

WILLIAMSTOWN CEMETERY

89 CHAMPION ROAD, WILLIAMSTOWN NORTH, VIC 3016



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 of 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 internment in graves, internment in mausolea, internment 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

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

Williamstown Cemetery is 11.4 hectares in size and was opened in 1858. It is strongly connected to the maritime history of the general Williamstown area. It is a highly monumental cemetery with many large memorials as well as a large mausoleum. It contains the mass grave of those buried at the original Point Gellibrand unofficial cemetery, exhumed and re-interred at Williamstown, and a small lawn grave area.

Williamstown Cemetery was established in 1857 after the inadequacies of the unofficial cemetery at Point Gellibrand were repeatedly brought to the attention of the government from 1848 onwards.¹¹ The Point Gellibrand Cemetery began life as a burial ground for those who died as a result of infectious diseases at the nearby quarantine station but was also the local un-gazetted burial ground for convicts from the hulks as well as seamen and their families and local people but no records were ever kept and there were no Trustees.¹²

Trustees were appointed for the new cemetery in 1854 (Lt. Crawford Pasco, Dr William Storey, Captain Charles Ferguson, John O'Neil, Robert McKay, George Thomas, James Conroy, Thomas Mason) but with no land set aside they were able to do little.¹³ In 1856 the Trustees formally resigned in favour of the Municipality of Williamstown as responsibility for cemeteries could then be vested in local government.¹⁴

In 1857 Crown Reserve RS5440 was set aside for cemetery land within a public park, the design of which had the cemetery as the centre in accordance with the view that cemetery land could be seen as a place for contemplative recreation and was related to the botanical park movement.¹⁵

Williamstown Cemetery was laid out to design of William Martin, Assistant Surveyor, Crown Lands, with the 15 acres of land divided into equal quadrants and with denominational sections allocated according to their population percentages in the latest census plus a section for "Other Religions".¹⁶

In March, 1858 the Williamstown Cemetery Rules and Regulations were published.¹⁷ All Trustees were local Councillors as the Council was now the responsible entity.¹⁸ The first burial was just 2 weeks later, that of Captain Lawrence Lawson, Master Mariner.¹⁹ Reports show that by 1861 the grounds had been laid out well and the cemetery was in good order.²⁰

Continuous complaints over the poor standard of the Point Gellibrand unofficial cemetery, and the fact that the land it was on was needed by the Railways for expansion, inspired departments to think laterally and a deputation from the Williamstown Corporation met with the Minister for Railways to offer the land containing the Point Gellibrand Cemetery to the Department of Railways if the Railways would cover the costs of the exhumation and reinternment.²¹

In 1888 Cemetery administration was transferred from the Minister for Lands and Survey to the Central Board of Health and a year later new Trustees were appointed – Mayor of Williamstown, two councillors and representatives from five religious denominations, Andrew English (Church of England), J. Rice (Roman Catholic), E. McRobert (Presbyterian), L. Worthington (Congregational), A.W. Hick (Wesleyan).²² These Trustees resolved to keep adequate and accurate records unlike former Trustees.²³ Throughout the 1890s the cemetery prospered and memorials such as the central fountain were erected.²⁴

By 1899 the solution to Point Gellibrand was found and the Secretary of Railways, under power of license from the Solicitor General, gave notice that it was the intention to resume all burials in Point Gellibrand Cemetery and remove them to the new cemetery at Williamstown.²⁵ This public notice was also published in the Age, Argus and Herald on 4 July 1899 and caused great public dismay.²⁶ In August and September 1899 the last of Point Gellibrand burials was moved to a Vault at Williamstown Cemetery and a total of 808 bodies were exhumed and re interred.²⁷

The exhumation and re internment attracted considerable interest in the press with many newspapers recording various curious incidents.²⁸ A Memorial was erected to cover the mass grave and a year later another memorial, to the crew of the yacht Queenie, was also erected demonstrating the continued maritime association as all crew were local men.²⁹ A few years later another memorial, to the memory of the officers and men of the permanent Victorian Naval Force was unveiled, again celebrating the links to the sea.³⁰

