from Forward-Thinking's Associate Director, Trish Oakley (Appendix 1: detailed Curriculum Vitae).

Professor Roberta Ryan

Roberta Ryan is a qualified social and health planner, she is a leading policy and planning researcher and analyst with over 30 years' experience in Australia and internationally. Roberta has a significant professional and academic background in social and health planning and impact assessment and has developed new approaches in the application of research and stakeholder engagement to social and health planning and impact assessment in land-use development and management contexts.

Roberta has experience in statutory planning processes and the delivery of major social infrastructure, cemeteries, housing, commercial, and retail developments. Roberta has demonstrated the capacity to manage complex land use and social planning projects in sensitive stakeholder environments. She is currently a member of the Metropolitan Memorial Parks board, which is the Crown Land cemeteries manager for public cemeteries in NSW and has a deep knowledge of the operations and practices of cemeteries. She has provided advice to NSW Department of Planning on the social impacts of cemeteries for consideration for the inclusion into the relevant social impact assessment guidelines.

Roberta regularly acts as a social planning expert witness in the NSW Land and Environment Court, NCAT and has also provided expert witness services to the Victorian Solicitor's Office and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This has included expert advice on the social impacts of a range of contentious

land uses and complex developments including mines, major social infrastructure, large format retail, affordable housing, and liquor, and restricted premises.

Trish Oakley

Trish Oakley has been involved in the preparation of Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) both in government and in the private sector.

Most recently, as a Director in Transport for NSW (TfNSW), Trish oversaw the preparation, and associated engagement, for the SIAs for two major urban renewal projects, Circular Quay Precinct Renewal and Central Station Precinct Renewal.

This involved overseeing the preparation of scoping reports and other key elements of the SIA methodologies.

As an engagement professional with more 30 years' experience, she brought a strong commitment for authentic consultation, particularly with hard-to-reach participants, such as CALD communities, as a foundation for SIAs.

Trish worked with TfNSW's Aboriginal engagement team to support a unique partnership approach with various Aboriginal stakeholders.

3 SYDNEY'S BURIAL LAND SHORTAGE

3.1 An overview of burial land shortage in Greater Sydney

The Metropolitan Sydney Capacity Report, November 2017, which is an analysis of remaining cemetery capacity in the Sydney metropolitan area (the Central, South, North, West, West-Central, and South-West planning regions), found the following:

“Urgent action is required to provide for the future burial needs to the Sydney community”⁴

There are on average 18,000 burials annually in NSW, around half of which occur in Greater Sydney. The unmet demand for burial internment is forecast to grow to 304,000 plots over the next 50 years in Greater Sydney and NSW⁵. (Appendix 2: Demand for Burial Space by Denomination)

In 2015, the newly established agency, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW (CCNSW) identified 301,000 burial plots were in NSW. The Agency's Report, *Metropolitan Sydney Capacity Report*, 2017 found that if there was no change to existing cremation and grave occupancy rates, cemetery capacity in metropolitan Sydney was expected to be exhausted by 2051, with availability of grave sites—that is, consumers' ability to secure a grave site in a location and/or religious-designated area of their choice—being affected well before that date⁶.

The Report went onto find, by 2056, an additional 11,800 plots per year, roughly four hectares of cemetery space, would be required to keep up with demand. Pre-sale of burial plots may mean that 'at need' access—that is, the ability to purchase plots at the time of death—will be compromised as soon as 2026, depending on trends in demand.

The issues have – at least in part – arisen because cemeteries have not been considered a priority within strategic land-use planning process.

Cemeteries which have served Sydneysiders for more than a century – Rookwood, Botany, Field of Mars, Macquarie Park – are now in their final years of being able to accommodate the burial needs of Sydney⁷. Some of these cemeteries will close within three years and all existing operational Crown cemeteries will close to new burials within 10-12 years. This is much sooner than previous timeframes indicated and requires immediate action.

Rookwood General, which undertakes approximately 30 percent of Sydney's burials will be closed to the sale of new interments rights in eight years. Many communities, including Sydney's large Muslim community, will exhaust their section in two years⁸.

⁴ Metropolitan Sydney Capacity Report, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW (CCNSW), 2017, p.11

⁵ NSW Government, Explanation of Intended Effect, Proposed Amendment to State and Regional Development SEPP to identify large scale cemeteries as State Significant Development

⁶ Ibid

⁷ 11th hour report

⁸ Interview with Mariam Ardati

Smaller groups like the Russian Orthodox, Mandaean and Maori will run out of burial space in as little as three years.

With cremation rates in Sydney consistently around 70 percent, there is limited scope to increase this further and materially reduce land supply requirements.

A planned new Crown cemetery, Macarthur Memorial Park, offers a positive yet temporary solution by providing 136,000 lawn plots (which is expected to result in circa 85,000 burial interment rights) this falls well short of projected unmet burial interment right demand of approximately 304,000 over the next 50 years and approximately 1,090,000 over the next 100 years. Therefore, Macarthur Memorial Park, is only expected to extend capacity for approximately an additional 10 years.

While Crown operators undertake approximately 72 percent of burials across Sydney, they have only 24 percent of estimated remaining supply.

Government Response

In 2012, the NSW Government began a program of reforms to restructure the interment industry, address the shortage of burial space and attempt to ensure the full range of interment options is accessible and affordable to everyone.

The *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013* established Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW (CCNSW), an agency with the objectives of developing and implementing collaborative, sustainable solutions to the problems of the industry.

The NSW Government set up the Metropolitan Memorial Parks (MMP), formerly Office of One Crown Cemeteries, to coordinate and expand crown cemeteries. MMP is established under NSW legislation as a for-purpose self-funding business, entrusted to manage Crown reserves on behalf of NSW Crown Lands and provide interment services to the community.

MMP oversees 1,000 acres of Crown Land in eight cemeteries across Sydney and Newcastle.

In 2019, CCNSW engaged Urbis to build on the 2017 CCNSW report and forecast the additional cemetery capacity required over the next 100 years.

Drivers of cemetery demand

Sydney's growing and ageing population is a key driver of demand for burial space in the city's constrained cemeteries, with religious affiliation a major factor (Appendix Three: Faith Engagement Outcomes). While cremation is the dominant form of internment, currently standing at 65% and increasing⁹, cultural and religious beliefs often determine an individual's choice of burial or cremation.

Sydney's population is expected to grow by 1.6% per annum until 2036, adding more than 1.5 million residents to the city¹⁰. Growth is expected to be concentrated in the northwest and south-west regions,

⁹ 11th hour report

¹⁰ CCNSW, Metropolitan Sydney Cemetery Report, November 2017, p 6-12

around 2.9% and 2.2% respectively ¹¹.

As the population increases, it is also expected to age, with an associated increase in annual deaths.

Demographically, people over 80 years of age are expected to increase at the highest rate over this 20-year period, at more than 4% per annum¹².

Land use planning

In NSW, cemeteries have not been treated as priority land uses in planning processes¹³. With the cost of land drastically inflated in Sydney, driven largely by the housing market, the economic case for cemeteries is difficult to make. As a result, space in existing urban lawn cemeteries is being depleted, with few solutions on the horizon.

The Greater Sydney Commission has identified that allocating space for new cemeteries should be a priority for local governments as they review their local environmental plans. Interviewees who were involved in recent attempts to develop new cemeteries within the Sydney Basin reported significant challenges associated with gaining approval for cemeteries to local opposition.

Much of this opposition appeared to be due to perceptions regarding the aesthetics of cemeteries, which may be based on the appearance of Victorian-era cemeteries. As evidenced from the community engagement (Chapter Seven) many people report disliking the idea of living near cemeteries. This appears to be a combination of factors, including the unsettling feeling of being constantly reminded of death, potential fears of the unknown or paranormal activity, concerns about the aesthetics of the view, and a perception that it could negatively impact property values. This reaction is heightened if a crematorium is part of the project.

Education and engagement may be needed to engage residents near proposed cemetery developments regarding improvements in cemetery design and possibilities for multi-functional cemeteries which are complementary with their local environment. Cemeteries are not deemed to be essential infrastructure, as are schools, parks and hospitals, and thus have not been considered a priority by many local governments.

Identifying and acquiring suitable land for new cemeteries is becoming increasingly difficult as the city expands and available land is sought for competing land uses. Identifying suitable land for cemetery use requires the following considerations:

- Proximity to communities requiring burial – most consumers prefer to travel no more than 30-40 minutes from their homes
- Land that is appropriately zoned, with established vehicular access and public transport connections

¹¹ 11th hour report

¹² Ibid

¹³ Pathways Towards Sustainable Burial and Cremation options for NSW, prepared by the Institute of Sustainable Futures

- Land with appropriate topography, soil type and drainage
- Land that is unlikely to be subject to competing land uses – residential, industrial.

Cultural diversity

Sydney's cultural diversity is another important driver of burial demand. Cultural beliefs and religious customs can determine whether an individual is buried or cremated.

Generally, the followers of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Orthodox religions require burial, while followers of Hinduism have a preference for cremation. (Appendix Two: Demand for Burial Space by Denomination) Information compiled by Multicultural NSW shows that NSW is home to more than 200 languages, over 125 religions, and some 300 ancestries¹⁴. Sydney's cultural and religious diversity is also growing with its population growth¹⁵.

Table 4 *Growth of Sydney's cultural and religious diversity*

RELIGION	2011 [%]	2016 [%]	% CHANGE
Protestant	24.8	19.1	-5.7
Catholic	28.3	25.2	-3.1
Orthodox	5.2	4.4	-0.7
Judaism	0.9	0.8	-0.2
Buddhist	4.3	4.1	-0.2
Non-religious	17.7	24.7	7.0
Hinduism	2.7	3.8	1.0
Other	9.3	10.1	0.8
Islam	5.0	5.6	0.6
Other Christian	1.8	2.3	0.5

People who belong to the Protestant and Catholic churches make up the biggest sector electing cremation. People of the Catholic faith were accorded the ability of be cremated in 1962 following the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, commonly known as the Vatican II.

The two largest Faiths in Sydney experienced the largest declines in representation from 2011 to 2016, 5.7 percent and 3.1 percent respectively. Both religions permit cremation, which has steadily gained acceptance among Catholics since it was afforded them in 1962.

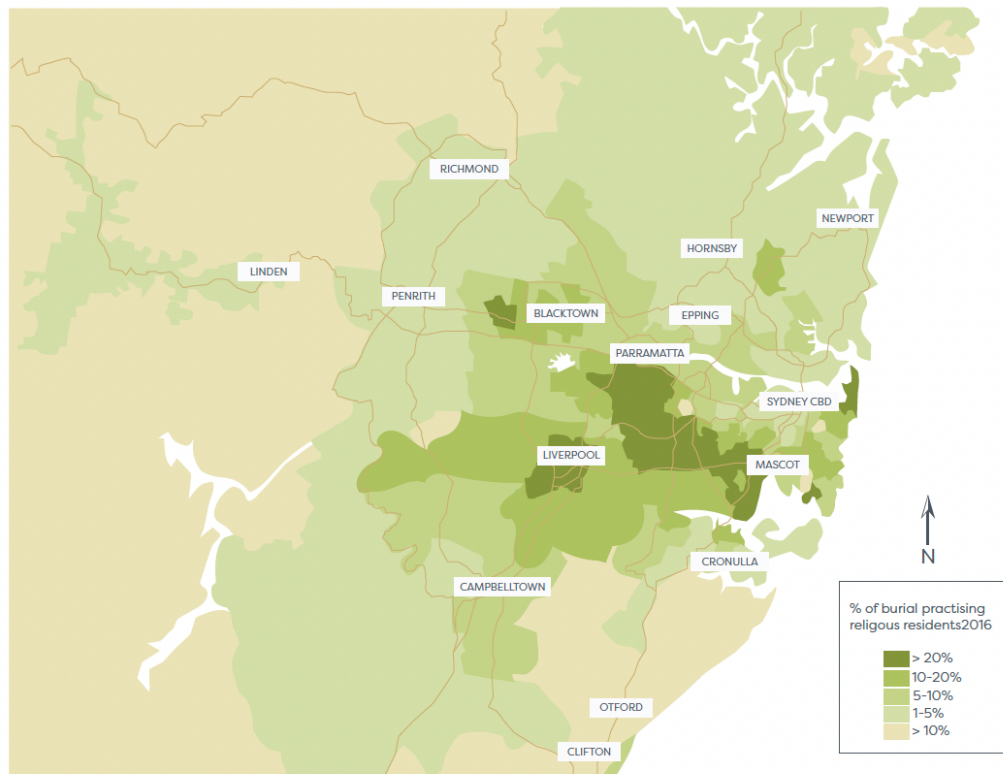
¹⁴ CCNSW, Metropolitan Sydney Cemetery Report, November 2017, p. 13

¹⁵ Ibid

The religious distribution indicates cremation will continue to grow, offset by increases in the Muslim community, who require burial (Appendix 3 – Faith Engagement Outcomes).

The location of these communities is an important consideration when planning for cemetery demand and catering for those wishing to be cremated.

Figure 4 *Distribution of religions that tend to practice burial, rather than cremation, across Sydney*



Source: Urbis and Australian Bureau of Statistics.

NSW is one of Australia's most culturally diverse communities, with people from 307 ancestries practising 146 religions and speaking more than 215 languages. Cemetery operators must cater to the particular interment needs of these groups to meet the Objects of the *NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013*. For example, in 2019, almost 30 different religious and ethnic groups were interred in Rookwood General Cemetery in accordance with their needs (figure 3). Specific religious requirements include consecrated burial sections within the cemetery, interments facing specific geographical directions, shroud burials for the Muslim community, the burning of incense for the Chinese community and back-filling graves by hand for those of the Jewish faith.

The Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic religions are already experiencing geographical shortages of burial space in certain parts of Sydney. The Muslim Cemetery Board made representations that it had already exhausted its local cemetery at Riverstone and is now burying members of its community at a Crown Cemetery at Kemps Creek.

While immensely appreciative to the Catholic Church for affording them this burial space, the lack of autonomy and reliance on another faith group to undertake what is viewed as a basic, yet essential, activity was a source of concern.

The Lebanese Muslim Association (LMA), conscious of the impending exhaustion of allocated land at Rookwood General Cemetery, is currently examining a range of options, such as renewable tenure (including accelerated decomposition trials), to meet expected future demand.

A report, commissioned by Catholic Cemeteries NSW, *Pathways Towards Sustainable Burial and Cremation options for NSW*, prepared by the Institute of Sustainable Futures, held discussions with various stakeholders from across NSW, and identified a range of consumer categories relevant to this research. The Institute found that those groups with a preference for burial will likely continue to practice burial, however, many may consider more sustainable practices.

Regarding those who elect cremation as a 'default' option, the Report concludes: enormous potential exists to either shift these consumers to more sustainable alternatives or to improve the choices available to them to allow the achievement of improvements to environmental impact associated with cremation.

Aboriginal burial issues

Since colonisation, Aboriginal communities in NSW have faced significant challenges burying their people in accordance with their traditional customs and rituals. While most religious groups have had sections of general cemeteries set aside and consecrated for their exclusive use, indigenous communities have had no such recognition.

Aboriginal communities are integral stakeholders in the NSW cemeteries and crematoria sector as they:

- Represent an important cultural group within our society with unique burial customs
- Operate cemeteries throughout the state
- Are some of the largest landholders in NSW and Sydney, through the Aboriginal Land Council network.

The diversity of Aboriginal culture means there is no common set of beliefs or customs specific to all Aboriginal communities across NSW. Each region of NSW, potentially comprising multiple communities, may have their own unique customs and beliefs with respect to burial and cremation.

As with almost every other group in Sydney, Aboriginal people in certain areas are reporting difficulties finding appropriate land to bury their people. In 2016, the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) entered a Deed of Agreement with the Southern Metropolitan Cemetery Trust for the provision of dedicated burial land for their community, in consideration of the resolution of an outstanding land claim.

3.2 Implications for the SIA

The evidence is clear that Sydney's burial land shortage is having significant, adverse consequences on the internment and memorialisation needs of people who require burial, rather than cremation. This is affecting mainly the Muslim, Jewish, and Orthodox faiths – but not exclusively, as the choice of burial is an individual one.

A myriad of government reports have explored the implications, describing the issue as a crisis and predicting dire consequences if the shortage is not addressed in a timely fashion. As demand for burial plots exceeds supply, the price of burial plots would likely skyrocket, making traditional burials inaccessible for many families. Certain religious groups could face challenges and loss of congregation if they cannot continue to offer burials.

