



# Lockyer Valley Regional Council

Cemetery Plan 2019–2029



REGIONAL COUNCIL









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# 1. Introduction

Lockyer Valley Regional Council (LVRC) plays an important role in the provision of services and facilities to the community. The purpose of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Cemetery Plan 2019-2029 is to establish a strategic direction to guide the management, operations and continual improvement of Council’s cemeteries over the next 10 years.

The Cemetery Plan provides:

- A summary of the policy context for the Cemetery Plan
- A summary of the trends impacting on cemetery services which require consideration in developing future actions
- Detail of the successes of Council’s cemetery services to date
- Key considerations for improving operations over the next 10 years
- A detailed action plan for implementation over the short, medium and long term for the improvement of cemetery services.

The Cemetery Plan also provides a framework to be used as a guide in relation to planning, allocation of resources, and the development of Council’s cemetery services.





## 2. Legislative and Policy Context

A detailed review of the relevant legislation and Council's strategic documents and policies has been conducted to ensure the Cemetery Plan aligns where applicable legislation supports Lockyer Valley Regional Council's framework and priorities.

### 2.1 Legislation

The following is a list of relevant legislation that applies to the management of cemeteries for Lockyer Valley Regional Council:

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Land Act 1994*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*

### 2.2 Policies and Procedures

The Cemetery Plan has been developed to align with Council's existing Cemetery Management Policy and Cemetery Management Procedure. These documents provide a framework for the management and operation of Council's cemeteries, promoting a safe and respectful environment for all users.

### 2.3 Community Plan

The Lockyer Valley Community Plan 2017 - 2027 is Council's leading planning document which outlines the vision the community has for the Lockyer Valley region. The Plan specifically seeks the provision of and access to quality services and facilities for the community.

### 2.4 Corporate Plan

The Cemetery Plan supports the following outcomes of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Corporate Plan 2017-2022 in responding to needs of the community:

- A community with fair and reasonable access to services
- Council optimises the use of its open spaces and facilities by improving access to and the quality of the facilities for individuals and groups for cultural, recreational and community activities.

### 2.5 Local Laws

Minimal provisions relevant to the operations of Council's cemeteries are contained in Council's local laws. The following subordinate local laws have limited provisions regarding the management of Council's cemeteries:

- *Subordinate Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities and Roads) 2011*
- *Subordinate Local Law No. 1.13 (Undertaking Regulated Activities regarding Human Remains) 2011*





### 3. Strategic Context

#### 3.1 Lockyer Valley Region Population

In 2017, the population of the Lockyer Valley region was approximately 40,229 with an ageing population trend. The Lockyer Valley is a culturally diverse community as the home for many overseas transient workers who work locally providing support to the agriculture sector and migrants. With this increase in ethnic groups and religious requirements in the region, new services to accommodate these requirements need to be put considered in local cemeteries.

The table below identifies that projected population growth over the term of the Cemetery Plan (2019 - 2029). The range is predicted to be from 43,477 (2021) to 52,302 (2031) with the majority of increases occurring in the key localities of Gatton, Plainland and Laidley.

#### Future Growth Projection Lockyer Valley

Planning District	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Ultimate
Gatton Town	8,035	9,781	11,704	13,911	15,974	29,640
Helidon Hills and Grantham	4,061	4,462	4,842	5,157	5,573	7,665
Helidon Village	963	1,028	1,076	1,118	1,154	1,353
Lawes University	438	439	443	444	446	469
Murphys Creek and Surrounds	1,601	1,638	1,678	1,715	1,758	2,003
Withcott	2,055	2,221	2,379	2,502	2,634	3,377
Forest Hill	523	531	537	543	548	577
Laidley North	2,937	3,166	3,449	3,766	4,148	6,120
Laidley Town	6,138	6,583	7,173	7,751	8,460	12,685
Moreton Vale	1,276	1,288	1,301	1,313	1,332	1,449
Plainland	7,988	8,781	9,591	10,350	10,954	14,499
Rural South	1,548	1,606	1,667	1,724	1,758	1,962
Rural West	1,925	1,953	1,982	2,009	2,019	2,106
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39,486</b>	<b>43,477</b>	<b>47,824</b>	<b>52,302</b>	<b>56,758</b>	<b>83,903</b>

Source: LVRC Model 2018 (Local Government Infrastructure Plan)

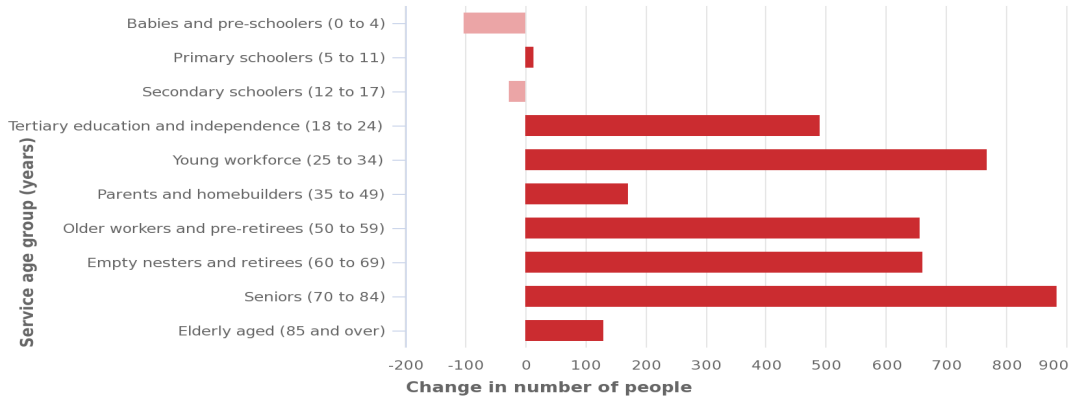


### 3.1.1 Age

Changes are expected with age structure during the life of the Cemetery Plan. Analysis provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from 2016 has indicated that the Lockyer Valley region is experiencing a high rate of growth in the 50+ age groups compared to the rest of South East Queensland

#### Change in age structure - service age groups, 2011 to 2016

Lockyer Valley Regional Council - Total persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



The South East Queensland growth average for the 50 + age group is 20.1% whilst the Lockyer Valley region is 22.2%.

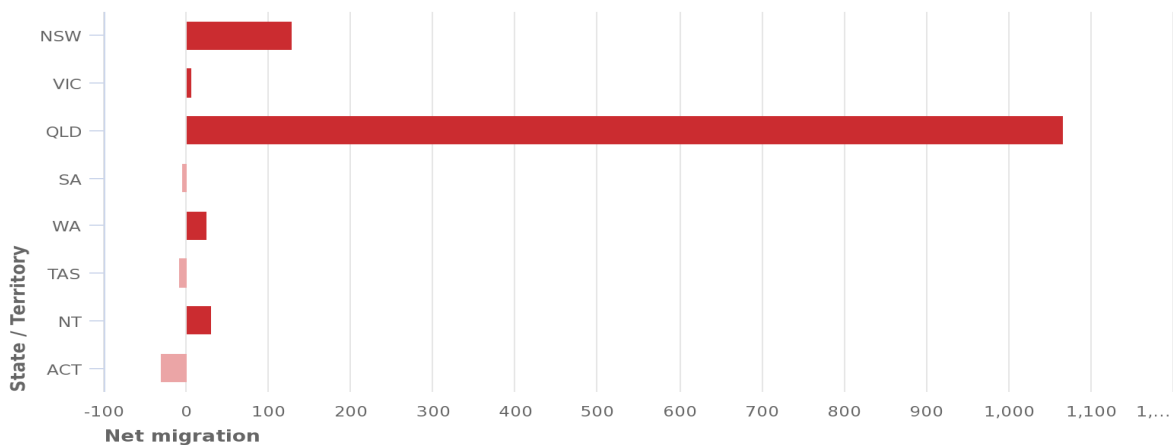
This predicted increase in population in the 50+ age group will impact on the need for cemetery related services provided by Council.

