



# Social Impact Assessment

Planning Proposal for cemetery

---

**Client:** Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

**Date:** 21 January 2019

**Contact:**

Sonia Dalitz  
sonia.dalitz@elton.com.au  
(02) 93872600

---

**CANBERRA  
02 6274 3300**

Superintendent's House  
25 Lennox Crossing  
Acton ACT 2601

---

www.elton.com.au  
consulting@elton.com.au  
Sydney | Brisbane | Canberra | Darwin | Melbourne | Perth  
ABN 56 003 853 101

---

<b>Prepared by</b>	Sonia Dalitz and Claire Adams
--------------------	-------------------------------

---

<b>Reviewed by</b>	Steve Rossiter
--------------------	----------------

---

<b>Date</b>	21 January 2019
-------------	-----------------

---

<b>Version</b>	Final 2.0
----------------	-----------

---

## Disclaimer

This report has been prepared solely for Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (the client) in accordance with the scope provided by the client for the purposes as set out throughout this report. Elton Consulting accepts no liability or responsibility for or in respect of the use or reliance upon this report and its supporting material by anyone other than the client.

<b>Report title</b>	Social Impact Assessment
<b>Project name</b>	Planning Proposal for cemetery at Lot DP 112382 and Lot 126 DP754881
<b>Client name</b>	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
<b>Project number</b>	18/8514
<b>Date</b>	21 January 2018
<b>Version</b>	Final Draft 02

Prepared by	Reviewed by
	
Sonia Dalitz, Project Manager MPPP, GradDipEd, BA	Steve Rossiter, Director, Social Sustainability MSc (Community & Regional Planning), GradDipEd, BA

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	What is social impact assessment?	7
2.2	Study scope	7
<b>3</b>	<b>SITE CONTEXT</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	Site location	9
3.2	Site background	10
3.3	Overview of the current situation	11
<b>4</b>	<b>POLICY AND PLANNING CONTEXT</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1	Local level planning documents	14
4.2	State level planning documents	15
<b>5</b>	<b>SOCIAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>LIKELY SOCIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>22</b>
7.1	Levels of trust in political systems	22
7.2	Cumulative risks to ways of travel	24
7.3	Community cohesion and/or character	25
7.4	Fear of decreased property values	26
7.5	Access to cemetery services and facilities	27
7.6	Likely social impacts if proposal does not proceed	28
<b>8</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>30</b>

## FIGURES

Figure 1	Location of site within Queanbeyan- Palerang LGA boundary	9
Figure 2	Location of site within Googong suburb boundary	9
Figure 3	Mount Campbell and Burrabella resident views to site	10
Figure 4	Screenshot of QPRC website for the proposal	12
Figure 5	Current estimated capacity of cemeteries in the ACT	18
Figure 6	Map of proposed cemetery in relation to existing cemeteries	21
Figure 7	QPRC site search area	43

## TABLES

Table 1	Planning Proposal documents	14
Table 2	Social Impact Assessment categories	32
Table 3	Social impacts matrix	34

## APPENDICES

A	Social impact identification	32
B	Cemetery site selection criteria	43
C	Community responses to proposal	45
D	Targeted stakeholder engagement outcomes	48

# 1 Executive summary

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been prepared for Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) to inform a Planning Proposal for a cemetery at the intersection of Old Cooma Road and Burra Road, Googong. The SIA is also required by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) as part of the planning approvals process. Qualitative information available for this SIA included outcomes from targeted stakeholder engagement activities including telephone interviews, a telephone survey and a focus group.

The SIA found the key likely social impacts if the proposal is approved include:

- » Decreased levels of community trust in the planning decision making process leading to potential negative impacts to levels of social wellbeing
- » Cumulative risks to the ways people travel on a day to day basis due to perceptions that existing traffic congestion will be exacerbated leading to longer travel times and more stressful driving experiences
- » Risks to community cohesion arising from potential changes to the rural character of the area, with associated negative health impacts including higher risks of social isolation
- » Fear of potential decreased property values leading to speculative market behaviour and consequently higher risks of financial stress
- » Risks to the community's ability to access cemetery services and facilities, with a potential shortfall of interment space if the proposal does not progress.

This SIA found that overwhelmingly, these potential negative social impacts are likely to be primarily and intensely felt among a relatively small number of people made up of predominantly existing residents who currently live in immediate geographical proximity to the site, and some people who are planning to move to the area surrounding the site in the near future (less than 2 years).

It is estimated that of affected households in the immediate geographic area, up to 60 households are potentially at high risk of experiencing the identified negative social impacts arising from the proposal if it is approved. It is assessed that the potential social impacts would cause primarily minor inconveniences and the majority of affected households would have the capacity to adapt over time with supportive mitigations relating to future cemetery facility design. The potential social impacts to these highly affected households need to be weighed carefully against the overarching social benefit to a much larger number of households across the LGA who would have increased potential local access to diverse and appropriate cemetery services and facilities if the proposal is approved.

The SIA found the proposal has a baseline social context of predictable and irreconcilable division between the amenity interests of people living in the area immediate to the site, and the wider public interest in maintaining a right to access interment infrastructure. There was a high degree of alignment found between the identified potential social impact issues for a cemetery on the site and social impact issues identified for other proposed cemeteries throughout NSW and the ACT. Overall, there was a high degree of consensus that a 15-minute travel distance to a rural location such as the site is appropriate for use as a cemetery, however affected people in the immediate geographic area were less likely to agree that the site constitutes the 'outskirts of town'.

If the proposal is approved, a key recommended mitigation is for QPRC to commence a robust, proactive and comprehensive communications and engagement strategy designed to ensure a high level of community awareness that the site would be developed as a cemetery. This would include provision of genuine opportunities for the community to collaborate with QPRC on future cemetery design.

If the proposal does not progress, a key recommendation is that QPRC should take necessary steps to allow the site to be developed for housing purposes in a timely way. Effective communications, including a Local Cemetery Strategy, should then be provided to reassure residents, businesses and visitors that alternatives are being pursued to meet medium to long term interment needs in the area.

From the full range of identified social impacts (outlined at **Appendix A**) the following key recommended mitigation and enhancement measures were identified:

## Summary of likely social impacts and their recommended mitigation or enhancement measures

Description of likely social impact	Recommended mitigation or enhancement
Reduced social wellbeing arising from decreased levels of community trust in the planning decision making process arising from both actual and perceived shortfalls in the ability of QPRC to involve people in decisions that affect them through community consultation processes to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Implementation of a comprehensive communications management plan (detailed at section 7.1)</li> </ul>
Cumulative risks to the ways people travel on a day to day basis arising from likely increases in vehicle traffic to and from the site for cemetery operational activities, resulting in fear of longer travel times and more stressful driving experiences including accidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Implementation of road improvements recommended in the Transport Impact Assessment</li> <li>» Implementation of a cemetery operational management plan that prevents conflict between cemetery service times and road network 'peak' traffic times</li> <li>» Advocate to Transport NSW for a reliable public transport route to the cemetery site</li> <li>» Consideration of additional significant improvements to the road route between Queanbeyan CBD and the site (detailed at section 7.2)</li> </ul>
Risks to community cohesion arising from localised activism and fear of changes in character to the existing rural setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Implementation of a comprehensive communications management plan that includes the provision of community services information and referral options for counselling services</li> <li>» Provision of targeted opportunities for people to participate in future concept design of the cemetery</li> <li>» Provision of a program of community development activities or projects targeting Mount Campbell and Burrabella residents</li> </ul>
Fear of potential decreased property values leading to speculative real estate market behaviour and consequently higher risks of financial stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Implementation of a comprehensive communications management plan that includes QPRC liaison with relevant local property developers or real estate agents to monitor property sales in the immediate site area</li> <li>» Provision of targeted opportunities to involve residents in the development of cemetery concept design drawings to ensure they can assist with suggestions that manage concerns that they perceive could impacts their property value.</li> </ul>
Risks to the community's ability to access cemetery services and facilities, with a potential shortfall of interment space if the proposal does not progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» If the proposal is approved,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; QPRC should commence exhibition of their Draft Cemetery Strategy</li> <li>&gt; Detailed design of the cemetery should include considerations outlined at section 7.5.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» If the proposal does not progress, QPRC should urgently pursue provision of an alternative cemetery site to prevent residents being socially disadvantaged in their ability access to interment services.</li> </ul>



## 2 Introduction

Elton Consulting has been engaged by Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) to prepare a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to inform a Planning Proposal for a cemetery at the intersection of Old Cooma Road and Burra Road, Googong.

### 2.1 What is social impact assessment?

SIA is the process through which efforts are made to estimate in advance the intended or unintended likely social consequences of a planning decision or action by a public or private entity.

The NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)<sup>1</sup> supports the requirement for SIA through:

- » Its object to promote the social and economic welfare of the community<sup>2</sup>
- » A requirement for the likely impacts of development, including social impacts in the locality, to be considered and addressed as part of the planning process<sup>3</sup>.

Social impacts can be both positive and negative, tangible or intangible, direct or indirect, quantifiable or qualitative. In many cases the same social impact can be experienced differently: for example, some people may find visiting a cemetery a peaceful and contemplative experience, while others may find it a stressful and upsetting place to be.

### 2.2 Study scope

This SIA has been informed by:

- » A review of relevant local and state policy and planning documents
- » A targeted desktop literature review of research, social media and other related 'grey' data sources
- » A review of existing social and demographic information previously prepared for the proposal (Social Report prepared by Coffey, June 2018).
- » Semi structured phone interviews with representatives from:
  - > QPRC Urban Landscapes
  - > NSW Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria
  - > Mount Campbell Estate Residents
- » A Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey of 143 residents within the Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA. There were 61 respondents from the suburb of Googong, 82 respondents from surrounding suburbs, with analysis between areas weighted 50:50.
- » A Social Impact Assessment focus group with 14 attendees out of 25 invited affected persons.

This SIA is being prepared subsequent to the preparation of a Planning Proposal that was submitted by QPRC to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) in August 2017. The submitted Planning Proposal (Section C) did not comprehensively address potential social effects however committed to a SIA being prepared if the Planning Proposal were to proceed. This SIA therefore constitutes a DPE condition of final approval for the amendment to the Queanbeyan Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2012 to permit a cemetery on the site.

---

<sup>1</sup> Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2017

<sup>2</sup> Object (a) of the Act

<sup>3</sup> Section 4.15 (b) of the Act



Prior to the submission of this SIA to DPE, QPRC propose to implement a range of community and stakeholder engagement activities (estimated to be held late 2019). It is anticipated that this community consultation process will provide a further opportunity for people who may be affected by the Planning Proposal to have a say on the potential social impacts identified in this SIA. The preparation of this SIA assumes that QPRC will undertake additional consideration of any further identified social impacts once outcomes of this community and stakeholder engagement are known.

### **Social impact assessment guidelines**

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) have developed a *Social Impact Assessment Guideline* (September 2017)<sup>4</sup> to provide a framework for identifying and responding to social impacts of state significant mining, petroleum and extractive industry development. These guidelines have been referred to as the main methodological approach for preparation of this SIA.

Further details of the guidelines are provided at **Appendix A**.

