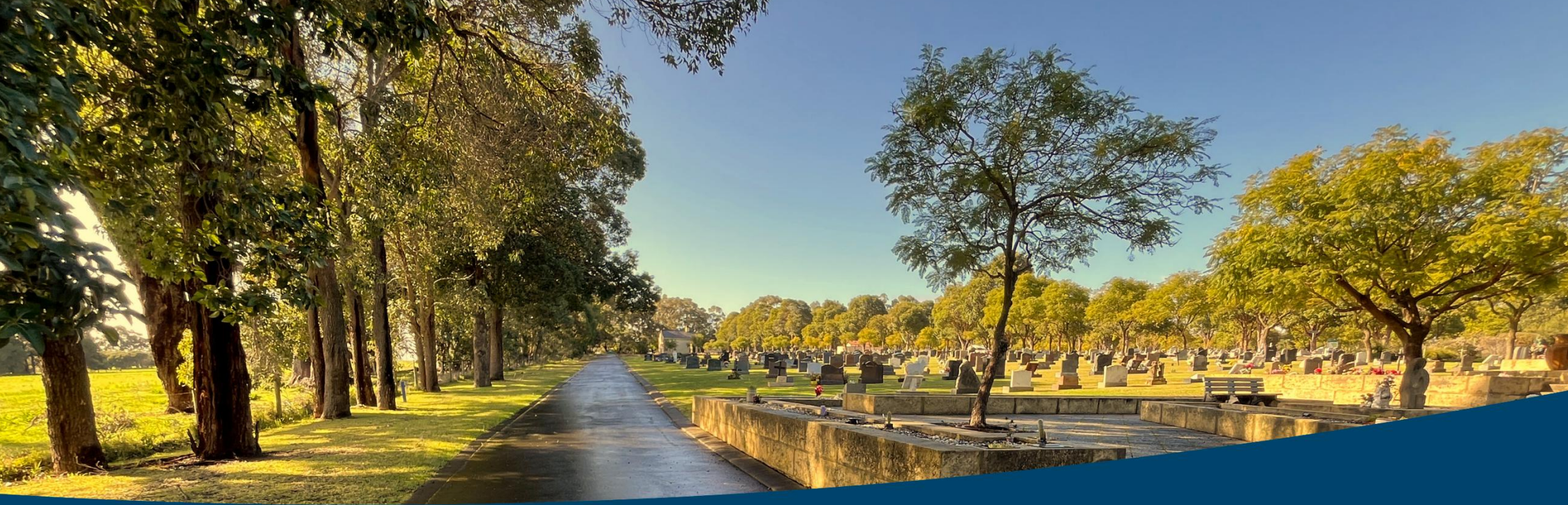




City of Busselton

50-Year Cemetery Strategy 2026

Mayor's Message

The City's 50-Year Cemetery Strategy has been developed through stakeholder engagement, research and site assessments. This long-term Strategy will guide the future planning, development, management and review of our cemeteries over the next five decades.

We extend our sincere thanks to industry stakeholders and community members who provided invaluable insights into their experiences and emerging trends. Their contributions have played a vital role in shaping this Strategy.

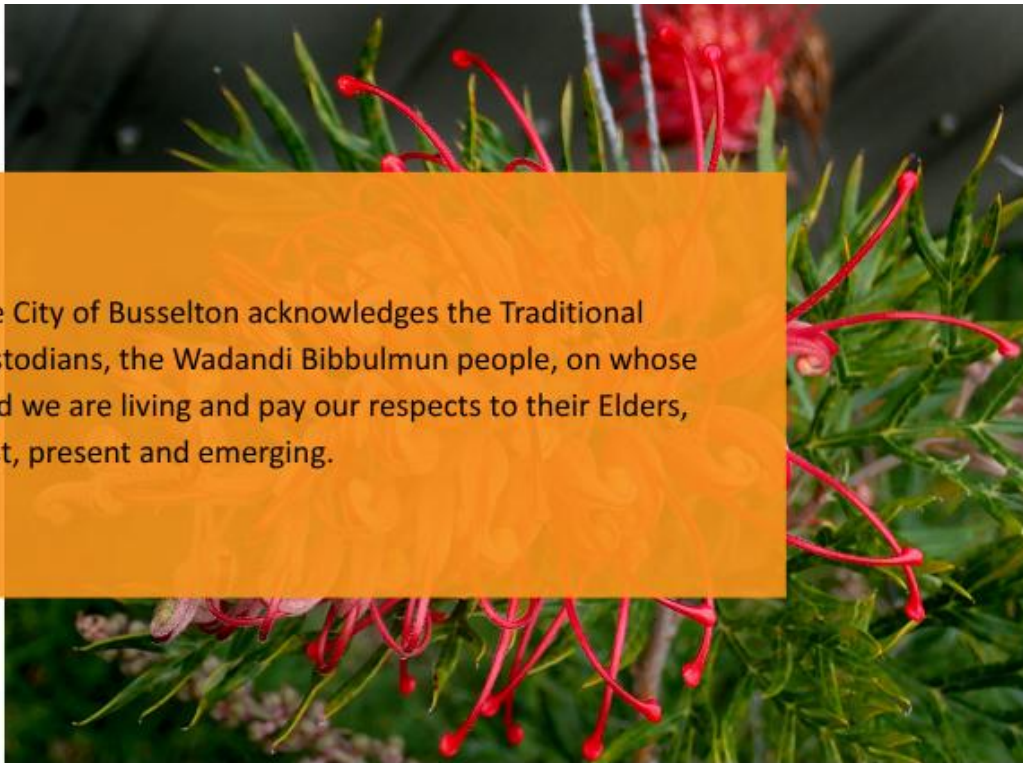
The City operates three active cemeteries in Busselton, Dunsborough and Metricup. These places hold deep significance for individuals and families and serve as the final resting place for many of our community's loved ones. Future planning will ensure these cemeteries continue to be respectfully maintained, preserving their importance while supporting equitable access to interment services for current and future generations.

This Strategy will support the creation and ongoing care of peaceful places to memorialise, honour and reflect on those who have passed. It will strengthen inter-generational connections to our community's history and ancestry, while preserving our natural and cultural heritage.

The Strategy will seek to facilitate the provision of meaningful choices for individuals and families in where they may be laid to rest, offer peaceful spaces for visitors to gather and commemorate loved ones, as well as foster an enduring connection between people and place.

Phill Cronin

Mayor, City of Busselton



The City of Busselton acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Wadandi Bibbulmun people, on whose land we are living and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Introduction

The City of Busselton is located in the South West region of Western Australia (WA). The City is a fast-growing local government area and Busselton is a major population and service centre for both the broader local government and surrounding smaller towns.

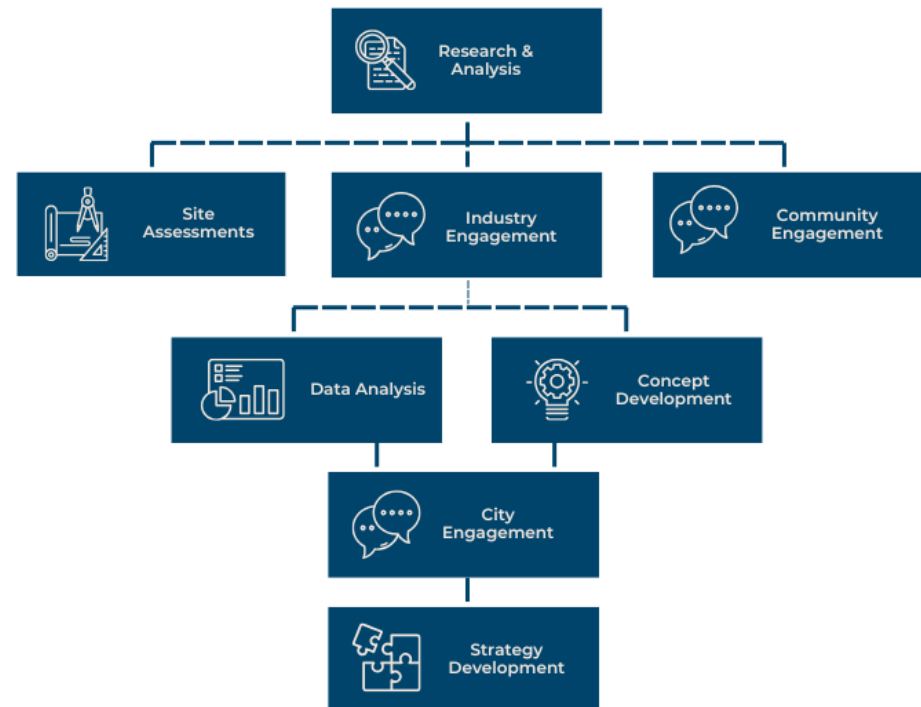
With a current estimated resident population of 45,003¹ the City is expected to experience continued growth, reaching a population of around 60,020 by 2036. This is higher than the expected growth rate in broader WA over the same period.²

The City operates three active cemeteries in Busselton, Dunsborough and Metricup which are covered in this new 50 Year Cemetery Strategy. This Strategy sets out a vision and supporting principles to guide how the City's active cemeteries are developed, managed and operated, in line with community needs and expectations. The Old Busselton Cemetery is no longer active and not in the scope of this Strategy.