The failure to plan for cemeteries in previous decades, and the current 'catchup' is seeing a fierce battle in communities on the urban fringe, with residents up in arms over cemetery proposals. These issues are enthusiastically reported by the media.

One example is the creation of a community group against a proposal for a cemetery in Campbelltown. Under the headline 'Sydney's nightmare burial shortage persists, despite controversial new mega: cemetery' the ABC reports that 'Sydney's cemeteries nearly full, but new sites, like the one near Campbelltown are facing staunch opposition from locals. As experts note, nobody wants a cemetery in their backyard'¹⁶.

The community engagement undertaken for this SIA is seeing strongly worded statements from neighbours who report opposition to the development, some not expressing a rationale, just general opposition. Comments include:

- 'Don't build something that the local community does not need or want'
- 'Remove use of this site as a crematorium'
- 'Do not allow the cemetery to be built'¹⁷

This is despite the fact that the site already has concept plan approval for a memorial park, granted in 2020, from the Wollondilly Shire Local Planning Panel. While the proposal that is the subject of this SIA is a significant increase in burial plots, there is no increase to the size of the development area. Further, the new plots will be built in stages over many years, with plenty of opportunity for community engagement. Clearly, the community is concerned about changes to the character of the local area and a general dislike to the idea of living near cemeteries. This general dislike may come from a combination of factors including psychological discomfort, superstition, and visual impact and activation impact.

¹⁶ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-23/sydney-is-running-out-of-burial-space/101881570>

¹⁷ Appendix Five

However, it's important to note that not everyone in the community is concerned about living near a memorial park. A well-designed Memorial Park, in a parkland setting, opened up for the community to enjoy, would be a positive landuse for many and certainly a better alternative than many other land-uses. An important strategy to assist the community come to terms with a cemetery next door, is ongoing engagement and education. While not all residents have raised specific issues, the Proponent is investigating the issues that are raised, such as traffic management, impact on the natural environment and activation impacts, and providing mitigations in the planning application. These are detailed in Chapter Eight.

Forward Thinking recommends the preparation of a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). A SIMP is about ensuring that strategies required to manage social impacts are implemented and monitored for the life of the project, or as required, following planning approval.

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Social (DPHI) sets out guidelines for SIMPs, saying that:

Monitoring and adaptive management should aim to protect and enhance the social environment throughout the life of the project. Project monitoring and management commitments can be integrated into overarching environmental management systems such as ISO 14001 accredited environmental management systems.

The Department's role in the post-approval phase is to regulate compliance with project conditions of consent or approval. If there is a condition of approval requiring a social impact management plan, this will usually need to be approved by the Department.

The DPHI provides this guide for key elements of a social impact management plan, which should:

- Enhance and refine mitigation, enhancement, monitoring and management of social impacts over the life of the project, and explain how unanticipated impacts will be addressed
- Set out how the community can provide feedback as part of adaptive management.
- Describe how the requirements of performance-based and prescriptive conditions will be implemented and monitored through a robust monitoring and auditing program.
- Set out elements such as indicators, baseline values, frequencies, triggers, stakeholders and responses.

A SIMP for Douglas Park Memorial Park would include:

- Ongoing engagement with Faiths and industry to ensure that these stakeholders continued to have input into the design of the Memorial Park
- Ongoing engagement with the local community to hear and respond to community issues
- Education opportunities on aspects of the proposal to all fears in the community
- A complaint handling process.

It is unlikely these strategies will resolve all the concerns of all members of the community. They will however build trust between the Proponent and the community and help allay the fears of many local residents.

4 POPULATION GROWTH IN THE SOUTH-WEST AND ILLAWARRA

4.1 Introduction

Sydney's population grew by 146,700 people or 2.8 percent to 5,450,500 in the year ending June 2023. The largest growth was mostly in outer-suburban areas, driven by net internal migration trends¹⁸.

The population of the South-West is growing faster than any other district of Greater Sydney. The South West Growth Area (SWGA) has been identified by the NSW Government as a key growth area. In SWGA, significant residential development is creating emerging suburbs supported by upcoming infrastructure funded and delivered by the NSW Government.

In this document, the South Western Sydney area includes seven Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Fairfield
- Liverpool
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

Additionally, the Illawarra Shoalhaven is one of NSW's fastest growing regions of NSW and is examined in this chapter.

4.2 South West Sydney Growth area

The SWGA consists of approximately 17,000ha of greenfield land identified by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for future urban development¹⁹.

It currently comprises of 16 precincts across the Camden, Campbelltown and Liverpool Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The SWGA is established by the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Western Parkland City 2021) (WPC Precincts SEPP) that is designed to streamline the land release process for the delivery of new communities, homes, employment areas, health and education facilities, supported through the provision of adequate infrastructure within greenfield areas.

Population growth

In keeping with trends over the last 10 years, the total population in the Growth Area is projected to be just over 170,000 people by 2041.

¹⁸ ABS, Capital city growth the highest on record, Media Release, 26/03/2024

¹⁹ DPHI, South West Growth Area, <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/priority-growth-areas-and-precincts/south-west-growth-area>

Wollondilly is one of the fastest growing LGAs in SWGA with a projected annual growth rate of 2.6 percent, compared with under one percent for NSW.

Figure 5 *projected population growth in Wollondilly LGA. Source: The Projections Explorer from the NSW Planning Portal*

Projections

Over the 20 years (2021-2041) New South Wales' population will grow by **1,706,176 (21%)** – or around (1%) a year. Not all places will grow or change in the same way, at the same rate, or at the same time. For more information about what sits behind these numbers, visit the [NSW Population Projections website](#).

Region	2021	2041	Change	Annual %
NSW	8,166,757	9,872,934	1,706,176	0.95
WOLLONDILLY	54,039	90,356	36,317	2.60

The South West Sydney Growth Area was included in the former Greater Sydney Commission's report *Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan*.

Projections of population growth for younger people (0-4, 5-19, and 20-24) in SWGA LGAs are particularly significant.

Figure 6 *Projected population growth in SWGA by age (young people). Source: Greater Sydney Commission's report Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan.*

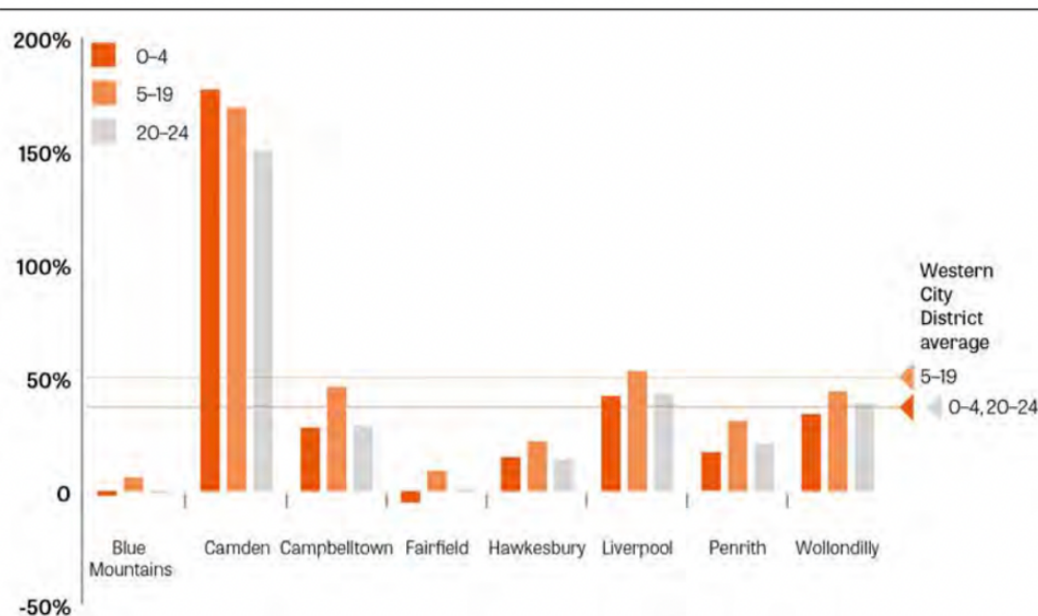
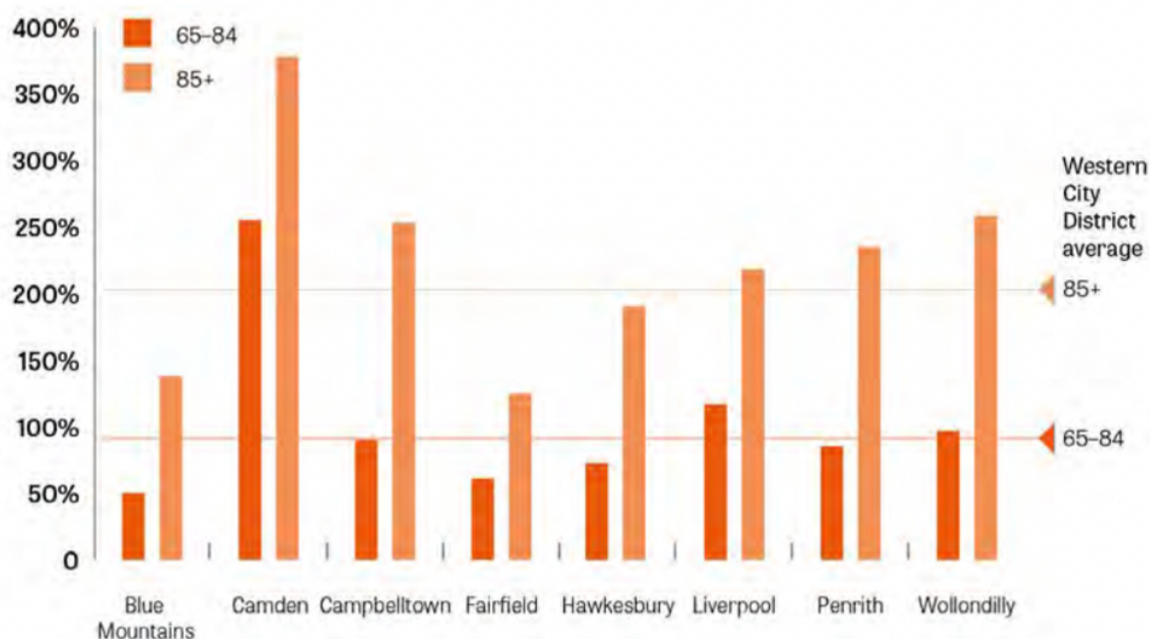


Figure 7 *Projected population growth in SWGA by age (older people). Source: Greater Sydney Commission's report Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan.*



4.3 Illawarra Shoalhaven area

The population of the Illawarra Shoalhaven area is expected to grow significantly over the next two decades. The current population of the Illawarra Shoalhaven is about 442,000 and is expected to increase by 26 percent by 2041²⁰.

The Illawarra Regional Plan sets out key strategies for planning for this growth over the next 20 years. It identifies 15 regionally significant precincts that will drive job creation, housing diversity, and strengthen communities. The aim is that these places will create more than 2,300 hectares for employment, hubs for recreation, culture, housing, and innovation. The Plan anticipates that almost 45,000 new jobs will be created, and the growth areas will provide land for almost 38,000 new homes²¹.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven economy contributes to the NSW economy in sectors such as education, research and innovation, advanced manufacturing, health and aged care, defence, construction, retail, professional and financial services. The region contributed \$23.9 billion to the State's economy in 2019, an increase of \$7.7 billion (47 per cent) from 2013²².

²⁰ DPHI, Population Projects, <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/research-and-demography/population-projections>

²¹ Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan, 2021 – 2041

²² Ibid

4.4 Implications for the SIA

The evidence demonstrates that location is a critical issue for cemeteries. On a number of criteria, the Douglas Park location is very positive for a memorial park of the kind proposed. Douglas Park is in one of the most rapidly growing areas of Sydney. The South West growth area is one of the fastest growing areas in NSW. The Illawarra is also a rapidly growing area both in population and economically.

Being in a growth area, not only is the vicinity in need of a memorial park, it is also in need of employment-generating land uses.

A memorial park would be an economic boost to the Douglas Park village and surrounds. The proposal would provide activation, employment, and hospitality opportunities.

The site in question has already been deemed suitable by consent authorities for a memorial park. In July 2020, the Proponent obtained an approval from Wollondilly Shire Local Planning Panel for a concept plan for a cemetery comprising about 27,000 burial plots. The current concept is seeking approval of about double that number. While this is a significant increase in number, there is no increase to the size of the development area.

The Douglas Park Memorial Park will be delivered in stages over some years. It is like that the burial landscape will change over that period as shortages continue to play out for some faiths and ethnicity groups. Ongoing engagement with Faiths, industry and the local community will be critical to ensure the Memorial Park continues to be sensitive to the needs of the local community.

However, the Faiths which require burial are also very location sensitive. For the Muslim Faith, the nearest funeral mortuary is at Lakemba - Australia's largest Mosque, the Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb Mosque - or Regents Park.

As against this concern, the critical shortage of burial spaces in Sydney means that people are likely to be willing to travel further for funeral services, internment and visitation.

This means that traffic management will be a critical issue. During community consultation, stakeholders and the community have been clear that they are concerned about how traffic will be managed.

The most significant impact of a population influx is traffic and transport. The proponent has commissioned a Traffic Impact Assessment and a Traffic Management Plan to mitigate traffic and parking impacts.

Forward Thinking recommends the preparation of a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP).

A SIMP is about ensuring that strategies required to manage social impacts are implemented and monitored for the life of the project, or as required, following planning approval.

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Social (DPHI) sets out guidelines for SIMPs, saying that:

Monitoring and adaptive management should aim to protect and enhance the social environment throughout the life of the project. Project monitoring and management commitments can be integrated into overarching environmental management systems such

as ISO 14001 accredited environmental management systems.

The Department's role in the post-approval phase is to regulate compliance with project conditions of consent or approval. If there is a condition of approval requiring a social impact management plan, this will usually need to be approved by the Department ²³.

DPHI provides this guide for key elements of a social impact management plan, which should:

- Enhance and refine mitigation, enhancement, monitoring and management of social impacts over the life of the project, and explain how unanticipated impacts will be addressed
- Set out how the community can provide feedback as part of adaptive management.

The plan should describe how the requirements of performance-based and prescriptive conditions will be implemented and monitored through a robust monitoring and auditing program. It should set out elements such as indicators, baseline values, frequencies, triggers, stakeholders and responses.

²³ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure,
https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023/GD1944%20SIA%20Guideline_NEW%20VI_14_02_23.pdf

5 SOCIAL BASELINE

5.1 Introduction

Fundamental to a robust SIA is an understanding of the Social Locality in which the site is situated to determine the Social Baseline.

This SIA considers an immediate Social Locality as defined by the Forward-Thinking team using Scopomap mapping technology (Figure 7).

The SIA also examines the wider social locality of the Wollondilly Local Government Area (LGA), in which the site is located, and which is the social, cultural and economic setting of the proposal that is the subject of the SIA.

5.2 Social locality map

The Immediate Social Locality of the site, as defined by the Forward-Thinking team using Scopomap mapping technology is shown below.