---

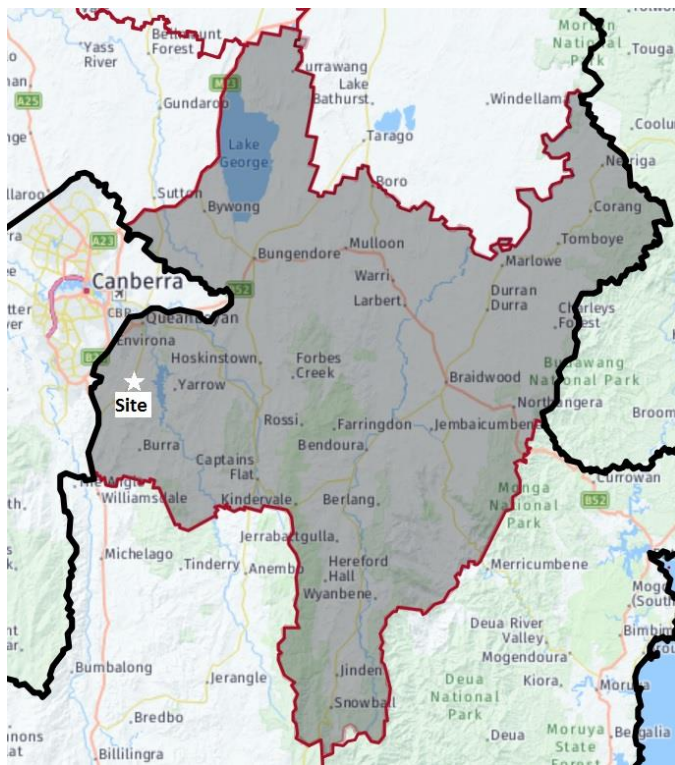
<sup>4</sup> NSW Department of Planning & Environment Social impact assessment guideline, Accessed 17 November 2018 from <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/under-review-and-new-policy-and-legislation/social-impact-assessment>

## 3 Site context

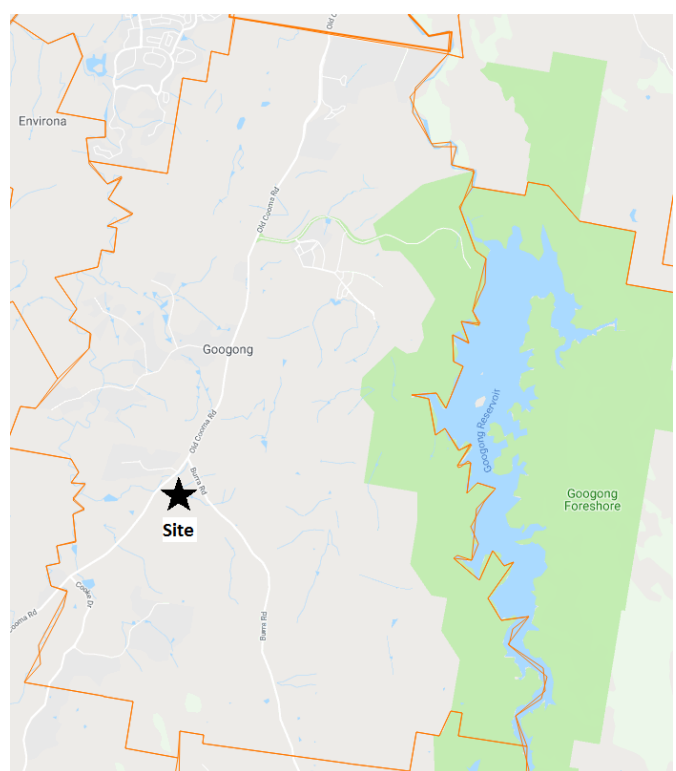
### 3.1 Site location

The site of the proposed cemetery (the site) is located in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council LGA, east of the Australian Capital Territory (shown in **Figure 1**). The site is approximately 10km south of Queanbeyan, in the suburb of Googong (shown in **Figure 2**). The site is a triangular shape area of 36.4ha at the intersection of Old Cooma Road and Burra Road.

**Figure 1 Location of site within Queanbeyan- Palerang LGA boundary**



**Figure 2 Location of site within Googong suburb boundary**



Source: Profile .id <https://profile.id.com.au/cbrjo/about?WebID=140>, Nearmaps (2018)

The land surrounding the site includes a community title housing development known as 'Mount Campbell' to the west and a new community-scheme housing development, 'Burrabella' to the south, which shares a boundary with the site (see **Figure 3** overleaf).

**Figure 3 Mount Campbell and Burrabella resident views to site**

Source: Elton Consulting, December 2018.

In addition to residential dwellings in the immediate area, a number of other uses nearby the site are likely to be sensitive to any potential social impacts of the proposal, namely:

- » St Paul's Anglican Church (opposite site)
- » Fernleigh Park Community Hall (including small playground, 1.6km from site)
- » Avalanche homestead (a Farm stay Bed and Breakfast, 2km from site)
- » Access to Googong Foreshore for recreation (4km from site).

## 3.2 Site background

The site is currently zoned E4 Environmental living, which means planning for the land is intended for low impact residential development or development that is designed to recognise the bushland character of the locality<sup>5</sup>.

### Past use

The property has been farmed since the 1800's and is used for rural purposes such as grazing. There is an existing dwelling on the site that was used as a residence prior to the property being purchased by QPRC.

### Current use

The site and its dwelling are currently being leased by QPRC for the continued purpose of residence and grazing.

### Reasons for change

QPRC has been actively seeking a suitable site for provision of a new cemetery since 2009. This is based on concerns that capacity in the Queanbeyan Lawn (Lanyon Drive) Cemetery is limited and additional land will be required to provide interment services for the growing population of the LGA into the future.

---

<sup>5</sup> Queanbeyan Local Environment Plan 2012  
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/EPI/2012/576/partlanduseta/include21>

### 3.3 Overview of the current situation

To understand the potential social impacts of change caused by the proposal, it is important to understand the baseline condition of the existing situation. This 'before-development' description enables accurate future comparisons to be made.

#### Proposal background

In 2017 the site was identified as a suitable cemetery location and subsequently purchased by QPRC (see criteria at **Appendix B**). QPRC assert that it did not consult with the community prior to the purchase of the site due to a confidentiality agreement entered into with the property owner until contracts were exchanged.

The purchase of the site and its intended use was advised to approximately 130 nearby residents and land owners via letter dated 20 April 2017 and formally announced at Council meeting 10 May 2017. The letter sent by QPRC to residents outlines Council's position as follows:

- » Queanbeyan-Palerang's population is set to grow from around 56,000 to more than 76,000 over the next 15 years. With this growth comes pressure on infrastructure and services that are provided to the community.
- » One service that is nearing capacity is Queanbeyan cemetery. Queanbeyan currently utilises the Lanyon Drive cemetery, however that is expected to reach capacity within the next five years.
- » Council has been aware of the need to expand these services and has been investigating potential sites across the region over the past four years.
- » Council's plans are to construct a modern-style memorial park on a small portion of the property (the site).
- » Residents are encouraged to access information about the proposal on the QPRC website and register at <http://yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au/> to ensure they are advised of upcoming project consultation.

Details of the proposal were also included in the QPRC Weekly eNewsletter dated 12 May 2017, which advised residents that:

- » Council had purchased the land as a preferred site for a proposed memorial park
- » Prior to a development application being lodged, a number of planning processes studies and investigations would be carried out, including applying for a Gateway determination
- » Council is still exploring other potential cemetery sites in case the site is deemed unsuitable for the proposal.

#### Need for the proposal

In order to enable a future cemetery facility to be constructed on the site, QPRC need to make a change to the E4 Environmental Living zone for the site which does not currently describe a cemetery or crematoria as a permitted use for the land. To change the permitted use of the land, QPRC was required to submit a Planning Proposal to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) for approval.

QPRC subsequently prepared and submitted a Planning Proposal to DPE Gateway in August 2017 that sought to make a change to the Queanbeyan LEP to allow a cemetery and crematoria on the site. The justification (Part 3) provided in the Planning Proposal includes that:

- » Over the past 8 years, the former Queanbeyan City Council has been reviewing the need for a new cemetery to supplement the existing Queanbeyan Lawn (Lanyon Drive) Cemetery. Council has now identified the need for a new cemetery as the existing Queanbeyan Lawn (Lanyon Drive) Cemetery is nearing its capacity with approximately five years left remaining. This matter is included in Council's 2013 - 2017 Delivery Plan.
- » The Community Strategic Plan 2013- 2023 sets out the key directions identified by the community. One such key direction is 4.1 Undertake planning to ensure infrastructure is prepared for future growth. The location of a site for a new cemetery is identified as a strategy to achieve this key direction.
- » The Planning Proposal is considered to be the best manner to progress the intended use of the site.



## Description of proposed change

Importantly, the Gateway determination process described above does not itself constitute approval for a cemetery facility to be constructed on the site. The proposed change in this case is to decide whether the proposal will allow future cemetery development assessment phases to proceed.

If approved, the change will make a cemetery development on the site permissible. A further development assessment process would then be entered into for the actual construction and operation of a cemetery.

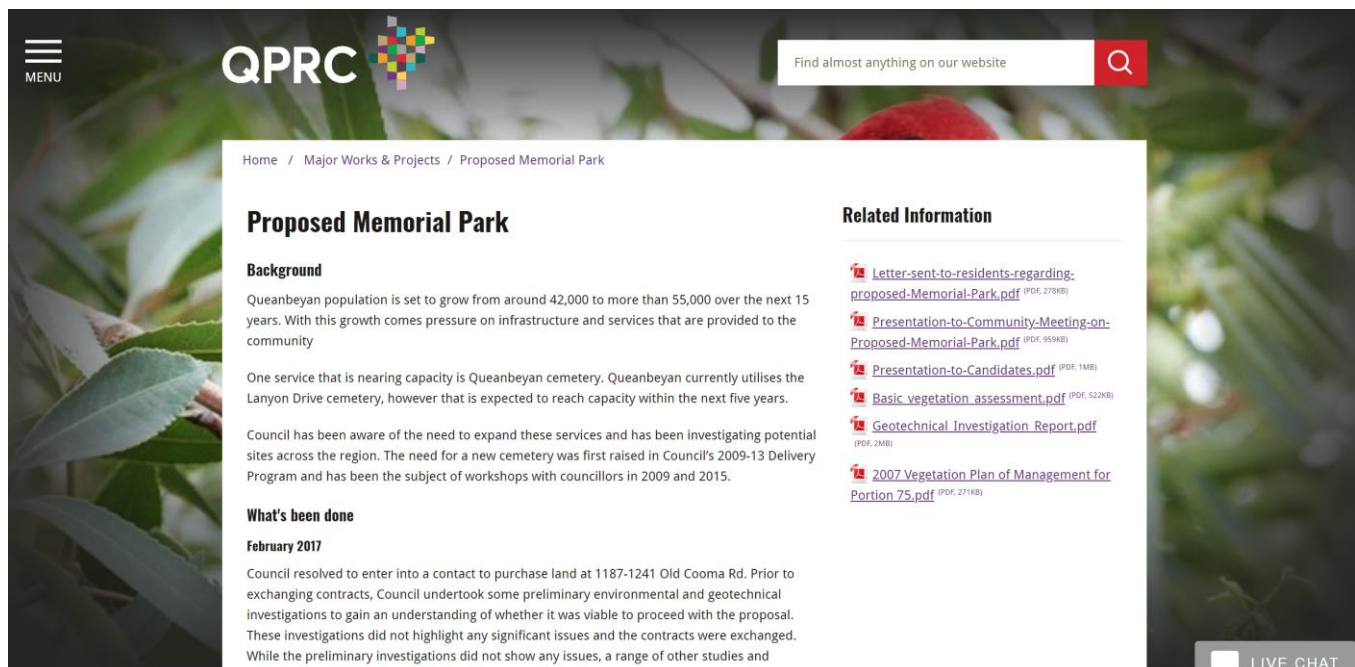
This means that at this stage of the Planning Proposal, any detailed description of a cemetery must be treated as hypothetical. QPRC have consistently communicated to the public that the intended cemetery would be in a modern 'memorial garden' style. For the purpose of this SIA however, it is assumed that the detailed design of any future cemetery cannot be considered certain. Similarly, it is assumed that the construction and operation of the proposed cemetery could theoretically be undertaken by an entity other than Council.

QPRC currently communicates information to the public about the proposed cemetery via a dedicated landing page on their website, shown in **Figure 4**.