Nationally there is a shift towards cremation and memorial-only sites, likely due to declining religious affiliation and rising burial costs. Consistent with national trends, demand for burials (as a percentage of deaths) has decreased in the City over the past 10 years, however total numbers remain stable due to population growth. Assuming current trends continue the City will be able to meet demand for burials within existing cemetery land parcels to beyond 2060.

Strategic planning must be flexible and future-focused, accommodating diverse community preferences and changes over time. This strategy was developed based on a detailed process of research, site assessment, engagement and strategy development and review.

1: Cemetery Strategy Development



¹ ABS (2025) Data by region: Busselton LGA. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved July 2025

² WAPC (2025) WA Tomorrow Report 12: Central Band Forecast Population City of Busselton

City of Busselton Cemeteries



Cemeteries Overview

The City of Busselton sits on Wadandi Boodja, part of Noongar country in the South West region of Western Australia. As of 2024, the City had an estimated resident population of 45,003 people.¹

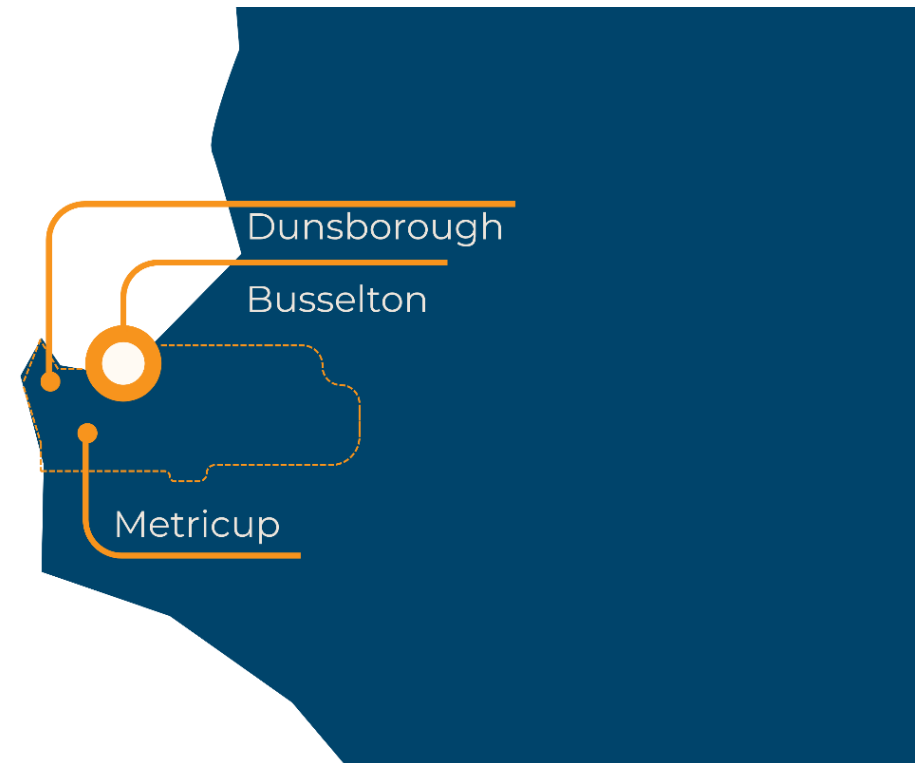
Covering 1,455km² and located approximately 230kms south of Perth, the City has three main town centres: Busselton, Dunsborough and Vasse.

The City operates three active cemeteries in Busselton, Dunsborough and Metricup which are covered in this Strategy. This Strategy will guide how the City's cemeteries are developed, managed and operated, in line with community needs and expectations.

The current features of each cemetery are detailed in the next section. A preference for more informal ash interment and memorial plaque locations is a trend seen across the City's cemeteries.

In the South West of Western Australia key climate projections are for an increase in average temperatures, more hot days and warm spells, decreasing winter rainfall and a harsher fire-weather climate. All three of the City's cemetery sites are located in designated bushfire prone areas.³

2: City of Busselton Cemetery Locations



³ CSIRO (2025) Climate Change in Australia: Southern and South—Western Flatlands West, Commonwealth Science Industrial Research Organisation

Busselton

Busselton is the key service and population centre within the City. As of 2021, the Busselton urban centre (ABS) had a population of 27,233.⁴

According to the City of Busselton Local Planning Strategy, the Busselton-Vasse urban area has an approximate potential maximum population of over 75,000 people.⁵

Busselton Cemetery is located at 285 (Lot 300) Vasse Highway Yalyalup, approximately six kilometres south-east of the Busselton city centre. Land surrounding the cemetery is rural.

The oldest traditional graves are located on the south of the site and newer traditional graves on the north side. Newer traditional graves are organised in banded concrete rows, about 6 metres apart in the most recent areas to permit double depth burials and excavation machinery circulation. Approximately 50% of this space is currently available, while the older traditional burials area is considered fully occupied.

Masonry-surrounded planter-like areas for ash interment are located near the entrance gate, but more recent preferences are ash interment and memorial plaques located more informally around trees and in planter beds. This is a trend seen at all three cemeteries.

Historically, stillborn burials have occurred on the far east side of Lot 300, adjacent to the older traditional burials area (edge of Lot 50). Lot 50 (Reserve No. 9298) is designated for future expansion.

3: Busselton Cemetery Aerial



⁴ ABS (2022) 2021 Census All Persons QuickStats: Busselton - Urban Centres and Localities

⁵ City of Busselton (2019) City of Busselton Local Planning Strategy

Dunsborough

The coastal town of Dunsborough is positioned on Geographe Bay, and the cemetery sits within the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge.

As of 2021, the Dunsborough urban centre (ABS) had a population of 7,182.⁶ According to the City of Busselton Local Planning Strategy, the Dunsborough Urban Area has an approximate potential maximum population of 15,000 people.⁵

Dunsborough Cemetery is located within the townsite, at 16-18 Hansen Street (Reserve No. 12304). It is a 1.21 hectare site, with approximately half of the area cleared / developed, and the other half vegetated. Surrounding land is developed residential or road reserve. The site is also bordered by Cape Naturaliste Road. Aboriginal cultural material or artefacts may be present at sub surface near this site boundary.⁷

The cemetery has a larger traditional burial area dating back to the 1930s. Graves are very close together making it very difficult to access these existing graves for second burials.

The soft, sandy soil conditions on site require shoring for all traditional burials and to ensure health and safety graves are excavated with machines and excavations shored to avoid sand collapse. This requires machine access to the graveside to remove excavations formwork.

Brick ash interment walls can be found near the entrance gates, but more recent preferences are a separate area for designated ash interment and memorial plaques.

4: Dunsborough Cemetery Aerial



⁵ City of Busselton (2019) City of Busselton Local Planning Strategy

⁶ ABS (2022) 2021 Census All Persons QuickStats: Dunsborough - Urban Centres and Localities

⁷ DPLH (2025) Site 29543 Cape Naturaliste Road 1: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Enquiry System

⁸ ABS (2022) 2021 Census All Persons QuickStats: Metricup - Suburbs and Localities

Metricup

Metricup sits within the City of Busselton local government area, forming part of the Margaret River Region wine and agritourism corridor. The area sits within the Leeuwin- Naturaliste Ridge. As of 2021, the Metricup locality (ABS) had a population of 263.⁸

Metricup Cemetery (Reserve No. 21540) is located on Metricup Road near the intersection of Bussell Highway, approximately 30 kilometres south of Busselton and 10 kilometres north of Cowaramup.

Located behind Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church, the Lot is 3 hectares of largely undeveloped and heavily vegetated land, with the area in current use confined to the southeastern corner.

Being situated on Bussell Highway, the site has both high visibility and proximity to established tourism and recreation uses in the area. It is currently zoned as Recreation.

There are less than 10 traditional graves on the site and will not be suitable for future burials due to shale rock. In the future this cemetery will only be able to accommodate ash interment and memorial placements in an informal, natural setting.

5: Metricup Cemetery Aerial



Legislation

In Western Australia, the Cemeteries Act 1986 (the Act) provides for the declaration and management of cemeteries, the establishment, constitution and functions of cemetery boards, the licensing of funeral directors and the regulation of burials. Part V covers management of cemeteries.

Many regional local governments in Western Australia have responsibility for management of cemeteries. In the Perth metropolitan area this falls under the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. The City of Busselton also manages its cemeteries under the City of Busselton Cemeteries Local Law 2015.