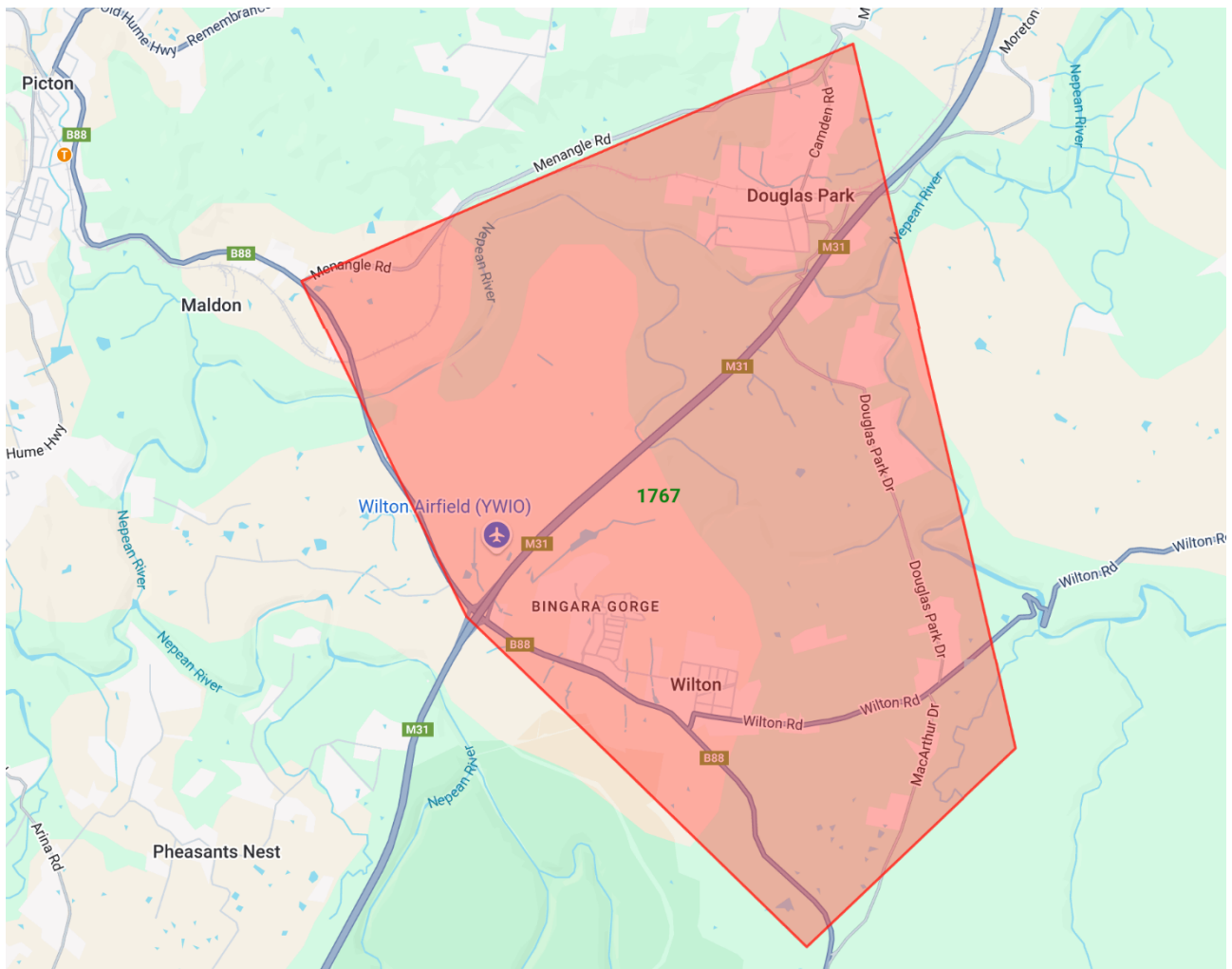
The area includes a population of 8,686 people. There are 3,801 residential addresses and 82 business addresses.

This defined locality takes into account local stakeholders, such as community members and organisations who are likely to be impacted by the proposal, as a result of their proximity.

Engagement collateral was letterboxed to 1,767 households and businesses and Forward Thinking engaged with key stakeholders in this area.

The issues raised by these stakeholders tend to be concerned about the character of the area, impact on the natural environment and traffic and transport impacts. Further details in Chapter 7.

Figure 8 Social locality map



The following figures provide the following:

- The area's demographic profile, covering age, income, employment status, tertiary education, and indigenous population
- The type of dwellings in the area
- The languages spoken in the area
- The percentage of car users in the area.

Figure 9 *Demographic profile*

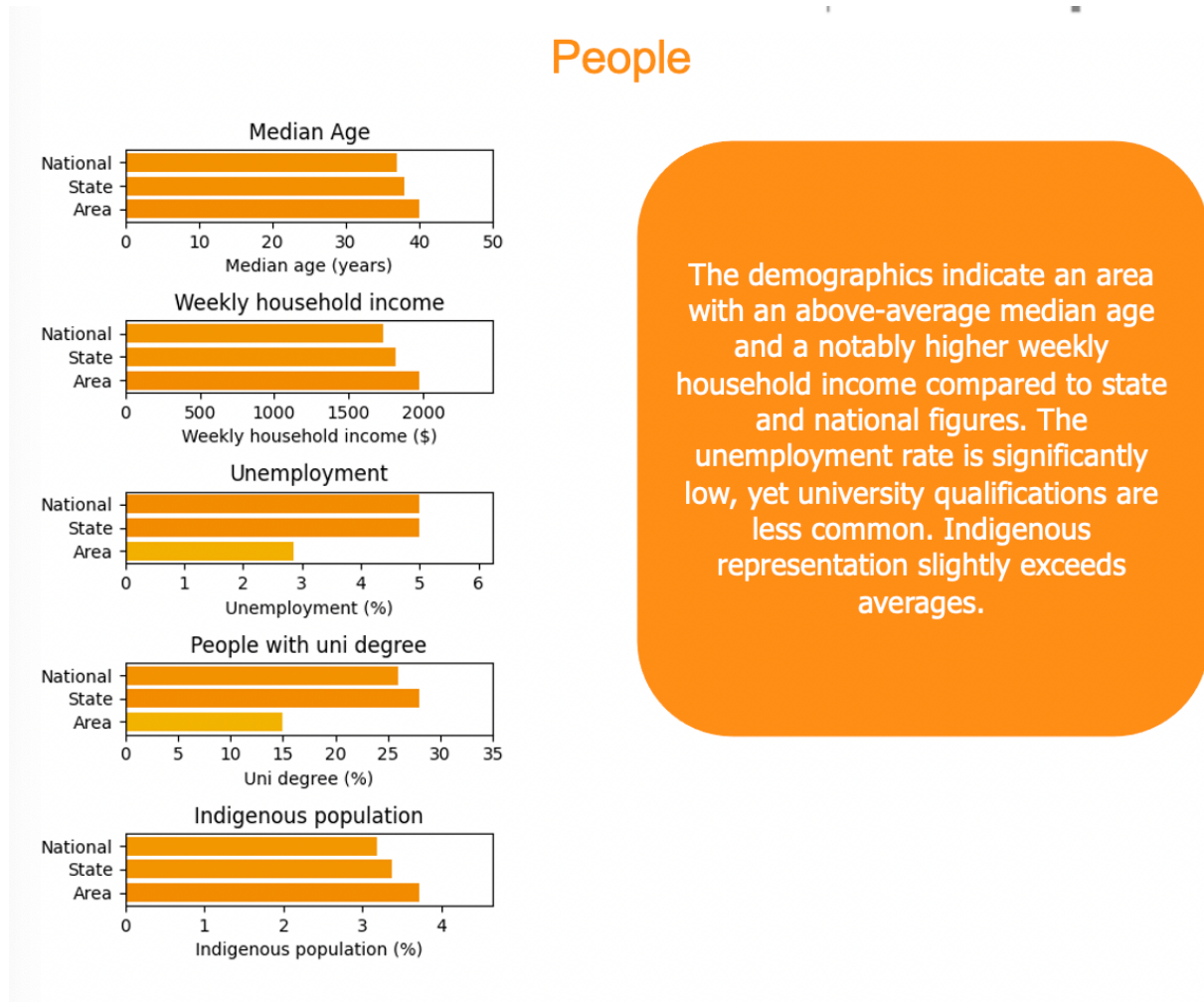
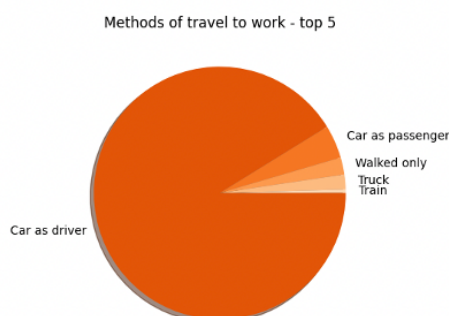


Figure 10 Dwelling types



The area under consideration diverges from state and national housing trends, with notably fewer apartments and rental properties, suggesting a population that prioritises homeownership. An above-average percentage of owned properties, both outright and with a mortgage, implies a relatively stable and invested community.

Figure 11 Methods of travel to work



In this area, the percentage of people getting to work by car as driver is 23% higher than the state average.

5.3 Wollondilly Local Government Area

Wollondilly Shire is located on the southwest fringe of the Greater Sydney area in New South Wales, parts of which fall into the Macarthur, Blue Mountains and Central Tablelands regions. Wollondilly is seen as the transition between Regional NSW and the Greater Sydney Region, and is variously categorised as part of both.

According to ABS data, collected at the 2021 census, Wollondilly has a population of 53,961 people, of whom 49.9 percent are female and 50.1 percent are male. There are 14,922 families living in the LGA.

There are 2,365 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the LGA, which comprises 4.4 percent of the population. This to be compared with NSW as a whole which has 278,043 Aboriginal residents, totaling 3.4 percent of the population.

Cultural and religious diversity

The ABS data reveals the ancestry of the population of Wollondilly is primarily European. In other words, the population does not reflect the diversity of contemporary NSW or Australia.

Regarding religious affiliation, the two largest religions, in terms of size of congregation, are Catholicism and Anglicanism.

The rapid growth of the area is likely to change both the cultural and religious mix of the population in coming years.

Table 5 Ancestry (Source: ABS)

Ancestry, top responses <i>All people</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Australian	23,486	43.5	2,307,549	28.6	7,596,753	29.9
English	21,338	39.5	2,404,990	29.8	8,385,928	33.0
Irish	5,547	10.3	735,340	9.1	2,410,833	9.5
Scottish	4,890	9.1	620,363	7.7	2,176,777	8.6
Italian	2,915	5.4	301,829	3.7	1,108,364	4.4

Table 6 Country of birth (Source: ABS)

Country of birth, top responses <i>All people</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Australia	45,413	84.2	5,277,497	65.4	17,019,815	66.9
<i>Other top responses:</i>						
England	1,777	3.3	231,385	2.9	927,490	3.6
New Zealand	513	1.0	118,527	1.5	530,492	2.1
Scotland	245	0.5	27,659	0.3	118,496	0.5
Italy	210	0.4	47,197	0.6	163,326	0.6
Malta	191	0.4	13,491	0.2	35,413	0.1

Table 7 Country of birth of parents (Source: ABS)

Country of birth of parents <i>All people</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Both parents born overseas	9,723	18.0	3,181,894	39.4	9,321,603	36.7
Father only born overseas	4,377	8.1	509,789	6.3	1,670,476	6.6
Mother only born overseas	2,922	5.4	369,492	4.6	1,257,942	4.9
Both parents born in Australia	34,278	63.5	3,529,168	43.7	11,663,577	45.9
Not stated	2,664	4.9	481,824	6.0	1,509,188	5.9

Table 8 Religious Affiliation (Source: ABS)

Religious affiliation, top responses <i>All people</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
No Religion, so described	17,202	31.9	2,644,165	32.8	9,767,448	38.4
Catholic	15,524	28.8	1,807,730	22.4	5,075,907	20.0
Anglican	11,375	21.1	960,305	11.9	2,496,273	9.8
Not stated	3,001	5.6	548,340	6.8	1,751,052	6.9
Uniting Church	1,073	2.0	172,132	2.1	673,260	2.6

Income, work pattern and occupation

Participation in the labour force is relatively high in Wollondilly, as compared with New South Wales. In Wollondilly 27,316 or 64.7% of people aged 15 years and over are in the labour force, while in New South Wales that figure is 3,874,012 people or 58.7% of people eligible to work.

The largest occupation group is technicians and trades workers, which stands at 4,898 people or 18.5% of the workforce in Wollondilly. This compares with 11.9% of the workforce, or 436,589 people in New South Wales.

The median weekly income is relatively high. In Wollondilly, the weekly household income is \$2,151, compared with \$1,829 for New South Wales.

Table 9 Participation in the labour force (source: ABS)

Participation in the labour force <i>People aged 15 years and over</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
In the labour force	27,316	64.7	3,874,012	58.7	12,695,853	61.1
Not in the labour force	12,808	30.3	2,341,417	35.5	6,888,081	33.1
Not stated	2,119	5.0	386,728	5.9	1,200,851	5.8

Table 10 Occupation (source: ABS)

Occupation, top responses <i>Employed people aged 15 years and over</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Technicians and Trades Workers	4,898	18.5	436,589	11.9	1,554,313	12.9
Professionals	3,986	15.0	952,131	25.8	2,886,921	24.0
Clerical and Administrative Workers	3,812	14.4	480,612	13.0	1,525,311	12.7
Managers	3,720	14.0	536,820	14.6	1,645,769	13.7
Community and Personal Service Workers	2,678	10.1	390,779	10.6	1,382,205	11.5
Labourers	2,479	9.3	300,966	8.2	1,086,120	9.0
Machinery Operators and Drivers	2,411	9.1	222,186	6.0	755,863	6.3
Sales Workers	2,061	7.8	294,889	8.0	986,433	8.2

Table 11 Median weekly income (source: ABS)

Median weekly incomes (a) <i>People aged 15 years and over</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Personal (b)	\$877	N/A	\$813	N/A	\$805	N/A
Family (c)	\$2,350	N/A	\$2,185	N/A	\$2,120	N/A
Household (d)	\$2,151	N/A	\$1,829	N/A	\$1,746	N/A

Table 12 Method of travel to work (source: ABS)

Method of travel to work on the day of the Census, top responses <i>Employed people aged 15 years and over</i>	Wollondilly	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Car, as driver	13,960	52.6	1,587,613	43.1	6,347,498	52.7
Car, as passenger	834	3.1	117,143	3.2	466,904	3.9
Truck	601	2.3	26,390	0.7	76,657	0.6
Walked only	354	1.3	92,368	2.5	306,045	2.5
Train	104	0.4	62,460	1.7	170,326	1.4
Did not go to work	3,887	14.7	487,646	13.2	1,417,449	11.8
Worked at home	6,273	23.6	1,141,467	31.0	2,531,262	21.0
People who travelled to work by public transport (a)	228	0.9	147,492	4.0	554,711	4.6
People who travelled to work by car as driver or passenger (b)	14,995	56.5	1,737,359	47.2	6,961,762	57.8

SEIFA figures

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage based on a range of Census characteristics. Two of the SEIFA indexes are the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) and the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD).

The IRSD index contains only disadvantage indicators such as unemployment, low incomes or education levels, single parent families, low skilled occupations, poor English proficiency, so is best used to distinguish between disadvantaged areas.

The IRSAD index contains indicators of disadvantage as well as additional indicators of advantage, such as professional occupations, high income, higher education levels, high rent, large dwellings.

A higher score on the index means a lower level of disadvantage, or (in the case of IRSAD only) a higher level of advantage. A lower score on the index means a higher level of disadvantage on both indexes, and a lack of advantage on the IRSAD.

The percentile column indicates the approximate position of this small area in a ranked list of Australia's suburbs and localities in 2021. It's meant to give a broad indication of where the area sits within the whole nation. A higher number indicates a higher socio-economic status. For instance, a percentile of 72 indicates that approximately 72% of Australia's suburbs have a SEIFA index lower than this area (more disadvantaged), while 28% are higher. This applies a comparison to suburbs even when the index concerned doesn't relate to a suburb.

For an effective comparator, Wollondilly is compared with Woollahra in Sydney's East is the most advantaged LGA in Australia, and Woorabinda, 170km southwest of Rockhampton in Central Queensland, is the most disadvantaged LGA in Australia.

Table 13 *SEIFA scores in Wollondilly compared with the most advantaged and the most disadvantaged LGAs in Australia*

LGA	Wollondilly	Woollahra	Woorabinda
Population	53,961	53,496	1,019
SEIFA Score	1020	1176	659
SEIFA Rank	454	547	1
SEIFA Decile	9	10	1
SEIFA Quintile	5	5	1

LGA	Wollondilly	Woollahra	Woorabinda
SEIFA Percentile	83	100	1

5.4 Social infrastructure

The area is characterised by rural/residential development, comprising low-rise dwellings on large land blocks. Directly neighbouring the site is Mitchell Place, where much of this large lot residential development lines the eastern side of the road. Dense bushland is located further east adjacent to more low-rise residential dwellings, adjacent to the Cataract River

North of the site is the Hume Motorway which runs from Melbourne to Sydney. Further north is dense bushland and the Nepean River. South of the site is a large allotment which is occupied by the Saint Mary's Towers Retreat Centre. The Centre is surrounded by primarily vacant land with scattered vegetation. West of the site, land comprises dense bushland.

Douglas Park Village

Douglas Park village is the location for the limited locally available social infrastructure. The housing in Douglas Park village comprises mostly single-story dwellings. Local residents are served by convenience-style shopping, a primary school, and a limited range of other services, such as a childcare centre.

Public Transport

Douglas Park Train Station is located in the village, about 1.4km north of the site. Douglas Park is on the Southern Highlands Line, providing daily services from Campbelltown to Goulburn. This is not a Sydney metropolitan route and the services are much more limited than those provided by Sydney Trains. There are hourly services in the morning and evening peaks. Travel to other parts of Sydney involve changing lines in Campbelltown.

