

# Guidelines for Natural Burial Portions in the Shoalhaven Memorial Gardens & Lawn Cemetery

*The purpose of a **natural burial** is to return the body to the earth in a manner that does not inhibit decomposition and allows the body to recycle naturally. It is intended as an environmentally sustainable funeral practice that will limit future hazards to public health and is in harmony with modern resource-conservation activities*

1. Natural Burials shall only occur in areas approved by the Shoalhaven City Council (Council).
2. The plot location for every Natural Burial, within an approved area (see 1), shall be determined by the Bereavement Services Unit based on operational risk assessments and logistics.
3. The plot size will be 1000mm X 2200mm.
4. The maximum opening size will be 760mm X 2150mm
5. The default opening size will be 660mm X 2100mm,
6. Every Natural Burial shall comply with
  1. The Public Health Regulation (Disposal of Bodies) 2002 (Regulation) under the Public Health Act of NSW
  2. Council's "Cemeteries, Crematorium and Memorial Gardens Policy"
  3. Council's "Funerary and Monument Masonry Services Policy"
  4. Council's Occupational Health & Safety Policy
  5. Other policies of the Council, when appropriate.
7. Application for a Natural Burial shall be made on the form provided in this Guideline.
8. The applicant's nominated funerary service provider must certify that
  1. the body to be buried has not been partially or fully embalmed.
  2. The coffin is constructed with rapid biodegradability in mind.
  3. Metal fixings to join the coffin should only used where essential for structural purposes
  4. the coffin in which the body will be contained
    - is constructed from a renewable or recycled resource such as wicker, reeds, bamboo, plantation softwood, recycled paper, recycled cardboard or recycled softwood; and
    - utilises only materials that are known to be rapidly biodegradable; and
    - has handles made from hemp rope or another similar biodegradable product; and
    - must not use non-biodegradable liners
    - contains only the body of the deceased;
  5. Pacemakers and other electronic implants are not present in the body.
  6. The body of the deceased is dressed only in fully biodegradable materials such

as cotton.

9. After burial, access to the each grave may be restricted due to
  - the protection of the landscape,
  - inclement weather
  - local environment protection concerns
  - Health and safety
10. Where appropriate, Council may, on or near the grave, plant a tree or shrub native to that area
11. Within seven days of burial Council will arrange a survey to determine the exact location of the grave site.
12. The surveyed location co-ordinates will be recorded in the burial register.
13. Within three calendar months of the burial the Council will procure a cast bronze plaque showing the full name of the deceased as declared in the burial application, their date of birth, their date of death and the surveyed co-ordinates of the burial plot.
14. The cast bronze plaque shall be fixed to a common rock along with plaques of others buried in the Natural Burial Portion.
15. The common rock will be located at a place on the perimeter of or near the entrance of the Natural Burial Portion.
16. Maps showing the location of Natural Burials can be obtained from the Bereavement Services Office.
17. Only natural cut or dried flowers may be left on or near the grave.
18. Flowers containing support wires, cables or supports will be removed without notice.
19. Flowers fixed into hydration bases will be removed without notices.
20. Flowers must only be tied with cotton or hemp string. Flowers otherwise contained or tied will be removed without notice.
21. Mementos or tributes of any other kind are not permitted on Natural Burial sites. They will be removed without notice and held by the Bereavement Services Office for collection for seven days after which time they will be disposed of.
22. The erection of any structure to mark the grave is not permitted. They will be removed without notice.