

FAWKNER MEMORIAL PARK

1187 SYDNEY ROAD, FAWKNER, 3060



The Greater Metropolitan
Cemeteries Trust
Lasting memories, peaceful places.



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT:

During 2015/2016 The Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust (GMCT) developed a series of short histories as part of its obligations under the Public Records Act 1973. The documents focus on the administrative history of each cemetery, providing a range information which may be useful to researchers, including a brief historical overview, timeline and bibliography. GMCT gratefully acknowledges the work of Dr Jan Penney and Sarah Hurley in the development of this document.

Cemeteries are controlled by a Trust appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the responsible Minister. The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust is a Class A Trust and a body corporate with perpetual succession established by the Governor in Council pursuant to regulations under the *Cemeteries Act 1958* and updated within the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*. The Trust is responsible for the maintenance of the cemetery, the handling of funds and the erection of monuments. Core services include interment in graves, interment in mausolea, interment of cremated remains, cremations, venue hire, hospitality, memorialisation, perpetual maintenance, archival cemetery and genealogical records and community events.

From 1864 to August 1873 The Commissioner of Public Works and the Public Works Department were responsible for cemeteries including the appointment of Trustees and fees charged (VRG28). From 1873 to 1888 The Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey and the Department of Crown Lands and Survey were responsible (VG18). In 1888 the Chief Secretary and his Department (VRG26) were in control of cemeteries, but in 1890 the Minister for Health and the Department of Public Health (VRG39) become responsible under the Public Health Act 1889 – 53 (Vic No:1044).¹ In 1944 the new Ministry of Health Act (1943) and the Cemeteries Act 1944 (5025) saw the Minister for Health and the Department of Health become the responsible entity.² On 1 January 2015 the Department of Health and Human Services was formed, integrating the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services Sport and Recreation.

In 2002 the government initiated a Report on the financial viability of Cemetery Trusts which raised a number of concerns over the viability, financial management and governance of some cemeteries.³ In 2004 The Department of Human Services was advised of concerns related to probity at some cemeteries and the Auditor General completed a review which was reported to Parliament in May 2005.⁴ As a result the Minister for Health requested the Auditor General to widen the Review to include all major cemeteries⁵ Government then initiated a review of the major cemetery trusts under section 50 of the Public Services Act (relating largely to the governance and effectiveness of the cemetery sector as a whole) which was undertaken by the State Services Authority and tabled in Parliament in June 2007.⁶

In July 2008 the State Government announced reforms to the fourteen major metropolitan and regional Cemetery Trusts that report to Parliament.⁷ Two major metropolitan Trusts were created, the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, and the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, three regional Class A Trusts and five other Trusts. Another major review of the five Class A Trusts was completed in May 2013 to ensure that the reforms were proceeding smoothly.⁸

Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust was formed in 2010 and assumed responsibility for twenty cemetery sites.⁹

Fawkner Memorial Park Cemetery is administered by the State Government through an independent Trust Board, the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, Class A, established in 2010.¹⁰

Fawkner Memorial Park is the largest, and the most diverse, cemetery in Australia covering 10.3 hectares in the older section with a further 93.3 hectares at the adjacent Northern Memorial Park. It opened in 1906, and was served by a special mortuary train service from Melbourne. Fawkner Memorial Park has a history of innovation and leadership in the Victorian cemetery industry which includes the introduction of Victoria's first modern purpose built crematorium in the 1927 and more recently introducing grand public mausoleums and ornate private mausoleums into Australia.

By 1899 there was a recognition that a cemetery to serve the northern suburbs was required and this resulted in a series of cemetery conferences to resolve the selection of a suitable site and to determine its management. The Northern Suburbs Cemetery Act, 1904, No. 1952, authorised the Melbourne City Council, towns of North Melbourne, Essendon, Brunswick, Borough of Flemington and Kensington and the Shires of Coburg and Broadmeadows to acquire and hold land for the purposes of a cemetery.¹¹

This was the only Victorian cemetery not funded by the state and was private land (until 1970) unlike other cemeteries which usually began with a grant of Crown Land.¹² Fawkner Cemetery was a planned "railway" cemetery situated on a currently underused rail line, a fact which local councils supported, and this was designed to enable people to easily access burial grounds located some distance from the city.¹³

In 1906, the Municipal Cemetery, officially called the New Melbourne Cemetery at Fawkner, opened to meet the needs of the city's north-west suburbs.¹⁴ The first burial took place on 10 December 1906.¹⁵ Charles Heath was appointed architect and surveyor and he designed the cemetery on a series of axis roads similar to a half spider web, the design which survives today.¹⁶