### 3.1.2 Migration

Migration is a key consideration in planning for the future of cemetery services. Over the past five years, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a total of 1067 people moved to the Lockyer Valley region.

#### Population movement by State/Territory

Lockyer Valley Regional Council



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

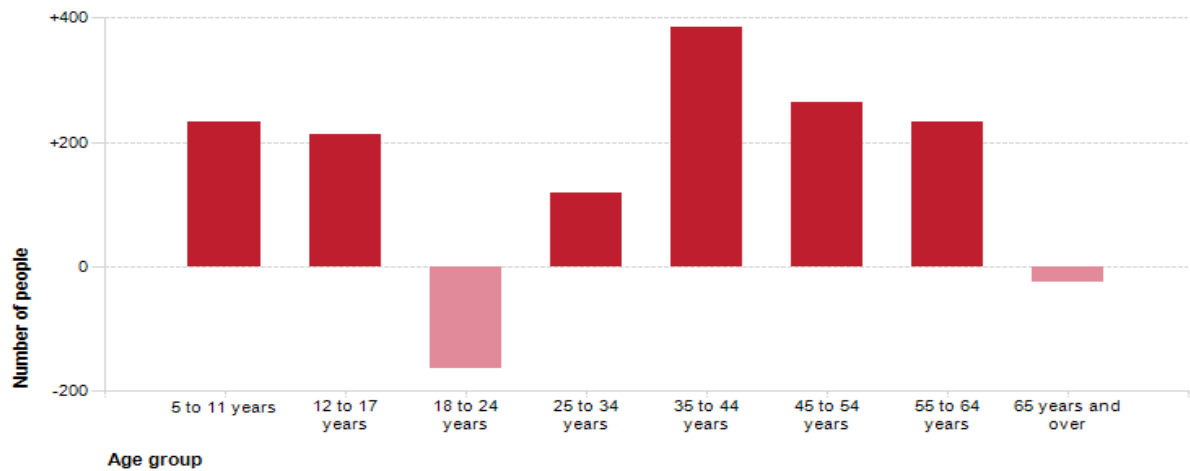




The most popular age group for this migration was the 35 to 44 year age group. It is important to note that there was a decrease in 65 years and over and 18 to 24 years.

### Net migration by age group 2016

Lockyer Valley Regional Council



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residents data) Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



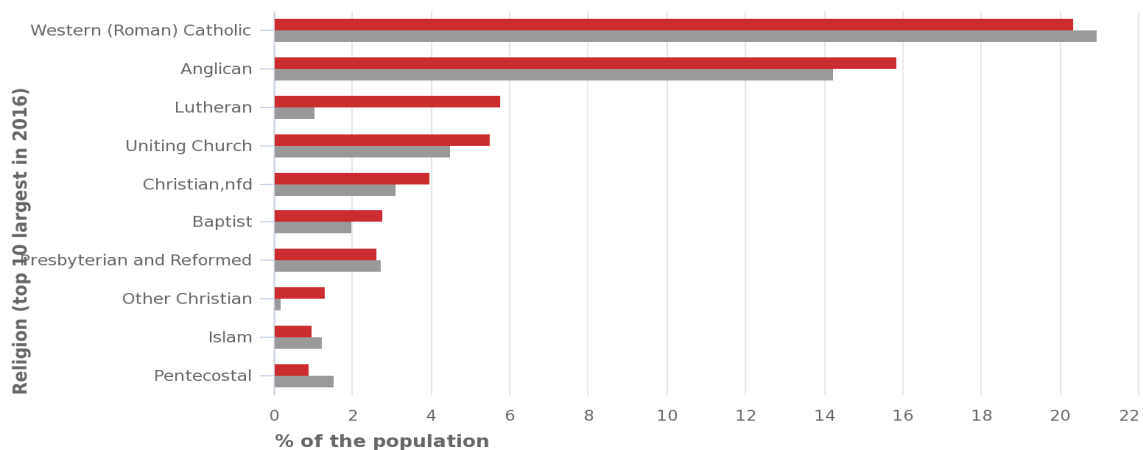
With the 35 to 44 age group being the most dominant and the Lockyer Valley Region having 52.4% of its residence not changing addresses over the last 5 years, Council can assume that this age group will more than likely be a permanent resident of the Lockyer Valley over the life of the cemetery plan. With population in the Lockyer Valley growing and the migration increasing to 1067 over five years there will be a requirement to factor a higher usage of Council controlled cemeteries.

### 3.1.3 Religious and Ethnic Background

The Lockyer Valley region is comprised of a large number of different religious groups with Christianity the most popular at 62.4%. (Australian Bureau of Statics 2016). Currently, the Roman Catholic denomination is the most popular at 20.4 % followed by Anglican at 15.9% and Lutheran at 5.8% with the Roman Catholic Religion slightly below the South East Queensland average. However, the Anglican, Lutheran, Uniting Church, Christian and other Christian religion is higher than the South East Queensland.

#### Religion, 2016

Legend: Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Red), South East Queensland (Grey)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



In 2016, Christianity according to Australian Bureau of Statistics decreased by 6% from 68.4 % since the census in 2011. With this decline there has been an increase in residences identifying that they have no nominated religion at 23.6%. Whilst Christianity has decreased since 2011, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism has increased in the results from the 2016 census. With these religions continuing to grow, future interments options will need to be considered as a part of the 10 year Cemetery Plan to cater for these emerging religions. As well as catering for the emerging trends, considerable burial capacity will still be required to cater for traditional burial options.



## 3.2 Lockyer Valley Cemeteries

### 3.2.1 Council Controlled Cemeteries

Lockyer Valley Regional Council is responsible for the management and operations of five operating cemeteries and two historical cemeteries across the region. Operational cemeteries are located at Gatton, Laidley, Forest Hill, Caffey and Murphys Creek whilst the historical cemeteries are at Ropeley and Ingoldsby which are closed for further interments.

These cemeteries contain monumental sections, however any new graves open for use are reverted to lawn graves or concrete beam areas. Currently, Council's operational cemeteries consist of 161,515 square metres of land (see Appendix 1: Council cemetery land analysis) however, most sites have constraints that makes areas unusable for further cemetery interments.

Council's cemeteries at Gatton and Laidley are currently nearing capacity and are the most used cemeteries in central locations with outlying cemeteries at Murphys Creek, Caffey and Forest Hill having enough capacity to accommodate cemetery operations on current usage for many years.

