



# A plan to address Sydney's critical public burial space shortage

Every person in NSW deserves burial services that are easy to access and are affordable.

Artist Impression





This document contains references that could be upsetting for First Nations peoples. In discussing land use, the term “Crown land” is used. We acknowledge that this terminology may bring up painful reminders of colonisation, dispossession, and the continuing impacts of land ownership and management practices on First Nations communities.

We respect and recognise the enduring connection First Nations peoples have to Country, and we are committed to approaching this work with care, respect, and a focus on building meaningful partnerships and healing.





Over 50% of deaths in Greater Sydney require land for interment - either through burial or ash-interment.

## The Challenge: Why does Sydney urgently need more burial space?

A recent NSW Government review found that public cemeteries across Sydney are running out of burial space, with estimates that without new land, they will need to begin turning away some faith groups in less than two years and will be fully exhausted within a decade after that.

NSW is one of Australia's most culturally diverse communities, with people from 307 ancestries practicing 46 religions and

speaking more than 215 languages. Crown land cemetery operators must ensure that interment space is provided to meet the needs of **all faith and cultural groups**.

Around two-thirds of people in Greater Sydney choose cremation when they pass, but for the rest, the need for new burial space is significant for cultural and religious purposes.



# What is the proposed solution?

The NSW Government has tasked Metropolitan Memorial Parks with identifying options to significantly increase the supply of new burial space. This included assessing options at existing sites and potential new sites.

This document outlines the process and criteria for how a site in central Sydney was identified.

## Part of a larger solution

Metropolitan Memorial Parks is doing everything to optimise existing sites as part of a long term and sustainable solution to meet Sydney's needs. However, more land in central Sydney is still needed.

# The time is now

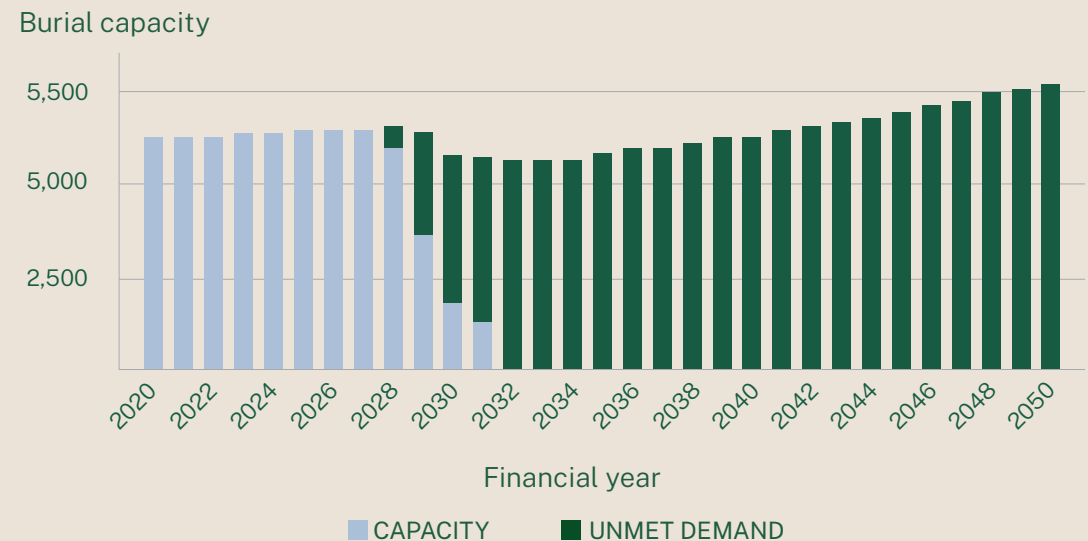
Sydney has an ageing population and demand for new burial space is forecast to increase significantly over time.

The statutory review of cemeteries, *11th Hour Report*, found that burial space will be close to exhaustion by 2030, and without new burial space, the future unmet demand will be significant (see Figure 1).

There is a higher demand for burial interments in Sydney's inner city, eastern suburbs, inner west, inner southwest and Parramatta.