The project website:

- » Briefly outlines the need for a new cemetery in the region and what has been done on the project so far
- » Provides links to relevant documents including the letter sent to residents, presentations to community meeting and candidates along with the initial vegetation and geotechnical investigation reports undertaken by Council prior to purchasing the site in February 2017.
- » Outlines in timeline format next steps, which has been updated during the preparation of this SIA to reflect progress made
- » Shows the location of the proposed cemetery
- » Has a link to Council's Your Voice engagement hub<sup>6</sup>.

**Figure 4 Screenshot of QPRC website for the proposal**



The Planning Proposal as originally submitted to DPE was to allow a cemetery and crematorium as an additional permitted use in Schedule 1 of the Queanbeyan Local Environmental Plan 2012 (QLEP) for the proposed site, Lot 2 DP 112382 and Lot 126 DP 754881 Old Cooma Road Queanbeyan. This proposed change would only apply to

<sup>6</sup> Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council 'Proposed Memorial Park' Major Works & Projects page <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Major-Works-Projects/Proposed-Memorial-Park> accessed 16/11/18

these lots and not to any other E4 Environmental Living zoned land within the LGA unless specifically mentioned in Schedule 1 of the QLEP 2012.

In response to a Council meeting resolution made on 9 May 2018, DPE altered the proposal on the 8 October 2018 to remove a crematorium as a proposed additional use, leaving a cemetery as the only proposed change.

Based on the existing operations of the Queanbeyan Lawn (Lanyon Drive) Cemetery and other recently constructed cemeteries in the area, if the current proposal is approved, a subsequent development application for a cemetery is likely to include:

- » Facilities for staff
- » Onsite parking for staff and visitors including amenities
- » Facilities for funeral related services including service sheds
- » Tree plantings
- » Interment walls
- » Extensive areas for burial with associated pathways and landscaping.

It is estimated construction of the cemetery could take up to six months.

While detailed design of a cemetery has not been undertaken, information provided by QPRC is that the proposed future cemetery is also likely to incorporate:

- » A 20m buffer between the interment areas and the perimeter boundary. QPRC would plant trees in advance in these buffer areas. Resources have been budgeted for this 17/18 and 18/19 budget although no planting has yet begun
- » Out of the whole 36ha site area it is likely that less than half (about 10 to 16ha) would be the constructed cemetery area. Around the perimeter fencing tree planting will take place with other areas (if not suitable for interment or with some biodiversity value) would be retained and restored.
- » The cemetery is likely to require up to 3 staff members in the longer term (+10 years)
- » The cemetery is likely to operate from 7am to 4pm on weekdays, with some infrequent Saturday services if needed to meet family or religious needs.

## **Responses to proposed change**

Since QPRC announced the proposal, there has been a considerable level of community concern expressed in print and online media, as well as by individuals at formal Council meetings.

The proposal has been a regular topic on the agenda at biannual QPRC Community meetings.

A desktop analysis of responses was reviewed and are described at **Appendix C**. Relevant social concerns raised from this analysis have been included in the scoping of social impacts provided at **Appendix A**.

## 4 Policy and planning context

The site and its surrounds are influenced by an extensive number of policy and planning documents at both a local and state level. A selection of these are reviewed in this chapter to determine the relationship between the proposal and stated public policy goals. Identifying and assessing this broader, regional scale wellbeing and welfare is particularly important to this SIA as the provision of cemeteries is considered highly relevant to the wider public interest.

### 4.1 Local level planning documents

#### Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (2017)

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP)<sup>7</sup> adopted in late 2017 sets out the community's vision and long term aspirations. One of the identified strategic priorities is "Land use planning that responds to local needs" (p13). The provision of a new cemetery in the LGA is considered by QPRC to fall under this priority. The provision of cemetery services also responds to the community vision statement "we are well connected to accessible services and facilities that provide our needs for living, work and leisure" (p14).

The CSP notes strong community appreciation of social and environmental connections traditionally associated with country and rural communities including a country lifestyle, natural beauty (landscape, bush and clean air) and peace and quiet (p13). This suggests that local communities may be particularly concerned about potential impacts or changes to a highly valued level of existing amenity in their lifestyle.

Community survey outcomes<sup>8</sup> (collected in 2017) indicate the following for the urban area of Queanbeyan-Jerrabomberra-Googong:

- » A heavy emphasis on appreciating their proximity to employment and services in Canberra (p13)
- » A 'issues' focus on poor public amenity; roads, traffic and transport problems (p21)
- » A strong identification with trees, mountains, rivers and lakes in the landscape (p29)
- » An expressed desire for better roads and public transport (p33).

It is worth noting that throughout the CSP, the lack of mention of any comments or issues around cemeteries suggests it is a relatively low level social issue when compared to other social infrastructure provision such as sport and recreation facilities, playgrounds and safety.

#### Planning Proposal for Cemetery and Crematorium (August 2017)

All documents relating to the Planning Proposal submitted to DPE can be found using the LEP's Online System<sup>9</sup>. A summary of relevant Planning Proposal documents is provided in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1 Planning Proposal documents**

Date	Title	Document purpose	Outcome
28 June 2017	QPRC: Council report minutes	Council (Administrator) endorsement to commence work on Planning Proposal	Resolved in favour

<sup>7</sup> QPRC Website <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Council/Council-business/Budgets-and-planning>

<sup>8</sup> QPRC Website

<sup>9</sup> NSW Government Current LEP Proposals <http://leptracking.planning.nsw.gov.au/currentproposal.php>



Date	Title	Document purpose	Outcome
18 August 2017	QPRC: Planning Proposal	To amend the Queanbeyan LEP	Seeking Gateway determination
25 August 2017	DPE: Determination letter	To amend the Queanbeyan LEP to "permit a cemetery and crematorium" at the site	Permitted to proceed with conditions
5 June 2018	DPE: Alteration of Gateway determination	To change description of the Planning Proposal to "permit a cemetery" only at the site	Amendment approved
8 October 2018	DPE: Alteration of Gateway determination	To extend the timeframe to complete the planning proposal	Amendment approved

The Gateway Determination Report from DPE noted that the site appears to be suitably sized to accommodate a cemetery however additional studies would be needed to verify the suitability of the site (p2). It is noted in this report that residents of the Mount Campbell rural estate have raised concerns of adverse social impacts and that additional studies are needed to clarify these likely impacts.

## 4.2 State level planning documents

### NSW South East and Tablelands Regional Plan (July 2017)

This Plan<sup>10</sup> guides the NSW Government's land use planning priorities and decisions over the long term (p4). Direction 21 of the Plan is to increase access to health and education services, including sufficient space for cemeteries and crematoria (p45).

### Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (October 2015)

Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW was established in response to NSW Government reforms in 2012 regarding the interment industry. The organisation's vision is that "All people in NSW have access to sustainable, innovative and culturally appropriate services provided by the interment industry in a consistent, transparent and accountable manner" (p20).

The Strategic Plan<sup>11</sup> describes cemeteries and crematoria as critical community infrastructure and essential service to the people of NSW (p10). The Plan is structured around four key priority areas including:

- » All people in NSW have access to a range of interment services that preserve dignity and respect and support cultural diversity
- » All people in NSW have access to affordable and sustainable interment options
- » Sufficient and suitable land is available to meet future demand for interment services
- » All cemetery and crematorium operators in NSW function in a consistent, transparent and accountable manner.

The Plan does not identify the QPRC LGA as facing a critical short term shortage of cemetery space when compared to the Greater Sydney metropolitan area. The plan does however focus on the need to ensure viable cemetery proposals are being progressed to ensure additional cemetery capacity is available in the long term.

<sup>10</sup> NSW Planning & Environment website, Plans for your area, Regional Plans, South East and Tablelands <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/south-east-and-tableland-regional-plan-2017-07.ashx>

<sup>11</sup> NSW Department of Industry website, What we do. <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/what-we-do/crown-land/cemeteries-crematoria/reporting>

## 5 Social context

A baseline community profile study aims to describe what the social context of the site is like now, and to identify any social issues or problems that may be already present in the area. A *Social Report* was compiled for QPRC by Coffey Services Australia (June 2018). This report provides a high level review of the existing social characteristics of the site and its surrounds. It includes a demographic description of the suburb of Googong and compares it with that of the Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA. This was combined with qualitative data gathered during the focus group.

### Population growth

The population of the area is increasing over time, with projected continued growth as the township of Googong expands over the next 20 years. This supports Council's assertion that demand for cemetery space in the locality will continue to increase over time. People living in the area expressed experiences of additional pressure on local infrastructure arising from ongoing urban growth activities, especially roads, traffic and transport.

### Age and household type

The age and household profile of the area is broadly consistent with the general population, suggesting social impacts will likely be felt by a wide variety of individual and family types.

It is noted that the Googong age and household characteristics suggest a community orientated towards young families. It is likely that these households may hold particular concerns for any social impacts that relate to children living in the area, such as their access to schools or recreational activities.

A large number of households in Googong have only recently moved to the area, suggesting social cohesion in the suburb is still in a forming stage. Many attachments to neighbours and place are likely to be newly formed, and due to the degree of new construction in their neighbourhood, residents may be sensitive to social impacts related to unanticipated changes to their environment.

It was found that Googong residents have a strong attachment to their place and neighbourhood, with perceptions of the suburb as a friendly and quiet suburb. There is an active Googong Residents Association who advocate to QPRC about local issues. Overall, residents are likely to have varying levels of awareness about what social services and facilities are currently available in the area, including those offered by QPRC.

Both trust in QPRC and risks to social cohesion were identified as major potential social impact issues and are discussed in detail at section 7.1 and 7.3.

### Income

Higher median household incomes for Googong are likely to reflect a high proportion of dual income households with or without children, higher household levels of education and employment in managerial or professional industries. This profile suggests people may be sensitive to social impacts that potentially impact their commute to work or access to out of hours care services for children

### Religious affiliation

The religious affiliation of the area is dominated by people who identify with a number of Christian faiths. Non-Christian faiths collectively make up less than 5% of responses, being Hindu, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. This suggests that there is some need for cemetery provision to respond to cultural diversity in the area.

While the social report did not look explicitly at cultural background, it is noted that Googong has higher proportions of people who were born in India or the Philippines. This suggests that these residents may be sensitive to any social impacts relating to different cultural practices around death and burial.

**Property values**

The social report states June 2017 property values. This data is included to suggest that people may be sensitive to social impacts relating to changes to property values arising from the proposal. Risk to property values was identified as a major potential social impact and is discussed in detail at section 7.4.

**Traffic and access**

The social report states local traffic volumes and peak times. This data is included to suggest that people may be sensitive to social impacts relating to changes to the way they travel or the time it takes them to travel to access daily needs. A school bus stop nearby to the site suggests people will be sensitive to social impacts on the operation of this route. Risk of traffic congestion was identified as a major potential social impact and is discussed in detail at section 7.2.

## 6 Literature review

Making an assessment about the likely future social impacts of the cemetery proposal requires knowledge about what research literature reports about cemeteries in other places. This section provides a review of what other sources say about nearby cemeteries as well as similar proposals which can indicate an understanding of likely impacts.

### Management of ACT cemeteries (2017)

This report<sup>12</sup> sets out the outcomes of an inquiry into the management of cemeteries in the ACT. Given the proximity of the ACT to Queanbeyan, it is highly relevant to consider matters raised in this inquiry particularly in relation to burial and cremation trends, land management and identification of potential future sites. Eleven submissions were received by the committee in addition to five days of public hearings held during October 2017.