By this time the cemetery had almost reached capacity as some 9,000 burials had taken place.³¹ Two years later in 1905 a Reserve extension was gazetted (approximately 13 acres) which took the cemetery up to the Park Crescent boundary and doubled its size (now 11.4 hectares).³² Over the next few decades some major works were undertaken including the erection of residences, public toilets, road extensions and major plantings plus electricity was connected.³³ In the 1930s more works were undertaken including a chapel, gatehouse, some new gates which were formerly at the St Kilda Town Hall and other extensions as income from burials were sufficient to allow such expenditure.

In the late 1940s the Trustees recognised the growing popularity of cremation as an option rather than internment and resolved to build a crematorium at Williamstown before realising that there was insufficient space and they took an option over land at Geelong Road, Altona.³⁴ Although the government had not formally approved the purchase nor the requested loan, the Trustees purchased the land with a deposit of 20,000 pounds in 1948 hoping government would supply the rest of the funds.³⁵ The Memorial Park opened at Altona North in 1961, (including the crematorium) and the Trustees were forced to spend much of their time developing Altona Memorial Park. Without sufficient funds from burials at Williamstown the maintenance allocated was insufficient and public complaints began to appear in local newspapers.³⁶

Government began a process of appointing professional and specialist people with skills other than a denomination to the Board in an effort to make changes but it was still the Williamstown Cemetery Trust to which they were appointed.³⁷ In 1980, after Williamstown Cemetery was ranked A in a Ministry of Planning survey of Victoria's historic cemeteries, the Trust was able to access funds through the National Estate Grant and some preservation works began.³⁸ In 1993 the Trustees commissioned a Conservation Plan after years of public complaints and neglect.³⁹ By this time the Cemetery was starting to become recognised as an historical artefact worth preserving and in 1997 Williamstown Cemetery was classified by the National Trust and later placed on the Heritage Register (VHR1837).⁴⁰

In 1994 the Cemetery (Mausolea) Regulations came into force to allow above ground vaults to be built within public cemeteries and this was seen as a way to include the changing demographics and include the recent migrant population who wished to be entombed above ground.⁴¹ Stage One of the new mausoleum, the Chapel of St Anthony of Padua (the patron saint of lost articles, shipwrecks, boatmen and fisherman) was opened 4 years later in 1998.⁴² In 2008 Stage Two was completed. Williamstown Cemetery remains open for burials and mausoleum entombments with limited space available.³¹

**FUNCTIONS:
INTERNMENT, ENTOMBMENTS, MEMORIALISATION AND
COMMEMORATION**

Williamstown Cemetery contains the graves of 60 Commonwealth service personnel from World War I and World War II (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