#### List of Council Cemeteries and Location

Cemetery	Location
Laidley	Southern Street, Laidley Qld
Forest Hill	Logan Road off QAC Connection Road, College View
Gatton	Dennis Minson Drive, Gatton
Caffey	Mt Sylvia Road, Caffey
Murphys Creek	Cemetery Road, Murphys Creek
Ropeley	Ropeley and Olm Road Ropeley
Ingoldsby	Ingoldsby Road, Ingoldsby



### 3.2.2 Cemetery Trends

As a service to the community, Lockyer Valley Regional Council carries out cemetery related activities as a part of Council's core services. These services include burials of coffins, ashes, placing of ashes in columbarium walls etc. Through a recent desktop audit of cemetery burial records, it has produced the following key trends:

- Over the last five years there has been a steady increase in ashes interments activities, with a large increase in 2017 and initial modelling indicating that there will be a similar amount of ashes interments in 2018.
- Total burials across Council cemeteries have remained consistent over the last 5 years.

### Lockyer Valley Regional Council statics relating to cemetery activities

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Burials	81	80	85	77	87	72	25
Total Ashes Interment	N/A	10	10	13	20	3	5
Total Interment	81	90	95	90	107	75	

These trends provide the basis for planning for the future use of the Council's cemetery services enabling the allocation of sufficient funds to cover these requirements.

### 3.2.3 Cemetery Services Team

Lockyer Valley Regional Council's Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Team is a part of the Infrastructure Works and Services Group at Council and manages Council's cemeteries carrying out the day to day operations of the cemeteries.

The key responsibilities of the Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries team include:

- Burial operations and ashes interment services
- Inspectors of monumental works that are carried out in Council controlled cemeteries
- Carry out general maintenance activities such as mowing, landscaping, spraying of weeds and lawn grave repairs
- Project manage and carry out capital works for cemeteries
- Chairing of Friends of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Cemeteries Group
- Implementation of Council asset management plan for cemeteries
- Management of Cemeteries Operational and Capital budgets
- Development and monitoring of Council fees and charges



The Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Team is ably assisted by the Customer Service Team who is responsible for provision of the following activities in the management of cemetery operations:

- Liaising with funeral homes, families and Council's Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries team with cemetery related applications such as burials, columbarium, and request for monumental works
- Processing applications through Council's Technology One cemetery module and updating cemetery related records
- Processing online burials through Birth, Death and Marriage (BDM) registry
- Assistance with grave reservation and selection of columbarium niches and plots
- Issuing of accounts for cemetery related activities
- First point of contact for cemetery enquiries
- Assist families with grave locations for deceased relatives.

Currently the Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries team is located in Gatton, with ease of access to Council controlled cemeteries across the region leading to efficient service delivery.

### 3.3 Achievements

In July 2016, Council approved changes to cemetery management with the Parks and Gardens team taking responsibility for Council controlled cemeteries forming the Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Team. Since the change of management, Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries have made significant achievements improving cemeteries operations for Lockyer Valley Regional Council, including:

- The creation of cemetery related activities factsheets which are located on the Council website and at the local funeral homes to help answer customer enquiries.
- Implementation of new cemetery application forms
- The creation of the Gatton Cemetery Master Plan, to help cater for future expansion works that are required at the cemetery
- Council achieving a minor deficit for the first time in cemetery operations, a significant step towards running efficient cemetery services
- The creation of a universal design for concrete seam strips in cemeteries to ensure long life of the seam strip
- Introduction of a Council policy and procedure for cemetery activities ensuring good governance across Council controlled cemeteries
- Implementation of a GIS map layer identifying grave locations and occupancy e.g. full, reserved and one interment
- The construction of Council's first ashes interment garden at Laidley cemetery
- The establishment of Friends of the Lockyer Valley Council Cemeteries Group to educate the community around cemeteries activities
- In conjunction with Council's asset management team, development of a cemeteries asset plan outlying future expenditure required to renew current cemetery assets.

These achievements have contributed to improved customer service for users of council controlled cemeteries and efficiency gains for operation of the cemeteries. The Cemetery Plan identifies further opportunities for improvements within Council controlled cemeteries across the region.



## 4. Future Considerations

Cemeteries like any other infrastructure need to be planned for the future. Cemeteries ultimately have a useful life where they are unable to cater for their core functions of cemetery interments. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis has been completed to identify what Council is currently doing well and areas where opportunities for the future. (See attachment Appendix 2). An action plan has also been developed to ensure that momentum is maintained in establishing efficient and practicable cemetery service delivery for the community in the future.

### 4.1 Current Capacity of Council's Cemeteries

The required use of Council's cemeteries continues to grow every year. Council's two main regional cemeteries located in Gatton and Laidley receive most cemetery interments. When factoring what is required for cemetery operations in the future at these main regional facilities and other Council cemeteries.

The following information is to be considered in future planning:

- The expected population growth in the next 10 years for the Lockyer Valley
- The Lockyer Valley Region having a higher than South East Queensland average for 50+ which will lead to further cemetery related requirements
- The Lockyer Valley Region has a high level of Christianity therefore more likely traditional burial methods will not change in near distant future, over alternative methods such as cremation
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council Cemeteries are currently the preferred location for the community needs when it comes to cemetery interments
- The ongoing increased development in the Plainland / Hatton Vale area, with no Council cemetery facility in this area to cater for the needs of the community
- A high level of migration to the Lockyer Valley, with 52.1% of the population not moving address in the Lockyer Valley in the last five years, it is assumed that they will be permanent residents for their natural life
- The potential growth of the industrial zone at Helidon and the potential to bring more residents to the region

With the increase in growth and development in the Lockyer Valley, assumptions can be made that the increase in cemetery operations will increase dramatically over the next 10 years. Over the life of this plan Council needs to take proactive planning to ensure that the community requirements will be catered for. On current average of interments across the Council region and over the life of the plan, Council will require an existing 820 graves to cover future demands at its current average without the expected increase in population growth.



## 4.2 Burial Capacity Requirements

With the projected growth in population in the Lockyer Valley of 10% over the next ten years and lack of planning and development of Council's cemeteries carried over the past 10 plus years, land and budget are required to accommodate this future growth.

The factors requiring consideration for future expansion of Council's cemeteries for interments include:

- Suitability of land for cemetery operations due to drainage flow paths and geological constraints
- Changes to vegetation laws will limit areas that can be cleared for cemetery operations
- Sensitive ecological inhabitants / fauna on some cemetery sites.

Council's Forest Hill Cemetery has protected species of trees that severely limits the availability of land for cemetery operations.

The below table provides an estimate of usable land for cemetery operations after each site has been evaluated for usability assessing the above factors. Other requirements that need to be included to determine the suitability of land for cemetery expansion include space for access tracks, gardens and storage spaces.

Council's current grave sizes differ across the region due to geological conditions. Laidley Cemetery currently operates on a 1.5m wide x 3m long grave including seam strip due to highly reactive soil and the potential for the grave to collapse, whilst Gatton, Murphys Creek and Caffey cemeteries operate on 1.2m width and 2.6m long graves.