Relevant findings within the report are:

- » Existing burial and cremation services provide for the burial traditions and rituals of 17 religious dominations including non-religious burial and cremation practices (p5)
- » There is a need to provide a variety of interment options and opportunities (p7)
- » Consistent evidence of a trend away from burial towards cremation (p8)
- » Study of existing cemetery capacity (p19) (see **Figure 5** below)

**Figure 5 Current estimated capacity of cemeteries in the ACT**

Years to Capacity				
	Gungahlin	Woden Mausoleum	Woden Cemetery	Hall
Total Sites	26,985	765	20,652	913
Unsold Sites	15,487	430	4,888	11
Percent Sites not used	57%	56%	24%	1%
Estimated Capacity Year	2070	2039	2038	2017

- » Community concern about cemetery access issues that result in considerable travel requirements for families and friends of a deceased (p21) including need for public transport options (p25)
- » Cemeteries are scary place at night (p22)
- » Preference for cemeteries to not result in loss of public green (park) space.

Recommendations of the report included:

- » The development and construction of a second crematorium in Canberra be considered a high priority (3.24)
- » There be re-consideration of the planned expansion of Woden cemetery (5.24)
- » The ACT Cemeteries Authority proceed with plans for a Southern Memorial Park as a matter of urgent priority (5.32), proposed to be a 70ha site near Hume.

<sup>12</sup> ACT Legislative assembly, Management of ACT cemeteries- Report 4, November 2017

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-environment-and-transport-and-city-services/inquiry-into-the-management-of-act-cemeteries>

A review of submissions made by non-government individuals and groups raised the following additional social impact related concerns:

- » Preference for sites close to public transport and hotel accommodation for interstate relatives and friends
- » Need for cemeteries to be tranquil places for people to reflect
- » Changing attitudes to death with opportunities for the urban design of cemeteries to incorporate memorials and graves in multi-use spaces with parks and reception facilities
- » Preference for two lane roads to accommodate funeral processions to reduce the risk of accidents.

### **Urban cemetery planning and the conflicting role of local and regional interest (2015)**

This research paper<sup>13</sup> examines past and present issues that have informed new cemetery planning in Sydney's rural-urban fringe and uses four case studies to trace tensions within the development assessment process (p450). It notes that community engagement around strategic and statutory planning for cemeteries is often fraught with opposition, with division between the interests of the local community in terms of their immediate amenity, and the longer-term interment needs of broader society (p451).

Relevant social issues and concerns relating to the studied cemetery proposals (p454-455) were:

- » Potential impacts of flooding
- » Small size of block (less than 10ha)
- » Inadequacy of supporting drawings and expert reports accompanying the applications
- » Need for adequate screening from adjacent properties
- » Concern about cumulative impact of cemetery 'proliferation' (i.e. numerous cemeteries within close proximity to each other)

Relevant court findings on the studied cemetery proposals (p454-455) were:

- » The public interest, concern and unknown long term impacts upon groundwater, traffic and onsite operation aspects of the cemetery and its financial viability outweigh any proposed mitigation measures (finding overturned on appeal)
- » Green burial practices are supportive of a rural landscape character, which relates to openness of land and its scenic quality rather than strictly its agricultural capacity
- » A numerical standard for cemetery sizes should not necessarily be prescriptive
- » Given predictions of regional burial capacity shortages the cemetery was in the public interest.

Discussion on the case study findings highlighted the following:

- » The importance of having an independent assessment panels/ objective authority as the decision maker with the capacity to move beyond the local interest perspective (p455)
- » General lack of reliable data on supply and demand for burial plots, and lack of detail on spatial locations or temporal demand in strategic planning documents (p456)
- » The growing importance of cemeteries in anchoring culturally diverse communities within existing social structures, assisting immigrant communities with integration.
- » In relation to concerns about property value impacts (p457), noting a suggested positive effect of cemeteries as a 'relatively benign neighbour' in terms of physical nuisance if compared to some other rural activities (e.g. poultry farms, fertilised market gardens, noisy trail bike riders).

---

<sup>13</sup> Urban cemetery planning and the conflicting role of local and regional interests, Bennett, G. and Davies, P.J. Land Use Policy 42 (2015) p 450-459.

The paper concludes by noting there is a lack of research available to understand where communities would want cemeteries and related facilities to be located. It highlights that local opposition to new cemeteries is inevitable irrespective of demand, with local community priorities seeming to be “vested in the status quo”.

The paper recommends better understanding how cemeteries are valued by society to provide a foundation for their future planning, along with early consultation with local and regional communities about long term need for cemetery land uses (p457).

### **Data on demand for cemeteries**

There are three key factors that influence the demand for cemetery land:

- » Number of people who die (death rate) requiring burial or cremation
- » Rate of cremation
- » For burials, grave occupancy rate (which allows projection of the use of new grave plots as opposed to second or subsequent interment in an existing grave).

According to the ABS<sup>14</sup>, the following trend for QPRC is identified:

- » A relatively stable number of deaths per year ranging between 258 and 293 people over the past seven years
- » A declining standardised death rate from 6.2 in 2011 to 5.4 in 2017

According to data provided by Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW<sup>15</sup>, the following trends for QPRC can be inferred:

- » A comparatively low cremation rate in the South East and Tablelands region (50.9%)
- » An average grave occupancy rate of 1.56 for Rural and Regional NSW.

QPRC report they are in the process of developing a draft Cemeteries Strategy which is likely to include additional analysis on local demand for cemetery services and facilities.

Research for this SIA (see **Appendix D-2**) suggests that the majority of residents would prefer to be within a 15 minute drive of a cemetery facility (approximately 10km). **Figure 6** (overleaf) shows a map of the proposed cemetery in relation to existing cemeteries in the area. As Riverside Cemetery (number 6) has no capacity to accept new burials, when Queanbeyan Lawn (Lanyon Drive Cemetery (number 5) reaches capacity, the only other existing cemetery that may meet these criteria is Woden cemetery (number 7) located in the ACT.

Other key points about existing cemeteries in the area are:

- » There is only one crematoria available in the wider region (ACT) which is privately owned and operates with an effective monopoly on local cremation services
- » All cemeteries within QPRC and the ACT are run by publicly owned entities
- » Gungahlin cemetery (ACT) is the largest existing cemetery (approximately 38ha) with all other existing cemeteries having site areas less than 15ha.

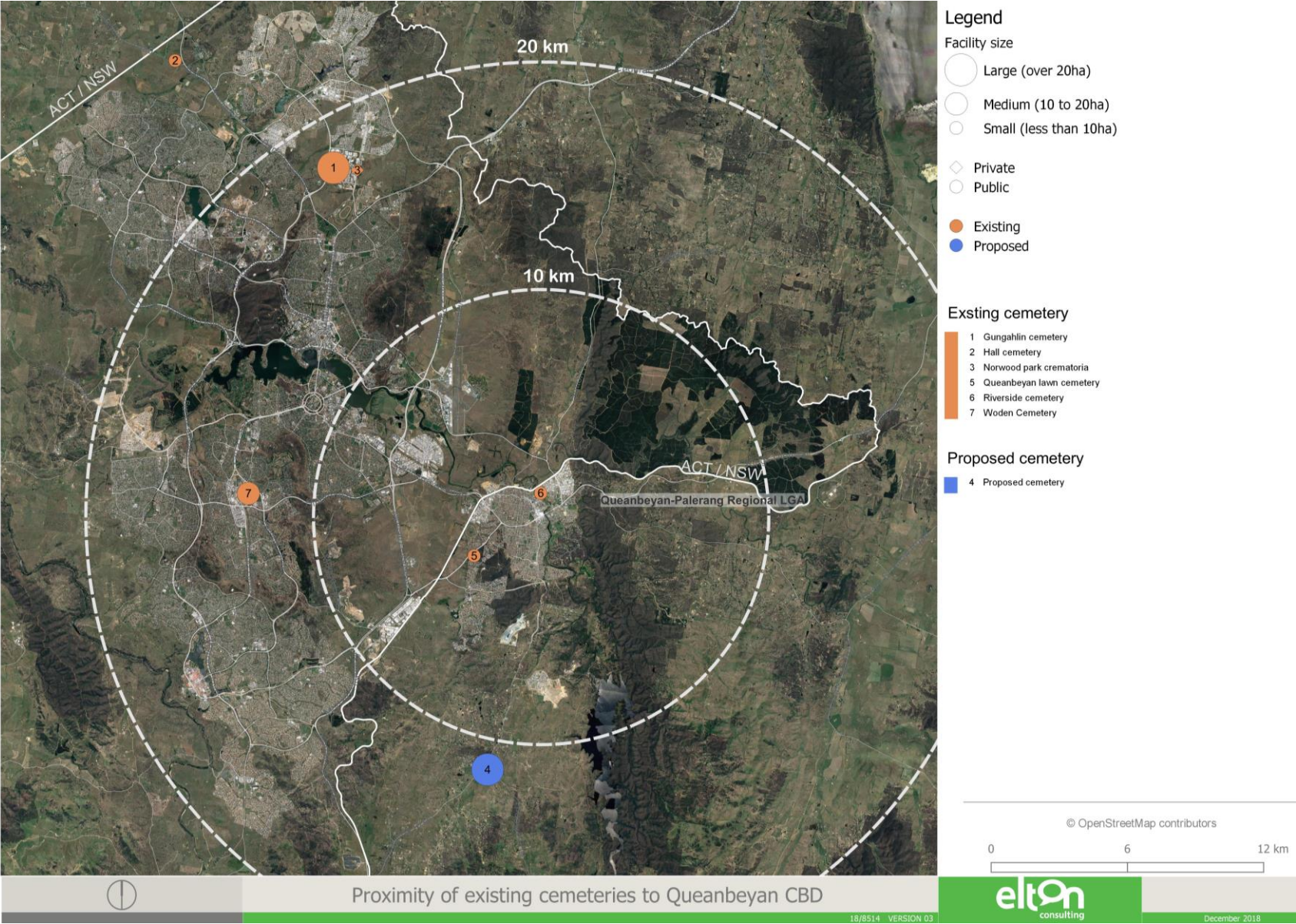
---

<sup>14</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 3302.0 Deaths, Australia, 2017 released 26 September 2018  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3302.02017?OpenDocument>

<sup>15</sup> NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria website  
[https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/175406/CCNSW-activity-report-2016-17.pdf](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/175406/CCNSW-activity-report-2016-17.pdf)



Figure 6 Map of proposed cemetery in relation to existing cemeteries





## 7 Likely social impacts

This chapter of the SIA incorporates targeted stakeholder engagement outcomes from public involvement in the formation of the assessment of the likelihood and severity of identified social impacts. Details of engagement activities undertaken are provided at **Appendix D**.

From the full range of identified social impacts (outlined at **Appendix A**) the following likely and major impacts were identified:

1. Decreased levels of community trust in the planning decision making process arising from both actual and perceived shortfalls in the ability of QPRC to involve people in decisions that affect them through community consultation processes to date
2. Cumulative risks to the ways people travel on a day to day basis arising from likely increases in vehicle traffic to and from the site for cemetery operational activities
3. Risks to community cohesion arising from localised activism and fear of changes in character to the existing rural setting
4. Fear of potential decreased property values leading to speculative real estate market behaviour
5. Risks to/or increases in access to cemetery services and facilities.

### 7.1 Levels of trust in political systems

The extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives is key to their level of social wellbeing. From both QPRC and the community's perspective, the flow of information regarding the site purchase and announcement of the intent to provide a cemetery could have been managed better. This has led to the proposal already resulting in some affected people experiencing negative impacts to their social wellbeing arising from decreased levels of trust in political systems designed to represent them.

The main source of information about the proposal at the time of site acquisition was via word of mouth, social media and subsequent local newspaper articles rather than via formal QPRC marketing channels such as letters to residents, newspaper advertisements and Council meetings. The unofficial access to proposal information has led to QPRC being constrained in their ability to address potential misinformation and address perceptions of underhand decision making.

There is a strong perception among some affected people that the context of QPRC being under the control of an administrator at the time of the site being acquired may have influenced the level of democratisation in the decision making process. This distrust extends to the source of funds for the site purchase and its possible impact on rate levies or the ability of QPRC to fund alternate social infrastructure projects. Similarly, there are mixed views as to the role that legal confidentiality requirements played in the ability for QPRC to consult with communities about the site. Some people are understanding that the prior property owner wanted this information protected, while others view it as an excuse for lack of transparency.