Williamstown Cemetery Timeline

1835	John Batman considered three sites for a settlement, Melbourne, Geelong and Williamstown but reconsidered Williamstown, which had easy harbour access, when no fresh water supply could easily be found. ⁴³ He was accompanied by Mr Gellibrand, the ex-Attorney General of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and Point Gellibrand was named after him. ⁴⁴ Point Gellibrand remained a popular anchorage and landing place for ships, especially during the gold rushes, and the settlement continued to grow.	1842	This area at Point Gellibrand became known as a burial ground and catered for seamen and their families as well (no records were ever kept and there were no Trustees) but it was also the local, un-gazetted, cemetery for many years ⁵³
1837	Chief Surveyor, Robert Hoddle, finished laying out the plan for the townships of Melbourne and Williams Town (Parish of Cut Paw Paw) and they were declared open to survey and settlement ⁴⁵	1842	Oldest tombstone found was dated March 1842 for a Donald Smith ⁵⁴
1837	Sir Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales, officially named the site Williams Town after the current King, William IV (1830-1837 who was known as "the Sailor King" ⁴⁶	1848	Petition signed by 69 people calling for a new cemetery was sent by the Williamstown Harbour Master to the Superintendent of Port Phillip, Charles LaTrobe ⁵⁵
1837/40	Three land sales sold off sites two blocks back from Nelson Place to establish the township of Williamstown but the area of land which later became the Williamstown cemetery was outside the land offered for sale ⁴⁷	1849	Land was set aside for a quarantine station and burial ground at Spotswood but it was never used ⁵⁶
1839	Williamstown Pier, built by convict labour, was completed which allowed direct and safe disembarkation and encouraged ships to anchor nearby. ⁴⁸ Large bluestone government stores located along the foreshore, also built by convict labour, indicated the importance of Williamstown as a dock and transport facility. Convicts were housed in five hulks moored just offshore. ⁴⁹	1850	April - Post Office established in Williamstown with mail daily to and from Melbourne indicating that the settlement was firmly established ⁵⁷
1840	First lighthouse, made of wood, were erected on the point of Point Gellibrand and were probably the first navigational aid in Victoria ⁵⁰	1853	Registration of burials became compulsory ⁵⁸
1840	First Water Police Superintendent appointed to manage the large number of ships and water traffic and this position continued for many years ⁵¹	1853	August - a new petition was sent to government stating Point Gellibrand Cemetery was full signed by Lieutenant Crawford Pasco of the Water Police ⁵⁹
1842	February - The ship <i>Manlius</i> , carrying Scottish immigrants, arrived in Port Phillip Bay flying the yellow flag signifying fever on board and was immediately directed to land at Williamstown and discharge the passengers and crew into a specially built quarantine camp. Seventeen people died and, as there was no local cemetery, they were simply buried nearby.	1854	First telegraph line built between Melbourne and Williamstown ⁶⁰
		1854	August - Trustees for the new cemetery were appointed: Lt. Crawford Pasco, Dr William Storey, Captain Charles Ferguson, John O'Neil, Robert McKay, George Thomas, James Conroy, Thomas Mason but with no land set aside they were able to do little ⁶¹
		1855	By 1855 there was sufficient business for several undertakers to offer their services ⁶²
		1856	March - Municipality of Williamstown established ⁶³
		1856	Trustees of the new planned Cemetery formally resigned in favour of the Municipality of Williamstown as responsibility for cemeteries was then vested in local government ⁶⁴