These suburbs predominately use Rookwood General Cemetery and Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park. These sites will be exhausted for some religious groups in as little as two years.

Figure 1 - Crown demand versus supply analysis



A new Crown cemetery has not been built in the heart of Sydney in more than 80 years, despite significant population growth and increases in demand.





## Additional burial space in South-West Sydney

Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria, the state's other Crown cemetery operator, has built a memorial park in South-West Sydney at Varroville, Macarthur Memorial Park.

This project will help alleviate the burial space crisis; however, new burial space is still required at a central location in Sydney to ensure accessibility for everyone.

More about the new Macarthur Memorial Park can be found at [www.mmpark.com.au](http://www.mmpark.com.au)

# What was the search criteria?

Metropolitan Memorial Parks has undertaken an extensive evaluation process to identify a suitable location that can be used for a modern memorial park. As directed by the Minister for Lands, this included reviewing existing Crown land (state-owned land) for repurposing and any other options for how to deliver a significant expansion of accessible burial space in Sydney.

Starting this process involved researching world-leading best practice for a new memorial park. This was the foundation for assessment criteria for suitability, permissibility and feasibility.

A new site had to meet the following key criteria:

Is it suitable?	Is it permissible?	Is it feasible?
The sites were evaluated in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Soil profile</li><li>✓ Water table depth</li><li>✓ Topography flood hazard</li><li>✓ Flora and fauna</li><li>✓ Heritage significance</li><li>✓ Buffers and easements</li></ul>	The sites were evaluated in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Site access and traffic</li><li>✓ Land-use zoning</li><li>✓ Site ownership, classification and tenure</li></ul>	The sites were evaluated in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Land value and compensation</li><li>✓ Proximity to other cemeteries</li><li>✓ Community and stakeholder feedback</li><li>✓ Attainable burial plot yield</li><li>✓ Development staging</li><li>✓ Design flexibility</li><li>✓ Adaptive reuse of built structures</li></ul>





# Carnarvon Golf Course has been identified as the ideal site to be transformed into a modern memorial park

Following an extensive evaluation process, Metropolitan Memorial Parks has identified a site in the heart of Sydney that it believes would be the most suitable for a memorial park.

Carnarvon Golf Course is central and close to Sydney's largest existing cemetery, Rookwood and meets all the best practice criteria for a modern memorial park.

Carnarvon is the ideal site because it is already Crown land, it is in the centre

of Sydney, it has limited flood risk, and the introduction of a modern memorial park would enhance the existing natural landscape while providing public amenity for the broader community.

Metropolitan Memorial Parks believes Carnarvon is the ideal location to meet the needs of the broader community as a place to remember loved ones, or to appreciate the natural beauty of new open space.



# Benefits of repurposing Carnarvon Golf Course

- ✓ A memorial park on this site will provide increased access to public open space for the community.
- ✓ A masterplan can deliver new walking tracks, parks, lakes and places to reflect.
- ✓ Burial sites and monuments can be integrated into the natural landscape to provide privacy for mourners.
- ✓ Most of the existing mature vegetation can be retained within the site.
- ✓ Screening and design can minimise visual impacts for neighbours.
- ✓ Carnarvon is publicly owned Crown land.
- ✓ Carnarvon has limited flood risk.
- ✓ With a potential 70,000 plots, Carnarvon has capacity to serve Sydney for many decades.
- ✓ The project will be self-funded by Metropolitan Memorial Parks and provide affordable burial space for those who need it.
- ✓ The staging of Carnarvon could continue to allow for a 9-hole golf course as the site transitions over many years.
- ✓ Carnarvon is a central location in Sydney that is less than one kilometre from Rookwood.
- ✓ There is no plan to include Coleman Park and the playing fields in the new memorial park.

## The ideal solution providing public amenity

Metropolitan Memorial Parks believes Carnarvon is an ideal site to meet the needs of the broader community as a place to remember loved ones, or to appreciate the natural beauty of new open space.