A 'Grant of Right of Burial' for 25 years gives the purchaser (the 'grantee') the right to arrange burials, place cremated remains and erect monumental work upon a grave. In Western Australia the grant is issued initially for a 25-year period, from the date of application. After this term, it can be renewed for a further 25-year term if an application is submitted and the required fee is paid.

A Grant of Right of Burial is issued in the name of one person only and only that person can make decisions about that grave. Whether for the first or a subsequent burial, the Grant held over a nominated burial plot must be current at the time a burial is conducted. Once a Grant expires, official ownership of the plot reverts to the City of Busselton.

As is the case for all City facilities, access improvements to cemeteries also need to consider requirements for public authorities under the Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993 (amended in 2004). This is currently covered by the City's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2025 – 2029.



Operations

Cemeteries within the City of Busselton are jointly managed by the Systems and Information Services and Public Open Space Services.

A dedicated Cemeteries Administration Officer, based in Customer Information services, coordinates burials and ashes interments, maintains records, manages finances and ensures compliance with relevant legislation.

Within Public and Open Space services, the Parks and Streetscapes Supervisor oversees grounds maintenance, landscaping and grave excavation, while the Foreshore, CBD and Trades Supervisor is responsible for ashes interments and associated memorial installations.

Stonemason and monuments work in City cemeteries is completed by external contractors. The City oversees approval of some cemetery services through a licence process, and Funeral Directors and Monumental Masons must hold a licence issued by the City.

All monumental works must be approved by the City, preferably through a monumental mason, prior to placement in City cemeteries. Specific requirements relate to monuments in the traditional areas of Busselton cemetery, to headstones in the lawn section of Busselton cemetery, and for plaques.

The City uses various application forms to support the cemeteries operations and to ensure the City of Busselton Cemeteries Local Law 2015 can be implemented. Current forms are shown at right.

6: Forms used by the City of Busselton in cemeteries management



Grant of Right of Burial

- ✓ Pre-Purchase or Reservation Form
- ✓ Purchase/Renewal Form
- ✓ Next of Kin Update Form
- ✓ Transfer Form



Ashes Management

- ✓ Interment and/or Memorial Placement Form
- ✓ Transfer/Removal Form



Memorial Plaques

- ✓ Order Form – Children's Garden
- ✓ Order Form – General



Monumental Works

- ✓ Monumental Mason – Licence Application Form
- ✓ Monument Installation Form
- ✓ Request for Memorial on a Grave with an Expired Grant
- ✓ Request Minor Monument Repairs on a Grave with an Expired Grant



Funeral Directors

- ✓ Licence Application Form
- ✓ Burial – Application Form

Cemetery Trends



Broader Cemetery Trends

The key sustained cemetery trends in Australia are an increase in cremations as preference, increasing land constraints impacting on burials, and digital and other industry innovations to improve access and inclusivity.



**INCREASING
CREMATIONS**



**LAND
CONSTRAINTS**



**INDUSTRY
INNOVATIONS**

The DeathTech Research Team based at the University of Melbourne and the University of Oxford have produced several research projects that offer an insight into cemetery trends and end of life intentions at a national scale. Their Future Cemetery National Surveys and Workshop outputs have been considered in this work as a snapshot of national trends⁹, alongside cemetery and crematoria market industry data.

Cremation – an increasing choice

Almost two thirds of Australians who die are now cremated, with this number rising consistently over the long term, up from around 50% in the 2000s. Rising inflation and a reduction in discretionary income, coupled with a long term decline in church attendance, are some likely reasons for this trend.

⁹ University of Melbourne (2025) DeathTech Research Team: Research

In the 2021 DeathTech survey 48% of respondents preferred a future cremation compared to 18% burial. Market reports also show a clear preference for lower price cremations over pricier burial services in Australia.

At a more local level, neighbouring local governments in the South West have also experienced a decline in traditional burials in their cemeteries, despite population growth.

In the Future Cemetery Survey 2020, when respondents were asked which factor would be most important to them when choosing how to dispose of their body, cost was ranked the most important.

Of those who indicated a willingness to be cremated in future, only 20% wished to be stored in a cemetery or columbarium (e.g. niche wall). More popular preferences were to be scattered in nature (42%), in a personally meaningful location (41%), scattered at sea (26%) or distributed amongst loved ones (21%).



42%
**SCATTERED IN
NATURE**



41%
**PERSONALLY
MEANINGFUL
LOCATION**



26%
**SCATTERED AT
SEA**



21%
**DISTRIBUTED
AMONGST
LOVED ONES**

Land constraints growing

Space restrictions have become a major limitation in metropolitan areas and other long-established cemeteries. The national DeathTech survey

appears to show support increasing for limited tenure options, with 44% of people in 2020 believing people should own a grave in perpetuity / permanently, down to 37% in 2021.

Added cost pressures of burial in the future due to declining space are also likely to accelerate a shift towards cremation. In Western Australia, graves are issued a Grant of Right of Burial with a tenure of 25 years, with the option to renew for an additional 25 years. In cemeteries where space is limited, new burial plots may be established within older sections by utilising areas where tenure has expired. This often involves placing new graves between existing ones to maximise available space while leaving existing graves in situ. Generally, these practices are used at metropolitan cemeteries where space is exhausted. Land constraints are not yet an issue at active Busselton cemeteries, but capacities need to be proactively planned and managed for the future.

Incorporating other values and uses

The Future Cemetery Survey 2020 asked about secondary services that cemeteries might offer. Many respondents felt that a cemetery could be a good place to learn about the history of those interred (42%), about a third of respondents (32%) rejected all of the suggestions, stating that 'the cemetery should only be for the interment and memorialisation of the dead' and about a third of respondents (32%) supported the idea of a cemetery as a nature reserve for the preservation of plants and animals.

Innovations – digital and future wishes

Cemetery innovations internationally include digital cemetery maps, funeral videography, grave directories, location-based games, memorial avatars, online memorials and remote visitation. Interest is also increasing in options such as water cremations and natural burials. Other recognised

methods are full body donation for research, burial at sea, upright burial, cryonics and natural or green burial.

Nature based burial locations are also rising in popularity. In the Future Cemetery Survey 2020, of those who indicated they would prefer to be buried, 57% wished to be buried in a cemetery and 31% would like burial in nature or bushland. In WA natural burial places usually involve use of a biodegradable coffin with materials made from natural fibres to allow remains to return to the earth and decompose naturally. Graves remain unmarked so disturbance to natural vegetation is minimised. Natural burial areas in WA currently exist at Fremantle Cemetery, Karridale Cemetery and Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park.

Key demand drivers

Key drivers that influence the demand for cemeteries, crematoria and funeral directors in Australia are:

- Number of deaths
- Consumer price index
- Real household disposable income
- Church attendance
- Population aged 70 or older.

Market research shows that demand for funeral services will continue to expand over the coming years due to a steady rise in annual deaths and an expanding population. Despite recovering economic conditions, more families are expected to choose lower priced cremation services over traditional burial services.¹⁰

¹⁰ IbisWorld (2025) Industry Report: Funeral Directors, Crematoria and Cemeteries in Australia, July 2025.

City of Busselton Trends

Overall, death and cemetery trends in Busselton are consistent with broader, national trends. There is a clear shift in community expectations around cemetery use and memorialisation, such as increasing cremation and use of memorial only sites. A general preference for cremation was also noted by local funeral directors.



GROWING
POPULATION



DECREASING
RELIGIOUS
BELIEFS



DECREASING
BURIALS



INCREASING
MEMORIALS

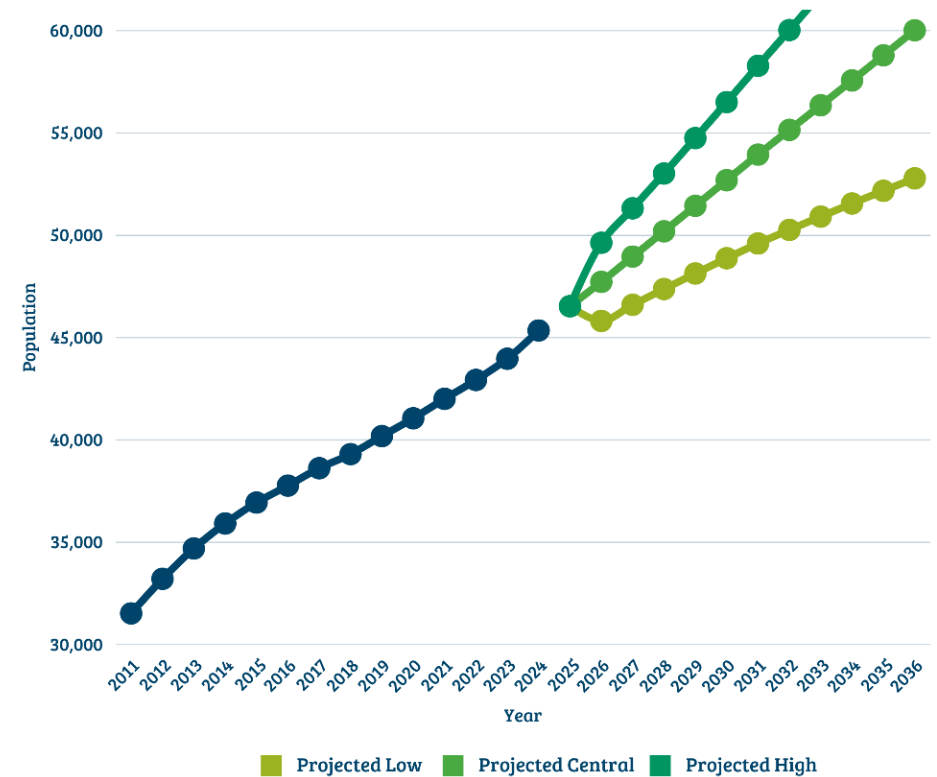
Deaths

The City of Busselton experienced population growth of 42% between 2011 to 2024, with a current estimated resident population of 45,003. Under WA Tomorrow projections, population growth is expected to be sustained, reaching 60,020 by 2036 (central band). This is higher than the expected broader WA growth rate over the same period.² WA Tomorrow provides population estimates to 2036 under high, central and low growth scenarios, as shown in Figure 7.