1857	First government railway line between Spencer Street Melbourne and Point Gellibrand ⁶⁵	1858	May – by the end of May the cemetery had been fenced, paths were installed and there had been 6 burials ⁷⁷
1857	The railway to Geelong, and 2 years later to Williamstown, cut through Section 11 of the Parish of Cut Paw Paw, and Champion Road, (also known as Cemetery Road) and provided access to nearby quarries ⁶⁶	1858	October - A road was established connecting the railway crossing to the cemetery ⁷⁸
1857	November - Boring was undertaken at two sites close to the rail line to determine if they were suitable for cemetery use and it was noted that the cemetery committee, comprising three people, had met three times over the past year ⁶⁷	1858	November – Municipal reports to government record 39 interments ⁷⁹
1857	15 Acres of a 70 acre reserve (Crown Reserve RS5440) was set aside for cemetery land (no reference in Gazette) but mentioned in correspondence in relation to land to be set aside for a public park, the design of which had the cemetery as the centre of a large park in accordance with the view that cemetery land could be seen as a place for contemplative recreation. ⁶⁸ The site was on the west side of the North Williamstown-Geelong Railway line and the surrounding land was also used as the Pound for many years. ⁶⁹	1859	July - Morgue buildings erected at Williamstown mainly to cater for death at sea or in the bay but many were displeased at its appearance ⁸⁰
1857	Williamstown Cemetery was laid out to design of William Martin, Assistant Surveyor, Crown Lands, with the 15 acres of land divided into equal quadrants and with denominational sections allocated according to their population percentages in the latest census plus a section for "Other Religions". ⁷⁰ The layout, designed to follow the modern style of cemetery layout allowing easy access to all areas with a curved alignment of the main four roads, remains essentially intact today. ⁷¹	1860	After several attempts, Williamstown Council had land reserved for a large municipal park to augment the land set aside for the cemetery and the botanical gardens. ⁸¹ Unfortunately half of the 65 acre reserve was re-gazetted as a site for railway purposes in 1882 and more land was resumed by the adjoining cemetery in 1905 and later lands were taken for various purposes leaving only a small section of the original gazetted park. ⁸²
1857	Point Gellibrand Burial ground was closed for burials, (no Trustees were ever appointed) but was still popular as a place to visit and even pick the flowers growing in the grounds ⁷²	1861	Report to the Central Board of Health noted that the grounds had been laid out well and the cemetery was in good order ⁸³
1858	Cemetery Trustees: Councillors Moxham, Fyfe, La Roche, and Jones, Town Clerk Frank Tattersall and Cr Thomas Stewart as Chairman which suggests that original Trustees were replaced by municipal Trustees after the formation of the Williamstown Council which was now responsible for the cemetery ⁷³	1882	Erection of a special infectious diseases or quarantine sanatorium named Cut Paw Paw or Newport Sanatorium inland from Williamstown originally built to contain smallpox victims away from the general population. ⁸⁴ Melbourne municipalities contributed the funds as patients were sent from all over Melbourne but many in the Williamstown community objected to having infectious patients in the facility or being buried in their cemetery so patients who died were buried within the facility. ⁸⁵
1858	3 March - Williamstown Cemetery Rules and Regulations published ⁷⁴	1882	A deputation from the Williamstown Corporation met with the Minister for Railways to offer the land containing the Point Gellibrand Cemetery to the Department of Railways if the Railways Department would cover the costs of the exhumation and reinternment ⁸⁶
1858	22 March - first burial at the new cemetery was that of Captain Lawrence Lawson, Master Mariner, only 2 weeks after Rules were gazetted ⁷⁵	1885	Cemetery land of one acre set aside at Cut Paw Paw sanatorium for internment of patients who died of infectious diseases, sometimes called Sanatorium Cemetery or Werribee Old Cemetery. ⁸⁷ The cemetery was officially gazetted as closed only in 1957 but it would seem that the only internments were removed to Williamstown Cemetery in the 1940s. ⁸⁸
1858	May – Williamstown Municipal reports show the Cemetery Committee met 7 times that year and that the application to government for cemetery land had been approved ⁷⁶	1885	Mayor and Petitioners wrote to the Lands Dept. to seek an extension preferably to south of existing reserve but this was eventually refused. Land to west was already a Recreation Reserve and to the south was vacant. ⁸⁹