Overall, the sentiment was expressed that QPRC had a public obligation to be more open about the specific geographical areas it was investigating as potential cemetery sites, even if they did not reveal a particular site address.

Countering concerns about QPRC communications for the site, this SIA found there is a high level of general community awareness that cemetery space in the LGA is running out. The objective of the proposal, namely that QPRC is looking at options for a cemetery site in the southern portion of the LGA, was found to be largely undisputed. It is likely that the problem of needing additional interment options has had time to filter through to the community as local knowledge over a longer period of time, while the site acquisition and proposal for a cemetery is perceived as a comparably abrupt announcement.

It is also important to note that for residents who are actively campaigning against the cemetery, the removal from the proposal of the option for a crematorium on the site is viewed as a positive democratic outcome. This indicates that there is preparedness from elected Councillors to respond to community views, although it is difficult to fully assess to what degree this democratisation reflects the views of other LGA residents.

Although intangible, the negative impacts to social wellbeing arising from decreased levels of community trust in the planning decision making process impact poses a real risk of cumulative impacts being experienced if the proposal is approved. For example, if QPRC are unable to deliver a memorial park style cemetery there would likely be further deterioration in the community's confidence in Council. This is particularly important as negative views of QPRC's capacity to consult with their communities is likely to be exacerbated by broader societal wide declines in trust in levels of government, politicians and democracy<sup>16</sup>.

Mitigating this social impact will require QPRC to proactively rebuild levels of community trust in its decision making processes through a commitment to full transparency about details of the proposal as it progresses through the planning approvals process.

### **Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures**

- » Implementation of a comprehensive communications management plan that includes a 'feedback loop' of information so that the community understands how their involvement has impacted decision making. The communications management plan should:
  - > Keep the community informed of the planning proposal process and outline points of engagement opportunities available to them at each stage. This should be undertaken using Plain English and occur via a variety of means:
    - Project landing page on QPRC website that is prominently displayed and easy to search
    - Letter box/ mail drops that provide a clear link to project landing page
    - Social media including Facebook
    - Email updates/ e-news
    - Community meetings/ briefings to local community associations
    - Local newspaper
  - > Provide further information to the community on cemetery proposal including:
    - Outline of the history and rationale for the site selection
    - Outline of timeline for decision making and associated consultation opportunities
    - Funding details for the cemetery (including any impact on rates)
    - Operational plans (i.e. who will be responsible for maintenance)
    - Any expected/projected long term (10+year) impacts
  - > Provide opportunities for affected communities to give targeted input at each stage of the proposal, including face to face consultation opportunities for Mount Campbell, Burrabella and Googong residents and their community associations. These should be held at or near the site, e.g. Fernleigh Community Hall, Royalla Hall and Googong Community Centre.
  - > Provide cemetery concept design drawings that assist the community to visualise the proposal options to ease concerns
    - Involve the community in suggesting terms of reference for the design brief for concept designs
    - Consider allowing the community to participate in co-design of cemetery (e.g. children's art, suggestions box, workshop with landscape architect, community voting on design options).

---

<sup>16</sup> Australian Election Study, 2018 <https://www.australianelectionstudy.org/trends.html>

- > Provide affected people with community services information and referral options for counselling services (discussed further at section 7.3)
- > Provide for liaison with relevant local developers and real estate agents to monitor potential impacts on property values (discussed further at section 7.4).

## 7.2 Cumulative risks to ways of travel

There is a strong perception in the community that the proposal will result in actual increases in traffic that could lead to longer travel times and more stressful daily driving experiences.

The existing roads in the broader geographical area around the site are currently rural in nature and lack wide verges where people could safely pull over. Vehicles travel at high speeds (80km+) and the roads can be hilly, limiting visibility.

With the existing and future planned urban growth in the Googong area, there are baseline experiences of communities currently already suffering negative social impacts arising from localised traffic congestion. Several road projects are already underway to address this existing congestion, as well as funded plans to duplicate Old Cooma Road to Googong Road, due for completion in 2020<sup>17</sup>. Affected people are therefore highly concerned about the potential for any cumulative impacts of traffic movements from future operation of the proposed cemetery.

The main traffic concerns that affected people perceive a cemetery facility will exacerbate are:

- » Slow motor vehicle funeral processions causing it to take longer for people to commute to work, get their kids to school or other day to day destinations
- » Longer term increases in cemetery visitation traffic creating a higher risk of car accidents and 'prangs' resulting in financial burdens (repairs) and/or physical injury.
- » Inability of vulnerable people (e.g. the elderly) to access the site for visitation via reliable and frequent public transport or other active transport options.

The Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) prepared for the proposal contains further information on projected actual traffic movements associated with the development of a cemetery on the site. It finds that with an average of four funerals per week, the likelihood of peak traffic generation of the site overlapping with the road network peak hours is very low.

While the actual risks to ways of travel is therefore minor, the expressed perceived levels of concern about major cumulative consequences of cemetery development is considered high. If the proposal is approved, it is likely to be difficult to distinguish between the cumulative risks to ways of travel arising from the site and that arising from ongoing urban expansion. It is acknowledged that several of the following mitigations therefore relate strongly to addressing social impacts from existing risks to ways of travel in the area that contribute to some affected people's perceptions that the site is not suitable to provide for cemetery operations.

### Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures

- » Implementation of recommended road improvement mitigations from the Transport Impact Assessment prior to any cemetery operation, including ongoing monitoring of peak hour intersection counts at the intersection of Old Cooma Road and Burra Road to assess the future need for signalisation
- » Implementation of a cemetery operational management plan that prevents conflict between cemetery service times and 'peak' traffic times, particularly relating to funeral processions and visitation on special occasion days such as Mother's Day/ Christmas

---

<sup>17</sup> Details available at QPRC web site <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Major-Works-Projects/Old-Cooma-Road>

- » Advocate to Transport NSW for a reliable public transport route to be provided to the cemetery site which is available as a realistic and convenient return trip on all days of the week. Alternatively, a community bus service could be required as a condition for the future cemetery operation
- » Consideration of additional significant improvements to the road route between Queanbeyan CBD and the site prior to its development as a cemetery. Suggested road improvements (subject to feasibility) include:
  - > Construction of generous entrance/exit to the site with good visibility and line markings/signage
  - > Widen existing roads that access the site
  - > Implement improved intersection controls
  - > Cycling/bike path along Old Cooma Road
  - > Pedestrian path between Googong and the cemetery site
  - > Tree plantings along cemetery boundary to help absorb traffic noise
  - > Duplication of Old Cooma Road between Googong and the cemetery site (Burra Road turnoff)/ Dual carriageway provision
  - > Upgrade to Old Cooma Road south of Googong Road with overtaking lanes
  - > Provide fencing along existing roads (to prevent risk of collision with Kangaroos).

## 7.3 Community cohesion and/or character

The proposal has resulted in a small number of significantly affected people taking active steps to oppose the cemetery (outlined in **Appendix C**). These people are primarily residents in the immediate geographic area of the site for who the proposal has already had major impacts on their way of life including negative health impacts arising from mental stress. A primary concern of these residents is fundamental changes in their amenity, especially the visual character of the bush nature of their surroundings. This has led to secondary social impacts being experienced by other residents in the immediate and surrounding geographical area who either share this concern, or are concerned on behalf of the affected residents. This includes prospective future residents of the Burrabella development.

This identified social impact is similar to that described in section 7.1 (levels of trust in political systems) in that it relates to people's social wellbeing relating to their ability to have a say in decisions that affect them, however focuses on peer to peer influences rather than decision makers in positions of power. It is also similar in that this social impact is already being experienced in affected communities since the proposal announcement.

Even though the proposal has not yet been approved, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to suggest the perception of negative social impacts has led to some people who live near the site making real, life-changing decisions on the basis of speculation about the proposal. This includes people moving home, changing their mind about a property purchase, or planning to move/sell should the proposal be approved.

To project the potential number of people that could be affected by this impact, the level of opposition to the proposal from Googong residents (38%) was applied to the number of households in the immediate geographic area (150 households), resulting in an estimated 57 households, or 170 people, being at risk<sup>18</sup>. For these households, social consequences may result in:

- » Major life-changing decisions to move away from an area they feel strong attachments to and have formed neighbourly relationships within. For these households, the impacts are likely to be impossible to reverse or compensate for.

---

<sup>18</sup> Based on 38% of surveyed Googong residents being opposed to the proposal (see Appendix D-1)

- » Moderate life disruptions arising from decisions to sell property or move away from an area they aspired to make their home with possible associated negative financial consequences. For these households, the impacts are likely to be recovered from over time with a degree of community support.

While emphasising these consequences would likely only affect a comparatively small number of people, it has already created a 'ripple' effect of disquiet in the wider geographical area. The social cohesion concerns held by affected people primarily revolve around the expression of residents' anger towards the proposal through social media campaigning, petitioning, letter box drops and vandalism of protest signage. The general sentiment expressed is that this sort of behaviour is passive aggressive in nature, and has led to a dichotomy forming between people who support and oppose the proposal. Use of emotive language such as referring to the cemetery as a 'graveyard' has resulted in similar scepticism as that expressed towards QPRC's references to the cemetery as a 'Memorial Park'. As detailed designs of the cemetery are not available at this stage of the planning process, this social impact has contributed to general community confusion about the potential size, scale and function of the cemetery.

Overall, in the immediate and surrounding geographical areas there are indications of 'us' and 'them' attitudes developing between people depending on their level of support for the proposal. The risk of this identified social impact is potential declines in levels of trust between neighbours that could lead to individuals experiencing a decreased sense of belonging in their community. These individuals are then placed at higher risk of social isolation which is associated with health impacts including depression and anxiety. Relating to this, for residents who highly value their existing bush views and rural setting, the construction of a cemetery is also likely to lead to increased risk of negative health impacts arising from grief and loss of changes to their physical surroundings.

On a smaller scale, those people engaged in anti-cemetery activism directed at QPRC have indicated some positive social impacts arising from a sense of common purpose and achievement, particularly related to the removal of the option of a crematorium from the proposal.

The proposal is also viewed by a number of people as providing positive potential intergenerational impacts by providing future generations with cemetery services, particularly as a place of reflection with opportunities to visit loved ones. Suggestions were that the future cemetery could provide recreational and leisure opportunities such as a parkland, public art areas and picnic spots. These potential social benefits are discussed further below at section 7.5.

### **Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures**

- » Implementation of a comprehensive communications management plan so that the community is accurately informed about the nature of the cemetery proposal (described in detail at section 7.1). The plan should also include provision of community services information and referral options for counselling services to any identified directly impacted residents
- » Provision of targeted opportunities for people in the immediate geographic area to participate in future concept designs for the cemetery to provide reassurance and ease concerns about impacts to their visual amenity
- » Provision of a program of community development activities or projects targeting Mount Campbell and Burrabella residents over the short to medium term to bolster levels of community cohesion. This could include meet and greets, pop up events or art installations, markets or community days. These activities and projects do not necessarily need to be held near the site, but could take place in Googong or the Queanbeyan CBD, and explicitly encourage affected residents to take part via the aforementioned communications management plan (see section 7.1).

## **7.4 Fear of decreased property values**

This SIA identified that while cemeteries are generally accepted as essential social infrastructure, they are widely perceived by property owners as undesirable neighbouring social infrastructure facilities with the potential to diminish the value of what is often their primary asset. While addressing such anticipatory behavioural psychology is difficult, the social consequences are potentially major as many life decisions are made by people based on

their property value which often has cumulative impacts on related decisions such as savings, retirement and mortgage payments.

As described in section 7.3 above, there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that existing speculation about the possibility of the cemetery proposal being approved has already led to a small number of households modifying decisions about the sale or purchase of their properties in the immediate geographical area around the site.

