



# The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust

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Strategic Plan 2016 - 2021  
*Stepping up, reaching beyond*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) is committed to serving the communities of yesterday, today and tomorrow. GMCT is pleased to share with you our strategic vision and road map for 2016-21.

This exciting new strategic plan builds on our achievements since the establishment of GMCT in 2010. Our plan has been informed by ongoing consultation with our internal and external stakeholders – including our customers and visitors, staff, our community advisory committee, members of the funeral industry, cultural, religious and special interest groups, local residents, and local and state government.

At the heart of this new strategic plan remain our organisational values: respect, integrity, sustainability and compassion.

As a cemetery trust, GMCT serves a diverse and multicultural community. Meeting the equally diverse expectations and needs of those communities is our core focus.

We understand that a commitment to operational excellence is critical to meeting those expectations and that our achievements to date provide a foundation on which to build. Our strategic theme – **stepping up and reaching beyond** – serves to articulate a commitment to our team and our stakeholders, to ensure we consistently strive to deliver beyond expectations, challenge perceptions of the industry, improve our service offering, and work with our communities.

Our aspirational roadmap for the next five years will see GMCT focus on four fundamental pillars: **community connections, lasting stewardship, operational excellence** and **change ready agility**. These priority areas will underpin and inform initiatives and decision making over the next five years and ensure we are focused, transparent and accountable.

Meeting the goals outlined in this strategic plan will require us to invest in our staff, through recruitment and training programs and dedicated efforts to build a positive and aligned corporate culture.

While our communities continue to change and evolve, GMCT will continue to provide burial, cremation and memorialisation services. However, while an effective road map provides organisational vision and a strategy for action, it must also allow room to respond to new opportunities, challenges, and changing needs and expectations. We will ensure this strategic plan is reviewed regularly, supported by continued stakeholder consultation and feedback so that it remains fit for purpose, laying the foundation for GMCT to build on in the long term.

We invite you to review our strategic plan and to let us know how we are doing. Your feedback is invaluable as we commence this next phase and will help us continue to provide the community with relevant, trusted and compassionate burial, cremation and memorialisation services; and importantly, create spaces, places and experiences for you, your family and future generations.



**Geoff Mabbett**  
Chair

**Jacqui Weatherill**  
CEO

***The Greater Metropolitan  
Cemeteries Trust is  
committed to serving the  
community***



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## BUILD ON OUR HISTORY

**G**MCT has a long and proud history. Establishment of the trust in 2010 brought together eight existing cemetery trusts into one.

We are responsible for the care and maintenance of 21 sites that form an arc across Melbourne, from Werribee in the west to Emerald in the east. Many of these cemeteries have provided services to their local communities for more than 150 years. Over this time, we have supported generations of Victorians with compassion and respect. Our cemeteries provide a peaceful resting place for many of Melbourne's key historical figures, such as Dame Nellie Melba and John Fawkner. Our history is important to us, but we have also striven to adapt to changing community needs and expectations – to remain future ready.

GMCT's role has evolved from that of an infrastructure provider to an integral part of the community service system. We work hard to ensure our services are respectful and responsive to different cultural needs, values and beliefs. We now offer green and natural burial options, and play a more active role in community conversations about planning ahead. Increasingly, we are exploring the place of digital technologies and online memorialisation to support day-to-day operations and service delivery.

As community and religious needs evolve, our priority over the next five years will be to ensure we meet community infrastructure needs well into the future. This will require implementation of our land strategy out to 2021, and further horizons of 2031, 2041 and 2051, and developing the infrastructure of our on-site facilities and venues to support a diverse range of community expectations and needs. Master planning is a key feature of our 2016-21 strategic plan.

GMCT will continue to listen to our communities and explore new and innovative approaches to remembrance. We will balance innovation with our role as a custodian of history, and work actively to integrate history and heritage in planning for the future. Above all, our core focus is constant – providing exceptional remembrance services for generations of families.

**"I am calling to compliment your staff for their friendliness, kindness, help and assistance... [which] enabled a family to reunite and mingle with long lost friends and family."**

**- Customer compliment**



## WE HAVE ESTABLISHED STRONG FOUNDATIONS: NOW IS THE TIME TO STEP UP

GMCT's strategic plan for 2013-16 provided a three-year road map for transforming eight separate trusts into one. During this time, we successfully implemented initiatives that enhanced our operations and corporate governance frameworks. We have developed a land strategy, reviewed and reconfigured our structure and vital business functions, streamlined burial operations and processes, implemented a new technology platform, and strengthened our employee engagement and training. Importantly, we established a firm and dedicated focus on family care, and enhanced the role of GMCT as an integral community service provider.