The land was acquired at Fawkner under the auspices of City of Melbourne and remained private land under the control of the Trust which consisted of municipal representatives until 1970.¹⁷ Between 1920-24 Fawkner Memorial Park accepted the reinterment of some 220 bodies removed from the Old Melbourne Cemetery and established the Old Pioneer Section.¹⁸

Melbourne's first crematorium was erected at Fawkner in 1927 and cremations gradually assumed a larger importance than burials. Melbourne's first above ground mausoleum was built in 1994 after the Cemeteries Act was changed to permit such a structure.²⁰

In addition to being trustees of the New Melbourne Cemetery, Fawkner, the five corporations became trustees of the Coburg Public Cemetery in 1970.²¹

In 1971 the name of the New Melbourne Cemetery was changed to Fawkner Crematorium & Memorial Park.²² Unofficially it had been known as the Fawkner Memorial Park for many years.²³ Originally established under the trusteeship of local mayors and councilors, the cemetery passed into the management of an independent Trust in 1971 thus freeing the cemetery from the influence of local politics.

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust was established on 1 March 2010 enabling the consolidation of eight existing cemetery trusts into one.²⁴ These include locations at Altona, Anderson's Creek, Fawkner, Keilor, Lilydale, Preston, Templestowe and Wyndham. The Trust is a body corporate with perpetual succession established by Governor in Council pursuant to regulations under the Cemeteries Act 1958 and updated within the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 (Vic) (the Act).²⁵

FUNCTIONS:

INTERNMENT (1906 -);

CREMATIONS (1926 -);

ENTOMBMENTS (1994 -);

MEMORIALISATION AND COMMEMORATION (1960 -);

CATERING (1934 -);

CHAPEL SERVICES

Fawkner Memorial Park contains the war graves of 173 Commonwealth service personnel from World War I and World War II. Fawkner Crematorium has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorial to 28 Australian service personnel of World War II, 23 soldiers, 4 airmen and one naval officer, who were cremated there. (CWGC)

PARLIAMENTARY ACTS AND BILLS RELATING TO CEMETERIES

- 1850 An Act for the Establishment and Regulation by Trustees of a General Cemetery Near the City of Melbourne - 1850 NSW 14, No: 19
- 1854 An Act for the Establishment and Management of Cemeteries in the Colony of Victoria 17 Vic, No: 12 (1854)
- 1864 An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws relating to Cemeteries - 27 Vic No: 201 20, April, 1864; "The Cemeteries Statute 1864"
- 1867 An act to Amend the Laws Relating to or Affecting Public Health - 31 Victoria No. 310
- 1880 The Cemeteries Statute Amendment Act 1880 - 44 Victoria No. 677
- 1889 The Public Health Act 1889 - 53 Victoria No. 1044 - section 14
- 1890 Cemeteries Act 1890, 10 July 1890, an Act to Consolidate the Laws relating to Cemeteries - 54 Vic No. 107; in operation on the 1 August, 1890
- 1903 Cremation Act 1903 - Act No. 1876
- 1904 Northern Suburbs Cemetery Act - 30 November 1904 No. 1952
- 1905 Amendment to the Act, No.3098
- 1909 Cemetery Act No. 2218
- 1915 Cemetery Act No. 2626
- 1928 Cemetery Act No. 3652
- 1930 Cemetery Act No. 3982
- 1931 Cemetery Act No. 4046
- 1944 Cemeteries Act No. 5025
- 1958 Cemeteries Act 1958 No. 6217
- 1970 Cemeteries Act 1970 (Coburg Public Cemetery)
- 1971 Cemeteries Act 1971, *Cemeteries* (Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park Act, Cemeteries Act 1958-Sect. 86)
- 1994 Cemeteries Act 1958, Rules and Regulations, Mausolea Approval

- 1995 Cemeteries (Incorporation of Trusts) Regulations, Version 010, Ser. No. 137, 14 May 1998
- 2003 The Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 (initiated in August, 2003)
- 2005 Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations No. 76/2005 (current)
- 2010 Amendment to the Cemeteries Act (2003) Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003, Ver. 20 80/2003 1 March 2010, creation of Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust
- 2015 Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations, Version 001, Ser. No.59, 27 June 2015