The Picton to Wilton bus route is via Douglas Park. This is not an opal card service and the bus stops at Douglas Park school twice per day.

5.5 Implications for the SIA

The data clearly shows that the Wollondilly LGA is populated by a relatively well-off, employed, and older demographic compared with the NSW average. The population comprises a traditional Australian community from an earlier era, of people mainly from a European background. It is not characterised by the sort of cultural and religious diversity characteristic of contemporary Australia.

Yet Wollondilly is part of one of the fastest growing areas of NSW. This demographic profile will change dramatically in the coming years. Understandably, residents of fast-growing areas react with concern and anxiety about the impact of change in their local area.

This viewpoint is coming through strongly in the Community Survey, with one respondent praising ‘The old Australia feel of the Wollondilly locality’ (Appendix 5).

To add to this, local residents live mainly in medium to large, stand-alone houses, rather than apartments. These residents likely bought into the area for a rural residential lifestyle – a life away from the ‘hustle and bustle’ of the city.

The percentage of people getting to work by car as a driver is 23 percent higher than the state average. This car dependence is the key reason that traffic is such a significant issue in the area, as well as reflecting a style of neighbourhood.

The proposal will bring significant change to the local community from the intensification of development and increasing activity. This will lead to a change of character of the local area, and create activation with all the associated noise, influx of people, and traffic that is typical of a growing area.

This is particularly the case in Douglas Park village, where current vacant premises are likely to be occupied as new people move into the area. There are vacant premises on commercial zoned land in the centre, creating potential for infill development. Public transport to Douglas Park is limited to an inter-city service, the Southern Highlands line, and is not serviced by Sydney Trains.

While many local residents have concerns, change is already underway in Wollondilly, like many of the urban fringe areas of large cities in Australia and around the world. The pace of change is most likely to speed up, not slow down.

The residents are aware that there is already an approval for a memorial park on this site. In July 2020, the Proponent obtained approval from Wollondilly Shire Local Planning Panel for a concept plan for a cemetery comprising about 27,000 burial plots.

The current concept is seeking approval for approximately 37, 107 plots overall. While this is a significant increase in number, there is no increase in the size of the development area. Further, the burial plots are to be delivered in stages, which are likely to be years apart. The Stage 1 works comprise burial zones with a maximum capacity of 15,447 comprising shallow, single and triple layered burial plots.

While the perception of change is a legitimate issue, the reality will be different from the concerns expressed. For example, residential development on the site would have significantly greater impacts of the kind that the residents are concerned about.

A well-kept memorial park in the context of beautiful landscaping is likely to enhance the site, rather than detract from it.

Indeed, many people generally dislike the idea of living near cemeteries because of certain preconceptions. These are factors, including the unsettling feeling of being constantly reminded of death, potential fears of the unknown or paranormal activity, concerns about the aesthetics of the view, and a perception that it could negatively impact property values.

Ongoing engagement, with an education focus, with the community will be crucial. For the proposal to successfully integrate into the local area, preparation and implementation of a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will be equally important.

6 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: FAITH AND INDUSTRY

6.1 Introduction

The SSDA has been informed by a comprehensive stakeholder and community consultation process. Forward-Thinking led an engagement process involving stakeholders, religious denominations and the funeral industry. Kate Robinson Consulting managed an engagement process with Wollondilly Shire Council, local residents and businesses and local stakeholder groups.

The objectives of the communication and engagement strategy were to:

- Provide a genuine opportunity for feedback to inform the SSDA.
- Raise awareness among the wider community that a revised plan has been developed and will be lodged with DPHI.
- Acknowledge issues raised previously by the community about the earlier proposal.
- Ensure the community understands how the new concept addresses the concerns that have been raised.
- Provide an ongoing mechanism to keep target audiences informed.
- Engage with Sydney and State-wide stakeholders, such as the funeral industry and the denominations, to inform them of the opportunities created by Douglas Park to ease Sydney's burial crisis and provide them with opportunities for feedback to inform the SSDA.

6.2 Faith and industry consultation

The purpose of this phase of consultation was to better understand the interment, memorialisation and other cemetery requirements of the faiths. Cemetery operators must cater for the particular interment needs of denominational groups to meet the objects of the NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013. While the demand for cremation is growing, currently standing at about 70 percent in Greater Sydney, cultural and religious affiliation is an increasingly important factor contributing to the demand for denominational burial space.

Cultural beliefs and religious customs can determine whether an individual is buried or cremated. Generally, the followers of Muslim, Jewish and Christian Orthodox religions require burial, while followers of Hinduism have a preference for cremation.

The engagement with the faiths focused on their specific interment, memorialisation and other cemetery requirements for the first phase of the design of the proposed cemetery.

Specifically, these matters included:

- Current preference data for burial versus cremation
- What are some of the considerations around these preferences?
- Specific plot design issues, such as size, orientation, location in a memorial park and how are these issues determined?
- Special features of a memorial park creating a design excellence outcome for mourners
- Special needs of cremation mourners
- Changes and modernisation in burial/cremation trends
- Spiritual and cultural needs for the service and body disposition, such as the time of day, role of mourners, likely attendance levels
- Catchment of the cemetery – time constraints for disposition and travel constraints of mourners
- General burial shortage data in Greater Sydney.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted with:

- A representative of the CEO of Catholic Cemeteries of Sydney, Michael Cashin
- Reverend Brett Hall of the Anglican Archdiocese of Sydney
- A representative of the Imman Shadi Alsuleiman, President of Australian National Imams Council, Mariam Ardati, who is a member of the Metropolitan Memorial Parks Community Engagement Committee
- A representative of Dr Kamal Weerakoon, Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Reverend John Murray, Minister of Camden Presbyterian Church
- Erica Hendrawan, Buddhist Council of NSW
- Reverend Dr Manas Ghosh, Minister in the Uniting Church in the Synod of NSW and ACT
- Councillor at the Australian Funeral Directors Association and executive at InvoCare, Shannon Scott.

A literature review was also conducted into the Faiths listed above and the following Faiths:

- Jewish faith

- Greek Orthodox
- Chinese Presbyterian Church
- Maronite Faith

A Board Member of the Australian Funeral Directors association was also interviewed. The Association is the major industry body in Australia. The Board Member interviewed, Shannon Scott, is also a senior executive with InvoCare, which operates internationally and is the largest funeral company in Australia.

6.3 Outcome of engagement with Faiths and Industry

From this engagement, it appears very likely that the Islamic faith will be a key client of the Douglas Park Memorial Park. (Appendix 3: Outcomes of Faith and Industry Engagement.)

Other faiths and nationalities who are facing impending burial land shortages will also be important to Douglas Park. This is likely to include Pacific Islander Anglicans and Chinese Presbyterians.

While the Catholic Religion encourages burials, a new Memorial Park in Macarthur is due to be opened next year. The Macarthur Memorial Park (MMP) will be multi-denominational, catering for all religious and ethnic groups. The MMP will also provide 35.5 hectares of publicly accessible parkland.

Further engagement with faiths will be critical to ensuring that the cemetery satisfies their needs. Two key faiths, the Jewish Faith and Maronite Christians, did not participate in interviews for this Report. It is recommended that further attempts be made to engage with these faiths.

Regarding Aboriginal burials, the Connecting with Country Report prepared by Artefact, recommends ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities to ensure the design and operation of the Douglas Park cemetery is sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal communities. This Report supports that recommendation. Most faiths reported three pillars of contemporary and sustainable Memorial Park:

- Visitability – families continue to visit for years to come – often bringing out the family for a picnic with the conviction that connection doesn't stop after death.
- Accessibility
- Affordability

While the location of the Douglas Park Cemetery is some distance from Sydney's CBD and Parramatta, and people tend to choose burial space that they have a connection with, the shortage of burial space is likely to mean that distance is less of a barrier in selecting a location for burial or cremation.

The travel time is always a consideration for mourners. Jewish and Islamic people tend to use their own dedicated funeral directors and generally they like to use cemeteries in established areas. However, this is rapidly changing due to the shortage of burial land in Greater Sydney.

Different cultures have a higher visitation rate to the grave on an ongoing basis. Anglicans and Catholics

visit regularly at milestone dates for a period. Other cultures have high visitation rates, such as Pacific Islanders. The family arrives with picnics around the grave.

However, the advice of industry is pertinent. Traffic and transport are critical issues, both in relation to how the cemetery is designed and how it is operated.

For a funeral director, traffic flow is a major consideration. Funeral Directors often have a number of services in any one day and need to enter and exit each location as rapidly as possible but also must consider the movements of the mourners.

Funeral services can be very large, up to 200/300 people. Douglas Park Memorial Park will have an exit onto Mitchell Park as well as the entry/exit from Douglas Park Road. Industry recommends that large funerals are staggered and that traffic management teams are brought in to assist on busy days.

Industry also recommends mourners are provided with public transport options.

7 ENGAGEMENT: COMMUNITY

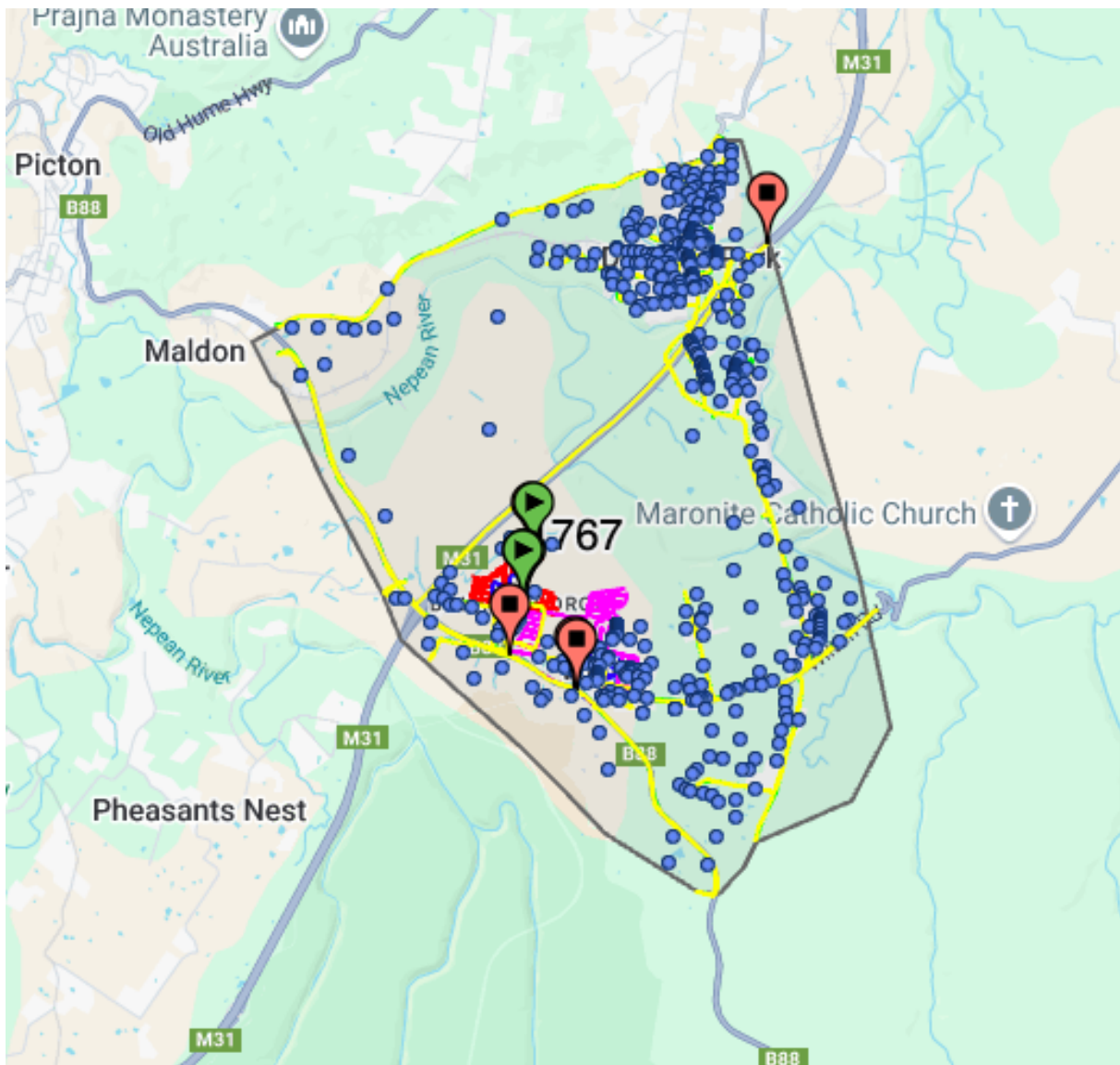
7.1 Engagement methodology

To seek community and stakeholder input into the updated scheme, Kate Robinson Consulting conducted scheduled public engagement from November 2024 to December 2024 on the proposed concept. Meetings and briefings continued before and after the formal engagement.

The engagement methodology comprised:

- A consultation website was launched - douglasparkmemorialpark.com.au – providing an overview of the SSDA key features.
- Through the website, input was sought via an online survey seeking the views of the local community in relation to the local area and the proposed development. A total of 50 surveys were completed. The analysis is at Appendix Four.
- Website visitors were invited to attend an online information session at 6pm on 14 November 2024.
- Contact details were provided for those seeking information who could not attend a session.
- A postcard was distributed to 1,767 households and businesses on 31 October 2024 and emailed to a further two stakeholders. The postcard provided details of the website, and the opportunities to attend the information session and/or to complete the survey.
- A letter was distributed to all Mitchell Place residents on 30 October 2024, inviting them to a dedicated briefing on:
 - 5.30pm - 6.30pm - 6 November 2024
 - 12.30pm - 8 November 2024
 - 9am - 9 November 2024

Figure 12 Catchment for the letter box drop



7.2 Summary of engagement findings

Attendance at the online information sessions was as follows:

- No participants at the Mitchell Place residents briefing on 6 November 2024
- Three participants at the Mitchell Place residents briefing on 8 November 2024
- No participants at the Mitchell Place residents briefing on 9 November 2024
- Three participants at the community briefing on 14 November 2024 (including one return participant from the 8 November briefing).

Table 14 *Key issues raised during community engagement*

Issue	Comments
Public access to Mitchell Place from the Northern end. Parking and traffic congestion are the major issues reported.	'They'll be able to park on Mitchell Place and walk to the site.' 'Don't want people exiting the facility in from of our homes and coming onto Mitchell Place – opens the whole facility to Mitchell Place'.
Traffic management plan	'The traffic management plan to divert people from going through the gorge will not be effective. People will be directed through the gorge by google maps, they'll turn left and do a U turn in Mitchell Place.'
The Memorial Park is not a park and public access for walking and cycling is not desirable.	'Why would we want to walk around a cemetery? It's not a park. This is a euphemism. No-one will bring their families. Who would want to be walking or cycling through a cemetery where people are grieving?'
Vegetation clearing	'30m buffer zone, local ecology only. Being knocked down by the developer already. We are going to be looking onto a cemetery.'
Wildlife impacts	'Already have lots of wildlife impacted by the speed limits on the roads, having corteges going through will impact further. Koalas have vanished from the site. Trees being removed.'
Water pollution	'Water damage already affecting properties. Buffer zone will not address water impacts.'
Noise and air pollution	'Built on sandstone. How will you mitigate the health impacts from rock ripping? The dust that comes from sandstone is 70% silica, which will affect my family. And noise? Everyone on Mitchell Place owns a dog that barks. I work from home, sound pollution important. And air pollution from crematorium?'
Bushfire risk	'We're in a bushfire zone. What happens when the buffer vegetation burns down and we have to wait for 2 years for regrowth?'
Economic viability	'What happens if it goes broke?'

Issue	Comments
Property values	‘We’ve been fighting for years. Some people are really ill, have had to move away. Anyone else wanting to move away will lose value on their property. This development shouldn’t be here on a residential street. It is depressing, morbid, the social impacts are anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, feeling helpless. We have a right to decide. There might be a small minority of people who don’t care. Most people do not want to live beside where people are buried. This is a remote, little village. The only reason people come here is to come home.’

7.3 Community survey analysis

The Douglas Park Memorial Park proposal community questionnaire was available on the project website (douglasparkmemorialpark.com.au) from 31 October until 31 December 2024. At the time of writing this Report, the questionnaire has been completed by 50 respondents.