We are proud of the GMCT team's hard work and commitment to our organisational values. Our strong culture has been built on this foundation and will be integral as we take the next step towards a future of excellent customer and stakeholder experience, industry leadership and community care.

## OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR 2016-2021

The next five years build on our strong history as a community service provider, the emerging strength of our operational processes and is set in a mood of excitement about what we can now achieve. We now aspire to establishing our role as a community and industry leader with even greater customer-centred service.

**"People step up and provide excellent service delivery. They focus on our families. Those families walk away and have had a positive experience."**

**- Rob, Regional Manager**

## ABOUT US

**A**t GMCT we believe in caring for your loved ones with dignity and compassion.

Each year, our staff assist over 11,000 families to plan and prepare for funeral, cremation, interment and memorial services. Across our sites, we provide a peaceful resting place for loved ones who have died and a meaningful place where the living can remember, celebrate and cherish family members or friends.

We respect all peoples, our heritage, our communities and the environment.

We offer a wide range of burial, cremation and mausoleum options, which allow Melbourne's diverse communities to make choices according to cultural traditions and customs, personal and religious preferences. We recognise that every journey is different and provide compassionate guidance and support to help you make decisions that are right for you.

In addition to the funeral services we provide, we commit to caring for your loved ones long into the future. Our perpetual maintenance fund ensures all of our cemeteries and memorial parks are maintained in perpetuity. We are committed to maintaining beautiful, restful and sustainable places that are also rich in history.

***Connecting generations of Victorians to people, places and memories***

### OUR VISION

Lasting memories, peaceful places

### OUR MISSION

We provide the final care for your loved ones with dignity and kindness. We respect all peoples, our heritage, our communities and the environment.

### OUR VALUES

We are committed to living our values:

- compassion
- respect
- sustainability
- integrity

**"To provide a service to the families in their time of need and make their experience as smooth as possible. It's rewarding at the end of the day."**

- Pania, Client Services

**"...sincere thanks to all the staff who assisted and were involved in the burial of [my] dear mother...[in particular] the courtesy and respect shown at the graveside by the burial staff of Keilor Cemetery."**

- Customer



## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We will focus on four strategic priorities to enable GMCT to step up and reach towards greater influence, relevance and success:

### Community connections

We will lead and nurture strong connections with the communities we serve

### Lasting stewardship

We are stewards of the community assets we care for now and in perpetuity

### Operational excellence

Our people will strive for excellence in everything we do, facilitated by innovative and effective technology, systems and processes

### Change ready agility

Our culture is brave, innovative and collaborative, and aligns with our corporate values and strategic goals

There are 12 strategies supporting our four priorities. Our annual plans will provide the mechanism through which we will action and realise this five-year strategic plan. Through these plans we will align, prioritise and measure our efforts and investment at each stage of our five-year journey.



## OUR KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Our key measures of success align to our four priority areas for 2016-2021. They will be the over-arching measures that will guide us to successful implementation of this strategic plan over the next five years. Our key measures of success are supported by strategic performance indicators and our annual planning process.

### Community connections

#### Customer satisfaction:

High quality customer experience and ease of interaction with GMCT

#### Digital service enhancement:

Digital processes that increase avenues for interaction and enhance service experience for customers

#### Community engagement:

Services respond to the evolving needs of our communities.

### Lasting stewardship

#### Strong sector leadership:

Support, guidance and advocacy on behalf of Class B cemeteries and the broader cemetery and funeral sector on industry issues and operations

#### Effective land and resource utilisation:

Ensure best use of assets and investments to position GMCT as future ready.

#### Remembrance and heritage reputation:

A reputation as a leading provider of remembrance services.

### Operational excellence

#### Sustainable revenue base:

Financially sustainable and able to meet our long term financial obligations

#### Cost performance:

Margins, revenue and control expenditure are optimised and drive financial accountability across the business - cost performance is at, or exceeds, industry benchmarks

#### Perpetual funding adequacy:

Adequate land and associated infrastructure is maintained and available to provide ongoing cemetery services to our communities

#### Work process productivity:

A continuous business process improvement culture ensures efficiency and effectiveness in every element of our operations

#### Workplace safety:

We live a culture of safety.

### Change ready agility

#### Workforce engagement:

The right people are in the right roles and actively engaged in what they are doing

#### Innovation profile:

Embed and nurture a culture of innovation and learning across the organisation

#### Information proficiency:

Information storage, management and sharing operates to benefit teams and clients.