The City's median Standardised Death Rate (SDR), measuring deaths per 1,000 people, has remained steady even as life expectancy has increased. Between 2013 and 2023, the SDR ranged from 4.6 to 5.5, averaging 5.04 and a median of 5.1 per annum, consistent with the national average of 5.28 and median of 5.3.

Reflecting population growth, the total number of deaths rose from 199 in 2013 to 356 in 2024 (averaging 294 per annum).

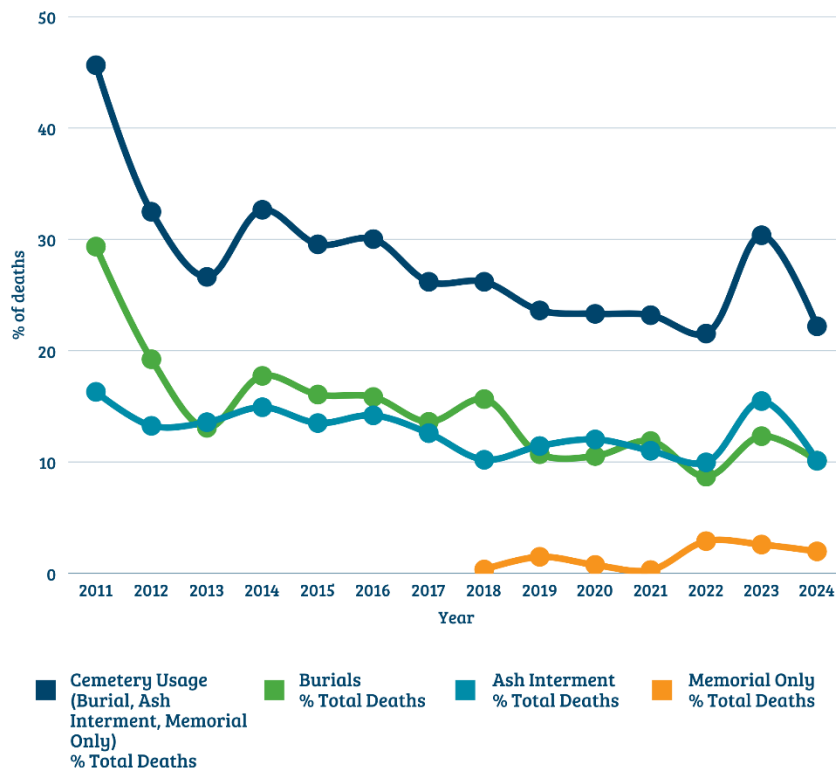
7: City of Busselton Estimated Resident Population (2011 to 2024) and Projected Population (2025 to 2036)



Cemeteries Usage

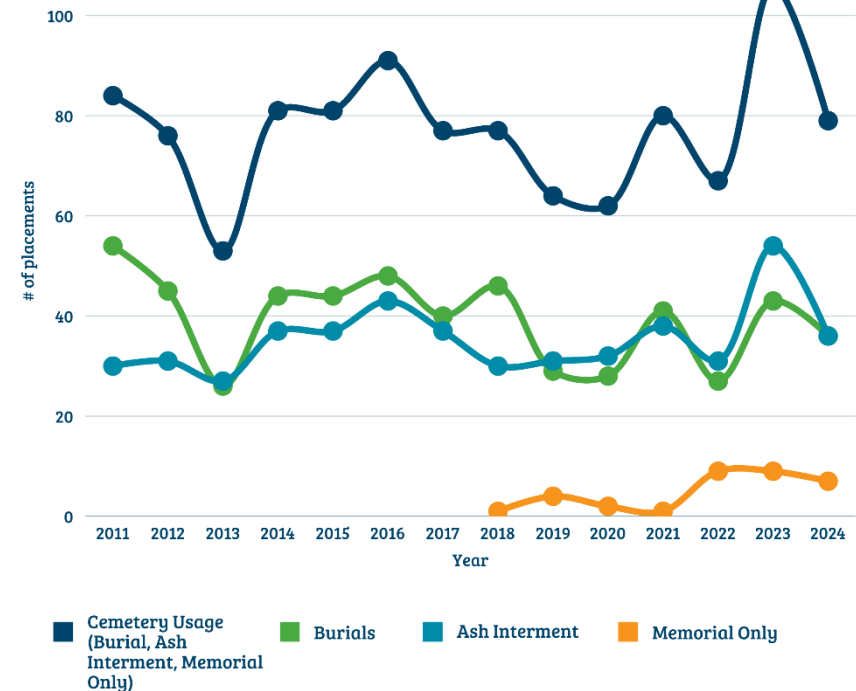
As a percentage of total deaths recorded for the City of Busselton local government area, usage of the City cemeteries for burial, ash interment or memorial only placement has declined since 2011.

8: City of Busselton Cemetery Usage (2013 to 2024) % Deaths



In total numbers, use of the City's cemeteries for either burial, interment or memorial has remained relatively steady, with median annual placements of 78. As the largest population centre, Busselton cemetery makes up the majority of burials and ash interments.

9: City of Busselton Cemetery Usage (2013 to 2024) Total Number of Placements



Burials

As a percentage of deaths there is a downward trend for burials in City cemeteries since 2011, with some year-to-year variability. Burials in City cemeteries equalled 29% of total deaths in the City of Busselton local government area in 2011, down to 10% by 2024. Over the past five years the average annual rate has been 10.7% of total deaths.

In total numbers, burials have fluctuated, from a high of 54 (2011) to a low of 26 or 27 (2013 and 2022). Over the past five years the average annual rate has been 35 burials.

Cremation and Memorial

As a percentage of deaths ash interments in City cemeteries have also trended downwards, yet at a lower rate. Ash interments in City cemeteries have ranged from 16% of total deaths in the City of Busselton local government area in 2011, down to 10% (2022). Over the past five years the average annual rate has been 11.7% of total deaths.

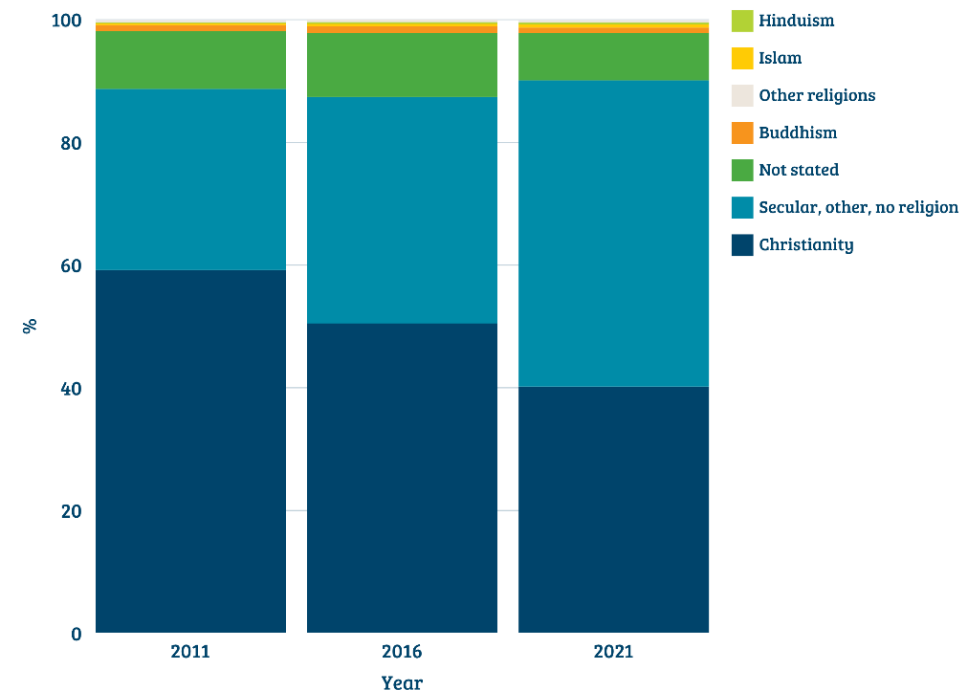
In total numbers, ash interments have ranged from a high of 54 (2023) to a low of 27 (2013). Over the past five years the average annual rate has been 38 interments.