Factoring in the dimension above and estimated available area, Council will have the following graves available in the table below.

### **Land Available for Cemetery Operations (Estimate)**

<b>Cemetery</b>	<b>Uncleared/Unusable</b>	<b>Total Used</b>	<b>Total Area</b>	<b>Total Available</b>	<b>Graves available</b>
Laidley	15487	22879	45419	7052	1567
Forest Hill	48167	1953	56713	6593	1465
Gatton	33950	18033	62234	10251	2278
Caffey	538	1409	9677	7730	1717
Murphys Creek	339	892	3465	2234	448

*Area based on squares metres*

## 4.3 Ashes Interments Requirements

With the trend towards ashes interments continuing to grow, Council needs to continue to create areas for ashes to be interred to cover this growing demand. Ashes can be interred in columbarium walls, lawn graves and gardens. Currently, Council has columbarium walls for interments located at Gatton, Laidley and Forest Hill Cemeteries, and ashes lawn area at Gatton and are currently developing a formal ashes memorial garden at the Laidley Cemetery. Current ashes interment spaces available at council-controlled cemeteries are:



## Niches Available

Cemetery	Single Niche	Double Niche	Family Niche	Lawn Ashes
Gatton	14	49	9	21
Laidley	1	26	NA	NA
Forest Hill	55	48	NA	NA
Caffey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Murphys Creek	NA	NA	NA	NA

Further budget allocation is required to cover shortfalls that currently exist in the ashes infrastructure at the Gatton Cemetery which has been identified through the Gatton Cemetery Master Plan.

### 4.4 Additional Burial Space

With the population forecasted to grow and therefore an increased need for cemetery services, Council needs to investigate options to purchasing additional land to cater for this demand. Once further sites have been identified a capital investment plan will be developed to ensure significant funds are available to cover the purchase and embellishment of the land.

Potential options for land include:

- Expansion of existing cemetery land to cater for the required usage
- Purchase of land adjacent to current cemeteries from private properties
- Review current parcels of land held by Council that may be suitable for cemetery operations within areas that will require cemeteries in the future
- Allocating existing government land for cemetery purposes.

When assessing further land for cemetery operations, the following criteria has been developed to ensure suitability for cemetery activities:

- The site is suitable for digging with no geological issues
- Close proximity to utility services such as water and sewerage
- Majority of the site has a moderate slope (less than 10%)
- Location has good access from local arterial road network
- No evidence of sensitive environmental fauna or cultural heritage issues.
- Location is not subject to flooding events.

Once a site has been selected for cemetery operations, master planning of the site will occur to ensure the most practicable use of the space. Cost effective establishment of cemetery infrastructure in appropriate construction order to limit issues that can occur from lack of appropriate planning.

Items to consider for the master planning stage include:

- Road network on the site covering access to all parts of the cemetery, ease of access to grave site for funeral directors and vehicles
- Adequate car parking arrangement for users of the cemetery
- Central location of equipment storage shed to provide easy access to areas for cemetery operations
- Toilet amenities for users of the cemetery
- Location of columbarium walls, ashes gardens and burial sites.
- Seating, landscaping and water bubblers.

A key component of the master planning works is the engagement of key stakeholders such as funeral homes, stonemasons, internal Council Departments, local cemeteries groups and the general users of the cemetery. Once this has been completed, a staged capital program can be developed and submitted for inclusion in the cemetery asset management plan.

#### 4.5 Additional Burial Space Options

Other burial space options that Council can consider to assist with the looming shortage of land for cemetery options include:

***Extra depth or Triple Depth Graves*** - When a request comes into Council for the preparation of a grave, Council offers the customer the opportunity of a grave depth to be single depth or double depth. If Council continues to offer the option of double and even triple depth interments Council can reduce the footprint that is required for cemetery operations and reduce grass control maintenance costs.

***Ashes memorialisation*** - Council has commenced catering for the growing trend of ashes memorialisation through the construction of columbarium walls and ashes memorial gardens at the Laidley Cemetery. These gardens and wall require a smaller foot print than traditional burial options and are commonly placed in areas at cemeteries where the land is not suitable for burial options. The current trend across the cemetery industry is for ashes memorialisation.

## **5. Community Involvement in Council Cemeteries**

### 5.1 The Friends of the Cemeteries Group

In October 2018, Council endorsed a proposal to form the Friends of the Cemetery Group for the region to enable members of the Lockyer Valley community to assist and provide feedback to Council regarding the management of Council's cemeteries.

Council receives multiple requests regarding Council cemeteries with enquiries ranging from general maintenance to infrastructure improvements. The purpose of the group is to help educate the community in cemetery related activities.

Key functions of the group include:

- A group where Council can inform users of Lockyer Valley Regional Council controlled cemeteries about maintenance works, future projects and Council directions for the cemeteries
- An opportunity for members of the group to express ideas, concerns and possible solutions about Council controlled cemeteries in the Lockyer Valley Region
- An opportunity to have special guests to educate members on funeral operations, cleaning techniques and other functions
- The potential to involve the community to assist Council to update old records with their local knowledge
- The potential for working bees to assist in bringing new life to old graves with no living descendants

The creation of this group will assist in educating the community and Council on cemetery requirements for the length of this plan.



## 6. Cemetery Operations and Fiscal Management

### 6.1 Cost Neutrality

Unlike the private sector that provide death care arrangements focusing on profits for stakeholders, Lockyer Valley Regional Council carries out death care arrangements as a service to the local community.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council cemetery activities in previous years have run at an operating deficit, where revenue generated from cemetery activities currently doesn't cover operational expenditure, however in 2018-19 Lockyer Valley Regional Council is on track to achieve cost neutrality for operational services e.g. maintenance and cemetery interments. (See Appendix 1. Revenue and expenditure cemeteries).

The revision of cemetery practices, staffing levels that carry out cemetery operations and adoption of fees and charges that are appropriate to carry out cemetery activities has helped changed Council's financial position in cemetery operations. However continued monitoring of actual cost of individual cemetery activities need to occur regularly to ensure that Council is still tracking towards its goal of cost neutrality. These activities need to then be benchmarked against neighbouring Council's cemeteries services to ensure that efficient practices are still occurring and value for money services are being delivered to the community.

### 6.2 Fees and Charges

Under the *Local Government Act 2009*, Council has the ability to recover costs for providing services to the community. Cemetery services are covered under this provision. In June 2016, a review of cemetery fees and charges was undertaken against the actual cost to provide those services. The costs were also benchmarked against neighbouring Council's to gain an understanding of how Council's fees and charges compared. (See Appendix 2 comparison fees and charges)

Key findings of the review include:

- Fees and charges set for cemetery activities where inadequate to cover services provided to the community
- Fees and charges for cemetery activities where the lowest amongst neighbouring Council's in every activity category
- Contractors costs had increased which has not been reflected in an increase in fees and charges
- Geological and environmental conditions where effecting time taken to prepare graves for burials
- Extra requests from the community and funeral homes not allowed for in the standard costing e.g. extra 50 required.