## HOW WE WILL DELIVER: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We strive to be connected with and responsive to our communities and stakeholders. We are seeing increasing desire for personalised and customised services. This consumer directed philosophy needs to be reflected in our approach to service delivery across all parts of our business. This will involve use of appropriate technologies to inform and engage, and active efforts to foster and facilitate meaningful community connections. Our values will continue to underpin our engagement with families and communities.

***Our customer solutions will add significant value to our communities, industry and government through quality engagement with stakeholders and utilisation of digital technologies.***

Strategies	Over the next 5 years we will	Performance indicators
Embed a family and community oriented service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a family and community first strategy, to simplify the customer experience and provide the framework against which to track progress</li> <li>Deliver our community connections strategy, incorporating consumer insights, diversity and accessibility, and building strong community ties to support customer confidence in GMCT.</li> </ul>	<p>Improved customer (family) satisfaction results</p> <p>Improved community engagement results</p>
Enhance digital consumer connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement our digital strategy to grow our digital product offer, and respond to the needs of 24/7 digital consumers</li> <li>Transform GMCT into an e-commerce enabled business to enhance service experience and realise digital efficiencies.</li> </ul>	<p>Increased proportion of online transactions (sales, bookings, or enquiries)</p>
Build progressive community leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a community education outreach program to demystify industry perceptions, build community awareness of GMCT, and strengthen connections with our communities</li> <li>Develop a community leadership program incorporating annual projects and grants for community groups.</li> </ul>	<p>Increased site visitation</p> <p>Increase satisfaction with religious/culturally tailored services</p>

### Measures of success

Customer satisfaction

Digital service enhancement

Community engagement



**HOW WE WILL DELIVER:  
LASTING STEWARDSHIP**

Responsible long-term planning, and land and resource management is critical to our ability to deliver leading remembrance and recognition services for generations of families. Our planning decisions will continue to preserve and promote accessible history and heritage for our communities. At a sector level, we will aspire to provide proactive and commercially astute thought leadership that represents our sector’s interests and influences government decision making.

*Our resources will be utilised responsibly and sustainably through proactive planning and management, promoting our critical role as custodians of heritage. We will be recognised for our leadership as public policy and industry influencers.*

Strategies	Over the next 5 years we will	Performance indicators
Sustainable resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enact the land strategy 2016</li> <li>Implement the asset management accountability framework</li> <li>Implement a future-focused sustainability strategy.</li> </ul>	Activated land and resource strategies Improved asset management results Improved sustainability indicators
Custodians of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a heritage and history strategy to realise our aspiration for internationally leading remembrance and memorialisation, focused on heritage and history and incorporating new innovations for families</li> <li>Develop an online family history and heritage hub, enabling and encouraging families and communities to understand cemetery history and heritage.</li> </ul>	Online utilisation of family history and heritage resources Level of online memorialisation innovation
Influential sector leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively advocate for the sector at all levels and with key stakeholders, providing proactive thought leadership and positioning as a key influencer</li> <li>Visibly demonstrate policy and industry leadership through our communications, public interface and business partnerships, working to ensure government and industry policy positively responds to future need</li> <li>Operate as valued partner to Class B cemetery operators.</li> </ul>	Stakeholder recognition of GMCT as a sector policy leader Class B operators recognise GMCT as a valued and trusted partner

Measures of success

Effective land and resource utilisation

Remembrance and heritage reputation

Strong sector leadership



## HOW WE WILL DELIVER: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Operational excellence provides the foundation for delivery of innovative family and community focused products and services. Best practice and results driven governance processes will facilitate excellence and productivity. We will invest in our people to attract talent and develop future leaders. By fostering strong strategic partnerships with key stakeholders we will maximise our commercial results, and collectively enhance the customer experience.

*Our people will strive for excellence in all that we do, facilitated through innovative and effective technologies, equipment and processes.*