Memorial only placements (e.g. plaque only) are a relatively new option in the City hence the low numbers and lack of historical data. However, this option has shown growth from one placement commencing in 2018 to nine in 2022 and 2023.

Religion

Declining religious affiliation is noted as a possible influence in burial and cremation trends. The most noticeable change in religious affiliation in the City of Busselton has been a decline in people identifying with Christian faith, coupled with a rise in those with secular beliefs, other spiritual beliefs or no religion. A snapshot of the last three Census periods (2011, 2016, 2021) is shown below.

10: Religious Affiliation in the City of Busselton (Census)



Community Needs



Industry and Community Engagement

Both a community survey and industry survey were hosted on the City of Busselton's online engagement platform, Your Say Busselton. A community survey was open from 8 August to 9 September 2025 and had 123 visits and 28 participants. It was promoted via newspaper, Facebook, Open Day and dedicated targeting of surveys to community groups and organisations.

A concurrent industry survey was available from 8 August to 22 September 2025. This survey was completed by five funeral providers, one pastor and a monumental mason operating or servicing the City of Busselton area.

Cremations and Traditional Burial

The industry survey confirmed that cremations have increased over the past five to 10 years and are now the most common request for local funerals. All industry stakeholders supported the continuation of lawn style burials with concrete beams at Busselton cemetery.

Other Options

In addition to a move away from burials (although total numbers may remain steady due to population growth), natural burials are anecdotally a growing trend. Several community members noted the cemeteries are not inclusive as this option is not currently available within the City, but one they would use. Natural burials were also noted as a trend by industry stakeholders.

Over half of industry stakeholders support the City exploring alternative options to burial or cremation, with the remainder unsure. Half of community respondents supported this, with a further quarter unsure.

Both industry and community stakeholders felt there was a need for a closer crematorium in addition to one currently located at Bunbury due to transport, cost and convenience.

Land Uses

Around 20% of community respondents considered that cemeteries should only be used to inter and commemorate the dead, with the remainder supporting this use as well as a space for quiet enjoyment, aligned tourism (e.g. history / genealogy), biodiversity / nature and for education purposes.



RELIGIOUS
GATHERINGS /
MEETINGS



QUIET
ENJOYMENT



EDUCATION /
INTERPRETATION



TOURISM



PRESERVE
BIODIVERSITY /
NATURE



ONLY TO INTER /
COMMEMORATE THE
DEAD

All but one industry stakeholder supported similar uses to the community: as a place for education / interpretation and tourism, biodiversity / nature and for religious gatherings.

Land Constraints

The grant of right of burial (25 years plus option to renew for 25 years) was generally viewed as common sense by industry stakeholders, due to the ability to include future burial plots in older sections without disturbing existing areas and a usual decline in visitors after 50 years. A lack of community awareness about this tenure was a concern raised.

Cemeteries Satisfaction

Industry stakeholders were positive about the City's level of service around cemeteries.

Generally, people like the native trees and vegetation at Dunsborough cemetery and suggested further perimeter planting. The possible day time opening of vehicle gates for accessible access outside of events was also raised.

Positive aspects of Busselton Cemetery noted were the simple layout, and areas of improvement the toilet facilities and chapel, ease of locating ancestral graves and a desire for a natural burial option. There were mixed views on upkeep but generally they related to the older area and use of plastic flowers and trinkets. Industry stakeholders noted a trend for people requesting religious ministers to do memorial services and blessings at Busselton cemetery, creating a need for improved on-site facilities.

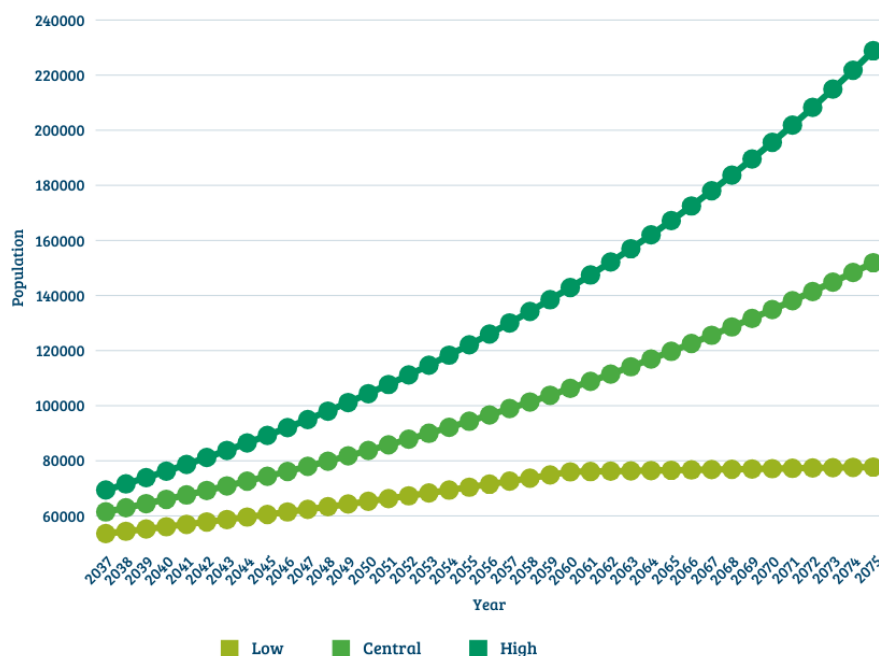
At both locations accessibility and turning space for trucks and machinery must be considered. Biodiversity was also important. Along with a continuation of current services, other services that may be required are family interment plots with memorial options and natural burial.



Research and Data Analysis

Population and Deaths

There are no local government scale population projections or forecasts currently available that cover 50 years, so several scenarios have been modelled. These are provided as a general guide only, as many factors including infrastructure and government policies can alter actual population growth.



WA Tomorrow (WA Government) provides local government area population forecasts to 2036 under high, central and low growth scenarios, as shown in Figure 7. A basic linear trend based on a continuation of 2036 growth rates has been modelled at each band: low (1.53%), central (2.41%) and high (3.19%), see Figure 11. This produces a population of between 77,756 to 228,871 in 2075.

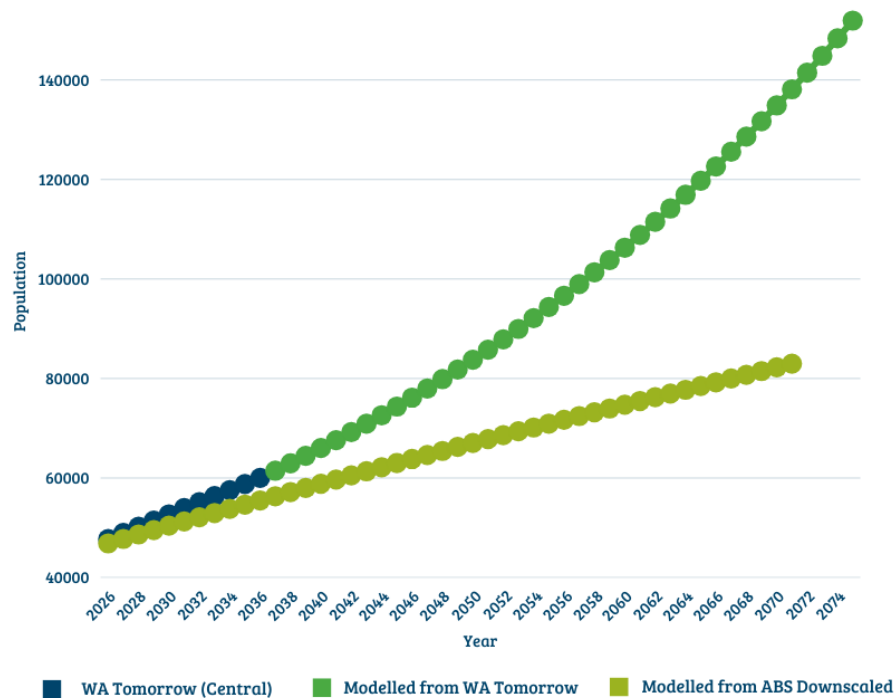
The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides population projections at a national and state level to 2071. These are not forecasts but rather illustrate what to expect from assumed levels of population changes using the cohort-component method.

The Australian population is projected to decline over this period (low and medium scenarios) without migration. Levels of overseas and interstate migration are historically volatile and based on government policies and broader economic and social influences, but the ABS includes these at a range of flow levels. Perth is projected to maintain around 80% of the WA population.