REVIEWS OF CEMETERIES UNDER THE ACT

- 2002 Department of Human Services, *Evaluation of the Financial Viability of Victoria's Cemetery Trusts and the Development of Fee Models*, (2002) prepared by RSM Bird Cameron, Melbourne (online)
- 2005 Auditor General Victoria, (May 2005) *Results of Special Reviews and Other Investigations, Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Trust, Review of Expenditure and Related Matters*
- 2006 Auditor General, (July 2006) *Review of Major Public Cemeteries*
- 2006 Department of Human Services, *Costing Study for Cemeteries and Crematoria*, (2006) prepared by Pitcher Partners, Melbourne (online)
- 2007 State Services Authority for the Auditor General, (2007) *Review of Cemetery Trusts*, State Services Authority Interim Report April 2007, Final Report June 2007
- 2013 Department of Health and Human Services, *Review of the Governance and Management of the Class A Cemetery Trusts* (2013), Melbourne

Fawkner Memorial Park Timeline

- 11878 Land was purchased at Springvale to provide cemetery space for Melbourne's expanding southern suburbs with first burial in 1902²⁶
- 1899 Coburg Council, among other neighbouring northern councils as well as City of Melbourne, began to agitate for a cemetery site to cater for northern suburbs and a series of Cemetery Conference were held²⁷
- 1902 Northern Suburbs Cemetery Conference was held in Melbourne Town Hall on 17 Jan. 1902 and recommended a 115 hectares (284 acre) site including Fawkner Railway Station be purchased²⁸
- 1904 Northern Suburbs Cemetery, (Act of Parliament, 1904) allowed the purchase of private land to be set aside for burials (not Gazetted Crown Land until 1970s). Fawkner was unique in that member municipalities funded and managed the cemetery so a special Act was required.²⁹ Members were City of Coburg, City of Brunswick, City of Essendon, City of Broadmeadows and City of Melbourne.³⁰ Prior to the councils of Flemington-Kensington and North Melbourne being absorbed into City of Melbourne there were seven municipalities involved.³¹
- 1905 July 1905, New Melbourne Cemetery Gazetted as open by order of Governor in Council³²
- 1905 The Municipal Cemetery, Fawkner name was used letterheads and plans³³
- 1906 Charles Heath was appointed the architect, surveyor and secretary to the Board of Management. He designed a cemetery based on a series of major and minor axes arranged in a spider web or fan shape. Designs included a combined residence and office, a railway station, waiting room and toilets and perhaps the Hebrew Chapel and caretaker's residence.³⁴ The magical number of seven radial roads to the west, south and north from a point originally designed to hold a clock tower (now the Charles Heath fountain). These roads also provided the boundary of the areas reserved for the main denominations. The central road led to the Crematorium (built 1927). Other buildings were laid out along the major axes with entrances to the north and south with the main entrance at the east point as well as a special entrance for those of the Jewish faith.³⁵
- 1906 December. Loan of 15,000 pounds was authorised for infrastructure development³⁶