Also related to section 7.1, there is a sentiment that these decisions may have been different had people had a higher level of awareness about the proposal prior to their property related decision making.

It is important to note that for this impact, there are baseline experiences of ordinary property market fluctuations in values arising from existing and future planned growth in the Googong area, and wider economic conditions. While it is beyond the scope of this SIA to provide property market analysis that distinguishes this impact from other cumulative property value impacts, it is considered possible that anticipated decreases in property values arising from knowledge of the cemetery proposal may have resulted in financial hardship being experienced by some residents in the immediate geographic area comparative to a baseline situation of no cemetery being proposed. By extension, it is therefore also possible that this perceived impact could lead to further localised property speculation if the proposal is approved.

### **Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures**

- » Proactive implementation of a comprehensive communications management plan (described at section 7.1) so property owners in the immediate site area are kept up to date about details of the proposal as it progresses through the planning approvals process. This should include mechanisms for a two-way flow of information between QPRC and relevant local property developers and real estate agents to monitor property sales in the immediate site area to identify potential baseline data that can be used at future planning stages to better understand any potential localised impacts on property values.
- » Provision of targeted opportunities to involve residents in the immediate geographic area to participate in the development of cemetery concept design drawings to ensure they can assist with suggestions for its future operation that manage concerns they perceive could impacts their property value. Suggested enhancements could include:
  - > Ensuring the cemetery entrance is off Burra Road (away from the Mount Campbell entrance)
  - > Screening of properties through mature tree plantings, ideally native species
  - > Improvements to local utility access, such as internet services.

## **7.5 Access to cemetery services and facilities**

The proposals ability to provide an additional local cemetery was strongly supported as a positive social impact. Benefits of an additional local cemetery that were identified are:

- » Provision of a local interment alternative to the Queanbeyan Lawn (Lanyon Drive) cemetery
- » Increased opportunity to be buried near to where people live/want to visit loved ones
- » A new recreation space/ place to walk that would become historically/culturally interesting over time (e.g. genealogy/ famous persons)

It is noted that these findings are likely to apply generally to the public interest of cemetery facility provision and could also be potentially applicable to any alternate sites identified by QPRC.

For the proposed site, there are mixed views on the appropriateness of the cemetery location. These views are closely related to perceptions of travel distance convenience. While there was clear consensus that the 'outskirts of town' is an appropriate location for a cemetery site, a key finding of the SIA is that there are highly subjective differences in what the 'outskirts' is considered to be. Research undertaken for the SIA (see **Appendix D-1**) found that the more proximate to the proposed cemetery site people are, the more likely they were to consider a more rural site as appropriate. Finding a suitable balance between a cemetery being easy to access and



convenient, while also being away from existing or planned residential dwellings is likely to be an irreconcilable tension.

This impact also expanded on the described fear of limited public transport, cycling and walking transport options to the site (see also section 7.2). Concern was expressed that people who would want to visit the cemetery, particularly older people who may not own a vehicle, will have limited transport options and effectively suffer a consequence of social isolation from their right to access cemetery services.

For people highly affected by this social impact, the only acceptable mitigation is viewed as a decision by QPRC to find a more isolated site for provision of a cemetery.

### **Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures**

If the proposal is approved:

- » QPRC to exhibit Draft Cemetery Strategy to the community that outlines actions to improve data collection on local cemetery capacity and monitor demand over time
- » The design of the cemetery should be undertaken in a contemporary, best practice landscaped style including:
  - > A capacity level that can accommodate interment needs over the very long term, for example 50 to 100 years lifespan.
  - > Mature tree screening, preferably with native species, should be achieved prior to cemetery operation
  - > Limited size of cemetery development footprint within the site, with remaining area to include portions dedicated for environmental restoration of biodiversity
  - > Appropriate location of car parking and buildings, with sufficient onsite parking to accommodate large funeral services
  - > Appropriate location of interment areas
  - > Inclusion of community bus and taxi set down/pick up area
  - > Internal network of pedestrian pathways and shaded rest areas, as well as links to external pedestrian network
  - > Inclusion of options that cater for a wide variety of burial practices including green burials
  - > Visual compatibility with St Paul's Anglican Church
  - > CPTED assessment of design undertaken at DA stage
- » As part of any future cemetery Development Assessment, the following should be required:
  - > A construction management plan
  - > An operational management plan, including identification of intended organisation to operate facility
  - > An onsite water management plan that addresses any potential impacts on surrounding properties

If the proposal does not proceed:

- » QPRC should urgently pursue provision of an alternative cemetery site to prevent residents being socially disadvantaged in their ability access to interment services.

## **7.6 Likely social impacts if proposal does not proceed**

If the proposal does not proceed, QPRC have indicated that they will sell the land for development, likely to be large block residential dwellings in similar character to those planned at Burrabella.

It is highly likely that QPRC would continue looking for alternative suitable cemetery sites with renewed urgency.



Based on existing projections of cemetery capacity, it is likely that there would be shortages in the availability of local interment space within the next 5 years. If this occurs, residents who wish to access cemetery services in the local area would be substantially inconvenienced. As discussed in Chapter 6, it is likely the only existing alternative would be Woden cemetery in the ACT which is also experiencing pressure for expansion of services.

A secondary impact is the reduced potential for social benefits arising from the development of a cemetery, such as additional tree plantings and supplementary local road improvements, may not occur or be delayed into the long term until sufficient urban growth expansion warranted similar improvements.

### **Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures**

- » If the proposal does not progress, it is considered imperative that QPRC adhere to its stated commitment of reselling the land for alternate development purposes permitted under the current zoning. The decision should be clearly communicated to the community in a timely way.

## 8 Conclusion

This SIA found substantiated justification of the need for a new cemetery in the southern region of the QPRC LGA. Provision of a new cemetery is likely to be in the wider public interest as an important social infrastructure facility that will provide improved options for local interment services.

The proposal does not address a similar identified need for crematoria facilities and services. It is noted however that the decision of Council to remove the option for a crematorium from the proposal has already accomplished effective mitigation of some negative social impacts currently being experienced by residents in the immediate geographical area.

For other affected households in the immediate geographic area, there is substantial risk of minor inconveniences to residents arising from future development of a cemetery facility affecting their current way of life and the value they attach to their home's rural setting. These households are likely to have the capacity to adapt over time with careful cemetery design and adequate landscaped screening.

This SIA found that all the identified social impacts (described in **Appendix A**) are broadly consistent with those experienced by communities affected by cemetery development applications in comparable regional areas and are unlikely to arise directly from the suitability of the proposals specific site location. Rather, the social impacts described by affected people in this assessment are characteristic of general societal discomfort with the placement of cemetery facilities close to residential properties.

If the proposal is approved, a key recommendation is that QPRC should implement a comprehensive communications management strategy to ensure it is well known among the community that the site is intended for development as a cemetery. This is crucial to resident's current and future ability to make informed decisions about their choice of where to live and go about their daily lives within the LGA. Effective communications, including a Local Cemetery Strategy, will also benefit businesses such as funeral operators, and visitors who live outside the LGA but are planning for future interment services for themselves or their loved ones.

If the proposal does not progress, it is recommended QPRC also implement a communications strategy that ensures it is well known among the community that the site will not be developed as a cemetery. QPRC should then take necessary steps to allow the site to be developed for alternate purposes. In this circumstance, QPRC should also provide reassurance to residents, businesses and visitors that alternatives for provision of additional local cemetery services are being pursued to meet medium to long term interment needs.

# Appendices

- A Social impact identification
- B Cemetery site selection criteria
- C Community responses to proposal
- D Targeted stakeholder engagement outcomes

# A Social impact identification

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) *Social Impact Assessment Guideline* (September 2017)<sup>19</sup> outline the following categories of social impacts for consideration:

**Table 2 Social Impact Assessment categories**

SIA Category	Description
Way of life	How people live, for example how they get around, access employment and recreation activities, how people interact with each other on a daily basis.
Community	Including its composition, cohesion, character and sense of place.
Access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities	Whether provided by local, state or federal governments, for profit, not for profit or volunteer groups.
Culture	Including shared beliefs, customs, values and stories, connections to land.
Health and wellbeing	Including physical and mental health.
Surroundings	Including access to and use of ecosystem services, public safety and security, the aesthetic value and or amenity of the natural and built environment
Personal and property rights	Including if people's economic livelihoods are affected, whether they experience personal disadvantage or have their civil liberties affected.
Decision making systems	Particularly the extent to which people have a say in decisions that affect the, and have access to complaint remedy and grievance mechanisms.
Fears and aspirations	Related to one or a combination of the above, or about the future of their community.

The likelihood of each identified social impact matter occurring is rated as being likely if there is a real chance or possibility that the adverse impact will occur.

For all identified likely social impacts, an assessment of their effects and consequence is made based on the professional judgement and expertise of the SIA preparers, with qualifications noted at the SIA inside cover (page 2) of this report. The assessment includes consideration of impact:

- » Extent (geographical area affected, number of people)
  - > Immediate geographical area, covering Mount Campbell and Burrabella housing developments. Estimated to be currently around 150 households and a population of 450 people (ABS statistical area SA1 1101120), forecast to grow by 100+ people within the next 5 years
  - > Wider geographical area, including the suburb of Googong. Estimated to be currently around 900 households and a population of 2,700 people (ABS statistical area SSC11704)<sup>20</sup>, forecast to grow by 2,500+ people within the next 5 years and 12,000+ people in the longer term

<sup>19</sup> NSW Department of Planning & Environment Social impact assessment guideline, Accessed 17 November 2018 from <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/under-review-and-new-policy-and-legislation/social-impact-assessment>

<sup>20</sup> Data provided by QPRC indicates that the population of Googong is now likely to be around 3,300 people with 1,178 occupied dwellings as at November 2018.

- > Whole LGA. Estimated to be currently around 24,000 households and a population of 56,000 people, forecast to grow by 3,700+ people in the next 5 years, and 20,000+ people in the longer term.
- » Duration (timeframe):
  - > Short term: 1 to 2 years, or until a cemetery development application is approved
  - > Medium term: 2 to 5 years, or until a cemetery is constructed
  - > Long term: More than 5 years, or arising from operation of a cemetery.
- » Severity (scale or degree of change)
  - > Minor: an impact likely to be controlled by normal best practice cemetery development at later stages of the planning process
  - > Moderate: an impact likely to require monitoring of mitigation measures as conditions of approval by decision makers
  - > Major: an impact that should be considered in detail with effective mitigation measures to be conditions of proposal approval by decision makers.
- » Sensitivity (Susceptibility or vulnerability of people, receivers or receiving environments).