The WA projections have been downscaled assuming the City of Busselton will increase as a proportion of the WA population, from 1.58% in 2026 to 2.07% in 2071. This method produces a population of 82,991 in 2071, with the City at 2.07% of the WA population.

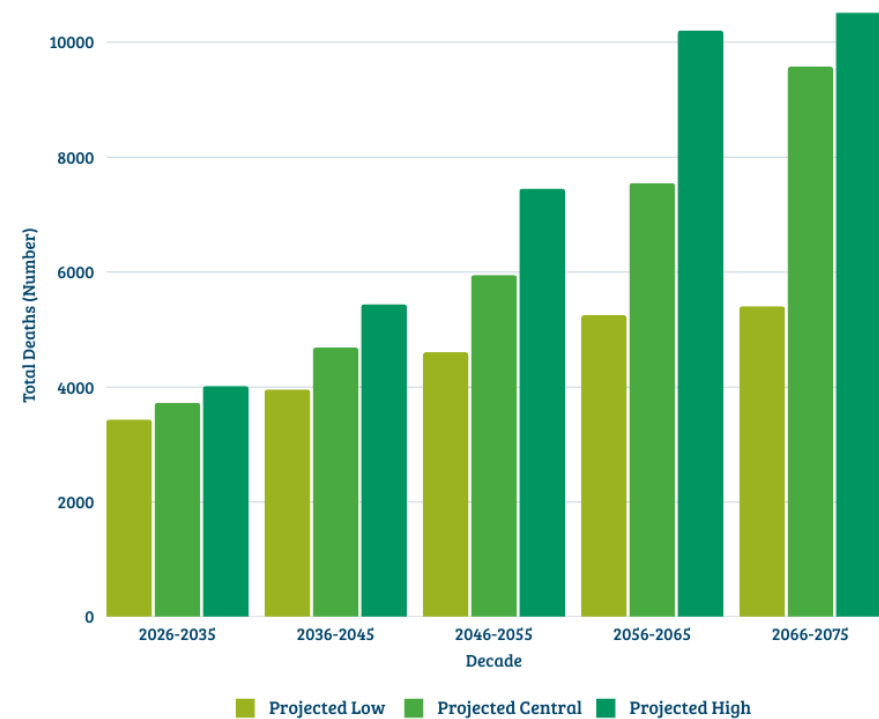
Figure 12 shows the WA Tomorrow (central band) forecast to 2036, WA Tomorrow modelled growth (central), and downscaled WA projections modelled for the City (medium series). While the WA Tomorrow modelled growth is considered highly optimistic this has been used for the following capacity calculations.

12: Busselton LGA Population Forecast & Projections



A linear trend forecast has also been applied based on actual deaths recorded for Busselton local government area 2013 to 2024, at each population band. Total deaths differ from SDR and these figures should be considered a guide only. This estimates 31,490 deaths over the 50 years using the higher WA Tomorrow modelled population numbers.

13: Busselton LGA Modelled Total Deaths per Decade (2026 to 2075)



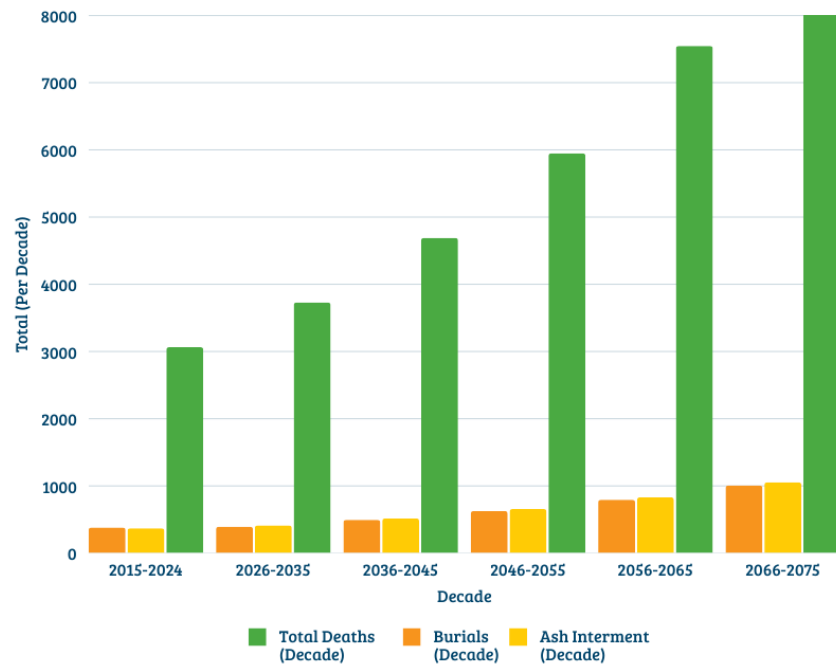
Cemeteries Usage

Overall, death and cemetery usage trends in Busselton are consistent with broader, national trends. There is a clear shift in community expectations around cemetery use and memorialisation, such as increasing choice for cremation and use of memorial only sites. This is partly driven by declining religious affiliation, increasing burial costs and digital innovation.

Burials have accounted for the main use of the City's cemeteries over the past 13 years, however this is expected to reduce as a proportion of total use in the future, based on observed trends.

Overall, since 2011 usage of the cemeteries for either burial, ash interment or memorial has made up a small proportion of total deaths in the City of Busselton local government area – a median of 26.4% of deaths annually. The current year (2025) was excluded from the cemetery usage graph.

14: City of Busselton Cemetery Usage per Decade Previous (2015 to 2024) and Forecast (2026 to 2075)



Based on a continuation of historical use and types over the past five years and central population projections, the estimated demand on City cemeteries is approximately 3,308 burials and 3,475 ash interments over the next 50 years. However, burial demand may decline faster.

Table 1: Estimated Demand on City of Busselton Cemeteries (All Sites)

Period	Total Burials - Estimated Demand	Total Ash Interments - Estimated Demand
2026 to 2035	393	411
2036 to 2045	493	517
2036 to 2055	625	656
2056 to 2065	792	833
2066 to 2075	1,005	1,058
Total Estimated Demand	3,308	3,475

Site Assessments and Capacity

In July 2025 site assessments were undertaken at Busselton, Dunsborough and Metricup cemeteries and spatial plans developed. A spatial analysis provides an overview of projected space allocation, access, services and preferred facilities recommended for each cemetery, highlighting opportunities for expansion, improvement, and enhancement of cemetery services and facilities.

Based on proposed future upgrades, capacities have been estimated at each site, and the combined totals are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Capacity Estimates at City Cemeteries Based on Concepts

	Burial Capacity	Ash Interment and / or Memorial Capacity
Capacity estimate across City cemeteries based on design suggestions	2,736	1,906
Demand estimate across the City to 2075	3,308	3,475

Assuming current trends continue the City will be able to meet demand for burials within existing cemetery land parcels to at least 2070. This does not account for expiring tenures, so could be further extended.

Capacities for ash interments and / or memorials will be reached in 2060 based on recent trends. Should the use of ash interment or memorial increase to one third of total deaths, capacity could be reached as soon as 2040. Based on historical use this is unlikely but can be catered to by keeping future development spaces flexible to account for future shifting needs and preferences and exploring new products and services to cater to this need within existing space.

Capacities assume new traditional grave sizes with a 1x2 metre space allowance for each grave with 250mm between each (1.5m width per gravesite) and 8 metres between concrete bands. Burial includes burial of a coffin into a grave up to a depth of approximately 1900mm with plots

typically having the capacity for two burials, one on top of the other. A full monument, or headstone (in the lawn section) is placed on the grave as a memorial.

Busselton Cemetery

Busselton Cemetery has parking along a separate road running parallel to Vasse Highway. Multiple sealed roads and walkways within the Cemetery provide for looped circulation. Due to the cemetery size, long walking distances are experienced with exposure to the elements from a lack of shade and shelter. There are currently no accessible parking bays.

Public toilets are provided but are drop style. Scheme water passes the lot but is not currently connected in the cemetery. Power is available. Service structures such as a small shed and waste area stand along the Lot 50 boundary fence line.

Due to its location out of the main city centre and the role of City staff in burials, staff remain on site during funerals and require basic facilities.

Busselton currently offers the following options.

Burial:

- Traditional Monumental Burial areas – Anglican, Catholic, Other Protestant Denominations (OPD) and Muslim.
- Lawn Section – multidenominational.

Ashes Interment:

- Traditional style niche wall.
- Garden interment – Native Garden, Jacaranda tree beds, Contemplation Garden, Memorial Drive family plots.
- Interment into burial plots.
- Memorial only options.

Additional land (Lot 50) has been purchased to the east for future expansion, which is 1.8 hectares. This is currently undeveloped. An historical still born burial site is also located on the eastern boundary.