As a result of the review, Council commenced an incremental increase of fees and charges for the provision of cemetery activities to achieve the goal of cost neutrality. In addition, clear and precise details of what is included in each burial (e.g. number of chairs, etc.) were detailed to reduce requests for extra equipment. As a result of these changes cemetery operation deficits have reduced.

Ongoing reviews of revenue verses expenditure will continue to achieve cost neutral of services. An adjustment may be required in certain cemetery activities to ensure that the cemetery service is not being completed at a loss.

Affordability for the community is integral in considering future fees and charges increases however decisions will also need to consider the wider cost for the community.



### 6.3 Cemeteries Asset Management Plan

In 2019, Lockyer Valley Regional Council completed a draft asset management plan for Council's cemeteries. Council cemeteries currently have assets valued at \$403, 226 which includes concrete seam strips, columbarium walls, fencing, furniture etc. These assets are regularly inspected by Council asset officers for defects and condition ratings of the assets are adjusted accordingly. Once condition ratings reach a trigger rating, assets are then scheduled for replacement as a part of the cemeteries capital program. To maintain the current assets in the cemeteries, current renewal forecast is \$12,550 per year.

As a part of the cemeteries asset management plan, a 10-year upgrade or new program has been developed to assist in developing and improving council cemeteries throughout the region. It is forecasted that Council will need to contribute \$995, 000 over the next 10 years to cater for cemetery expansion works for Council to cope with growing usage of Council cemeteries, with the majority of these works in expanding existing council cemeteries.

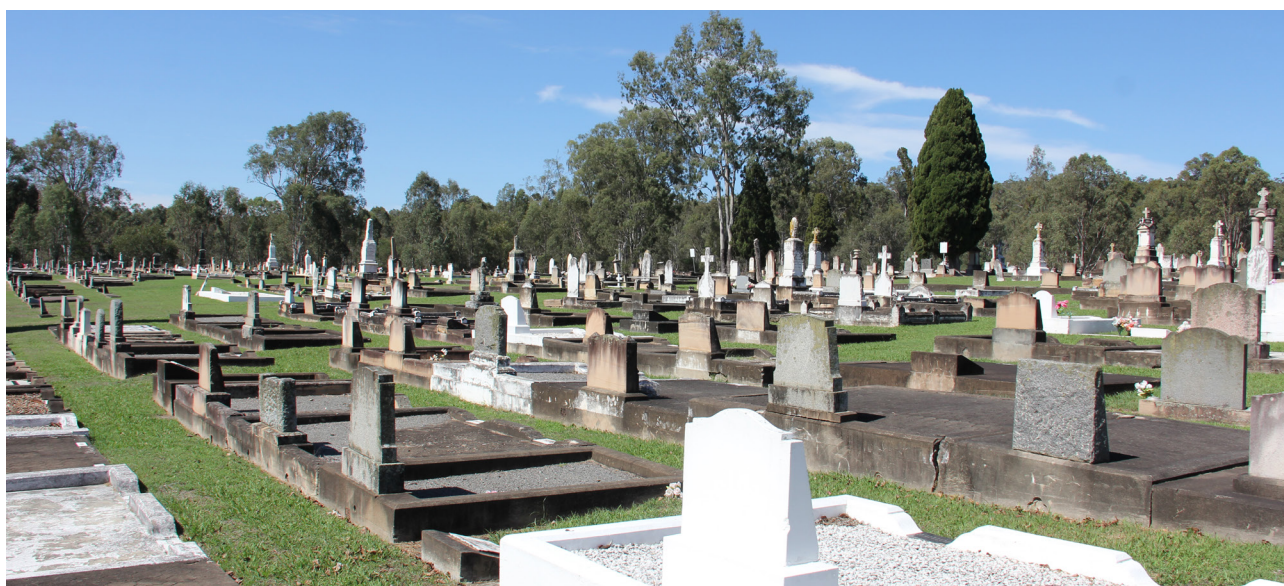
The acquisition of future land for cemetery activities is not included in the forecasted new expenditure over the next 10 years, however through identification in the cemetery plan, further land acquisition maybe required to continue to provide cemetery services for the community.

In addition, further capital expenditure may be required to generate further revenue from cemetery activities e.g. creation of ashes gardens to assist in covering operational costs.

### 6.4 Continued Monitoring of Cemetery Trends

Although the Lockyer Valley region has a high percentage of Christianity designated as the most popular religion and believes in traditional burial methods, a key trend in the death care sector has been for cremation over burials which may affect cemetery services in the future. To cater for the new cemetery trends Council needs to consider developing alternative methods of interments to cater for this growing market.

Regular monitoring of cemetery trends is required during the life of the plan, and budget for certain projects may be required to be relocated to cover shortfalls that occur from this trend becoming more popular than forecasted. Ongoing reviews of statics will be required by Council Officers to forecast these trend changes to ensure that the requirements of the community are being met and that revenue is continually being generated to assist in maintenance and cemetery works in the future.



## 6.5 Ongoing Review of Revenue and Expenditure

To continue to achieve the goal of cost neutrality for cemetery operations, regular reviews of works practices will occur. Educating the Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries officers around financial management will be key to achieve efficient cemetery services and making them responsible for budgets will help drive productivity dividends.

Council officers will continue to participate in local Council cemetery working groups to gather ideas that other Councils are currently using that may lead to savings in operating expenditure. Information gathering on fee structures and reasoning behind their fees may lead to identifying areas of opportunities that may potentially produce other revenue streams.

Embracing new mobility technology and data capture has the potential to assist in reducing costs in plaque application and inspection process whilst speeding up response time to customers. Through this technology, works orders for costings can be created per task and true costs for a cemetery interment can be thoroughly analysed to see if improvement can be completed to reduce expenditure. e.g. hard rock, grave took six hours to dig, did we use the appropriate machine?

Ongoing development of Council officers, review of expenditure and embracing new technology can all assist in producing cost neutral cemetery services.

## 6.6 Maintenance of Council Cemeteries

Council is committed to maintaining Council-controlled cemeteries to a high standard. Like other Councils there is a high community expectation that cemeteries are kept in a presentable manner as a mark of respect for former community members that have passed.

Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries staff currently carry out maintenance activities across all of Council-controlled cemeteries. Maintenance activities include mowing, spraying, gardening, furniture maintenance, ground improvements etc. These activities are carried out in accordance with the below schedule:

### Current maintenance schedule for Council controlled cemeteries

Cemetery	Intervention level
Laidley Lawn	Weekly
Laidley Monumental	Fortnightly
Forest Hill	Fortnightly
Gatton Lawn	Weekly
Gatton Monumental	Fortnightly
Caffey	Fortnightly
Murphys Creek	Fortnightly
Ropeley (closed)	On request
Ingoldsby (closed)	On request

Intervention levels have been set based on feedback from the community via Council's customer request system in alignment with resourcing that is available to carry out maintenance activities. Extra servicing is carried out for signature events such as Christmas, Easter, Mother and Father's Day as well as Anzac Day when usage of Council cemeteries is high.

Council currently allocates a budget of \$199,000 for maintenance and cemeteries operations every financial year, with usage increasing and cemeteries expanding it is forecasted that the budget for maintenance and operation will need to increase to cater for the expected increased usage.