66% of people who were buried or buried a loved one at Rookwood in the past two years are from within 10kms of the location. This shows strong demand for local burial services.

## Have your say

We are running a consultation process that enables the government to make a final decision. If you want to learn more about this proposal, Metropolitan Memorial Parks encourages you to participate in the consultation process.

Learn more:









# Consultation

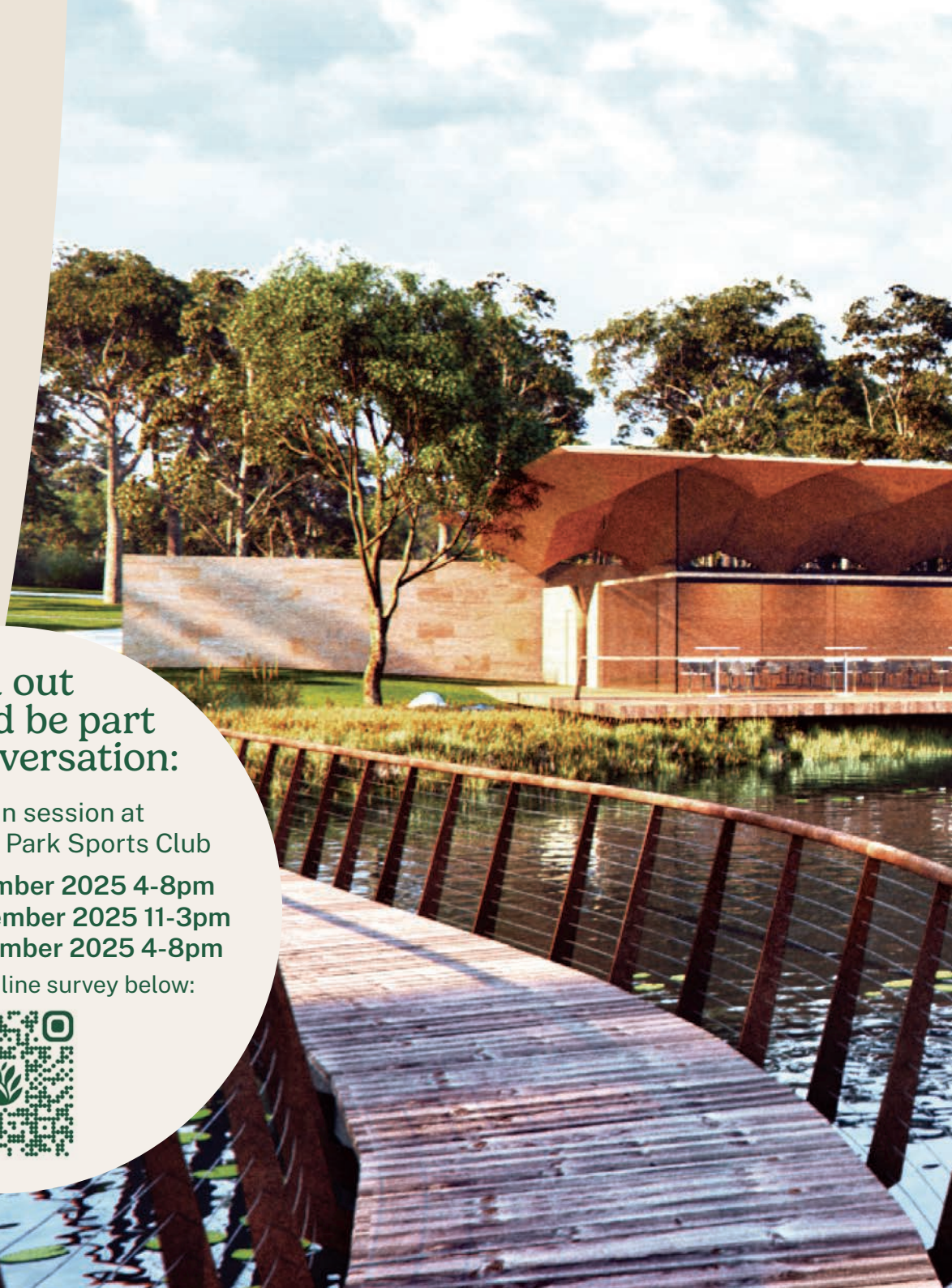
Recognising the significance of this issue, Metropolitan Memorial Parks is committed to engaging with the community to explain the rationale and process behind the identification of Carnarvon as the ideal site for a new memorial park.