1886	Williamstown proclaimed a Town ⁹⁰	1899	In August and September 1899 the last of Point Gellibrand burials were moved to a Vault at Williamstown Cemetery and a total of 808 bodies were exhumed and re-interred. ¹⁰⁴
1888	Cemetery administration transferred from the Minister for Lands and Survey to the Central Board of Health on 1st September 1888 and they were keen to see some improvements in cemetery administration ⁹¹	1899	The exhumation and re internment attracted considerable interest in the press with many newspapers recording various curious incidents ¹⁰⁵
1889	April 16, New Trustees appointed – Mayor of Williamstown, two councillors and representatives from five religious denominations, Andrew English (Church of England), J. Rice (Roman Catholic), E. McRobert (Presbyterian), L. Worthington (Congregational), A.W. Hick (Wesleyan) ⁹²	1900	A Memorial erected to the crew of the racing yacht Queenie, which had sunk the previous year with the loss of all aboard, all seven men being long term residents of Williamstown and all were interred after a very elaborate funeral ¹⁰⁶
1889	27 June – at the first meeting the Trustees determined to keep a full set of records, and to administer the cemetery in a professional manner and began their work with a new seal and new Regulations and within a year had dismissed the long term caretaker which caused considerable public comment ⁹³	1901	New Trustee appointed ¹⁰⁷
1890	Although the archives relating to the earlier period are no longer available copies of plans show the cemetery trust were continuing to progress layout works. ⁹⁴	1901	Memorial established over the vault where Point Gellibrand bodies were transferred and re-buried with surviving headstones and obelisks which mentions 920 bodies rather than the 808 listed in official sources ¹⁰⁸
1892	New Trustees appointed ⁹⁵	1902	Various Trustees appointed, 8 January; 10 September, 1 October with those representing religious denominations serving longer periods than those from the local Council who were often replaced as councillors after council elections ¹⁰⁹
1892	Trustees decided to install prominent, pressed cement, memorial fountain in the centre of the cemetery (designed by Wardrop and Scurry architectural modellers) which was created for a cost of £55. The fountain leaked from the beginning and was rarely able to be kept filled but a grant recently received by the Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust (2015) will be spent on restoring the fountain. ⁹⁶	1903	Some 9,000 burials had taken place and the cemetery was fast reaching capacity ¹¹⁰
1893	Trustees appointed ⁹⁷	1903	October – an extension of the cemetery was discussed and boring undertaken to determine if the land envisaged, part of the adjoining parklands, was suitable for cemetery purposes ¹¹¹
1894	Rules and Regulations for Williamstown General Cemetery published ⁹⁸	1904	Monument to the memory of the officers and men of the permanent Victorian Naval Force unveiled marking the end of a long association with this force which was then amalgamated with the Royal Australian Navy ¹¹²
1897	Trustees appointed ⁹⁹	1905	Reserve extension gazetted (approximately 13 acres) which took the cemetery up to the Park Crescent boundary and doubled its size ¹¹³
1897	Cremation of a “Hindoo” at Cut Paw Paw Sanatorium upset many in the community and was widely reported but the now neglected cemetery was the selected place for such ceremonies which occurred infrequently ¹⁰⁰	1909	Caretaker’s residence constructed ¹¹⁴
1899	June – article in the Argus newspaper strongly criticises the poor state of Point Gellibrand Cemetery and calls for action to preserve the monuments and graves of Williamstown first settlers and mariners ¹⁰¹	1917	New sewered public toilets and cottage. Electricity introduced ¹¹⁵
1899	July – <i>Williamstown Chronicle</i> noted that the Secretary of Railways, under power of license from the Solicitor General, intended to resume all burials in Point Gellibrand Cemetery and remove them to the new cemetery at Williamstown. This public notice was also published in <i>the Age, Argus</i> and <i>Herald</i> on 4 July 1899 causing great dismay. ¹⁰³	1919	Williamstown proclaimed a City ¹¹⁶
		1931	Road constructed in the cemetery extension and Palm trees were planted either side of the road extension ¹¹⁷