A full report of the survey is provided (Appendix 4).

Demographic profile

Most of the respondents were near neighbours of the site. Of the 50 residents, 29 live within five kilometres of the site and 15 live within 500 metres of the site and three as both a local resident and business owner within five kilometres of the site. One respondent was a former resident of Mitchel Road and one is a resident of the Mt Gilead Estate, where a cemetery proposal is attracting resident concerns. The respondents were mostly over 40 years of age and most had lived in the area for more than 10 years. Of those who lived closest to the site, 35 have lived in the area for more than 10 years, and seven for between 5 – 10 years.

Things valued most about the area

Respondents were asked to provide the three things they valued most about their local area. The most frequently mentioned attribute was a ‘quiet, rural lifestyle’. This included features such as ‘the semi-rural character of the environment’, ‘undeveloped rural land, bushland environment’ and ‘space, quiet and community’.

This response is best summed up by this statement: ‘1) It’s a small quite (sic) rural area. 2) We are away from the hassle and Bissel (sic) of the busy suburbs. 3) keeping the existence of small rural town’. Some respondents referred to a sense of ‘old Australia’: ‘the old Australia feel of the Wollondilly locality’.

Low traffic volumes were reported as a very positive feature, which were associated with a rural lifestyle: ‘Quiet, semi-rural, not busy roads, bush environment’.

The natural environment was highly valued: ‘the natural environment that supports most of the iconic Australian native species of flora and fauna’; ‘Biodiversity. Clean Air and Clean Waterways’; and ‘the bush,

the river and the people’.

Concern about the Memorial Park was directly mentioned by three respondents: ‘bushland, no cemetery, peace and quiet’ was an example.

Features of the proposal rated for importance

Respondents were asked to rate for importance features of the proposal. The features reported as the most important include:

- Maintaining as many trees on site as possible
- The protection of flora and fauna
- Effective management of traffic entering the site
- The design of new landscaping
- Avoiding environmental impact from the operation of the crematorium.

The features reported as very unimportant include:

- The provision of a new and expanded cemetery to meet burial needs
- The ability to access opportunities on the site, such as a café or a contemplate garden
- The ability to walk or cycle through the site
- The design of the buildings and how they fit in with the environment.

Strategies for reducing impacts

Respondents were provided with a list of strategies for reducing the impacts on local residents of aspects of the proposal and asked to rate the strategies by importance. The key themes mentioned above came through clearly once again. The themes of change to the character to the local area (10), concerns about a cemetery and crematorium in the local area (14) and traffic flows when the Memorial Park is open (14) were the most frequently mentioned.

When asked for suggestions for managing impacts, 25 respondents simply expressed opposition to the proposal.

Five respondents criticised the survey for not being able to tick more than one option in survey questions.

Thirty-seven residents expressed opposition to the proposal when directly asked.

General responses

When asked for an overall response to the proposal the following comments best capture the sentiment of respondents:

- ‘This proposal is incompatible with the amenity of this rural community. Do not import of the problems of overpopulation to our community.’
- ‘1. Burying of bodies in solid rock with extremely limited natural soil depth. 2. Contaminated runoff entering nearby properties on Mitchell Place via surface and spring aquifers above impervious bedrock. 3. Lack of reticulated sewage, on-site wastewater treatment and disposal into biodiversity buffer zone. 4. Noise from services and traffic entering and leaving the site, and

congestion in the nearby one-way Douglas Park gorge. 5. Bushfire hazard associated with the operation and fuelling (sic) of the crematorium.'

- 'This is pristine bush with very deep sandstone. It is uphill from houses and a beautiful river. This cemetery will ruin the area completely. It is ridiculous to put it in this much bedrock. It is ridiculous to put a crematorium here. We should not have to breathe in the fumes from the crematorium. The traffic will be a nightmare.'

7.4 Implications for the proposal

As discussed previously, there is a strong generalised opposition to the proposal coming through the community engagement.

The source of this seems to be two-fold: a) maintaining 'old, traditional, Australia' as the character of the area, and b) the general dislike of living near cemeteries expressed by some people, which may be caused by a combination of somewhat emotional factors, including being constantly reminded of death, potential fears of the unknown and general superstition exacerbated by the site of graves.

The practical issues running through the Community Survey are consistent with the themes that were reported during the stakeholder and community consultation. They are also consistent with the issues raised in the media by the community and stakeholders.

These include:

- Traffic Management, particularly focussing on Mitchell Place and when services are occurring
- Environmental impact, such as on flora and fauna, biodiversity, the water table and the sandstone bedrock
- How the proposal, through design and landscaping, will aim to retain the character of the local area
- Management of the impacts of the crematorium on the local community
- Construction impacts, such as noise, dust and traffic.

The Proponent is responding to all these issues in this application. The mitigating strategies are detailed in Chapter Eight.

8 MITIGATING SOCIAL IMPACTS

8.1 Government guidelines

The DPHI Guidelines for Social Impact Assessments have create a series of categories for the identification of social impacts²⁴.

These are:

- Way of life, including how people live, how they get around, how they work, how they play, and how they interact each day
- Community, including composition, cohesion, character, how the community functions, resilience, and people's sense of place
- Accessibility, including how people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities, whether provided by a public, private, or not-for-profit organisation
- Culture, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including shared beliefs, customs, practices, obligations, values and stories, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings
- Health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress resulting from financial or other pressures, access to open space and effects on public health
- Surroundings, including ecosystem services such as shade, pollution control, erosion control, public safety and security, access to and use of the natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity
- Livelihoods, including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business
- Decision-making systems, including the extent to which people can have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms.

²⁴ DPHI; Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment; 2023; p.19

8.2 Social impacts and benefits and mitigations

Table 15 *Social impacts and benefits and mitigations*

Social impact and benefit	Likelihood level and magnitude	Assessed impact significance located in project phase	Mitigation strategies
Way of life and surroundings			
Changing character of the area: maintaining 'old, traditional, Australia' as the character of the area.	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy	Currently the site is under-utilised and unsightly. The Proponent intends to enhance the character of the local area by creating a large park open to the community. The park will be created through extensive landscaping and planting with drought tolerant species that are local to the area. Connecting to Country principles will celebrate the area's indigenous history. All built form and infrastructure will be carefully planned to sit within the natural environment as sensitively as possible.
Visual impact	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy	Architecturally designed, built form will be integrated into the landscape to minimise both visual and environmental impact. Buildings and roads are designed to limit their footprint, for example, using boardwalks to avoid significant trees. Low scale building with minimal impact on the natural setting. The materials will reflect this approach: earth tones to suit the existing visual settings, recycled sandstone pavements and recycled and environmentally sensitive fencing. The Visual Impact Assessment (VIA), prepared by Arcadia, assesses the visual impact of the proposal to be low, particularly when managed appropriately through means of design and landscaping. In their report, Arcadia recommends a range of strategies to mitigate visual impact. These include retaining and promoting a wide vegetated buffer around the site boundary, to function as a natural screen; landscaping with indigenous plant species to assist with the integration of the burial grounds into the existing environment; and careful design of all proposed structures and infrastructure on the site. In promoting the visual integration of proposal into its surrounds, as well as supporting native biodiversity, these strategies are supportive of the community's priorities for

			preserving the character and environmental integrity of the area. The Arboriculture Impact Assessment Report prepared by Travers Ecology has recommended preserving all medium and high value trees in the 15-metre buffer, natural area, to the south and north of the development. The report found these trees are critical for maintaining ecological balance, providing habitat for wildlife, and enhancing the aesthetic value of the area. Additionally, trees play a vital role in air purification, carbon sequestration, and soil stabilisation, all of which are crucial for sustaining a healthy environment. To ensure the preservation of these trees, construction methods and materials should adhere to the guidelines specified in the document "Construction Materials and Methods around Trees." This includes using techniques that minimise root disturbance, protecting the trunk and canopy from damage, and employing materials that do not harm the tree's health.
Sensitivity towards locating a cemetery in the local area.	This impact is possible but relatively minor in magnitude and can be mitigated with the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy	The evidence suggests that the general dislike of living near cemeteries expressed by some people, is generally caused by a combination of emotional factors, and superstition. A Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will be prepared and implemented and this issue will be one of the key matters it will address. Ongoing engagement, with an education focus, with the community will be crucial to allay community concerns in this area.
Environmental impact	These impacts are likely, and potentially major. Impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy.	The objective of the design of the proposal is to create a memorial park, minimising impacts on biodiversity, and opening the park to the community for recreation, walking and cycling. A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) has been prepared for the site. A primary mechanism for protecting flora and fauna is the creation of a perimeter conservation area of variable width (buffer zone). A threatened flora survey has been undertaken and those recorded on site are not impacted and protected in the conservation area. Trees that are medium or high value and critical for maintaining ecological balance and providing habitat for wildlife, will be protected in the buffer zone. Other key elements of the environmental strategy include:

			• Extensive landscaping and planting with drought tolerant species that are local to the area and selective use of natives in landscaping • Significant trees are being retained on the site • Water use that does not impact the ground water • All water captured on building roofs will be used for toilets and other black/grey water needs. • Stormwater management through sustainable landscape features, including capture and re-use • Fencing to protect flora and fauna from construction impacts.
Loss of trees	These impacts are likely, and potentially major. Impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	Trees play a crucial role in providing shade, reducing urban heat, and offering habitat for wildlife. The removal of trees is considered only when necessary, such as when trees are diseased, damaged, or pose a safety or environmental risk. The impact of tree removal on the surrounding environment and community, such as the loss of shade, cooling benefits, and wildlife habitat, should also be carefully considered. In the Landscape Design Report and Landscape Drawings prepared by Arcadia, it is noted that the proposal will aim to retain and regenerate as much of the site's perimeter vegetation as possible, including through planting new native trees with foraging value. The Arboriculture Impact Assessment Report prepared by Travers Ecology outlines the comprehensive evaluation of the trees at site, conducted in line with Australian Standard. This assessment underscores the importance of preserving significant trees and working closely with landscape architects to ensure alignment with sustainable practices. A total of 566 trees have been assessed and categorised based on their STARS value. Among these, 118 trees are classified as high value due to their significant ecological and aesthetic contributions. Another 316 trees are categorised as medium value, indicating their moderate importance within the landscape. The remaining 132 trees are considered low value. Each tree is also assigned a tree retention value. Of the 566 trees assessed, 103 are high, 323 are medium, or A rated trees and 140 are deemed low or very low retention value or Z rated trees. 142 trees will be removed and 424 are to be retained. Efforts should be made to preserve high and medium retention valued trees, ensuring that sustainable practices are upheld throughout the project. By prioritising the conservation of high and medium value

			trees, the project not only aligns with ecological preservation goals but also enhances the aesthetic and environmental quality of the site. Retaining these valuable trees supports a more sustainable and environmentally friendly design, benefiting both the local ecosystem and the community.
Groundwater	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	Groundwater investigations included the creation of groundwater monitoring wells across the site. These were monitored for more than five months. While some zones of the site were deemed not suitable for triple burial plots, groundwater in Zone 3 does not present a barrier to triple burial plots. A Hydrological Assessment by Martens Engineers (MA) identified a number of groundwater receptors and potential hazard pathways associated with the proposal, including some groundwater contamination; loss of groundwater resource; and loss of yield to other groundwater users. Each of these identified potential hazards were addressed by the MA engineers with recommended mitigation measures contained at Table 13 of their report. Generally, these recommended mitigation measures relate to the limitation of burials in accordance with hydrogeological zones (as discussed) and system design characteristics to facilitate: • proper stormwater recharge • ideal drainage • minimised intersection of elements with the groundwater table. MA's report details the risk evaluation for each of the hazards identified above, based on circumstances in which the recommended mitigation measures are adopted. This risk assessment framework considered both the hazard consequences and likelihood of occurrence. According to this assessment all identified risks were classified by MA as either 'Low' or 'Very Low' risk. On this basis, the engineers found that if the potential hazards to groundwater are appropriately managed according to recommended measures, significant impacts to groundwater, and to environmental or human health as a result, are not expected to arise from the Proposal.²⁵
Air quality, particularly with regard to	These impacts are likely, and potentially major. Impacts	Impacts will need to be addressed	The Proponent engaged Neo Consulting to conduct an air quality assessment. The air quality impact from the operation of the proposed crematorium was assessed. Two accepted industry models - AERMOD (Regulatory

²⁵ Ibid, p.29

the crematorium	will be mitigated by the strategies described.	prior to construction.	model) and CALPUFF (Alternate model) - were used for this assessment. The maximum allowable emission limits for a typical crematorium were used. Two exhaust stacks were assumed as the only emission sources. Results of both models demonstrated that there are no adverse environmental effects from the operation of the proposed crematorium. The Report found that the location and the design of the exhaust chimneys are favourable for operating the crematorium without having any air quality impacts over the surrounding area. The Report also found actual operations on completion of the project may have fewer emissions further assuring that there are no environmental impacts.
Construction impacts on the environment	These impacts are likely, but relatively minor. Impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	The aim of the CMP, prepared by HT Building, is to set up strategies that minimise and monitor the impact of the development on the existing internal and surrounding environment. The constructor will implement and maintain the CMP throughout the course of the works until completion of the development. Key potential construction impacts relate to: noise and vibration; airborne dust control; stormwater and sediment control; onsite building water management; and management of hazardous materials onsite. All subcontractors will be required to sign off to acknowledge acceptance of the adherence to the conditions contained herein. The plan will always be available for inspection in the site manager's office. The CMP includes a Community Communication Management Plan.
Sustainability	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	BESTEC has been engaged by the Proponent to prepare an Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) report for the project. This report has been produced to satisfy both the relevant items detailed within the Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and addresses Wollondilly Shire Council's Sustainability Policy. The following ESD initiatives are targeted: • The site will be an all-electric site with ≥30% of the annual electricity demand to be provided by onsite renewables • It will be a fossil free site – fully powered by renewable energy (combination of onsite and

			through a renewable energy contract) and smart metering to be installed for energy management • Fittings and fixtures specified in accordance with Green Star requirements • ≥50% of soft landscape to be drought tolerant / native planting • Rainwater reuse tank to each building • Recycling of ≥90% of demolition and construction waste • Water Sensitive Urban Design
Bushfire risk	These impacts are possible and must be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	Travers Bushfire and Ecology have prepared a Bushfire Protection Assessment. The proposal will comply with the Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019.
Health and well-being			
Impact on health	These impacts are possible and must be mitigated by the strategies described in the HIA	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	The Health Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared by Forward-Thinking, details how health impacts are mitigated.
Culture			
Aboriginal heritage	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy	An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) has been prepared by Travers Bushfire & Ecology (Travers). In this report, Travers details appropriate culture heritage mitigation measures which have been developed in consultation with a wide range of Aboriginal stakeholders. It is noted, with respect to consultation, that given the proximity of the study area to the site of the Appin Massacre (approximately 1.5km south east), the site may be of sensitive value to Dharawal and Gundungurra people. With respect to cultural significance and sensitive land management, the Proponent will ensure that all site personnel are made aware of the statutory legislation protecting Aboriginal sites and places of significance. All staff and contractors involved in the initial disturbance of topsoil on the site are recommended to undergo a cultural heritage induction prior to commencing works. With respect to any Aboriginal objects, human remains or other sensitive material discovered during works, works will be restricted immediately and the relevant agencies (such as Heritage NSW or NSW Police) will be notified.