- 1906 Old railway line between Coburg and North Campbellfield was partially reopened to allow mortuary trains to run to New Melbourne Cemetery (Fawkner Cemetery).³⁷ The re-opening of this rail line was a great incentive for local councils as they lobbied government to have the cemetery located at Fawkner.³⁸ This followed the modern pattern of railway cemeteries in Australia such as Rookwood (1860) and Springvale (1902) and copied the current British model. One service per day ran from Platform 10 east, the Mortuary Platform, at Flinders Street Station and this ran as an ordinary passenger service with additional hearse cars attached. Mourners and hearses could be carried³⁹
- 1906 5 December – a special train carried dignitaries to Fawkner for official inspection⁴⁰
- 1906 10 December - first regular Mortuary Train ran from Flinders Street Station to Fawkner⁴¹
- 1906 10 December - first burial was that of Dorothy Gladys Knapp, 4 years old, the daughter of A.C. Knapp assistant stationmaster at Brunswick, Catholic service was officiated by Father Hayes of Coburg. Her death was actually on 19 August 1906 and she was embalmed by John Allison Funeral Directors until the cemetery could be opened.^{42, 43} This was the “unofficial opening”. Her tombstone reads “a fairer bud on promise never bloomed”⁴⁴
- 1907 The New Melbourne General Cemetery (de facto name) was used to try and encourage wider acceptance and use of the facilities as the member councils were concerned at the lack of incoming revenue.^{45, 46}
- 1909 Cemetery Act (Act No. 2218, Act of Parliament allowed the State Government to make loans to cemeteries and this relieved member municipalities of concern over the increasing levels of debt⁴⁷
- 1911 Gazettal notice of official consent to the councils of City of Melbourne, City of Essendon, City of Brunswick, Borough of Coburg and Shire of Broadmeadows to acquire and jointly hold a piece of land part of Crown portion 111, Parish of Will Will Rook, county of Bourke mentioned on certificate of title vol. 2355, fol. 470060⁴⁸
- 1913 Heath completed a final plan for the cemetery removing some original elements and relocating the planned crematorium to the western end of Fourth Avenue⁴⁹
- 1914c First Jewish Chapel⁵⁰
- 1918 Erection of second Jewish Chapel by Chevra Kadisha at southern end of First Avenue, cost 200 pounds, permission given Nov. 1918⁵¹
- 1920s Erection of Muslim Chapel⁵²
- 1920 Exhumation of bodies held in 525 marked graves in Old Melbourne Cemetery began and were reinterred in cemeteries around Melbourne. 70 significant sandstone and slate memorials were relocated to Fawkner Park old Pioneers section.⁵³
- 1920 Electrification of rail line to Fawkner Memorial Park was completed at end of 1920 and burials increased rapidly between 1921 and 1926.⁵⁴
- 1920 Bridge erected on Sixth Avenue⁵⁵
- 1922 Old Melbourne Cemetery closed with last burial in 1917
- 1922 Old Pioneer section created to hold 220 bodies transferred from Old Melbourne Cemetery including John Batman, founder of Melbourne, and other notables. Jewish remains were reinterred in a separate section.⁵⁶
- 1923/4 Relocation of remains from Old Melbourne Cemetery site at Victoria Market to Fawkner Memorial Park concluded⁵⁷
- 1924 27 January - dedication ceremony was held for Old Pioneer section⁵⁸
- 1925 Non-denominational crematorium designed by Charles Heath in Greek Revival style with two chapels, the larger Eastern Chapel and the smaller Southern Chapel.⁵⁹
- 1927 June – the opening of Melbourne’s first modern crematorium and chapel which was reached by new concrete bridge over Merlynston Creek at the end of Fourth Avenue of a similar design to bridge on Sixth Avenue in 1920.⁶⁰ The archaic crematorium at Springvale closed and Fawkner then operated Melbourne’s only crematorium for the next 10 years.
- 1927- The New Melbourne General Cemetery including The Melbourne Crematorium became the official name but unofficially the cemetery was usually referred to as the Fawkner 1928. Muslim community requested and was granted a separate area for burials and a “Mahomedan” chapel was built⁶¹
- 1930s Additions to the crematorium built plus two new chapels and auxiliary services built with work ongoing up to 1943⁶²
- 1931 Construction of Garden of Remembrance
- 1934 Further work on Garden of Remembrance to include a walled enclosure to house interment niches, statuary and burial urns, the columbarium⁶³

1934	Design and erection of new Italianate Tea Rooms adjoining the new Garden of Remembrance (1933-38, extended 1950s). Old tearooms built C1922-3 demolished. Designed by Charles Heath in the manner of a miniature Italian provincial villa with input from his son Frank. ⁶⁴ The use of thin tapestry bricks with terracotta shingled roof was unusual in such buildings ⁶⁵	1986	18 April 1986 Establishment of Northern Memorial Park (94 hectares) on the old Gowrie Estate land was purchased in the 1950s
1938	Classically symmetrical Rose Urn Garden completed in 16th century Baroque style with rose bushes planted in concentric beds ⁶⁶	1994	1 Sept. 1994 - Government approved construction of above ground mausoleums ⁷⁷
1939c	Seventh Avenue Bridge constructed in similar design to those at Sixth and Fourth Avenues ⁶⁷	1994	Stage 1 of Australia's first public Mausoleum, The Holy Family Mausoleum-Piazza Della Madonna was opened ⁷⁸
1939	Regular daily Mortuary train service was discontinued although trains still ran on demand ⁶⁸	1996	Government commenced an enquiry into the Cemeteries Act ⁷⁹
1944	Cemeteries Act 1944 (Act 5025, Act of Parliament) and Ministry of Health Act (1943) makes Minister of Health and Department of Health responsible for Cemeteries	2000	Stage 2 of the "Chapel of the Archangel Michael", Holy Angels Mausoleum began which would house over 2,200 caskets and make Fawkner the largest provider of public mausoleum crypts in Australia ⁸⁰
1948	Trust begins to lobby to purchase land from the Gowrie Estate to the north for a needed extension. This later becomes Northern Memorial Park ⁶⁹	2004	The Department of Human Services was advised of concerns related to probity at the Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Trust which instigated a review by the Auditor General
1950s	Fawkner Memorial Park name widely used on letterhead and photographs	2005	Findings of Review were reported to Parliament in May 2005 ⁸¹
1952	Erection of Charles Robert Heath Fountain where the original clock tower (never built) was placed in the original design by Heath (modified in 1994 by the addition of two metal inverted discs) ⁷⁰	2006	July - Government then decided to initiate a larger review of the fourteen major cemetery trusts in the state resulting in an Interim Report in tabled in Parliament on July 2006 ⁸²
1952	Mortuary Train service finally discontinued ⁷¹	2006	August 2006 an administrator, Peter Lewinsky, was appointed to the Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park after receiving and investigation allegations of fraud and the Trust was dismissed ⁸³
1952	Second Garden of Remembrance was built to cater for rising demand as cremations numbers increased rapidly ⁷²	2006	Administrator remains in place until Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust was appointed in March 2010 as an independent and remunerated Board ⁸⁴
1959/60	Current front gates were relocated from the Melbourne Fish Market, refurbished and placed on site ⁷³	2008	July 2008, the State Government announced reforms to the 14 major metropolitan and regional Cemetery Trusts that report to Parliament under the Financial Management Act 1994
1964	Lawn cemetery developed in area north of the main entrance along Sydney Road frontage caused some public outcry ⁷⁴	2007/8	Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park managed Coburg Pine Ridge, Northern Memorial Park and Plenty Valley Memorial Park (Yan Yean) as well as Fawkner operations ⁸⁵
1971-	Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park (Act of Parliament 1971) changed the name from New Melbourne General Cemetery to Fawkner Memorial Park officially and changed from municipal ownership and management to independent trusteeship. This act freed the cemetery from the influence of local politics ⁷⁵	2010	Two major metropolitan Trusts were created as a result of the reviews, the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and three regional Class A Trusts and five other Trusts ⁸⁶
1980	Original crematorium and chapel was demolished and replaced with new complex ⁷⁶		