1937	New gatehouse/office, chapel, secretary's quarters, manager's room, and boardroom was built with Mr Morsby the architect. The original building (office and rest house) became a public shelter and was re-painted with 'Rest House' written on the front ¹¹⁸	1950-	Although Williamstown Public Cemetery and Altona Memorial Park (Western Suburbs Memorial Park) were two different sites, and of a different nature; Williamstown being monumental and with a mausoleum, Altona a crematorium and lawn cemetery only; both were managed by the same set of Trustees as separate arrangements until formally merged in 1996 ¹³⁰
1939	The entrance gates from St Kilda Town Hall and six iron posts sourced from Exhibition Gardens fence were erected as the cemetery's front fence ¹¹⁹	1950s	Trustees devoted much of their time and energy to establishing the Altona Memorial Park and, although changes such as lawn graves and low set memorial stones were introduced at Williamstown, both to save money and to lower maintenance costs, the cemetery began to deteriorate ¹³¹
1939/44	Cemetery suffered from shortages in manpower owing to the war and in obtaining materials to keep the cemetery maintained ¹²⁰		
1946	A crematorium proposed by the Cemetery Trust is approved by the Health Dept. but the Dept. was unable to allow the release of materials (due to war shortages). Long and sometimes heated discussions between the Trustees finally indicated that a new area in the vicinity of Geelong Road and Kororoit Creek should be considered and this eventuated as the Altona Memorial Park ¹²¹	1960	October – Scale of Fees for Western Suburbs Memorial Park, Altona North, proclaimed with Trustees noted as E.S. Loft, (Chair) J. Criggall, D. Dignan, A.W. Hick, F.R.Speechkey and S.H.Robinson, the same Trustees as for Williamstown Public Cemetery ¹³²
1947	Increase in fees were announced but income was still an issue and the cemetery was not in good condition ¹²²	1960	December 15 - the Memorial Park is opened at Altona North and includes the crematorium. Altona Memorial Park management take over running of Williamstown Cemetery but without sufficient funds from burials at Williamstown the maintenance allocated was insufficient and public complaints began to appear in local newspapers ¹³³
1947	Trustees seek an extension of land at the south west of the site (now the cricket ground) but this application was withdrawn after objections from Williamstown Council ¹²³	1962	Williamstown Cemetery Trustees were given consent to borrow 25,000 pounds towards the establishment of the Altona Memorial Park, also named as Western Suburbs Memorial Park ¹³⁴
1947	Trustees recognise the growing popularity of cremation as an option rather than internment and resolved to build a crematorium at Williamstown before realising that there was insufficient space and they took an option over land at Geelong Road, Altona ¹²⁴	1962/3	A lawn section was created on the former garden area inside the main gates to cater for more popular lawn graves ¹³⁵
1948	After several options over the land at Altona had expired and the government had not formally approved the purchase nor the requested loan, the Trustees purchased the land with a deposit of 20,000 pounds hoping government would supply a loan ¹²⁵	1966	Caretaker's residence was demolished and a new brick residence was constructed in the south west of the cemetery site together with new workshops this released the ground now vacant for use as a popular lawn section ¹³⁶
1948	December – local newspaper reports that the government has loaned the Trustees 15,000 pounds for the purchase of land for cemetery purposes. ¹²⁶ The loan later had to be repaid to government. ¹²⁷ The total amount of the loan was 246,000 pounds ¹²⁸	1968	John Patterson appointed a Trust member on 14 September 1968 and served as a Trustee until Greater metropolitan Cemeteries Trust was appointed in 2010, he was the longest serving Trust member ¹³⁷
1949	Local newspaper reported on the consternation of the Altona riding councillors at the purchase price for the land reserved for the Altona cemetery quoting the council valuation of 15 pound per acre against the reported purchase price of 333 pounds per acre, and noting the highest price ever paid locally was @200 pounds per acre ¹²⁹	1970s	The Trustees devoted much of their time to the establishment and development at Altona Memorial Park and Williamstown Cemetery became more neglected ¹³⁸
		1970s	Continued public complaints over the deterioration of the cemetery ¹³⁹