			A Connecting with Country Framework has been prepared by Artefact Pty Ltd which aligns with the principles and guidelines of the Government Architect New South Wales <i>Connecting with Country Framework 2023</i> and associated best practice documents. This document has been prepared in consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders from the area and provides a vision to embed design principles into the future development of the site. The Report makes a range of recommendations, including embedding Designing with Country principles into the design; facilitating ongoing consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders during subsequent key development stages, and the development of a heritage interpretation strategy or public art strategy that requires consultation with key stakeholders. Forward-Thinking supports the implementation of these recommendations.
Community			
Ongoing community engagement	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will primarily occur during and post-construction and pre and post occupancy	For the proposal to successfully integrate into the local community, the preparation and implementation of a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will be critical. The SIMP will focus on issues raised by the community, and outline strategies, which will be monitored, for managing those issues.
Economic			
Economic impact to local area	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy	Douglas Park is a hamlet-scaled centre catering for the limited convenience needs of the mainly single-story dwellings that surround it. Douglas Park includes a primary school and rail station. There are vacant premises on commercial zoned land in the centre, and potential for infill and intensification of commercial land. The local area is one of the fastest growing areas in Sydney and this proposal and infill residential development would provide a significant economic boost to the village and local residents. This would create jobs and further investment into the local economy.
Access			
Traffic management	These impacts are almost certain and	Impacts will need to be addressed	A Traffic and Accessibility Impact Assessment has been prepared by Traffix Pty Ltd. Douglas Park Drive will be reconfigured to create a dedicated right turn lane for

	can be mitigated by the strategies described.	prior to construction	northbound vehicles to avoid queuing on Douglas Park Road. The proposed driveway access on Douglas Park Drive and the associated right lane will be designed in accordance with Australian standards, and New South Wales government and Wollondilly Council requirements. The project is expected to generate the following additional vehicle trips: • 20 vehicle trips during the AM network peak hour • 130 vehicle trips during the PM network peak hour • 110 vehicle trips during the Saturday network peak hour. This predicted traffic generation is expected to have no adverse impacts on the surrounding road network. With the timing of the services being from 10am the arrival of the first service will be after the morning peak period and therefore will not affect traffic in the morning peak period.
Car parking management	These impacts are almost certain and can be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	The proposal will include provision for 135 car spaces. This figure has been determined after assuming that all mourners and visitors will arrive by car. This will be more than sufficient to accommodate the demands of up to 330 visitors and 20 staff. The Chapel can accommodate a maximum of 200 visitors with up to 130 visitors in the burial grounds.
Construction impacts	These impacts are certain and can be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction.	A Construction Traffic and Pedestrian Management Plan has been prepared for the project. The plan is aimed at minimising disruption to residents and visitors to the area during the project's construction. The Report makes a range of recommendations including: • The use of heavy vehicles will be restricted to specific construction hours • All loading and unloading activities will be contained wholly within the site • All adjacent property access will be maintained at all times • All vehicles are not obstructing, any pedestrian crossing or footpaths • No access from Mitchell Place will be provided for construction vehicles to minimise impacts to neighbouring residents • SafeWork NSW accredited traffic controllers will be utilised at the site vehicle access points to assist construction vehicles during work hours and ensure safety for local residents. Trucks will be required to use Transport for New South Wales classified state roads, where possible. All drivers

			will be required to Radio in prior to arriving on site, to avoid queueing on surrounding roads. Drivers will not be permitted to park on surrounding roads outside of the site.
Green Travel Plan	These impacts are likely, with positive impacts for the local and wider communities. Negative impacts will be mitigated by the strategies described.	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to occupancy	The project's Green Travel recommends several actions to manage future travel demands being generated by the development. These actions include: • On site passenger drop off/pick up area • Consider provision of EV charging facilities • Encourage staff pooling and provide all staff with a copy of the Transport Access Guide. • Ongoing engagement Council to improve existing sustainable infrastructure in the local area.
Decision making systems			
The proposal should be assessed by Council rather than the NSW Government	These impacts are very unlikely	Impacts will need to be addressed prior to construction	The proposal will be assessed as State Significant Development (SSD). This is a stringent process requiring around highly technical reports from experts as part of an Environment Impact Statement (EIS) to the be assessed by DPHI.

9 CONCLUSION

The project comes at a time when there is increasingly urgent demand for new burial spaces in Greater Sydney. A myriad of government reports have explored the implications, describing the issue as a crisis, particularly for those faiths that require burial, rather than cremation. The issue is likely to see the price of burial plots become out of reach for most families. Religious groups could face a backlash from their distressed congregation.

The failure to plan for cemeteries in previous decades, and the current 'catchup' is seeing strong community resistance to cemetery proposals. The community engagement undertaken for this SIA reports strongly worded statements from neighbours who express total opposition to the proposal. Some community members are adamant that the cemetery, particularly the crematorium, should not be built on the site.

While it is critical to take note of the concerns of the community in a Social Impact Assessment, resident views must be weighed against the fact that the site already has concept plan approval for a memorial park, granted in 2020, from the Wollondilly Shire Local Planning Panel. While the proposal that is the subject of this SIA is a significant increase in burial plots, there is no increase to the size of the development area. Further, the new plots will be built in stages over many years, with plenty of opportunity for further community engagement.

Clearly, the community is concerned about changes to the character of the local area and a general dislike to the idea of living near cemeteries. However, it's important to note that not everyone in the community is concerned about living near a memorial park. A well-designed memorial park, in a parkland setting, opened up for the community to enjoy, would be a positive landuse for many and certainly a better alternative than many other land-uses.

An important strategy to assist the community come to terms with a cemetery next door, is ongoing engagement and education. A Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will involve ongoing engagement with local residents and education to allay the concerns of the community.

As detailed in Chapter Eight, all specific impact issues raised by the community have been addressed by the Proponent. These include traffic management and parking, and impact on the natural environment, such as flora and fauna, ground water and air quality.

Further, the population of the South-West is growing faster than any other district of Greater Sydney. The South West Growth Area (SWGA) has been identified by the NSW Government as a key growth area. In SWGA, significant residential development is creating emerging suburbs supported by upcoming infrastructure funded and delivered by the NSW Government.

A large, multi-faith Memorial Park will be a critical part of the infrastructure in the area required to

contribute to the physical and social fabric of the community. A memorial park would be an economic boost to the Douglas Park village and surrounds. The proposal would provide activation, employment and hospitality opportunities.

From the engagement, it appears very likely that the Islamic faith will be a key client of the Douglas Park Memorial Park. Other faiths and nationalities who are facing impending burial land shortages will also be important to Douglas Park.

While the location of the Douglas Park Memorial Park is some distance from Sydney's CBD and Parramatta, and people tend to choose burial space that they have a connection with, the shortage of burial space is likely to mean that distance is less of a barrier in selecting a location for burial or cremation.

It is likely that the proposal will help address an urgent landuse planning issue facing Sydney, and create a passive opportunity lacking in the local area which will be of benefit to local residents. Overall, this SIA finds that the social benefits of the proposal are strong and the negative impacts are appropriately mitigated by the Proponent.

Appendix 1 Curriculum Vitae

Professor Roberta Ryan

Roberta Ryan is a qualified social planner, she is a leading social policy and planning researcher and analyst with over 30 years' experience in Australia and internationally. Roberta has a significant professional and academic background in social planning and impact assessment and has developed new approaches in the application of research and stakeholder engagement to social planning and impact assessment in land-use development and management contexts.

Roberta has experience in statutory and social planning processes and delivery of major social infrastructure, housing, commercial, and retail developments. Roberta has demonstrated the capacity to manage complex land use and social planning projects in sensitive stakeholder environments.

Roberta regularly acts as a social planning expert witness in the NSW Land and Environment Court, NCAT and has also provided expert witness services to the Victorian Solicitor's Office and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This has included expert advice on the social impacts of a range of contentious land uses and complex developments including mines, major social infrastructure, large format retail, affordable housing, and liquor, and restricted premises.

Expertise

Roberta is a respected social planning advisor to the NSW Land and Environment Court, NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Northern Territory Liquor Commission, the Victorian Court of Administrative Appeals, and the ACT Supreme Court. These matters have considered the potential for social benefits and adverse impacts from potentially conflicting land uses, including:

- Licensed clubs (general social impacts, liquor, gaming, childcare, retail, caravan parks and manufactured home estates and retirement living)
- Affordable housing (including boarding houses, group homes and other affordable housing projects)
- On-premises and packaged liquor licences (bars, nightclubs, liquor precincts, retail)
- Retirement and aged care facilities
- Quarries and mining
- Schools (changing land uses, Muslim schools)
- Churches (large evangelical churches, mosques)
- Residential housing impacts (increases in density, changing land uses)
- Sensitive uses (brothels, funeral parlours)

- Personal damages (negligence, contributory negligence, spinal injuries)

Research areas

- Social Impact
- Strategic planning processes for state agencies and local councils
- Social research, program evaluation and policy review and development in the areas of health, disability, housing and employment
- Environmental impact and prevention
- The development and review of community strengthening, community development and whole of government and whole of community programs
- Community and stakeholder engagement, management, communications and facilitation

Teaching areas

- Social planning
- Social sustainability
- Social research
- Strategic planning
- Impact evaluation and assessment
- Intergovernmental relations
- Community engagement and stakeholder management

Trish Oakley

Trish Oakley has been involved in the preparation of Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) both in government and in the private sector. Most recently, as a Director in Transport for NSW (TfNSW), Trish oversaw the preparation, and associated engagement, for the SIAs for two major urban renewal projects, Circular Quay Precinct Renewal and Central Station Precinct Renewal.

This involved overseeing the preparation of scoping reports and other key elements of the SIA methodologies. As an engagement professional with more 30 years' experience, she brought a strong commitment for authentic consultation, particularly with hard to reach participants, such as CALD communities, as a foundation for SIAs. Trish worked with TfNSW's Aboriginal engagement team to support a unique partnership approach with various Aboriginal stakeholders.

As an Associate Director at Forward Thinking, Trish leads both the engagement for the preparation of SIAs and works with clients to develop mitigation strategies for identified issues associated with the proposal.

With degrees in government and law, Trish has been a senior executive in the NSW Government over decades. Most recently, in TfNSW, she oversaw business strategy, stakeholder engagement and communication for major project infrastructure delivery in Sydney. Projects included various active transport corridors, Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, and train station and ferry wharf upgrades. Critical to the success of these projects was the management of impacts on local and wider communities.

As an Executive Director in the Department of Planning and Environment, Trish led the Department's communication and engagement strategy for the reform of the planning system, as well as the key business-as-usual programs.

As a leading consultant for a range of blue-chip property and infrastructure companies, Trish designed and implemented large-scale communications and stakeholder engagement programs for a number of urban renewal sites, including ICC Sydney, Central Park and Green Square.

Trish was Chief of Staff to a NSW Deputy Premier, managing policy, communication, engagement and media strategy in the portfolios of Health, Planning, Housing and Aboriginal Affairs. She advised government at the highest level in these portfolio areas, liaising with the bureaucracy, shaping policy development and advising and implementing communication and engagement strategies.

Trish began her career as a journalist with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, focusing on reporting politics and law, working in both the Federal and State press galleries.

Appendix 2 Demand for Burial Space by Denomination

South West Sydney and the Illawarra: Residential Development Expansion

INTRODUCTION

The population of the South-West is growing faster than any other district of Greater Sydney and the extent of proposed residential development in this district reflects this growth. Additionally, The Illawarra Shoalhaven is one of NSW's fastest growing regions of NSW.

In these areas, significant residential development is creating emerging suburbs supported by upcoming infrastructure funded and delivered by the NSW Government.

In this document, the South Western Sydney area includes seven Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Fairfield
- Liverpool
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

For the purposes of this document, this analysis also includes the Illawarra and Shoalhaven LGAs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the population growth in Sydney's South-West and in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven LGAs will support the Development Application (SSDA) for a cemetery on Douglas Park Road, Douglas Park.

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY GROWTH AREA

The South West Growth Area (SWGA) has been identified by the NSW Government as a key growth area. The SWGA consists of approximately 17,000ha of greenfield land identified by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for future urban development.

It currently comprises of 16 precincts across the Camden, Campbelltown and Liverpool Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The SWGA is established by the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Western Parkland City 2021 (WPC Precincts SEPP))* that is designed to streamline the land release process for the delivery of new communities, homes, employment areas, health and education facilities, supported through the provision of adequate infrastructure within greenfield areas.

Population Growth

In keeping with trends over the last 10 years, the total population in the Growth Area is projected to be just over 170,000 people by 2041.

Wollondilly is one of the fastest growing LGAs in SWGA with a projected annual growth rate of 2.6%, compared with 0.95% for NSW.

Figure 1: Projected population growth in Wollondilly LGA. Source: Projections Explorer from the NSW Planning Portal

Projections

Over the 20 years (2021-2041) New South Wales' population will grow by **1,706,176 (21%)** – or around **(1%)** a year. Not all places will grow or change in the same way, at the same rate, or at the same time. For more information about what sits behind these numbers, visit the [NSW Population Projections website](#). 

Region	2021	2041	Change	Annual %
NSW	8,166,757	9,872,934	1,706,176	➕ 0.95
 WOLLONDILLY	54,039	90,356	36,317	➕ 2.60

The South West Sydney Growth Area was included in the former Greater Sydney Commission's report *Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan*.

Projections of population growth for younger people (0-4, 5-19, and 20-24) in SWGA LGAs are particularly significant.

Figure 2: Projected population growth in SWGA by age (young people). Source: Greater Sydney Commission's report *Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan*.

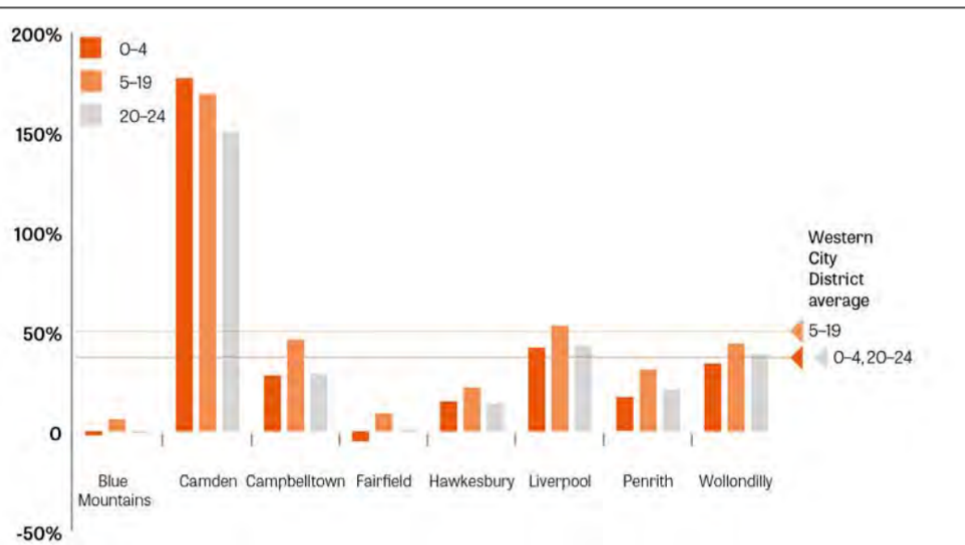
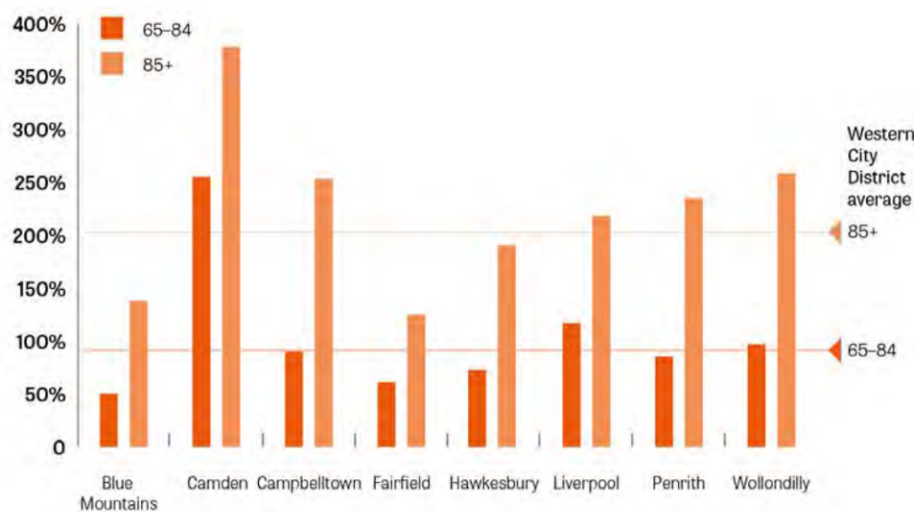


Figure 3: Projected population growth in SWGA by age (older people). Source: Greater Sydney Commission's report *Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan*.



Housing Growth

The NSW Government has imposed significant housing targets on LGAs in the Western City District.

Figure 4: Housing targets in Western City. Source: Greater Sydney Commission's report *Our Greater Sydney 2056: Western City District Plan*.