All future works at Council cemeteries involve maintenance minimisation principles with every aspect of the planning process in future expansion works to identify the maintenance cost and burden when completing the new or upgrade works. By utilising these principles, a reduction in maintenance costs may be possible. Council has moved away from lawn plaques areas due to the maintenance issues that have been occurring and will be utilising concrete seam strips in lawn areas in future plans.

Issues that have arisen in lawn areas include:

- Potential of damage to plaques from mowers and claims for repairs
- Long servicing costs to maintain a lawn area over a concrete seam strip. Receptacles and plaques are placed on concrete strip and weed eating doesn't need to occur around the vases
- Continued sinking of plaques in lawn areas and requirement to continue re-levelling
- Increased maintenance costs due to memorialisation issues.

By moving towards concrete seam strips, it will reduce maintenance cost and time and free up Council staff to complete other cemetery related tasks.

All landscaping works will be done in a manner which is maintenance friendly and only drought tolerant plants are utilised that require limited maintenance. This planting will mainly occur where an opportunity exists to create ashes memorial gardens and where revenue can be generated to assist in maintenance costs.

### 6.7 Economic Opportunities

Council is always looking for opportunities to growth revenue streams to assist in covering expenditure to deliver services. Cemetery operations are no different. Potential opportunities exist in Council cemeteries to provide extra revenue streams by capitalising on the historic nature of the cemeteries. With genealogy and history becoming popular council could potentially carry out cemetery tours focusing on history of key graves throughout the cemeteries. Gatton cemetery is home to the famous Murphys Grave which has links to recent publications around the "Gatton murders". A cost benefit analysis would be required to be completed before progressing further to understand if this economic opportunity could produce significant revenue to cover the cost of carrying out tours.

As highlighted earlier in the cemetery plan, Christianity since 2016 as decreased by 6% form the census carried out in 2011. Alternative venues for funeral services will be required to cater for families who won't have their funeral service in a church and may prefer an area located at a cemetery.





## 7. Administration and Record Keeping

Lockyer Valley Regional Council currently utilises Technology One Council in conjunction with Intramaps for our day to day operations. One Council is the organisational tool that allows the cemetery team to generate new grave sections in our cemeteries, update existing graves and locate and retrieve deceased records. Cemetery information from One Council is automatically updated into Council's mapping software Intramaps. At a glance Intramaps will display what is available within our cemeteries which assists the community and funeral homes. This provides information to the Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries team which helps ascertain what land is required for future cemetery activities.

The integration of One Council and Intramaps has made interpreting data easier which only benefits the cemetery officers and the customers. It offers coloured plots to differentiate available, occupied, partially occupied and reserved graves in the cemeteries. This data is constantly updated giving invaluable support to all involved in cemetery services.

## 8. Key Actions

The Cemetery Plan has identified key considerations that need to be addressed to future proof cemetery operations and accommodate for the project growth in usage over the life of the plan.

Council will address the key considerations highlighted within the Cemetery Plan under three guiding principles and strategies:

Guiding principle	Strategy
Future considerations for cemetery operations	Lockyer Valley Regional Council will maintain sufficient land and facilities to carry out cemetery operations in the region and adjust to growing cemetery trends when required.
Provide professional, customer focus cemetery operations to the community	Provide fit for purpose cemetery facilities that are too a high standard and are well maintained that encourages community usage and ownership.
Efficient and cost-effective service delivery	Continue to manage expenditure whilst increasing revenue opportunities whilst embracing efficient cemetery operations delivery.

## 9. Related Documents

### 9.1 Action Plan

This action plan has been created to address the above key guiding principles that have been identified through the Cemetery Plan. Completed actions identified in the plan will assure continued professional customer focus cemetery operations for the community into the future.

Each principle identified in the Cemetery Plan has a series of actions which will require action either immediately, or in the short, medium, long term.

Time Frame	Priority
Immediate	High risk and requires immediate action
Ongoing	Action a part of daily core business
Short term	Within the next 3 years
Medium term	Within 3 – 5 years
Long term	Within 5 – 10 years

Key infrastructure projects identified through the plan will be submitted to Council's Capital works budget for consideration and endorsement.

Daily core business actions identified through the plan will be completed utilising existing operational budget allocation each financial year.

<b>Action Plan – Guiding Principle 1: Future Considerations for cemetery operations.</b>				
<b>Strategy 1:</b> Lockyer Valley Regional Council will maintain sufficient land and facilities to carry out cemetery operations in the region and adjust to growing trends when required.				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Delivery Timeframe</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.1	Continue to monitor cemetery interment trends and develop plans to cater for the trends if necessary.	Ongoing	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.2	Analysis existing cemetery interment data and ensure that there is adequate and useable land to provide for burial and ashes interments across council cemeteries.	Ongoing	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.3	If further land is required to be developed for burial and ashes interments, appropriate master planning of area to occur and budget to be allocated for development.	Short term	Capital Budget to cover master planning and development of site	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Finance
1.4	Should further land be required due to existing cemetery being full to provide for usage. Investigations to take place on suitable sites according to Council's suitable cemeteries standards and land acquisition process to occur.	Short term	Capital Budget to purchase land	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Finance
1.5	Monitor projected growth data, religious trends and update plans to cover potential changes required to service the need.	Ongoing	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.6	Investigate the requirement to establish new cemeteries in high projected growth areas in the region.	Medium Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.7	Liaise with Council's Legal Services and Property Coordinator to identify spare council land parcels that may be suitable for future cemeteries when current cemeteries have no room for expansion.	Long Term	Council Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Legal Services Planning
1.8	Continued replacement of cemetery assets in accordance with Council Cemetery Asset Management Plan.	Ongoing	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Finance
1.9	Updating of Cemetery Asset Management Plan when renewal and new works have been completed.	Ongoing	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Asset Management
1.10	Implementation of the Gatton Cemetery masterplan.	Ongoing	Capital Budget allocations	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.11	Creation of masterplan for existing Council cemeteries to help plan for future growth.	Short term	Budget Allocation	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.12	Review of Cemetery Plan to update action items.	Medium Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
1.13	Submission of Capital budget bids to cover cemetery requirements identified in the Cemetery Asset Management Plan and the Cemetery Plan.	Ongoing	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries

**Action Plan – Guiding Principle 2: Provide professional customer focus cemetery operations to the community.**

**Strategy 2:** Provide fit for purpose cemetery facilities that are too a high standard, well maintained and encourages community usage and ownership.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Delivery Timeframe</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
2.1	Develop a Friends of the Cemeteries Group where Council can discuss and inform the community on projects and issues at the cemeteries.	Immediate	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
2.2	Provide well maintained cemeteries that meet the community expectations.	Immediate	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
2.3	Develop relationships via the Friends of Cemeteries Group to help improve cemetery data from cemeteries that council has received from trusts.	Short Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
2.4	Continue to develop and update information fact sheets, procedures and form to ensure a professional customer experience.	Immediate	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Customer Service
2.5	Continued training in cemetery procedures to customer service and parks, gardens and cemeteries staff to provide a professional and consistent customer service experience.	Immediate	Core Business	