For future development of Busselton Cemetery, key design aspects include:

- Maintain a primary feeder road into the cemetery, with multiple access points, and improved parking provision for access.
- Provide a natural transition between existing and newer spaces of the cemetery, to a paddock or style area.
- Improve bushland and develop low impact use, such as ash interment via an accessible walkway meandering through the bushland.
- Further ash interment area to be provided near mausoleum.
- Improve shade and shelter provision.
- Relocate service areas.
- Continue banded style traditional lawn burials.
- Area to be allocated for natural burials.

Based on spatial planning, the estimated capacities for Busselton are shown in Table 3. This is based on traditional lawn style burial, although this can be kept flexible to allow for other options in the future such as natural burial.

Table 3: Busselton Cemetery Capacity Estimates Based on Concepts

Category	Description / Location	Capacity
Burial	Zone 5	290
	Zone 6	350
	Zone 7	372
	Zone 8	498
	Zone 9	500
	Natural burials	250
	Total	2,260
Ash Interment	New interment areas	1,270
	Near existing mausoleum	160
	Total	1,430



Dunsborough Cemetery

The Dunsborough site is fully fenced and located in a town centre setting. Sealed parking is provided outside of the boundary on Hansen Rd (local road). The internal cemetery roads are not continuous (looped) so vehicles entering must reverse out or find somewhere to do turn around as there is no drive-through ability. The vehicle access gate is locked apart from use during events.

Public toilets are provided and there is no power supply or outdoor lighting. The property appears to be well drained with no apparent standing water. Part of the site sits within the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) Register Place 29543 - Cape Naturaliste Road. Further archaeological investigation and local Aboriginal community advice may need to be sought before further burials are permitted. If there are significant items there, that may redefine capacity for future burials in the affected areas.

A separate area is being used for designated ash interment and memorial plaques. Plaques are attached to tubes and are about 300mm above the ground. Many of these are located around trees in a more informal manner. Dunsborough currently offers the following options.

Burial:

- Traditional Monumental Burial areas – Anglican, Catholic, Other Protestant Denominations (OPD) and Muslim

Ashes Interment:

- Traditional style niche wall
- Garden Interment Options – Peppermint Trees, Native Garden, Raised Garden
- Interment into burial plots
- Memorial only options

For further development of Dunsborough Cemetery, key design aspects include:

- Continuing traditional burials.
- Low impact use of the bushland area by use of a raised walkway with memorial plaques.

Current graves are very close together making it difficult to access existing graves for second burials. Based on spatial planning, estimated capacities for Dunsborough are shown in Table 4. The larger traditional burial area has capacity for approximately 100 graves of the same style.

Table 4: Dunsborough Cemetery Capacity Estimates Based on Concepts

Category	Description / Location	Capacity
Burial	Site 1	88
	Site 2	208
	Site 3	180
	Total	476
Ash Interment	Along raised walkway through bushland	416

Metricup Cemetery

Parking on site is currently an informal unsealed area located off Metricup Road. As the nearby Anglican Church is located very close to the intersection of Bussell Highway and Metricup Road, church users are encouraged to use this same car park due to safety.

The unsealed car parking area suffers from stormwater damage due to it falling towards the road edge, gathering stormwater along the road edge. There is a bus shelter located in the centre of the car park.

Currently the cemetery entrance is poorly signed or identified. There is no power, water or toilets on site. The property appears to be well drained with no apparent standing water, except for the car park area.

Metricup will only be able to accommodate ash interment and memorial placements in an informal, natural setting. New compacted gravel pathways from the informal car parking area off Metricup Road have recently been constructed to access the existing graves and the new ash interment areas. The newly created natural bush style ashes garden and memorials are spaced 2 metres apart alongside the path.

For further development of Metricup Cemetery, key design aspects include:

- Improve parking and provide accessible parking.
- Link existing cemetery to parking area.
- Future pathways with ash interment opportunities and memorial plaques.

The estimated capacity of Metricup is shown in Table 5 and is based on creating a second and third zone and use of a raised walkway.

Table 5: Metricup Cemetery Capacity Estimates Based on Concepts

Category	Description / Location	Capacity
Burial	Not viable due to rock	0
Ash Interment	Within existing fenced area	60



Future Strategy



Strategy Development

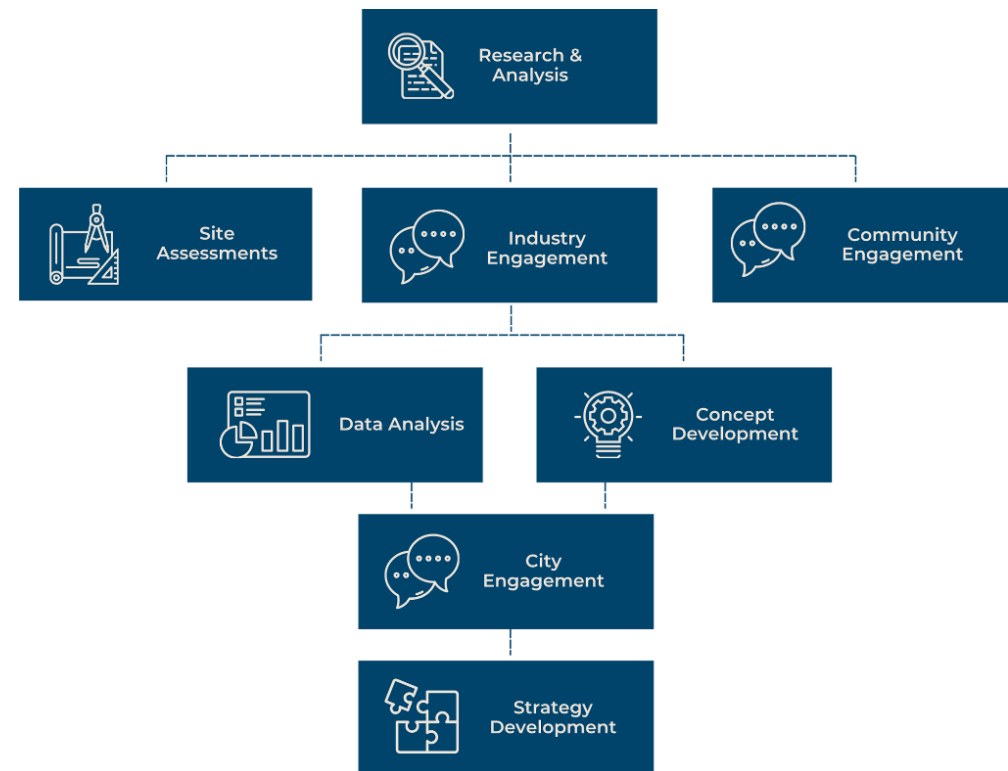
The City's 50 year Cemetery Strategy is the culmination of research into trends and demographics, a site analysis of each cemetery and engagement with both the community and industry stakeholders.

In addition, the development of the Strategy drew on the significant internal expertise in the City.

This comprehensive process was undertaken to ensure that the Strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community, incorporates trends to future proof the cemeteries, while also meeting legislative requirements.

Based on the Strategy development process a vision, guiding principles and action outcome areas have been developed to guide the City of Busselton cemeteries into the future.

18: Busselton 50 Year Cemetery Strategy Development



Vision

Aligning with the City's overarching vision articulated in the Council Plan, the vision for Busselton cemeteries is for:

**Community-focused, accessible,
and environmentally responsible
cemeteries that preserve our
natural and cultural heritage.**

Guiding Principles

Three guiding principles apply to management and development of the City's cemeteries. These will shape strategic planning and ensure a flexible, future-focused approach over the next 50 years.

In response to the guiding principles, concept plans were developed for Busselton, Dunsborough and Metricup cemeteries. These concepts respond to the local character and environment of each location and aim to meet the community needs identified through engagement, research and data analysis. They represent the longer term plan for each cemetery, with actions to be completed over time as demand is realised.



COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Offer a diverse range of options that cater to community needs and preferences now and into the future.



INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

Provide inclusive spaces that are accessible, comfortable and cater to a range of backgrounds.



ENVIRONMENT AND SENSE OF PLACE

Develop and manage City cemeteries in a way that responds to and protects the area's unique biodiversity and sense of place.



Action Plan

Key action outcome areas for the City of Busselton cemeteries are:

1. Increased provision of ash interment and memorial areas.
2. Continued development of burial plots.
3. Improved accessibility and amenity at active City cemeteries.
4. Protected and maintained biodiversity for resilience.
5. Maintained and improved community and cultural connection.

Timing for implementation of actions is defined as short term (up to five years) medium (five to 10 years) and longer term (beyond 10 years).