LGA	0-5 year housing supply target: 2016-2021
Blue Mountains	650
Camden	11,800
Campbelltown	6,800
Fairfield	3,050
Hawkesbury	1,150
Liverpool	8,250
Penrith	6,600
Wollondilly	1,550
Western City District Total	39,850

Reflecting the population growth and housing targets, The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) is considering a record number of planning proposals in the SWGA

Figure 5: Planning proposals in the SWGA. Source: DPHI *Guide to Growth Areas*

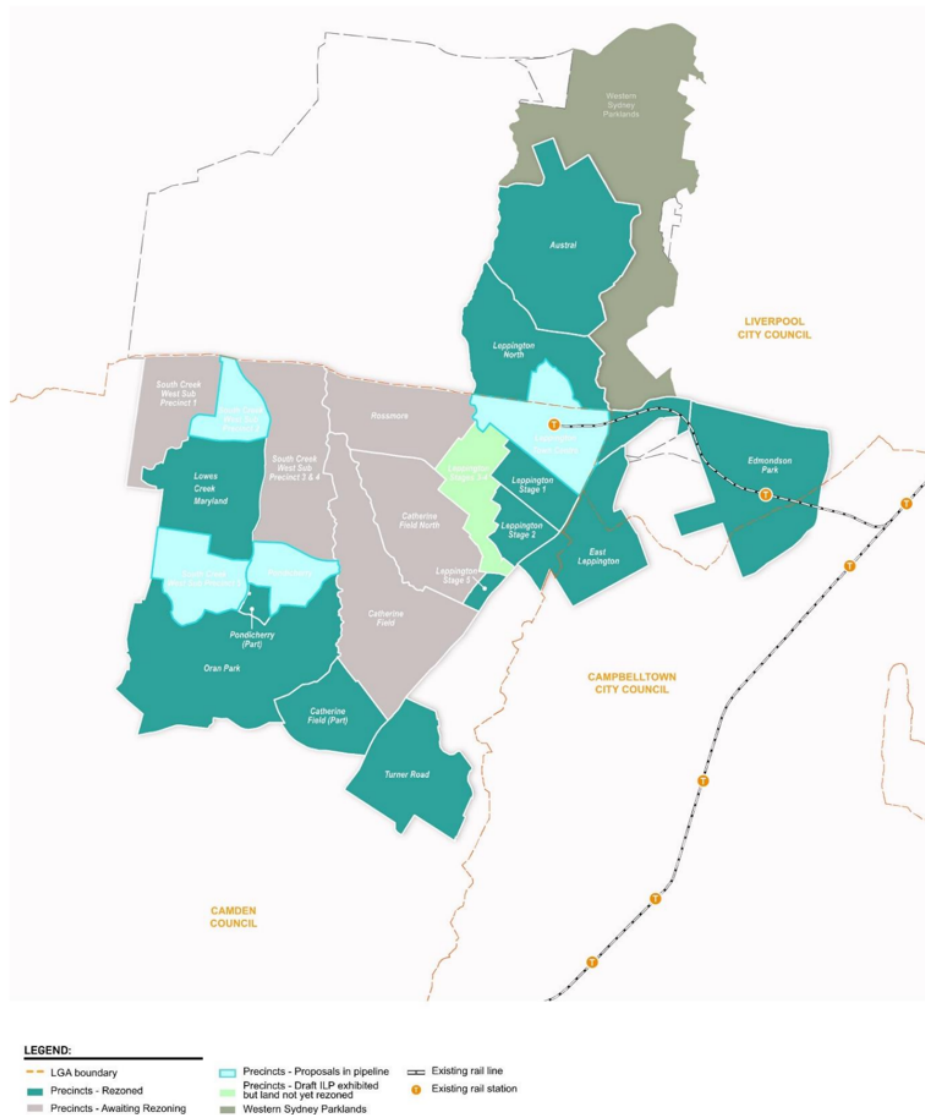


Figure 6: Chronology of rezoning precincts and the estimated number of homes each will deliver. Source: DPHI

Precinct	Local Government Area	Year Rezoned	Anticipated Number of New Homes
Oran Park	Camden	2007	7,540
Turner Road	Camden	2007	4,020
Edmondson Park	Liverpool and Campbelltown	2008	6,000
East Leppington	Camden and Campbelltown	2013	3,300
East Leppington	Liverpool	2014	1,150
Catherine Field (Part)	Camden	2013	3,200
Leppington (Stage 1)	Camden	2015	2,500
Leppington North	Camden	2013	17,500
Leppington North	Liverpool	2013	
Austral	Liverpool	2013	
Lowes Creek Maryland	Camden	2021	7,000
Leppington (Stage 2)	Camden	2021	1,900
Leppington (Stage 5)	Camden	2021	500
TOTAL			54,610

Key precincts

Wollondilly

In March 2020, Council adopted the *Wollondilly Local Strategic Planning Statement*, which provides specific guidance to implement the priorities and actions of the *Western City District Plan* at the local level.

The *Wollondilly Local Housing Strategy* provides a 20-year vision for housing across the Wollondilly Shire. The strategy states that the delivery of additional housing in Wollondilly can be achieved through planned growth in the Wilton Growth Area, with the focus on coordinated planning and infrastructure delivery across State and Local Government.

Council adopted the *Wollondilly Employment Land Strategy* to establish a framework to guide future development on employment land in Wollondilly Shire LGA.

Forty hectares of land has been identified in the strategy for future employment precincts as part of the Wilton Growth Area Structure Plan. These areas are proposed for business and enterprise type uses, including office, bulky goods retail and highway service centre uses.

Wilton

The Wilton Growth Area is at the junction of the Hume Motorway and Picton Road in the Wollondilly Shire Local Government Area.

Priority 4 of the *Wollondilly Local Strategic Planning Statement* sets out Council's commitments to new residential communities in Wilton.

Ninety percent of forecasted housing growth in the Wollondilly LGA is planned to be located in the Wilton Growth Area.

While Wilton will be delivered in stages, it is expected there will be more than 10,000 new dwellings by completion.

There are seven precincts within the Wilton Growth Area. Each precinct will create a local community, providing new homes, jobs, public transport and community facilities.

Campbelltown-Macarthur

Campbelltown-Macarthur is developing into Greater Sydney's newest health and medical hub. It contains Campbelltown public and private hospitals, Western Sydney University Campbelltown Campus, and TAFE NSW Western Sydney.

Collectively, these elements form the health and education precinct. The Collaboration Area also includes Macarthur Square, Campbelltown Mall and surrounding government services.

The centre has the potential to grow up to 31,000 jobs (a 52 percent increase) by 2036.

Gilead

A rezoning proposal for the Gilead master planned community in Campbelltown has been approved by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. This major planning milestone will see half of the 495 hectare site rezoned for environmental conservation, with the balance of the site approved to deliver 3,300 homes in south-west Sydney.

Cobbitty

A residential development in Cobbitty in south-west Sydney effectively creates a new suburb a general store, café, post office, church and thousands of homes.

The suburb of Cobbitty stands to benefit from multi-billion-dollar infrastructure investment in Sydney's south-west. On the edge of the South West Growth Area, extensive planning is underway to deliver road and rail improvements to support future economic and social opportunity.

Other drivers of population growth in south west Sydney

Aerotropolis

Western Sydney Airport will be a major generator of business growth and will attract investment to the region. The airport alone will support almost 28,000 direct and indirect jobs in Western Sydney by 2031 and nearly 120,000 in the long term.

ILLAWARRA SHOALHAVEN REGION

Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan

The *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan* sets the strategic framework for the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven.

Objective 18 of the Regional Plan is to provide housing to meet the demand for 58,000 new houses by 2041, in urban release areas and existing urban areas.

The Regional Plan reports that Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven will meet this demand and identifies West Lake Illawarra, Nowra-Bomaderry and Bombo Quarry as growth areas.

Bombo Quarry

Bombo Quarry is a 114-hectare regionally significant site long recognised for its potential reuse for employment and residential needs.

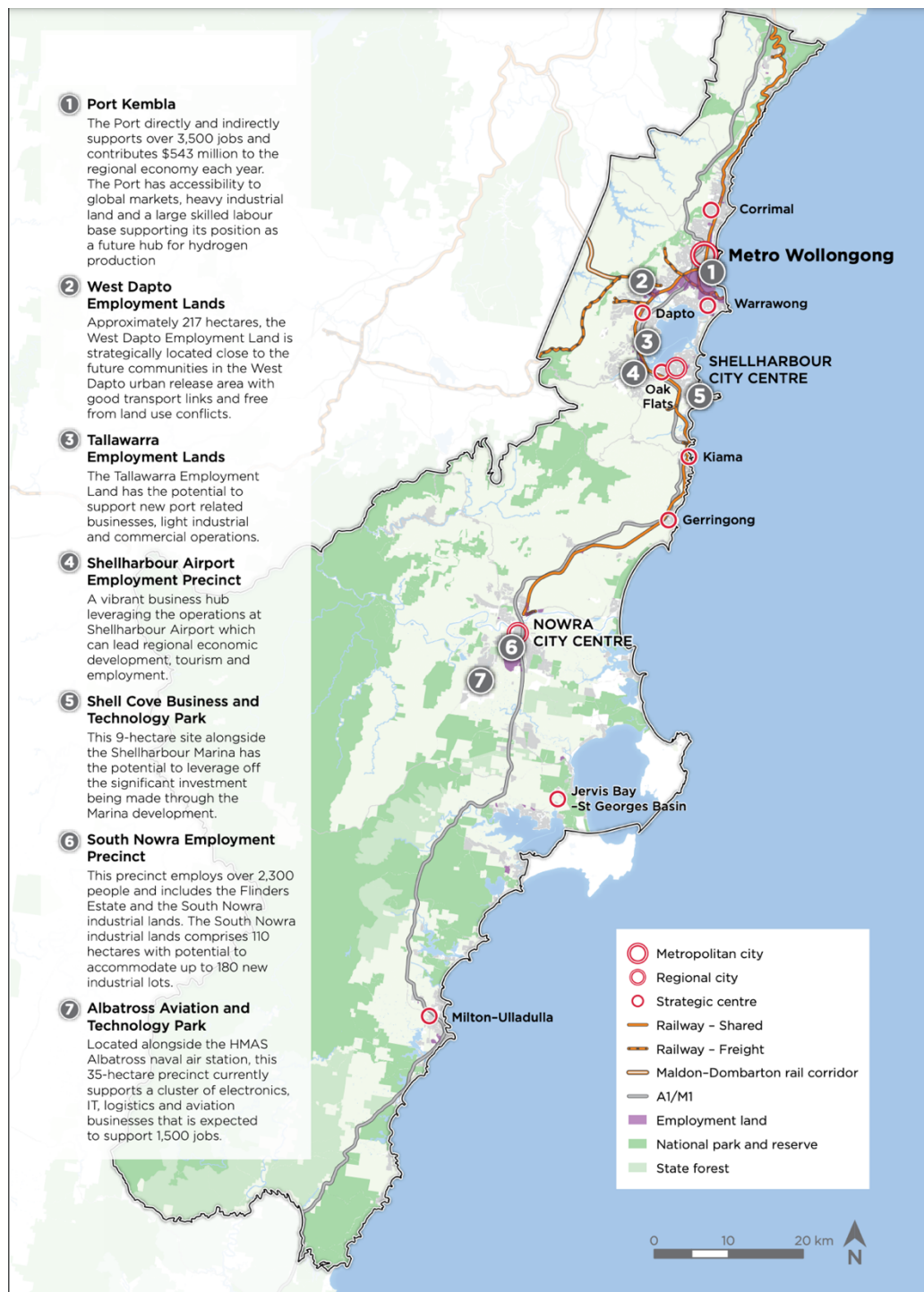
The Quarry has supplied hard-rock resources to the Illawarra and Sydney construction markets since the 1940s, providing rail ballast, aggregate and road-based products.

As the Quarry nears the end of its operational life, it could potentially be transformed with new housing, workplaces or recreational areas.

Calderwood

In 2010 the NSW State Government granted the Calderwood Urban Development Project Concept Plan for the development of approximately 4,800 residential dwellings, 50 hectares of mixed-use land, open space, environmental lands, internal roads, service infrastructure and community facilities. The plan also established general principles for local infrastructure requirements.

Figure 7: Employment lands in the Illawarra Shoalhaven precincts. Source: DPHI



Appendix 3 Faith Engagement Outcomes

Purpose

The purpose of the Faith and Industry Engagement Report is to provide a summary of the engagement undertaken by Forward-Thinking with religious denominations and the funeral industry about religious and cultural requirements regarding memorialisation and other matters.

To provide more detailed information, Forward-Thinking also undertook a literature review of the various faith's preferences for burial or cremation, requirements for memorialisation and other cultural practices, relating to ongoing visitation, style of headstone and grave, and approach to funeral services.

This information will inform the proposed cemetery design to be presented to the State Design Review Panel (SDRP) on 2 October 2024.

Methodology

Forward-Thinking contacted the 10 largest, denomination groups in terms of congregation size (Attachment One). The first point of contact tended to be members of the NSW Faith Affairs Council.

The engagement focused on the following specific matters:

- Current preference data for burial versus cremation
- Considerations around these preferences
- Specific plot design issues, such as size, orientation, location in the cemetery and how these issues are determined
- Special features of the cemetery creating a design excellence outcome for mourners
- Special needs of cremation mourners
- Changes and modernisation in burial/cremation trends
- Spiritual and cultural needs for the service and body disposition, such as the time of day, role of mourners, likely attendance levels
- Catchment of the cemetery – time constraints for disposition and travel constraints of mourners
- General burial shortage data in Greater Sydney.

Interviews were conducted with:

- A representative of the CEO of Catholic Cemeteries of Sydney, Michael Cashin
- Reverend Brett Hall of the Anglican Archdiocese of Sydney
- A representative of the Imman Shadi Alsuleiman, President of Australian National Imams Council, Mariam Ardati, who is a member of the Metropolitan Memorial Parks Community Engagement Committee
- A representative of Dr Kamal Weerakoon, Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Reverend John Murray, Minister of Camden Presbyterian Church
- Erica Hendrawan, Buddhist Council of NSW
- Reverend Dr Manas Ghosh, Minister in the Uniting Church in the Synod of NSW and ACT

A Board Member of the Australian Funeral Directors association was also interviewed. The Association is the major industry body in Australia. The Board Member interviewed, Shannon Scott, is also a senior executive with InvoCare, which operates internationally and is the largest funeral company in Australia.

Forward Thinking undertook a literature review into the faiths interviewed and the following faiths:

- Jewish faith
- Greek Orthodox
- Chinese Presbyterian Church
- Maronite Faith
- Pacific Islander burials

Engagement Outcomes

Catholic Internments

While Vatican II gave Catholics a dispensation for cremation, people of catholic faith still tend to elect for burial. This is particularly so for Catholics of Italian background.

As Christians, Catholics believe in the afterlife. As such, their funerals centre upon prayers for the deceased's soul. And they typically include a mass during the Catholic funeral service²⁶.

²⁶ Memorial Planning; Religious Funerals Guide; <https://www.memorialplanning.com/resources/religious-funerals-guide/catholic-funerals-guide-etiquette-traditions>

Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria is the organisation leading the management of existing cemeteries and leading the delivery of new cemeteries. A new cemetery is under the Macarthur Memorial Park (MMP) will be multidenominational, catering for all religious and ethnic groups. The MMP will provide 35.5 hectares of publicly accessible parkland. It is scheduled to open next year²⁷.

Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria say that 70 percent of Catholics are using burial, although other sources indicate this figure maybe high. Of those, about 70 percent require only a simple grave, with a relatively plain granite headstone. The remaining 30 percent require something more 'monumental'²⁸.

In terms of the location of the Douglas Park proposal, people tend to prefer a cemetery where they have a connection. That is changing, however, and people tend to want to travel about 30 or 40 minutes and not much more. Ongoing visitation is not as important as with other cultures²⁹.

For those who elect cremation traditionally churches and cemeteries prefer that ashes be placed in a cremation urn and either buried or kept in a mausoleum, not scattered. Catholics believe at the end of time all bodies will rise from the grave to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Autopsies are allowed, and Catholics actually see them as an act of charity, a concept which is central to their faith. Embalming is also allowed.

The Catholic Rites are comprised of three separate and vital parts. The Vigil, Funeral Mass and the Committal. Through these sacred and solemn Catholic Rites, the family and friends of the deceased are reminded of the companionship and support of Christ and all believers.

For the Reception of the Body, also called the Prayer Vigil, the coffin is taken into the church on the eve of the funeral and people gather together to pray. It is traditional in many cultures but there are good reasons why any Catholic family might want to have the service³⁰.

Usually, the final commendation is conducted in church and then the body is carried to the grave. The tomb or burial plot is then blessed, if it has not been blessed previously. A grave newly dug in an already consecrated cemetery is considered blessed, and requires no further consecration.