Metropolitan Memorial Parks encourages members of the community to learn more about this site to provide a sustainable burial solution that is equitable and accessible for all.

**Find out  
more and be part  
of the conversation:**

Join a drop-in session at  
Dooleys Regents Park Sports Club  
Tuesday 2 September 2025 4-8pm  
Saturday 20 September 2025 11-3pm  
Tuesday 30 September 2025 4-8pm

Or complete an online survey below:







## Keeping the conversation going

If the government decides to proceed with Carnarvon, Metropolitan Memorial Parks want to know how best to work with the community on delivering this important social benefit. There will be many opportunities for you to have your say throughout the planning approval process.

You can find out more about Metropolitan Memorial Parks' plans for a new modern memorial park at [www.metropolitanmemorialparks.com.au/haveyoursay](http://www.metropolitanmemorialparks.com.au/haveyoursay)

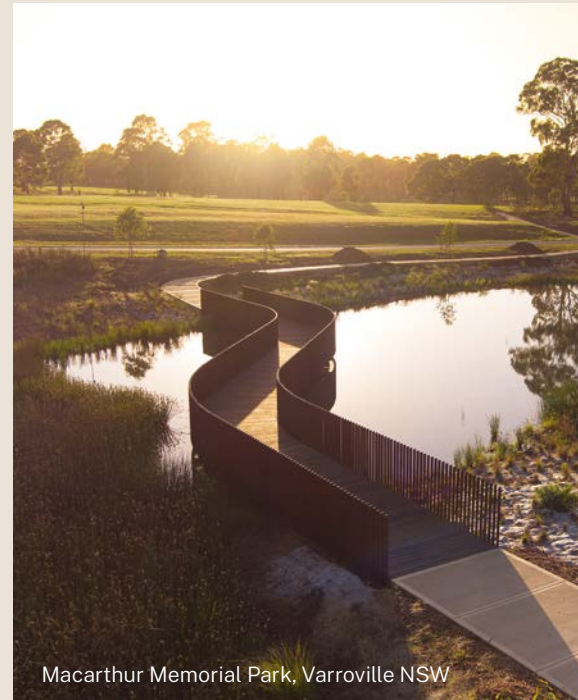


# What is a modern memorial park?

Modern memorial parks are about unlocking and providing new green spaces as places for reflection for those that have lost loved ones, and a peaceful open space for the community.

They have more of a park feel with lawns, landscaping, footpaths and lakes, with burial sites and monuments integrated into the landscape to provide privacy for mourners of all diverse communities.

They contain community spaces, places for reflection, walking paths, reflective spaces and cafés; while also a space to remember loved ones.



Macarthur Memorial Park, Varroville NSW



Macarthur Memorial Park, Varroville NSW



Artist Impression, Modern Memorial Park



Macarthur Memorial Park, Varroville NSW





## About Metropolitan Memorial Parks

Metropolitan Memorial Parks is an important government cemetery manager providing 60% of interments in Sydney. Metropolitan Memorial Parks manages eight memorial parks across Sydney and Newcastle, spanning over 400ha of Crown land. As a Category 1 Crown cemetery manager operating under NSW legislation as a self-funding entity, Metropolitan Memorial Parks is responsible for providing accessible and affordable interment services, addressing market gaps, and ensuring equitable access.



Artist Impression, Modern Memorial Park



## Contact Us

Phone: 1800 955 831

[www.metropolitanmemorialparks.com.au/haveyoursay](http://www.metropolitanmemorialparks.com.au/haveyoursay)