Key:

Cemetery B = Busselton, D = Dunsborough, M = Metricup

Timeframe: S = short term, M = medium term, L = long term

Action Outcome Area	Action Description	Cemetery (B, D, M)	Timeframe (S, M, L)		
			S	M	L
1. Increased provision of ash interment and memorial areas	1.1 Develop raised, accessible deck type walkway meandering through the natural bushland with memorial plaques attached to a broad balustrade	B		•	•
	1.2 Reduce the existing gravel driveway width to a pathway width at mausoleum	B	•		
	1.3 Use saved space from mausoleum driveway to develop further ash interment area	B		•	
	1.4 Develop raised, accessible deck type walkway meandering through the natural bushland with memorial plaques attached to a broad balustrade	D	•	•	
	1.5 Create second pathway for designated interred ash memorials alongside pathways	M		•	
	1.6 Create third pathway for designated interred ash memorials alongside pathways	M			•
2. Continued development of new burial plots	2.1 Develop open areas of Lot 50 for banded style traditional lawn burials	B			•
	2.2 Investigate an area for development of natural burials and the demand vs cost factors	B M	•		
	2.3 Connect scheme water to site to support future development and improved visitor comfort	B	•		

Action Outcome Area	Action Description	Cemetery (B, D, M)	Timeframe (S, M, L)		
			S	M	L
	2.4 Develop roadways into the cemetery site to provide access to newer areas	B		●	●
	2.5 Develop parking along current boundary to new area	B		●	●
3. Improved accessibility and amenity at active City cemeteries	3.1 Provide accessible parking bays	B	●		
	3.2 Detailed design of covered function area improvements for onsite memorials	B	●		●
	3.3 Construction of covered function area improvements for onsite memorials	B	●	●	
	3.4 Detailed design of second covered function area near meadow	B		●	
	3.5 New toilets installed following installation of scheme water onsite	B	●		
	3.6 Install secondary toilets near future traditional sites (Lot 50)	B		●	●
	3.7 Relocate service structures for staff services, maintenance, equipment and waste to the south of the site	B		●	
	3.8 Seal carpark and provide designated accessible bays	M		●	
	3.9 Provide a sealed pathway	M			●
	3.10 Install single UAT toilet	M			●
	3.11 Level carpark and install drain under the road verge to reduce damage	M	●		

Action Outcome Area	Action Description	Cemetery (B, D, M)	Timeframe (S, M, L)		
			S	M	L
	3.12 Install wayfinding signage to denote cemetery and key access point	M	●		
	3.13 Monitor demand for crematorium in closer proximity to Busselton	B D M		●	●
4. Protected and maintained biodiversity for resilience	4.1 Design and develop picnic meadow using native and/ or drought tolerant species	B		●	
	4.2 Manage and improve natural areas	B	●	●	●
	4.3 Manage and improve natural areas	D	●	●	●
	4.4 Manage and improve natural areas	M	●	●	●
	4.5 Provide treed landscaping backdrop around Lot 50 perimeter	B	●		
	4.6 Include outdoor cemetery staff in workforce planning for heat wave conditions	B D M	●		
	4.7 Increase canopy coverage (broad leafed plants) to reduce heat island effect and prioritise drought tolerant species to reduce water use	B	●	●	
	4.8 Monitor and review lawn provision and need for future irrigation with increased heat and evapotranspiration	B			●
	4.9 Maintain as a local endemic landscape with little to no water requirements	M	●	●	●
	4.10 Assess and alter any new structures and assets for suitability in a harsher fire weather climate	M	●	●	●

Action Outcome Area	Action Description	Cemetery (B, D, M)	Timeframe (S, M, L)		
			S	M	L
	4.11 Ensure cemeteries are included as part of City facilities in the City's climate change adaptation planning – e.g. consideration of increased bushfire intensity and frequency, flooding (erosion), debris from storms (trees), urban heat mitigation, reduced water / drought	B D M	●	●	●
5. Maintained and improved community and cultural connection	5.1 Engage Traditional Owners in appropriate recognition and inclusion	B D M	●		
	5.2 Digital innovations – consider digital storytelling, wayfinding and genealogy information in conjunction with local history services as opportunities and funding arises	B D M	●	●	●
	5.3 Incorporate a short nature walk, meditation benches and flora identification signage / interpretation	M	●		
6. Governance and operations	6.1 Update fees and charges to incorporate new ash interment areas	B D M	●		
	6.2 Update policies and procedures to incorporate natural burial option	B	●		
	6.3 Update fees and charges to include natural burial options, as decided	B	●		
	6.4 Develop Best Practice Management Guidelines for City cemeteries, including clearly stating the guiding principles and what environmental and community values are to be protected	B D M	●		
	6.5 Consider holistic management of natural burial areas and update Guidelines as needed	B	●		

Action Outcome Area	Action Description	Cemetery (B, D, M)	Timeframe (S, M, L)		
			S	M	L
Governance and operations continued	6.6 Monitor feedback and consider new products such as family ash interments and family memorial only products	B D M	●	●	●
	6.7 Review policies for pre-need purchases and include clear refund policies (e.g. 0-5 years since purchase 75% of current fee, 5-10 years since purchase 65% of current fee, 10-15 years since purchase 50% of current fee, 15-20 years since purchase 25% of current fee)	B D	●		
	6.8 Complete the phase out of the term 'Reservation' to improve community understanding about the limited term rights to the space	B D	●		
	6.9 Redevelop service areas into centralised services compound with sheds, area for staff and space for short term soil storage	B	●	●	
	6.10 Consider introducing a limited tenure model for ash interment and memorials, similar to burials	B D M		●	
	6.11 Consider non cemetery options that co-deliver on goals such as canopy coverage or biodiversity – e.g. dedication trees or memorial forests with fees to cover geolocation, planting, establishment and maintenance of trees	-		●	
	6.12 Review cemeteries Fees and Charges annually to ensure service remains viable	B D M	●	●	●

Five Year Implementation Plan

All Cemeteries

Action Ref	Action Description	Ongoing
5.1	Engage Traditional Owners in appropriate recognition and inclusion	
6.4	Develop Best Practice Management Guidelines for City cemeteries, including clearly stating the guiding principles and what environmental and community values are to be protected	
4.11	Ensure cemeteries are included as part of City facilities in the City's climate change adaptation planning – e.g. consideration of increased bushfire intensity and frequency, flooding (erosion), debris from storms (trees), urban heat mitigation, reduced water / drought	●
4.6	Include outdoor cemetery staff in workforce planning for heat wave conditions	
6.1	Update fees and charges to incorporate new ash interment areas	
6.6	Monitor feedback and consider new products such as family ash interments and family memorial only products	●
6.12	Review cemeteries Fees and Charges annually to ensure service remains viable	●
6.7	Review policies for pre-need purchases and include clear refund policies (e.g. 0-5 years since purchase 75% of current fee, 5-10 years since purchase 65% of current fee, 10-15 years since purchase 50% of current fee, 15-20 years since purchase 25% of current fee)	

Busselton Cemetery

Action Ref	Action Description	Ongoing
2.2	Investigate an area for development of natural burials and the demand vs cost factors	
2.3	Connect scheme water to site to support future development and improved visitor comfort	
1.2	Reduce the existing gravel driveway width to a pathway width at mausoleum	
3.1	Provide accessible parking bays	
3.2	Detailed design of covered function area improvements for onsite memorials	
3.3	Construction of covered function area improvements for onsite memorials	●
3.5	New toilets installed following installation of scheme water onsite	
6.8	Complete the phase out of the term 'Reservation' to improve community understanding about the limited term rights to the space	
6.5	Consider holistic management of natural burial areas and update Guidelines as needed	
6.2	Update policies and procedures to incorporate natural burial option	
6.3	Update fees and charges to include natural burial options, as decided	
6.9	Redevelop service areas into centralised services compound with sheds, area for staff and space for short term soil storage	●
4.5	Provide treed landscaping backdrop around Lot 50 perimeter	
4.7	Increase canopy coverage (broad leafed plants) to reduce heat island effect and prioritise drought tolerant species to reduce water use	●
4.2	Manage and improve natural areas	●

Dunsborough Cemetery

Action Ref	Action Description	Ongoing
1.4	Develop raised, accessible deck type walkway meandering through the natural bushland with memorial plaques attached to a broad balustrade	
4.3	Manage and improve natural areas	●
6.8	Complete the phase out of the term 'Reservation' to improve community understanding about the limited term rights to the space	

Metricup Cemetery

Action Ref	Action Description	Ongoing
2.2	Investigate an area for development of natural burials and the demand vs cost factors	
3.11	Level carpark and install drain under the road verge to reduce damage	
3.12	Install wayfinding signage to denote cemetery and key access point	
4.4	Manage and improve natural areas	●
4.9	Maintain as a local endemic landscape with little to no water requirements	●
4.10	Assess and alter any new structures and assets for suitability in a harsher fire weather climate	●
5.3	Incorporate a short nature walk, meditation benches and flora identification signage / interpretation	

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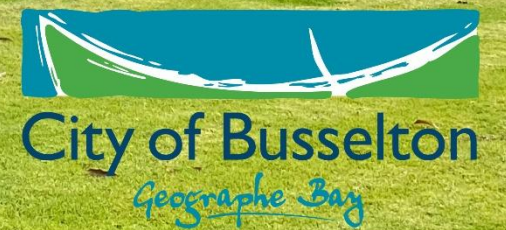
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