**Action Plan – Guiding Principle 3: Efficient and cost effective service delivery.**

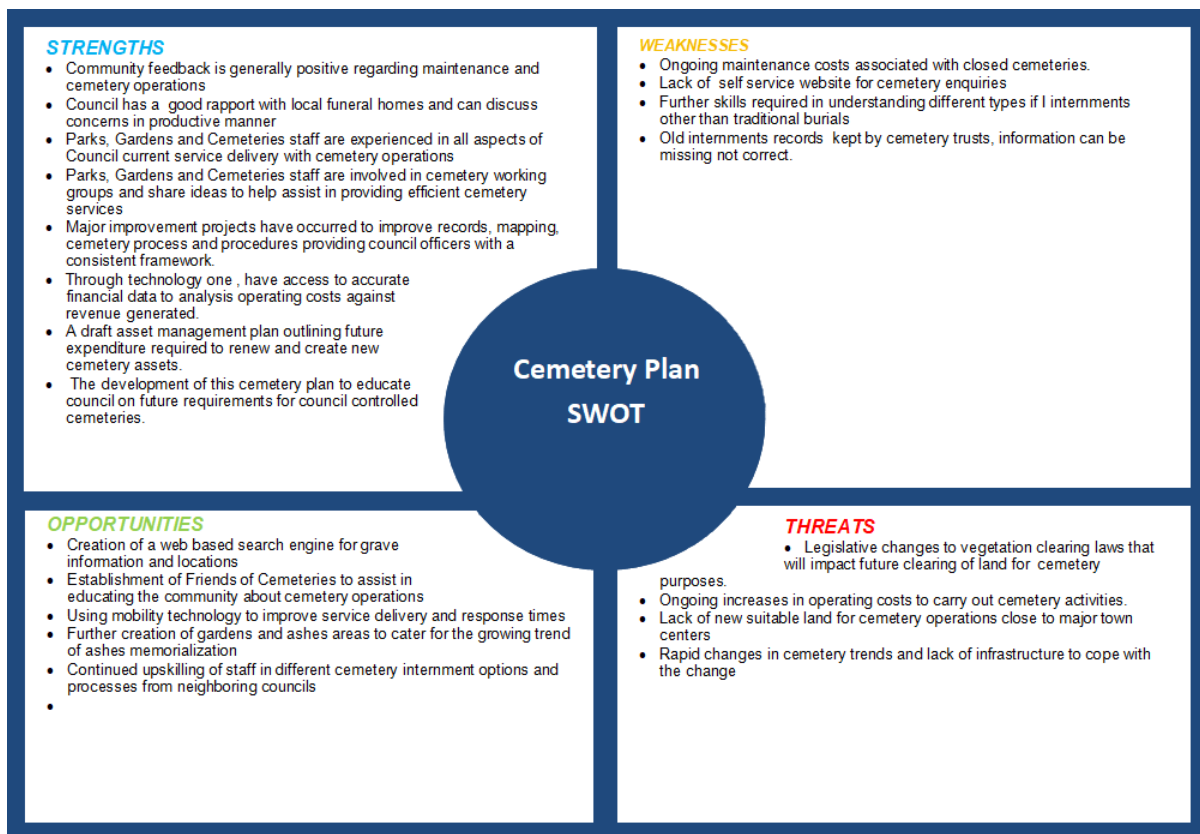
**Strategy 3:** Continue to monitor expenditure whilst increasing revenue opportunities and embracing efficient cemetery operations.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Delivery Timeframe</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
3.1	Annual review of revenue generated against operations expenditure to determine if fees and charges have been adequate to cover expenses occurred.	Immediate	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
3.2	Ongoing review of cemetery operations to determine if efficiencies can be made by changing work practices to help lower operational expenditure.	Short term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
3.3	Annual benchmarking of fees and charges against neighbouring councils.	Short Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
3.4	If required, continued incremental increase of fees and charges to assist in delivery of services at affordable levels to the community.	Short Term Long Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
3.5	Continued training for Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries staff on cemetery practices to ensure efficient delivery.	Short Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Customer Service
3.6	Attendance of regular Queensland Councils cemetery meetings to fact find and discuss different cemetery operations that may lead to efficiencies in delivery of cemetery operations.	Immediate	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Customer Service



3.7	Embrace the use of mobility to gain efficiencies when carrying out plaque inspections.	Short Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
3.8	Ongoing development of web-based search engines database of cemetery data to assist in public record searches.	Short Term	Budget Allocation	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries IT
3.9	Investigate opportunities to carry out historic cemetery tours to assist in generating revenue.	Long Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries
3.10	Creation of an open-air chapel at the Gatton cemetery to cater for services whilst capitalising on a new revenue stream.	Short Term	Core Business	Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Community Facilities

## Appendix 1 – Cemetery Plan SWOT



## Appendix 2 – Cemetery Figures

### 7406 Cemetery Revenue and Expenses 18/19 Financial Year to Date

Budget Detail	Accum	Accum	Original Budget
	Actual	Budget	
1BRV801 - Other Revenue	112,688	100,000	100,000.00
3BCR101 - Capital Grants, Subs	36,260	0	0.00
<b>Total Revenue to Date</b>	<b>148,948</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
2BEX101 - Employee Costs	26,907	78,430	78,430.00
2BEX201 - Goods and Services	27,937	55,500	55,500.00
2BEX203 - Internal Transfers (Plant Hire)	17,662	31,200	31,200.02
2BEX204 - Oncost Recoveries	11,668	34,393	34,393.00
<b>Total Expenses to Date</b>	<b>84,174</b>	<b>199,523</b>	<b>199,523</b>
<b>Net Result to Date</b>	<b>64,774</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>

### 7406 Cemetery Revenue and Expenses 17/18 Financial Year

Budget Detail	Accum	Accum	Original Budget
	Actual	Budget	
1BRV801 - Other Revenue	154,673	140,000	100,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>154,673</b>	<b>140,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
2BEX101 - Employee Costs	49,027	71,819	78,430.00
2BEX201 - Goods and Services	48,672	68,000	55,500.00
2BEX203 - Internal Transfers (Plant Hire)	35,295	15,073	31,200.02
2BEX204 - Oncost Recoveries	21,599	30,294	34,393.00
2BEX401 - Depreciation	18,031	19,040	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>172,623</b>	<b>204,226</b>	<b>199,523</b>
<b>Net Result</b>	<b>(17,949)</b>	<b>(64,226)</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>

## 7406 Cemetery Revenue and Expenses 16/17 Financial Year

	Accum	Accum	
Budget Detail	Actual	Budget	Original Budget
1BRV601 - Operating Contributions	423	0	0.00
1BRV801 - Other Revenue	167,724	160,000	100,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>168,147</b>	<b>160,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
2BEX101 - Employee Costs	47,334	74,000	78,430.00
2BEX201 - Goods and Services	74,050	78,000	55,500.00
2BEX203 - Internal Transfers (Plant Hire)	28,459	66,152	31,200.02
2BEX204 - Oncost Recoveries	20,029	0	34,393.00
2BEX401 - Depreciation	2,078	3,000	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>171,950</b>	<b>221,152</b>	<b>199,523</b>
<b>Net Result</b>	<b>(3,804)</b>	<b>(61,152)</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>