**Table 3 Social impacts matrix**

<b>Matters</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Social impact category</b>	<b>Nature of potential impact without mitigation</b>	<b>Likelihood and severity</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Extent/ Sensitivity</b>	<b>Mitigation or enhancement</b>
<b>Amenity</b>	Acoustic (noise and vibration)	Way of life Health and wellbeing	» Stress and/or irritation caused by construction phase noise from the building of access roads, onsite buildings, landscaping works	Likely, Moderate	Medium term	Immediate geographical area (Addressed in Noise Impact Assessment)	» Implement a construction management plan » Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site
	Noise impacts	Health and wellbeing	» Stress and/or anxiety caused by operational nuisance noise such as light excavation machines, music during graveside ceremonies, maintenance equipment such as lawn mowers.	Likely, Minor	Long term Intermittent	Immediate geographical area (Addressed in Noise Impact Assessment)	» Implement a cemetery operational management plan (hours of operation) » Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site
			» Stress and/or irritation caused by increased noise of road traffic from cemetery visitors in light vehicles	Unlikely, Minor	Long term	Immediate geographical area Possible cumulative impacts to wider geographical region (Addressed in Noise Impact Assessment)	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Appropriate location of car parking and buildings at design stages » Implement a cemetery operational management plan (onsite vehicle behaviour/speed)

Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
			» Stress for mourners/cemetery visitors caused by nuisance noise arising from existing residents/dwellings e.g. dirt bikes, lawn mowing, backyard get togethers.	Possible, Moderate	Long term Intermittent	Within site boundary	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Appropriate location of interment areas at design stages
	Odour	Health and wellbeing	» Stress and/or anxiety caused by the perception the facility will include a crematoria (fear of potential odour)	Unlikely, Minor	Short term	Immediate and surrounding geographical area	» Communications management plan providing clear community messaging that the proposal does not include a crematorium
	Vista	Culture (valuing rural setting)	» Stress and/or depression caused by loss of existing views	Possible, Moderate	Medium to long term	Immediate geographical area, particularly existing residents/ those who have recently bought property	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Require mature tree screening of burial areas to be achieved prior to cemetery operation approval » Implement best practice requirements for landscaping at the design stage ensuring it is sympathetic to the rural character of the area
		Health and wellbeing (mental and spiritual wellbeing)	» Stress and/or depression caused by view of cemetery (seeing mourners/ reminder of mortality)	Possible, Moderate	Long term Intermittent	Immediate geographical area with view of site (Addressed in Visual Impact Assessment)	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Require mature tree screening of burial areas to be achieved prior to cemetery operation approval



Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
			» Stress for mourners/cemetery visitors caused by views of existing residents/dwellings	Possible, Minor	Long term Intermittent	Within site boundary	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Require mature tree screening of burial areas to be achieved prior to cemetery operation approval
	Air (particulate matter)	Health and wellbeing (physical) Environment	» Health conditions arising (e.g. asthma) from construction phase dust caused from building works	Possible, Moderate	Medium term	Immediate geographical area, particularly those with pre-existing health conditions	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Implement a construction management plan
			» Health conditions (e.g. asthma) arising operation phase dust from digging of graves	Unlikely, Moderate	Long term Intermittent	Immediate geographical area, particularly those with pre-existing health conditions	» Limit size of cemetery development footprint within site » Implement a cemetery operations management plan (maintenance hours)
		Health and wellbeing (mental)	» Stress and/or anxiety caused by the perception the facility will include a crematoria (fear of potential smoke)	Unlikely, Minor	Short term	Immediate and surrounding geographical area	» Implement a communications management plan providing clear community messaging that the proposal does not include a crematoria

Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
Access	Road network	Way of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Traffic delays caused by funeral processions</li> <li>» Traffic congestion on special occasion (high visitation) days</li> <li>» Traffic congestion at the junction of Old Cooma and Burra Road</li> </ul>	Possible, Moderate	Long term Intermittent	Wider geographical region (Addressed in Traffic Impact Assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Improve the local road network prior to cemetery operation as described in section 7.2 of this SIA</li> <li>» Implement recommendations of the TIA including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Improve Old Cooma Road and Burra Road condition/ lane markings/turn bays</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Implement a cemetery operations management plan (staggering of interment services)</li> </ul>
	Parking (offsite)	Way of life Access to infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Traffic congestion on special occasion (high visitation) days</li> </ul>	Likely, Moderate	Long Term Intermittent	Wider geographical region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Cemetery design to accommodate onsite parking facilities for traffic projections associated with large funeral services</li> </ul>
	Transport Accessibility (active transport)	Way of life Access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Lack of public transport services to site</li> <li>» Lack of pedestrian and cycle ways to site</li> </ul>	Likely, Moderate	Short to medium term	Wider geographical region/LGA People who are transport disadvantaged, including older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Cemetery design to include set down/pick up areas for community busses and taxi services</li> <li>» Site to provide links to external pedestrian networks and provide active transport network within site</li> </ul>

Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
<b>Built setting</b>	Public domain and infrastructure	Access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities	» Level of local access to interment services	Likely, Major	Medium to Long term	Wider geographical region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Council to exhibit Draft Cemetery Strategy to the community as a matter of priority, including an outline of actions to improve data collection on local cemetery capacity and a commitment to monitoring demand over time</li> <li>» If the proposal does not progress, QPRC to pursue alternative cemetery sites as a matter of urgency</li> <li>» Cemetery design to include burial options to cater for a wide range of cultural practices including green burial.</li> </ul>
<b>Heritage</b>	Aboriginal	Culture (heritage values)	» Loss of onsite Aboriginal archaeological sites	Addressed in Aboriginal Due Diligence assessment	Addressed in Aboriginal Due Diligence assessment	Within site boundary People who identify as Aboriginal	» Undertake further assessment of identified Aboriginal archaeological sites via Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment including consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders
	Cultural	Culture (shared beliefs and customs)	» Reduction in local burial options for people (e.g. from diverse cultural backgrounds, including 'green' burials)	Likely, Major	Medium to long term	Wider geographical region/ LGA	» Cemetery design to include burial options to cater for a wide range of cultural practices including green burial.

Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
		Culture (heritage values)	» Reduction in opportunities to increase visitation to St Paul's Anglican Church (Heritage listed)	Possible, Minor	Short to medium term	Immediate geographical area	» Implement cemetery management plan that commits to investigating opportunities for church to be used for funeral related activities » Cemetery is considered visually compatible with the church (addressed in Heritage Assessment)
<b>Social</b>	Health	Health and wellbeing Fears and aspirations	» Stress and/or depression and distress caused by cemetery triggering reminders of death/ fear of death	Possible, Major	Short term	Individuals, most likely living in the immediate geographical area	» If the proposal does not progress, this impact will be avoided » QPRC providing information on referral options to counselling services
		Health and wellbeing Fears and aspirations	» Stress and/or anxiety arising from fear local interment options will not be available and/or reduce local ability to visit interred loved ones	Possible, Moderate	Short term	Wider geographical region/ LGA	» Council to exhibit Draft Cemetery Strategy to the community as a matter of priority, including an outline of actions to improve data collection on local cemetery capacity and a commitment to monitoring demand over time » If the proposal does not progress, QPRC to pursue alternative cemetery sites as a matter of urgency

Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
	Safety	Health and wellbeing Fears and aspirations Surroundings	» Risk of headstone/ site vandalism and/or loitering on site arising from relative isolation from urban areas	Possible, Minor	Short to medium term	Immediate geographical area	» Implement a cemetery operations management plan (security systems) » Design of cemetery site to reconcile crime prevention through environmental design principles with recommended visual screening requirements
	Housing availability	Way of life	» Reduced land availability for environmental living (E3) housing	Possible, Minor	Long term	Immediate geographical area	» If the proposal does not progress, QPRC to resell the land in a timely manner for the purpose of housing development »
	Social cohesion, social capital and resilience		» Decreased levels of trust between neighbours and higher levels of social isolation » Higher risk of mental health conditions	Likely, Major	Short term Ongoing	Immediate geographical area Wider geographical region/ LGA	» Implement detailed recommendations described in section 7.4 of this SIA
	Decision making systems	Decision making systems	» Deteriorating levels of trust in QPRC and planning processes	Likely, Major	Short term Ongoing	Wider geographical region/ LGA	» Implement a comprehensive communications management plan as described in chapter 7.1 of this SIA
<b>Economic</b>	Livelihood	Way of life	» Reduction in property values leading to financial hardship	Possible, Major	Short term	Immediate geographical area Small proportion of affected households	» Implement communications management plan

Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increased local employment opportunities</li> <li>&gt; Short term construction works</li> <li>&gt; Ongoing operations</li> </ul>	Likely, Minor	Medium to Long term	Wider geographical region/ LGA	N/A
		Access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Improved financial viability of QPRC arising from potential profitability of cemetery operations</li> </ul>	Likely, Minor	Medium to long term	Wider geographical region/ LGA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Cemetery development application to include information on intended facility operator (public or private)</li> <li>» If cemetery is to be run by Council, economic business case findings should be made available to the public.</li> </ul>
<b>Bio-diversity</b>	Native vegetation or fauna	Surroundings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Loss of flora or fauna</li> </ul>	Addressed in Flora and Fauna assessment report	Medium term	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Site to include portions dedicated for environmental restoration of biodiversity on site as part of cemetery design</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	Ground and surface water quality	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Concern about leeching of pollution from decomposing bodies into the creek and/or bore water used by locals for watering/irrigation/ fire fighting</li> </ul>	Possible (subject to findings of current hydro-geology studies)	Long term	Immediate area and wider geographical region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Implement communications management plan that makes clear reference to relevant study findings</li> <li>» Implement any recommended mitigations of study when complete</li> </ul>



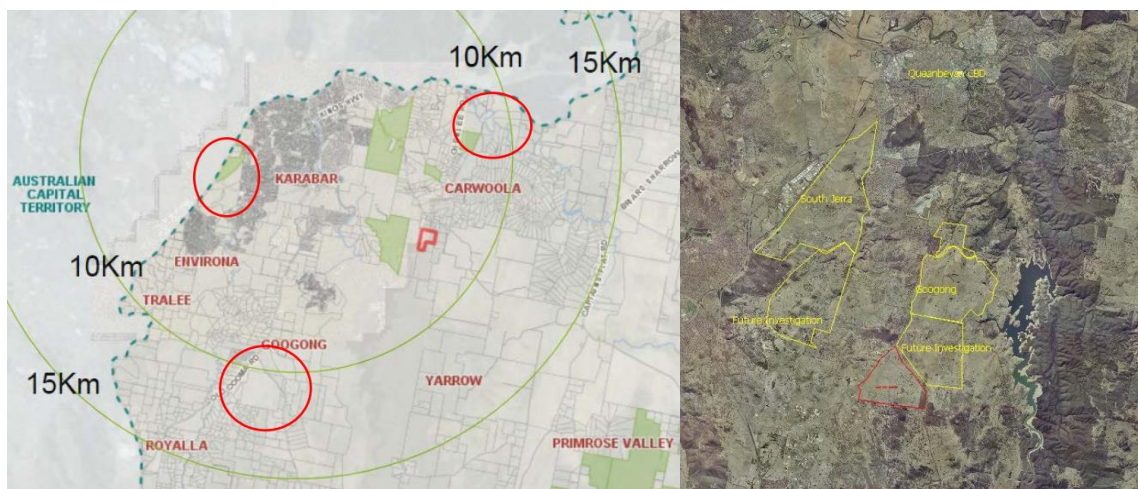
Matters	Impact	Social impact category	Nature of potential impact without mitigation	Likelihood and severity	Duration	Extent/ Sensitivity	Mitigation or enhancement
		Surroundings	» Concern about QPRC ability to maintain site to a high standard due to watering requirements	Possible, Moderate	Long term	Immediate geographical area, particularly landholdings reliant on bore or creek water	» Cemetery design to include onsite water management plan that addresses any impacts on surrounding properties
<b>Risks</b>	Flooding	Fears	» Stress and/or anxiety about human remains being exposed during flood events (linked to localised memories of 1974 flooding of Riverside cemetery)	Unlikely, Major	Long term Intermittent	Immediate geographical area, particularly people aged over 50 years	» Implement communications management plan that makes clear reference to relevant hydrological study findings

## B Cemetery site selection criteria

The following site selection criteria (presentation to Council candidates 10 May 2017) was used to identify land within the QPRC LGA which may be suitable for a new cemetery:

- » Proximity to city and urban areas, 10-15km radius
- » Allow for future urban growth
- » Proximity to main roads
- » Able to accommodate separated exit and entrance
- » Minimum site of 35 hectares of memorial park, including buffer zones, access roads and facilities.
- » Topography predominately flat to slight undulation
- » Consistent subsoil depths to 3.5m deep
- » Outside 100-year flood zone preferred
- » Low water tables desirable, ideally minimum 3.5 metres
- » Access to services, irrigation water in dams, electricity and potentially gas
- » Avoid significant environmental constraints, e.g. Googong Dam, Eastern escarpment, E1 & E2 Lands.

