

LITCHFIELD COUNCIL



Community effort is essential

Thorak Regional Cemetery Board Meeting **BUSINESS PAPER** **WEDNESDAY 15/11/2017**

Meeting to commence following the Litchfield Council Meeting at
6:00pm

In Council Chambers at 7 Bees Creek Road, Freds Pass

Kaylene Conrick, Chief Executive Officer

Any member of Council who may have a conflict of interest, or a possible conflict of interest in regard to any item of business to be discussed at a Council meeting or a Committee meeting should declare that conflict of interest to enable Council to manage the conflict and resolve it in accordance with its obligations under the Local Government Act and its policies regarding the same.



THORAK REGIONAL CEMETERY BOARD MEETING

Notice of Meeting
to be held in the Council Chambers, Litchfield
on Wednesday, 15 November 2017

Kaylene Conrick
Chief Executive Officer

Number	Agenda Item	Page
1	Opening of Meeting	
2	Apologies and Leave of Absence	
3	Disclosures of Interest	
4	Confirmation of Minutes	
	THAT the minutes of the Thorak Regional Cemetery Board Meeting held 18 October 2017, 3 pages, be confirmed.	
	Minutes have been distributed under separate cover and are publicly available on Council's website http://www.litchfield.nt.gov.au/council/council-meetings/council-minutes or in hard copy by request.	
5	Business Arising from the Minutes	
6	Accepting or Declining Late Items	
7	Notices of Motion	
8	Officers Reports	
8.1	Thorak Regional Cemetery and Crematorium Quarterly Performance Reply Jul – Sept 2017	
8.2	Finance Report – October 2017	
9	Other Business	
10	Confidential Items	
11	Next Meeting	
12	Close of Meeting	



COUNCIL REPORT

Agenda Item Number:	8.1
Report Title:	Thorak Regional Cemetery Quarterly Performance Report July – September 2017
Report Number:	17/0048
Meeting Date:	15/11/2017
Attachments:	NIL

Purpose

This report presents to Council the Thorak Regional Cemetery Quarterly report for the period of July to September 2017.

Summary

This report provides Council with an update of work conducted by Thorak Regional Cemetery, statistics of comparison to previous year, an update on progress against the 2016 Service Review actions, and a brief overview of upcoming projects.

Recommendation

THAT Council receives and notes the Thorak Regional Cemetery Quarterly performance report for the period of July to September 2017.

Background

For the first quarter of this financial year Thorak Regional Cemetery has seen an increase in the number of services provided.

Table 1 shows a comparison of some services for the same period in the prior year. Cremations increased by over 30%, reflecting the national trend towards cremations. Burials were also slightly up. The largest, with an increase of 120%, is the ash interment which correlates to the increased in cremations. This Quarter also resulted in an increase in the chapel hire.

Table 1: Comparison of services provided from July to September 2017 with the same time in the prior year.

Number of:	July – September 2016	July – September 2017	Change + (-)
Cremations	34	48	14
Burials	26	29	3
Ash Interments	3	12	9
Ex rights Pre-need Burials	2	5	3
Ex rights Reservation	1	2	1
Chapel Hire	14	20	6

Table 2 compares cremations and burials service users by local government area, with Darwin service users the majority.

Table 2: Number of cremation and burials by local government area July – September 2017

Local Govt Area	Cremations	%	Burials	%
Litchfield	9	19%	4	14%
Darwin	19	40%	19	66%
Palmerston	9	19%	4	14%
Other	11	23%	2	7%
Total	48	100%	29	100%

Landscaping of new Section G

Preparation of the ground ready for seeding of Section G has commenced with a couple of rounds of turning of the soil. This is the newest lawn section of the cemetery, allowing plaques only as memorials. Seeding and planting will begin mid-November 2017.

Operational Schedule

An operational schedule has been reintroduced. This schedule documents tasks once they are completed, maintenance checks, and the time taken. It will assist with monitoring, evaluating and streamlining productivity, as well as identifying gaps in Cemetery processes.

Reduced Employee Hours Trial

On 1 September 2017, all full-time ground staff began a trial of reduced working hours as part of an attempt to reduce operation costs. The trial sees a reduction from 38 hours per week to 30 hours per week for three ground staff. This results in an overall reduction of 24 staffing hours per week. The trial period runs until the end of January 2018. All impacts on the delivery of services are being recorded and will be assessed by management.

Employment of a Customer Service Officer

Council has successfully filled the part time Customer Service Officer position at Thorak Regional Cemetery, after an extended vacancy. The position is 30 hours a week and will provide administration support and be the first point of contact at the Cemetery.

Muslim Section

It has recently come to the Cemetery's attention that there may be a possible misunderstanding regarding the appropriate treatment of Muslim gravesides. Council is working with the Islamic Society of Darwin to ensure Council's original policy regarding this section, developed in cooperation with the Islamic Society, remains valid.

Progress of implementation of the Service Review

- A review of all current procedures has been initiated. The review is ensuring compliance with legislation and identifying gaps in procedures for tasks performed regularly and tasks that carry risk.
- A work plan has been created and position descriptions for all staff have been updated, ensuring clarity of roles and accountability.

- The development of a Risk Management Plan is in progress.
- Regular contact with Funeral Directors and Stonemasons continues.
- The security contract for opening and closing of cemetery gates has been reduced. Security is not required in the mornings with staff commencing at 7.00am.
- An Thorak Regional Cemetery Asset Management Plan is currently under development. The Plan will identify future maintenance and replacement costs.