## 7406 Cemetery Revenue and Expenses 15/16 Financial Year

	Accum	Accum	
Budget Detail	Actual	Budget	Original Budget
1BRV801 - Other Revenue	105,199	99,000	100,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>105,199</b>	<b>99,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
2BEX101 - Employee Costs	60,225	51,000	78,430.00
2BEX201 - Goods and Services	66,568	42,500	55,500.00
2BEX203 - Internal Transfers	17,542	23,000	31,200.02
2BEX204 - Oncost Recoveries	26,576	23,000	34,393.00
2BEX401 - Depreciation	2,746	3,000	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>173,658</b>	<b>142,500</b>	<b>199,523</b>
<b>Net Result</b>	<b>(68,459)</b>	<b>(43,500)</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>



## 7406 Cemetery Revenue and Expenses 14/15 Financial Year

Budget Detail	Accum	Accum	Original Budget
	Actual	Budget	
1BRV801 - Other Revenue	116,607	99,000	100,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>116,607</b>	<b>99,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
2BEX101 - Employee Costs	52,526	48,000	78,430.00
2BEX201 - Goods and Services	44,640	30,000	55,500.00
2BEX203 - Internal Transfers (Plant Hire)	24,345	7,000	31,200.02
2BEX204 - Oncost Recoveries	22,983	21,600	34,393.00
2BEX401 - Depreciation	3,071	5,000	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>147,564</b>	<b>111,600</b>	<b>199,523</b>
<b>Net Result</b>	<b>(30,958)</b>	<b>(12,600)</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>

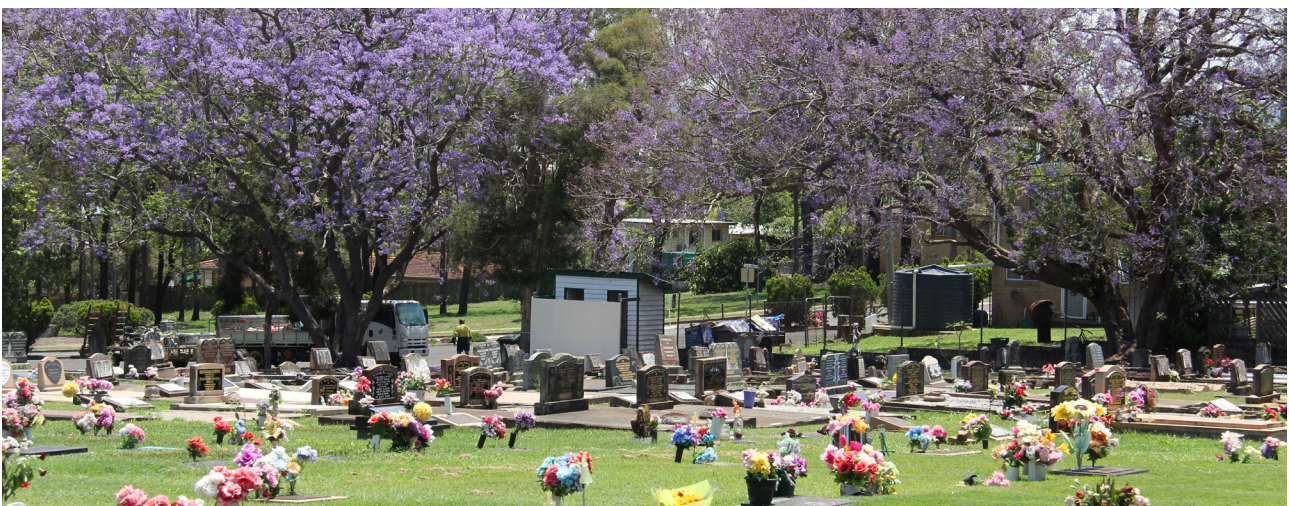
## 7406 Cemetery Revenue and Expenses 13/14 Financial Year

(only from Oct 2013 after go Live to June 2014)

Budget Detail	Accum	Accum	Original Budget
	Actual	Budget	
1BRV801 - Other Revenue	105,915	95,000	100,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>105,915</b>	<b>95,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
2BEX101 - Employee Costs	51,063	0	78,430.00
2BEX201 - Goods and Services	23,554	29,001	55,500.00
2BEX203 - Internal Transfers (Plant Hire)	21,146	0	31,200.02
2BEX204 - Oncost Recoveries	25,063	0	34,393.00
2BEX401 - Depreciation	3,301	4,082	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>124,127</b>	<b>33,083</b>	<b>199,523</b>
<b>Net Result</b>	<b>(18,212)</b>	<b>61,917</b>	<b>(99,523)</b>

### Appendix 3 - Proposed 2019-2020 Fees and Charges

Lockyer Valley Regional Council   2 - Commercial Fees & Charges   2.8 - Cemeteries   2.8.1 - Gatton, Laidley, Caffey, Forest Hill & Murphys Creek   General Cemetery				
Application for Burial	\$890.00	\$910.00	2.25%	\$20.00
Application for Reservation of Plot	\$1,025.00	\$1,050.00	2.44%	\$25.00
Extra Depth	Price on application			
Interment Fee - Monumental	\$1,455.00	\$1,490.00	2.41%	\$35.00
Interment Fee - Lawn	\$1,335.00	\$1,370.00	2.62%	\$35.00
Interment Fee for Child aged 12 and under	\$670.00	\$685.00	2.24%	\$15.00
Land for Child Grave (Smaller Plot)	\$446.00	\$457.15	2.50%	\$11.15
Breaking of Concrete on Graves	Price on application			
Land for Burial of Ashes	\$512.00	\$524.80	2.50%	\$12.80
Burial of Cremation Ashes	\$195.00	\$200.00	2.56%	\$5.00
Re-Opening Grave / Exhumation	Price on application			
Hand Digging	\$515.00	\$530.00	2.91%	\$15.00
Application for Monumental Work and Plaque Modifications	\$82.00	\$84.00	2.44%	\$2.00
Lockyer Valley Regional Council   2 - Commercial Fees & Charges   2.8 - Cemeteries   2.8.1 - Gatton, Laidley, Caffey, Forest Hill & Murphys Creek   Overtime Rates				
Overtime Rates	\$175.00	\$180.00	2.86%	\$5.00
Lockyer Valley Regional Council   2 - Commercial Fees & Charges   2.8 - Cemeteries   2.8.1 - Gatton, Laidley, Caffey, Forest Hill & Murphys Creek   Columbarium				
Single	\$515.00	\$530.00	2.91%	\$15.00
Double	\$635.00	\$650.00	2.36%	\$15.00
Family	\$710.00	\$730.00	2.82%	\$20.00
Interment of Ashes	\$160.00	\$160.00	0.00%	\$0.00
Removal of Ashes	\$160.00	\$160.00	0.00%	\$0.00







For more information phone 1300 005 872,  
email [mailbox@lvrc.qld.gov.au](mailto:mailbox@lvrc.qld.gov.au) or visit [www.lockyervalley.qld.gov.au](http://www.lockyervalley.qld.gov.au)