- 2010 1 March 2010 Establishment of Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust as a Class A Trust under an amendment to the Act (2003) to manage one Trust after the consolidation of eight existing cemetery trusts into one. These include locations in Altona, Anderson's Creek, Fawkner, Keilor, Lilydale, Preston, Templestowe and Wyndham
- 2011 Government releases a discussion paper "Victoria's Cemeteries and Crematoria: Options for Legislative Change"⁸⁷
- 2010 1 March - first meeting of the Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust⁸⁸
- 2013 A review of the five Class A Trusts was completed in May 2013 to ensure that the reforms were proceeding smoothly.⁸⁹ While some minor changes were recommended on the whole the government was satisfied the reforms had succeeded.

Fawkner Memorial Park Name Changes

- 1904 Northern Suburbs Cemetery⁹⁰
- 1905 The Municipal Cemetery, Fawkner⁹¹
- 1905 Fawkner Cemetery⁹²
- 1907 The New Melbourne General Cemetery⁹³
- 1927- The New Melbourne General Cemetery including The Melbourne Crematorium⁹⁴
- 1927 Fawkner Crematorium (popular use)⁹⁵
- 1950s Fawkner Memorial Park (widely used on letterhead and photographs)⁹⁶
- 1971- Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park (Act of Parliament, 1971)⁹⁷
- 2010 Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, Fawkner Memorial Park⁹⁸

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- Dove Tail (staff newsletter 1993-97)
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City of Coburg – var including Minute Books, Outward Letter Books, Public Works Committee Minutes

City of Brunswick - var including Minute Books, Outward Letter Books, Public Works Committee Minutes

City of Essendon - var including Minute Books, Outward Letter Books, Public Works Committee Minutes

City of Melbourne - var including Minute Books, Outward Letter Books, Public Works Committee Minutes

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* *Lists those cemeteries which were incorporated into Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in 2009*

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FOOTNOTES


- 1 Public Health Act 1889 – 53 Vic No:1044
- 2 Cemeteries Act 1944, Act No. 5025
- 3 Department of Human Services, *Evaluation of the Financial Viability of Victoria's Cemetery Trusts and the Development of Fee Models*, (2002) prepared by RSM Bird Cameron, Melbourne [online]
- 4 Auditor General Victoria, *Results of Special Reviews and Other Investigations, Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Trust, Review of Expenditure and Related Matters*, May 2005
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- 6 State Services Authority, *Review of Cemetery Trusts, Interim Report, April 2007, final Report June 2007*
- 7 See Amendments to the Cemetery and Crematoria Act, 2003
- 8 *Review of the Government and Management of Class A Cemetery Trusts*, May 2013
- 9 Creation of Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust 1 March 2010, via Amendment to the Cemeteries Act (2003) Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003. Ver. 20 80/2003
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