Future Projects

Bench Sponsorship

A previously approved initiative to allow sponsorship of benches to be placed around the Cemetery grounds is being revamped. A report will be prepared for Council.

Mausoleums

There has been some interest in establishing family mausoleums. The viability of this is currently under investigation.

Jewish Section

A request from the Jewish community of Darwin to have their own section at the Cemetery has been received. Costing and operational considerations are currently being investigated.

Irrigation Upgrade and Expansion

To improve current water usage and cater for possible future expansions of the Cemetery, Council has sought quotations for the development of an irrigation master plan. The Cemetery currently uses two bores to irrigate the site. A third capped bore will be assessed for viability and brought on line to help with the water needs as the Cemetery grows. Council will seek grant funding for this expense.

Cremation Package

Council is currently reviewing the opportunity to provide a full cremation package to customers including the transport and the provision of coffins.

Providing this service could result in an increase in cremations at the Cemetery. This service is currently only available from the three funeral companies operating in Darwin.

Links with Strategic Plan

An effective and sustainable Council.

Legislative and Policy Implications

Not applicable

Risks

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Recommending Officer: **Silke Maynard, Director Community and Corporate Services**

Any queries on this report may be directed to the Recommending Officer on telephone (08) 8983 0600.

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COUNCIL REPORT

Agenda Item Number:	8.2
Report Title:	Thorak Cemetery Finance Report – October 2017
Report Number:	17/0056
Meeting Date:	15/11/2017
Attachments:	Nil

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the monthly financial report for Thorak Regional Cemetery for the period ended 31 October 2017.

Recommendation

THAT Council receive the Thorak Regional Cemetery finance report for the period ended 31 October 2017.

OPERATING RESULT

There are no budget amendments yet and YTD Actuals are income and expenses recognised for the four months of 2017/18 financial year.

Thorak Cemetery had 107 internments and cremations to date for this financial year, below provides a comparison with the same report period last year:

Year - comparison	Burials	Cremations	Total	Difference
July - October 2016	30	54	84	
July – October 2017	38	69	107	+23

Revenue is favourable to date given the national trend that cremations are preferable to burials.

Expenses are reasonable for this period, given the insurance premiums and administration fee are both recognised for the full year.

No capital revenue or expenses are expected in the 2017/18 financial year.

	2017/18 YTD Actuals	2017/18 Budget	2017/18 Forecast	Variance +ve (-ve)
REVENUE				
User Fees and Charges	384,661	725,125	725,125	0
TOTAL REVENUE	384,661	725,125	725,125	0
EXPENSES				
Contractors	18,515	84,800	84,800	0
Materials	115,616	189,210	189,210	0
Other Expenses	12,522	26,600	26,600	0
Employee Costs	128,647	491,045	491,045	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	275,300	791,655	791,655	0
TOTAL	109,361	(66,530)	(66,530)	0

CASH & INVESTMENTS

Date Invested	Invested Amount	Days Invested	Invested with	Interest Rate	Maturity Date	Return
29/06/2017	418,032	365	Bendigo	2.75%	29/06/2018	11,496

DEBTORS

Total Sundry Debtors at 31 October 2017 are \$100,007. The majority of outstanding debtors are with the three funeral service providers and reflect the increased activity at the Cemetery.

Category	Current	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days and over	Balance
Cemetery	\$54,986	\$43,629	\$0	\$1,392	\$100,007
% of TOTAL DEBTORS	55.0%	43.6%	0.0%	1.4%	

Action summary of 90 Days Debtors: \$1,392.00

Two invoices are in 90 days and over. Reminder notices were sent on numerous occasions. The debt recovery process was implemented for on invoice amounting to \$1,152 and a payment plan has commenced. Family has been contacted to request payment of the other outstanding invoice totalling \$240. If payment is not made by end of November, the debt recovery process will be implemented.



CEMETERY FINANCIAL RESERVE




The Cemetery Reserve balance as at 30 June 2018 is forecast to be \$98,337.

	Balance as at 1/7/2017	Forecast TO Reserve	Forecast FROM Reserve	Forecast Net Movement	Forecast Balance as at 30/06/2018
Cemetery Reserve	164,867	-	(66,530)	(66,530)	98,337

THORAK CEMETERY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

The table below tracks the KPI's for the Thorak Regional Cemetery as set out in the 2017/18 Municipal Plan.

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Status	Comment
Compliance with Cemetery Regulations	100%		
Achievement of Operational Budget	100%		

-  KPI met
-  KPI in progress, on track
-  KPI not met

Links with Strategic Plan

An effective and sustainable Council

Legislative and Policy Implications

Local Government (Accounting) Regulations and the Northern Territory Cemeteries Act.

Risks

The operation of Thorak Regional Cemetery remains an ongoing financial sustainability challenge for Litchfield Council.

Council is awaiting the Minister's consideration after raising the matter late May 2017. In the interim, with the adoption of Thorak Regional Cemetery Fees and Charges for 2017/18 an inclusion of an Administration Charge of 10% on all fees and charges for non-Litchfield residents is in effect. In addition, the Asset Management Plan for Thorak Regional Cemetery is in its final stages of development.

Financial Implications

To date, the Administration Charge has raised additional revenue totalling \$21,984. Council monitors all revenue and expenditure levels closely and this will continue throughout the financial year.

Recommending Officer: **Silke Maynard, Director Community and Corporate Services**

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