However, a mausoleum erected above ground, or even a brick chamber beneath the surface, is regarded as needing blessing when used for the first time. This blessing is short and consists only of a single prayer after

²⁷ Interview with Michael Cashin Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria, 12 September, 2024

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

which the body is again sprinkled with holy water and incensed. Italian Catholics tend to prefer an ornate above ground crypt or vault.

Image: Catholic section at Rookwood cemetery



Jewish internments

Jewish law requires that a person be buried within 24 hours from the time of death. The religious concept underlying this law is that a human, made in the image of God, should be given the deepest respect³¹.

As a sense of respect, the deceased is not left alone from the time of death until the funeral. Volunteers from the Jewish community sit with the deceased, often reading psalms, until the burial.

Burials never take place on the Sabbath or holidays. Displaying the body prior to burial is not permitted. Before the deceased is buried, the person must be ritually washed. Those who volunteer to do this righteous task are members of a "Chevra Kadisha," or holy society. They are on call 24 hours a day.

Jewish law states that the dead must be buried in the earth. The human body returns to the earth as it was³². The focus is on natural decomposition of the remains: the embalmed body in a wooden casket, as close to the earth as possible.

³¹ Why are Jewish people buried within 24 hours of passing: What's the Rush? Star of David Memorial Chapels, <https://jewish-funeral-home.com/why-are-jewish-people-buried-within-24-hours-of-passing-whats-the-rush/>

³² Lamm Maurice, The Internment in Judaism, Chabad Organisation
https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/281565/jewish/The-Interment-in-Judaism.htm

Cremation is never permitted. The body must return to the earth without being unnaturally interfered with. Cremated ashes may not be buried in a Jewish cemetery. Mausoleums are acceptable only if the deceased is buried in the earth itself.

Usually, the funeral ceremony is brief and includes the recitation of psalms, followed by a eulogy (hesped), and finishes with a traditional closing prayer, the El Maleh Rachamim³³.

When the funeral service has ended, the mourners come forward to fill the grave. Symbolically, this gives the mourners closure as they observe, or participate in, the filling of the grave site.

One custom is for all people present at the funeral to take a spade or shovel, held pointing down instead of up, to show the antithesis of death to life and that this use of the shovel is different from all other uses, to throw three shovelfuls of dirt into the grave.

When someone is finished, they put the shovel back in the ground, rather than handing it to the next person, to avoid passing along their grief to other mourners. This literal participation in the burial is considered a particularly good mitzvah because it is one for which the beneficiary—the deceased—can offer no repayment or gratitude and thus it is a pure gesture.

The Jewish community tends to live in Sydney's East and upper North Shore (around the St Ives area) and the requirement for bodies to be buried within 24 hours means location is a critical consideration in selecting a cemetery. However, the shortage of burial space will encourage to consider options further afield and may see new Douglas Park cemetery as an opportunity.

While historically headstones were not encouraged, now headstones often cover the whole plot.

³³ ["The Jewish Funeral Ceremony – Brooklyn Funeral Home". www.shermanschapel.com. Archived from the original on 2017-04-06.](http://www.shermanschapel.com)

Image: Typical Jewish graves; Melbourne Memorials, <https://melbournememorials.com.au>



Single

Typically covering the full plot, a single Jewish memorial will generally feature a headstone and cater to a single burial.



Double

Covering two plots, a double Jewish memorial will often feature a single headstone, or two headstones joined together, and cater to two burials.



Bespoke

Bespoke Jewish memorials allow you to honour the life of an individual with a unique, single or double memorial, designed and crafted by specialist artisans.

Islamic funerals

The Islamic faith has a strong belief in the afterlife and funerals are extremely spiritual events and central to Muslim communities³⁴. Sharia law dictates that funeral arrangements must start immediately after the death, which of course means the travel time to the cemetery is critical for the family.

The Islamic community say they are the biggest customers of Rookwood cemetery burials³⁵. Rookwood will run out of space for Muslim burials in one to two years. They also say that they will seek 40 percent of the space at Douglas Park³⁶.

Sustainability is the key consideration. There are three pillars of a good cemetery:

- Visitability – families continue to visit for years to come – often bringing out the family for a picnic. Connection doesn't stop after death.
- Accessibility
- Affordability

³⁴ Funeral Partners <https://www.funeralpartners.co.uk/help-advice/arranging-a-funeral/types-of-funerals/muslim-funeral-services/>

³⁵ Interview with Mariam Ardati, 10 September, 2024

³⁶ Ibid

Douglas Park is a good area for a cemetery. It is in a growth area. Although the nearest funeral mortuary is at Lakemba or Regents Park. Lakemba is reportedly Australia's largest Mosque and is known as the Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb Mosque³⁷.

The Muslim community tends to use dedicated Islamic funeral directors. There is no viewing of the body and mourners must attend the mosque³⁸. The treatment of the body is generally very simple and the shroud generally a simple white cloth.

The grave should be perpendicular to Mecca, with the deceased's body positioned so their right side faces Mecca³⁹. Where there is no coffin, which is against the law in Australia, traditionally wood or stones are laid down to prevent the body touching the dirt⁴⁰.

Traditionally, large or decorative headstones are not allowed. In Sydney, in contemporary times, this is not strictly adhered to but, generally speaking, Islamic headstones tend to be plainer than some other faiths.

On average, an Islamic funeral lasts between 30 to 60 minutes. The Imam leads the service, which includes prayers and readings from the Quran at the Mosque. The funeral procession can number up to 300 people. Mourners tend to arrive in car and carpool⁴¹.

There is no issue with the Muslim community regarding triple deep graves, or limited tenure, as long as they are safe. Miriam Ardati is not aware of triple deep graves in Australia⁴².

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Funeral Partners <https://www.funeralpartners.co.uk/help-advice/arranging-a-funeral/types-of-funerals/muslim-funeral-services/>

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Input from Farah Georges

⁴¹ Interview with Mariam Ardati, 10 September 10, 2024

⁴² Ibid

Image: Muslim graves at Sydney's Rookwood cemetery



Anglican Burials

The Sydney Anglican community is 90 percent low church. High church has similar requirements to the Catholic Church. The low Church places little emphasis on ritual. Chapels should be plain but practical, consider simple and practical items, such as good sound systems, to make it a respectful occasion but not elaborate ⁴³.

Both burial and cremation are acceptable in the Anglican faith. There are few restrictions on headstones and the graves tend to vary considerably. People tend to cremate – one of the main reasons is cremation is much cheaper than burial. Services are either in a church or at the cemetery chapel.

There are no rules regarding the timing of the burial.

There is a shortage of burial space in the whole of Sydney and in the area local to Douglas Park. The Anglican Church has just closed a burial ground in the area.

About 10 percent of the people who identify as Anglicans are churchgoers. An Anglican service is usually carried out before a cremation. Anglican crematoriums usually have special grounds called 'gardens of rest' where the ashes can be buried.

There is often a short service at the crematorium, even if there has been a full funeral service previously.

⁴³ Interview with Rev Brett Hall, Sydney Anglican Diocese, 12 September 2024, formerly a local parish minister in the area

Pacific islanders

Anglicans from the Pacific Islands view burials as a very significant part of the faith and the funeral ceremony tends to be among the most elaborate Anglican funeral services. The deceased is often dressed in traditional costume.

The coffin often goes to the family home the night before the funeral home for an all-night vigil by family members. Very often there is a service at the church then the procession proceeds to the cemetery. There are no major location considerations or rules governing graves.

A ceremony around the grave is very important and Pacific Islanders often like to be part of filling the grave. The family will visit the grave regularly, often holding family picnics at the grave site.

Greek Orthodox

The orthodox churches have a strong belief in the afterlife and the Church requires burial rather than cremation.

The funeral service is presided over by the Priest and an open casket is the usual practice. The final order of service is a graveside service where the deceased is buried in the cemetery. Grave design tends to be fairly elaborate and cover the whole grave.

As with the funeral service, the traditions of the graveside ceremony at a Greek funeral can vary, however, they commonly include the following practices:

- The priest will perform the Trisagion Service
- Soil is placed on the coffin in the shape of a cross
- Mourners place flowers on the coffin
- The coffin and grave are arranged so that they face East
- The priest may seal the casket with oil and sand⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Guide to Greek Funerals in Australia; <https://www.gatheredhere.com.au/guide-to-greek-funerals-in-australia>

Image: Greek Orthodox graves at Rookwood



Presbyterian Church of Australia

The Presbyterian church is a relatively small church and does not have a large congregation in the Douglas Park area. There are many larger churches in the area⁴⁵.

Chinese Presbyterian

The rules around death are very important to all members of Chinese society. Special attention is paid to the care of the dead and very specific rules are followed. It is widely believed that bad luck will come to the family that does not honour the rules.

Chinese people equally accept casket burial and cremation. The choice is a matter of personal preference, and some families choose to watch or even participate at the beginning of the cremation.

During a witness cremation, which is also called a cremation viewing, family members are brought into the crematory to watch as their loved one is moved into the cremation chamber. In some cases, a loved one may be permitted to press the button that starts the cremation process.

For burials, the coffin is lowered into the ground, with two lighted candles, a pair of joss sticks, and a simple offering placed by the grave. After the burial, the eldest son carries the joss urn home, and the second son

⁴⁵ Interview with Rev John Murray, minister of Camden Presbyterian Church, September 12 2024

or eldest grandson carries the photograph of the deceased. Funerals can be quite lavish as elaborate funerals help determine status in society.

When a loved one dies, there are many arrangements to be made. Among the first things a Chinese family may do is contact a Feng Shui 風水 (fēngshuǐ) master to choose the day and time for their loved one's funeral and burial. If a gravesite hasn't already been chosen, they will ask the Feng Shui master to help them choose cemetery property with location and orientation in mind—often on a hill and never under a tree⁴⁶.

During the ceremony the cast stays open. After the funeral, there is a procession to the gravesite or crematory. Tradition calls for the loved one's oldest son or grandson to lead, carrying a large portrait of the loved one and the incense holder. Other family members follow the leader. Friends and other guests walk behind the family.

Image: Chinese section at Rookwood Cemetery



⁴⁶ Chinese Funeral Traditions; Dignity Memorial; <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/memorial-services/funeral-traditions/chinese-funeral-traditions>

Aboriginal burials

Aboriginal communities have specific rituals and mourning practices that vary across different regions and clans. These rituals often involve cleansing ceremonies, storytelling, singing, and dancing. Mourning periods can last for days or even months, allowing the community to grieve collectively and honour the deceased⁴⁷.

Funeral ceremonies in Aboriginal cultures are deeply rooted in tradition and symbolism. They serve as a way to guide the spirit of the deceased into the afterlife and provide closure for the community. These ceremonies often involve the participation of elders, who play a vital role in leading the rituals and ensuring the proper conduct of the ceremony.

The Connecting with Country Framework for Douglas Park Cemetery provides guidance to the design and delivery of the project and has been prepared to align with the principles and guidelines of the GANSW Connecting with Country Framework (2023) and associated best practice documents.

This document has been prepared in consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders from the area and provides a vision and design principles to embed Country into the future development of the site.

The document recommends ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities to ensure the design and operation of the Douglas Park cemetery is sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal communities.

Buddhists

Buddhists believe that reincarnation of the soul takes place after death. Although there are many forms of Buddhism, this belief in reincarnation is one principle they typically share. It forms the underpinnings of most Buddhist funeral traditions.

Selecting burial or cremation is a matter of individual choice. Buddhists generally favour cremation. There are no rules governing when the burial or cremation takes place.

After death, relatives and friends pour water over one hand of the deceased in a bathing ceremony. They then place the body in a casket and surround it with flowers, candles and sticks of incense. If possible, a photograph of the person is placed alongside and coloured lights are hung around the casket.

⁴⁷ <https://bare.com.au/blog/aboriginal-funeral-and-burial-traditions>

Buddhist funeral rites are conducted on the morning of the burial/cremation ceremony. Verses are chanted, and monks may be invited to conduct the ceremony according to Buddhist funeral traditions. Again, it depends on the family's wishes. The burial or cremation ceremony may simply be conducted by the family.

Cremations are often highly ceremonial. A man carrying a white banner on a long pole leads the walk to the place the cremation will be held. He is followed by elderly men carrying flowers in silver bowls. Next, a group of eight to ten monks hold a broad ribbon that extends to the casket behind them. The casket may be carried by family pall bearers or pulled in a funeral car by a large number of friends and relatives who feel that they are performing their last good deed for their loved one.

During the service at the cemetery, monks sit facing the casket and lead the mourners in singing prayers. The casket is then placed on a stack of bricks and family and friends toss lit candles, incense and wood beneath the casket to start the burning.

The nearest Buddhist Temple to Douglas Park is the Wollongong Temple, where there is a large community of Buddhists, particularly from Vietnam. The funeral service is likely to be at the temple, where monks will chant and the family will hold a wake-style funeral ceremony. Generally, the ashes will be placed in an urn and memorialised at the Temple with a name plaque. The family are likely to visit the temple around once per year to commemorate their loved one⁴⁸.

For those Buddhists who elect burial, the design of the graves are individualistic and often influenced by Feng Shui considerations. Buddhists are regular visitors to the grave, at least once per year.

Sikhism

As with many Asian religions, Sikhs believe that the physical body serves no purpose but to house the soul. For that reason, cremation is usually preferred, but burying is also accepted. However, no headstone or monument is allowed.

⁴⁸ Interview with Erica Hendrawan, Buddhist Council of NSW

Non-Religious Interments

A non-religious funeral service may be chosen when the deceased did not practice any specific type of formal religion. Non-religious funerals are also appropriate when the deceased had been an Atheist or a Humanist.

Because there are no historical guidelines and traditions in place for this type of funeral, the format is usually dictated by the deceased person's wishes or by their family.

All religions have traditions and rituals that serve to honour the dead and assist bereaved families in handling their grief. The need for a fitting way to remember a departed loved one and say goodbye is universal, even among the non-religious.

So really a non-religious funeral just means a ceremony to honour the deceased that is not tied to the traditions, rituals, or beliefs of any particular religion. Many of the same elements, such as eulogies and non-religious funeral readings, are used.

Industry

For a funeral director, traffic flow is a major consideration. Funeral Directors often have a number of services in any one day and need to enter and exit each location as rapidly as possible but must consider all the mourners.

Funeral processions (corteges) can be very large - up to 200/300 people. It is critical to have more than one exit to the cemetery. It is time consuming trying to get people out and people get stressed.

Industry recommends that large funerals are staggered and that traffic management teams are brought in to assist on busy days.

Public transport is critical. Douglas Park should consider a shuttle bus from Douglas Park train station. The concerns expressed by local residents to a cemetery being located in their backyard is generally not about the cemetery itself but the traffic it generates.

The travel time is always a consideration for mourners. Jewish and Islamic people tend to use their own dedicated funeral directors and generally they like to use cemeteries in established areas. However, this is rapidly changing due to the shortage of burial land in Greater Sydney.

Different cultures have higher visitation rates to the grave on an ongoing basis. Anglicans and Catholics visit regularly at milestone dates for a period. Other cultures have high visitation rates, such as Pacific Islanders. The family arrives with picnics around the grave.

Conclusion

From this engagement, it appears very likely that the Islamic faith will be a key client of the Douglas Park cemetery. Other faiths and nationalities who are facing impending burial land shortages will also be important to Douglas Park. This is likely to include Pacific Islander Anglicans and Chinese Presbyterians.

Further engagement with faiths will be critical to ensuring that the cemetery satisfies their needs. Two key faiths, the Jewish Faith and Maronite Christians, did not participate in interviews for this Report. It is recommended that further attempts be made to engage with these faiths.

It is recommended that at the time of public exhibition of the SSDA Concept and Stage One DA, the faiths are offered presentations of the plans. Those interviewed for this report indicated they would welcome this opportunity.

Regarding Aboriginal burials, the *Connecting with Country Report* prepared by Artefact, recommends ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities to ensure the design and operation of the Douglas Park cemetery is sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal communities. This Report supports that recommendation. While the location of the Douglas Park Cemetery is some distance from Sydney's CBD and Parramatta, and people tend to choose burial space that they have a connection with, the shortage of burial space is likely to mean that distance is less of a barrier in selecting a location for burial or cremation.

However, the advice of industry is pertinent. Traffic and transport are critical issues, both in relation to how the cemetery is design and how it is operated.

Industry recommends that large funerals are staggered and that traffic management teams are brought in to assist on busy days. Public transport opportunities should be considered.

Industry advises that the concerns expressed by local residents to a cemetery being located in their backyard is generally not about the cemetery itself but the traffic it generates.