**Figure 7 QPRC site search area**



Six sites were identified and assessed across eastern, western and southern search areas of the LGA:

Eastern search area:

- » Carwoola site 1, Crown Land, failed initial vegetation assessment, drains to Molonglo River and subject to land claim
- » Carwoola site 2, passed initial veg assessment, unable to assess for Geotech as access consent not provided by property management.

Western Search Area:

- » Hoover Road site 1 failed on Geotechnical assessment, former land fill site, unstable cannot excavate
- » Site 2 private land failed vegetation due to high conservation value habitats and visible hard rock.

Southern search area: Two Sites assessed. QPRC concurrently negotiated to acquire options over two properties:

- » Site 1 Showed potential but was declined by owners, details commercial in confidence
- » Site 2 Passed initial vegetation and geotechnical assessment, owners agreed to the option per Council resolution
  - > Due to changes to Federal legislation, the land owner requested Council accept outright purchase prior to 30th June 2017.

# C Community responses to proposal

## Newspaper articles

Newspaper report (May 2017) <sup>21</sup> that up to 50 people attended a Council meeting to voice their concerns including residents from Mount Campbell Estate. Issues raised were:

- » Lack of community consultation
- » Lack of transparency from Council to the public
- » Potential for flooding on the site
- » Lack of clarity as to why the site was selected.

Newspaper report (June 2017) <sup>22</sup> that Council had decided to submit a planning proposal to vary the land's zoning to allow a cemetery and crematorium on the site. The article notes that Council have not committed to a crematorium but are keeping the option open. The article reiterates concerns from Mount Campbell estate residents who attended the 10 May 2017 Council meeting in opposition to the project

- » A lack of consultation in choosing the potential location.
- » Because the land has been purchased, it presents to community as a foregone conclusion that the cemetery will proceed.

Newspaper report (August 2017) <sup>23</sup> that the proposed cemetery site is subject to flooding and referenced fears that the 1974 floods that washed out the Queanbeyan cemetery could be repeated if the cemetery goes ahead.

- » Mount Campbell residents believe the land to be unsuitable due to flooding
- » Nearby residents oppose the location on a range of issues including flooding.

The Canberra Times reported vandalism of a sign opposing the proposed cemetery in an article on 5 September 2017. The article outlines the following community concerns:

- » Criticism of administration of the project and purchase of the property without notifying residents
- » Fears the cemetery will ruin the local environment, bring down property prices and be vulnerable to flooding
- » Preference for alternative locations of additional land near existing cemetery, or development of crown land
- » Thought zoning protected them from development but now "a cemetery or a crematorium could be dumped in our backyard"
- » Perception of being misled by previous descriptions of cemetery site being at nearby Royalla<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> The Queanbeyan Age Chronicle, 11 May 2017, "Lively Council meeting over cemetery proposal" (James Hall). Accessed 8 November 2018 from <https://www.queanbeyanagechronicle.com.au/story/4655247/lively-council-meeting-over-cemetery-proposal/>

<sup>22</sup> The Queanbeyan Age Chronicle, 30 June 2017 "QPRC moving forward with plans for new Queanbeyan cemetery" (Elliot Williams). Accessed 16 November 2018 from <https://www.queanbeyanagechronicle.com.au/story/4763006/controversial-cemetery-moving-forward/>

<sup>23</sup> The Queanbeyan Age Chronicle, 10 August 2017 "Residents opposed to new Queanbeyan cemetery say it's a flood risk (Elliot Williams). Accessed 16 November 2018 from <https://www.queanbeyanagechronicle.com.au/story/4844906/new-cemetery-raises-flood-concerns/>

<sup>24</sup> The Canberra Times, 5 September 2017 "Sign opposed to controversial cemetery vandalised ahead of NSW council vote" (Tom McIlroy) accessed 16 November 2018 from <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/act/sign-opposed-to-controversial-cemetery-vandalised-ahead-of-nsw-council-vote-20170905-gyaxlp.html>

It was reported that the removal of the possibility of a crematorium at the site was a win for residents in an article dated 12 May 2018. Council voted to remove the crematorium from the proposed Schedule 1 (QLEP 2012) amendment in response to concerns from the community. The article also notes:

- » A crematorium would have required a gas pipeline to be constructed at extra expense
- » Residents now “feel confident the whole cemetery won’t be going ahead” and submitted a petition opposing the cemetery with almost 400 signatures to the Council meeting on 9 May 2018
- » Local councillor considers a cemetery between Queanbeyan and Bungendore would better serve the community’s needs<sup>25</sup>.

### **Council meetings**

At Council Community Meeting held 3 May 2018, an update on the proposal was provided. At this meeting community members were provided the opportunity to ask questions, with key issues raised including:

- » Stop the investigation and look for another site closer to Queanbeyan
- » Frustration that ‘bushland cemetery’ site (portion 75) not going ahead (E2 land, high ecological value)
- » Distrust in processes and lack of transparency around purchase of Old Cooma Rd site
- » Deep concern and opposition to a crematorium on the site, frustration that Council won’t decide/disclose either way - Burrabella in particular want guarantee of no crematorium
- » Burrabella buyers feel misled/deceived that this project was unknown at time of purchase
- » Alleged errors in Gateway submission – want these rectified
- » How can a social impact assessment be done prior to community consultation? Impact on Mount Campbell Estate and Burrabella as closest residential communities – we haven’t been asked so how can they know?

Other related concerns were:

- » Availability of water to maintain memorial park gardens and impact on nearby residential bores (Mount Campbell and Burrabella)
- » Cost to taxpayers – interest to hold block, investment if it can’t even be used
- » Errors/omissions on Council websites, and difficulty navigating/finding relevant documents – distrust in Council abilities/accuracy
- » Consultation – will Burrabella future residents be directly notified? How to find out when the public hearing and consultation period will be.
- » Which steps in the planning process there is consultation on – wanted social impact and community consultation input to Gateway which has concluded.

At its meeting of 9 May 2018, Council resolved (PLA052/18) to submit an amended planning proposal for the memorial park at Old Cooma Road to remove the use of a crematorium from the proposed additional uses of the site in response to community concerns. Council received a revised Gateway determination on 5 June 2018 and has been progressing the planning proposal.

### **Public Facebook ‘No cemetery on Old Cooma & Burra Road’ page:**

- » Created 23 April 2018
- » 49 members as at 12/12/2018

---

<sup>25</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 May 2018 “ Win for residents as Googong crematorium idea scrapped” (Elliot Williams) accessed 16 November 2018 from <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/win-for-residents-as-googong-crematorium-idea-scrapped-20180512-p4zew6.html>

**Petition to QPRC:**

- » " We the undersigned vehemently oppose the development of a cemetery and crematorium as proposed by Tim Overall during his time as the sole administrator of the Queanbeyan and Palerang Regional Council (QPRC).

The proposal, if supported by the QPRC, will see the development of a cemetery and crematorium directly across the road from 47 Lot Owners in an area zoned as Environmental Living."

- » 420 signatures (mix of local residents and people outside of QPRC LGA).
- » Submitted to Council on 9 May 2018/ tabled at the Planning and Strategy Committee of the Whole Council meeting.



## D Targeted stakeholder engagement outcomes

### D-1 Computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) survey

A short, 5 minute telephone (mobile and landline) survey was undertaken as part of this SIA. The survey was conducted in late November 2018 over 2 evenings by a professional research company with 140 survey responses collected for analysis. This sample size has a sampling error of +/-9.6%. Surveys were conducted on a purely random basis with responses post-weighted to reflect a mix of age and gender comparable with the demographics of the QPRC LGA. Half of respondents were from the suburb of Googong, and half from other surrounding suburbs including Queanbeyan, Jerrabomberra, Bungedore, Karabar, Crestwood and Royalla. All respondents were over the age of 18 years and did not include people who work for or are elected members of QPRC.

The survey questions asked were designed to investigate:

- » Awareness of the planning proposal and support or opposition towards a cemetery at the site
- » Perception of the positive and/or negative impacts if a cemetery were to be built at the site
- » Perception of reasonable travel distance to access local cemetery facilities
- » Demographic questions.

Results of the survey are described below:

A slight majority (51%) of all respondents were not aware of the planning proposal, while 49% were aware. Of these:

- » Respondents from Googong had a higher level of awareness (65%)
- » Respondents aged over 60 years had a higher level of awareness (57%)
- » Respondents aged 40 to 49 years had the lowest level of awareness (41%)

Based on respondent's knowledge of the planning proposal, 52% were in support, 22% were opposed, and 26% were unsure. Of these:

- » Googong respondents had a higher level of opposition (39%) followed by support (34%) and unsure (26%)
- » There were slightly higher levels of support in the 40 to 59 year respondent age bracket (55%)
- » There were slightly higher levels of opposition in the 60+ respondent age bracket (26%)

Respondents reasons for support for a cemetery were that it is in an appropriate location (24%) and it would be good to have another cemetery in the local area (18%) or there is a need for another cemetery in the local area (8.5%)

- » Respondents from other suburbs were much more likely to say the cemetery would be an appropriate location (41.5%) compared with Googong residents (24.5%).
- » Respondents from other suburbs were much more likely to say it would be good to have a local (34%) compared with Googong residents (13%).

Respondents reasons for opposition to a cemetery were that it is not in an appropriate location (13%) or is too far away (3.5%), and there is a lack of community consultation (5%).

- » Respondents from Googong were much more likely to say the cemetery was not an appropriate location (24.5%) compare with respondents from other suburbs (13.5%).

- » Respondents who did not provide an answer for their support or opposition or were unsure was 14%. Other responses made up 9.5%
  - > Respondents from Googong were more likely to list an 'other' impact (23%) compared with other suburbs (6%).
- » Respondents aged over 60 years were slightly more likely to state it is an appropriate location (36%) as well as that it is not an appropriate location (21%).
- » Respondents aged 18 to 30 years were less likely to state it would be good to have a local cemetery (17%) and more likely to not answer or be unsure (21%).

Regarding potential impacts of the proposed cemetery:

- » A significant percentage of respondents did not think it would have an impact (31.5%)
- » Other primary impacts identified related to increased road traffic (20.5%) followed by concern it would upset neighbouring residents (20%) or reduce their property values (9.5%).
- » Respondents from Googong were most likely to cite traffic impacts (29%) compared with respondents from other suburbs (19%)
- » Respondents from Googong were most likely to cite concern it would upset neighbouring residents (27.5%) compared with respondents from other suburbs (19%)
- » Respondents from other suburbs were much more likely to cite no impacts (45%) than respondents from Googong (24%)

Most respondents (53%) stated that it was quite or very important for a cemetery to be within a 15 minute drive of local residents in their area while 44% stated it was not at all or not very important.

- » Response to this question was strongly tied to location, with 56% of respondents from Googong reporting it was not at all or not very important compared with 35.5% of respondents from other suburbs.
- » Conversely, 63.5% of respondents from suburbs other than Googong stated it was quite or very important compared with 38% of respondents from Googong.

## **D-2 Social impact assessment focus group**

A 2 hour focus group was held on a weeknight in early December 2018 at the Googong Community Centre to further investigate impacts identified in the telephone survey (described above at Appendix C-1). The focus group was facilitated by this report's authors, with two QPRC staff members attending as observers. There were 25 invitees to the focus group identified between QPRC and the report authors based on the following criteria:

- » Residential proximity to site (randomised selection)
- » Representatives of relevant identified business or community based organisations.

14 of the invitees accepted and attended the focus group in a voluntary capacity.

The questions asked during the focus group were designed to investigate:

- » Understandings of the project and who might be impacted
- » Identifying any relevant history, trends or existing social issues in the local area
- » Perceptions of what a cemetery could look like at the site
- » Understandings of the likely responses to primary identified social impacts
- » Perceptions of impact significance
- » Contributions to the design of project alternatives and mitigation suggestions.

Outcomes of the focus group have been integrated into the body of this report.