1970	Appointment of Barry Heath, horticulturalist at Williamstown Council, (together with Barry Moore and Howard Whittaker) started the process of appointing professional and specialist people with skills other than a denomination or a municipal post to the Board of Trustees (note appointed to the Williamstown Cemetery Board) ¹⁴⁰	1980	March - Separate Scale of Fees proclaimed for both Williamstown Public Cemetery and Williamstown Public Cemetery (The Memorial Park) by the same Trustees, R.A. Wiseman, B. Heath, H. Whittaker and G.J. McGill as Manager and Secretary for both cemeteries ¹⁵⁰
1971	Trustees of Williamstown Public Cemetery (the Memorial Park) received \$50,000 for the extension of the Lawn Cemetery ¹⁴¹	1980s	Considerable amounts of money was expended on sending Trustees and staff interstate and overseas to study current cemetery practices ¹⁵¹
1971	Scale of Fees for Memorial Park Williamstown Public Cemetery including cremation fees indicating this refers to Altona Memorial Park with Trustees noted as S.H. Robinson, J.E.Patterson, D. Smith and C. Sidway as Manager and Secretary; Trustees also of Williamstown Public Cemetery ¹⁴²	1980	After Williamstown Cemetery was ranked A in a Ministry of Planning survey of Victoria's historic cemeteries, the Trust was able to access funds through the National Estate Grant and some preservation works began ¹⁵²
1974	June - Separate Scale of Fees proclaimed for both Williamstown Public Cemetery and Williamstown Public Cemetery (The Memorial Park) by the same Trustees, E.S.Loft, H. Whittaker, and S.H. Robinson and with C.W.Sidway as Manager and Secretary for both cemeteries ¹⁴³	1981	Scale of Fees proclaimed for both cemeteries with same Trustees for each and same manager in March, July and December ¹⁵³
1974	August - Separate Scale of Fees proclaimed for both Williamstown Public Cemetery and Williamstown Public Cemetery (The Memorial Park) by the same Trustees, E.S.Loft, H. Whittaker, S.H. Robinson and with C.W.Sidway as Manager and Secretary for both cemeteries ¹⁴⁴	1983	Scale of Fees proclaimed for Williamstown Public Cemetery by the Trustees of the Williamstown Public Cemetery and for the Memorial Park Public Cemetery by the Trustees of the Memorial Park Public Cemetery, with same three Trustees for each cemetery (Howard Whittaker, John Patterson and D. Smith) ¹⁵⁴
1976	November - Separate Scale of Fees proclaimed for both Williamstown Public Cemetery and Williamstown Public Cemetery (The Memorial Park) by the same Trustees, E.S.Loft, H. Whittaker, S.H. Robinson and with C.W.Sidway as Manager and Secretary for both cemeteries ¹⁴⁵	1989	1989/1990/1991/1992 Williamstown and Altona cemeteries had Scales of Fees proclaimed with same Trustees listed ¹⁵⁵
1978	March - Separate Scale of Fees proclaimed for both Williamstown Public Cemetery and Williamstown Public Cemetery (The Memorial Park) by the same Trustees, B. R. Moore, B. Heath, S.H. Robinson and G.J. McGill as Manager and Secretary of both cemeteries but with several new Trustees in place and a new manager for both cemeteries ¹⁴⁶	1983	Sale of Fees published – Williamstown Public Cemetery ¹⁵⁶
1978	Regulation of Cemeteries published – Williamstown Public Cemetery ¹⁴⁷	1985	Orthodox section opened ¹⁵⁷
1978	Scale of Fees proclaimed for both cemeteries on June 21, 1978; 5 July 1978; 4 April 1979 and 15 August 1979 with same information ¹⁴⁸	1988	Jacy Critchley was appointed Trust member and served until 2010 ¹⁵⁸
1979	Trustees of the Williamstown Public Cemetery (the Memorial Park) received \$36,000 to be expended on the development of a lawn area, the funds being the balance of funds allocated ¹⁴⁹	1992	D. W. Hanlon appointed a Trustee of Memorial Park Altona Public Cemetery (but noted as Williamstown Cemetery in the Gazette also) ¹⁵⁹
		1993	Trustees commissioned a Conservation Plan after years of public complaints and neglect
		1994	Williamstown Council amalgamated with Altona Council to become City of Hobsons Bay ¹⁶⁰
		1994	Three new Trust members were appointed, Joseph Yacano (June) Pamela Jellie (July) and Gary Lee (August) ¹⁶¹
		1990s	mid 1990s – demand from local Italian population in the western suburbs to be able to inter their dead in above ground mausolea increased after Springvale Cemetery offered this option and Melbourne General Cemetery could no longer offer in ground vaults ¹⁶²

1994	Cemetery (Mausolea) Regulations comes into force and allows above ground vaults to be built within public cemeteries ¹⁶³	2006	November – extension of mausoleum commenced ¹⁷⁵
1996	January – Incorporated under the Cemeteries (Incorporation of Trusts) Regulation 1995, No 137 when the Altona Trust and the Williamstown Trust were officially merged and titled “The Memorial Park” although in fact the Trustees had operated both Trusts together from the beginning ¹⁶⁴	2007	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 ¹⁶² in Parliament on July 2007 ¹⁷⁶
1996	1 June 1996 - Regulations amended to declare Memorial Park Altona and Williamstown Public Cemetery are to operate as a single Trust ¹⁶⁵	2007	Manager of Altona Memorial Park writes to Crown Lands re acquiring part of road Reserve at north west end of site as an area the cemetery might have as an extension to current lands ¹⁷⁷
1996	Stone cenotaph marking the Japanese Sailors’ Memorial Graves installed ¹⁶⁶	2008	This request for extra land is refused ¹⁷⁸
1997	April and October Scale of Fees proclaimed for both cemeteries in a single proclamation rather than separately as had been the case previously with Trustees J. Patterson; H Whittaker; W Crofts (J. Yacono in October) and G. McGill as Secretary and Manager ¹⁶⁷	2008	Mausoleum Stage II to design of Bahramis Architects completed ¹⁷⁹
1997	Williamstown Cemetery classified by the National Trust and later by Heritage Victoria (VHR1837) ¹⁶⁸	2008	Three new Trust members appointed; G.J. Murdoch (July); A. DeFazio (July); Josie Thwaites (July) ¹⁸⁰
1998	October - Stage One of the new mausoleum, the Chapel of St Anthony of Padua (the patron saint of lost articles, shipwrecks, boatmen and fisherman) was opened by the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, George Pell, and was built to design of Bahramis Architects ¹⁶⁹	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 ¹⁸¹
2001	February 20 – The Cemetery Trust changed its name to “the Trustees of the Altona Memorial Park to manage two cemeteries, Altona Memorial Park and Williamstown Public Cemetery ¹⁷⁰	2010	Two major metropolitan Trusts were created as a result of the reviews, the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust plus three regional Class Trusts and five other Trusts. ¹⁸²
2002	Government commissioned a report on the viability of Cemetery Trusts which discovered that there were concerns over viability, financial management and governance at a number of cemetery trusts ¹⁷¹	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, Williamstown, Anderson’s Creek, Fawkner, Keilor, Lilydale, Preston, Templestowe and Wyndham ¹⁸³
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 ¹⁷²	2010	1 March- First meeting of the Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust ¹⁸⁴
2005	Findings of Auditor General’s Review were reported to Parliament in May 2005 ¹⁷³	2011	Government releases a discussion paper “Victoria’s Cemeteries and Crematoria: Options for Legislative Change ¹⁸⁵
2006	Following this Review The Auditor General completed a review of thirteen major Cemetery Trusts which was printed in July 2006 and raised a number of concerns over financial probity and governance issues ¹⁷⁴	2013	A review of the five Class A Trusts was completed in May 2013 to ensure that the reforms were proceeding smoothly. While some minor changes were recommended on the whole the government was satisfied the reforms had succeeded. ¹⁸⁶
		2015	New Regulations to the Cemetery and Crematoria Act released ¹⁸⁷

Williamstown Cemetery Name Changes

- 1857 Williamstown Cemetery¹⁸⁸
- 1894 Williamstown General Cemetery¹⁸⁹
- 1994 Williamstown Public Cemetery¹⁹⁰
- 2010 Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Williamstown Cemetery¹⁹¹

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