### Measures of success

Sustain revenue base

Cost performance

Perpetual funding adequacy

Work process productivity

Workplace safety



Strategies	Over the next 5 years we will	Performance indicators
Process excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a retail strategy for key point of sale locations which supports retail goals and is accessible to our diverse communities</li> <li>Undertake business process re-engineering aiming for simplification in all we do, underpinned by a SMART framework</li> <li>Continue to simplify our pricing structure to facilitate improved customer interaction and review our pricing to ensure long term financial sustainability is maintained.</li> </ul>	<p>Increased transactions (bookings, sales, burials) per FTE</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction results</p> <p>Staff satisfaction with key business processes</p> <p>Improvement in financial measures and performance</p> <p>Improved performance against OH&amp;S standards</p>
Aligned workforce capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop our people into a technologically savvy workforce, that delivers our goals/objectives within a paperless office, and aligns with our digital strategy</li> <li>Initiate a workforce capability framework that supports development of a workforce confident in their skills and capabilities</li> <li>Foster a learning organisation culture, that supports staff engagement and underpins our product and service delivery.</li> </ul>	<p>Revenue growth and costs approximate benchmark sector standards</p> <p>Maintain annual staff retention rate of 90%</p> <p>Increased workforce availability</p> <p>Increase in role flexibility within GMCT</p>
Blended service partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a business to business strategic partnership pathway that supports blended service partnerships with funeral directors, stonemasons, Class Bs and other key industry partners. This cohesion will enhance the end customer experience.</li> </ul>	<p>Enhanced profile and influence with funeral directors and other industries</p> <p>Improved stakeholder satisfaction (funeral directors)</p> <p>Increased proportion of online self-serve interactions with key stakeholders</p>

**HOW WE WILL DELIVER:  
CHANGE READY AGILITY**

We will develop a workforce that is supported and informed to make quality decisions aligned to their role and GMCT’s goals. Over the next five years we will face many challenges, but these also present opportunities to realise our aspirational goals. Our team will work within a culture of continuous improvement, engaging in a constant effort to improve services, products and processes. We will strive to operate in an ongoing cycle of positive change and employee involvement, and be energised and excited to respond to future changes.

*We will foster a culture that is proactive, innovative and collaborative, and aligns with our corporate values and strategic goals.*

Strategies	Over the next 5 years we will	Performance indicators
Empowered, collaborative and a ‘can-do’ workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a change ready workforce strategy to ensure our staff have the ‘right’ attitudes, expertise, skills and experience, and reflect the rich diversity of our communities and that promotes inclusion and diversity as a key driver of our innovation agenda</li> <li>Implement a workforce strategy, incorporating a blueprint for career and performance development that supports recruitment, retention and staff growth.</li> </ul>	<p>Increased staff engagement</p> <p>Workforce performance meets or exceeds similar industries</p>
Integrated knowledge management culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform our electronic records information system and related systems into an integrated enterprise knowledge management bank, improving workplace efficiency and facilitating positive customer experiences</li> <li>Deploy digital collaboration platforms to enable our teams to share insights more effectively across sites, to drive innovation and achieve benefits across the whole network.</li> </ul>	<p>Accessibility of key business knowledge for workforce</p> <p>Staff satisfaction with knowledge management</p>
Innovation through learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a cultural change program that supports collaborative learning and stimulates innovative “can-do” thinking and actions in our people</li> <li>Initiate a staff profiling project to match role positions to personality attributes – driving more effective recruitment and setting up staff for success</li> <li>Implement a reward and recognition program that values staff contributions and supports career progression within and beyond GMCT</li> <li>Embed a product innovation program (PIP) through development of alternative and/or innovative commercial products.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff satisfaction with learning and development opportunities</p> <p>Maintenance of a viable innovation portfolio</p>

Measures of success

Workforce engagement

Innovation profile

Information proficiency





## OUR COMMUNITIES

GMCT serves a diverse community. Every year, we welcome more than one million visitors to our sites, and support over 12 thousand families with a range of religious, cultural and demographic expectations and needs. GMCT is committed to ensuring our cemeteries remain relevant to local communities. We achieve this by working closely with Melbourne's diverse cultural, religious, demographic and special interest groups.

Our cemeteries and memorial parks are invaluable community assets, providing local residents with stunning public parks. As guardians of history and heritage, we share, celebrate and hold the stories of those laid to rest, who remain in our care, in perpetuity.

An integral part of GMCT's community engagement program is our community advisory committee – a group of committed volunteers who represent the wider community and importantly, assist GMCT in identifying and understanding the needs and preferences of the communities we serve. They ensure our actions, initiatives and decisions are informed by community input and contribute invaluable local knowledge, such as religious, cultural and heritage perspectives.

**"The efforts of the staff...were outstanding and they could not have been more caring or professional – they are to be commended for their energy and attention to detail."**

**- Victorian Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia**



**“It’s a good opportunity to learn about different people and cultures; understanding the needs of different cultures and providing a dignified service to those communities.”**

**- Steve, Client Services**

## OUR PROFILE IS CONTINUALLY EVOLVING

Our profile is continually evolving in response to the needs of our communities.

## OUR GOVERNANCE

GMCT is classified as a Class A Cemetery Trust under the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003* (the Act). We are responsible to the Minister for Health, and governed by trust members appointed by the government.

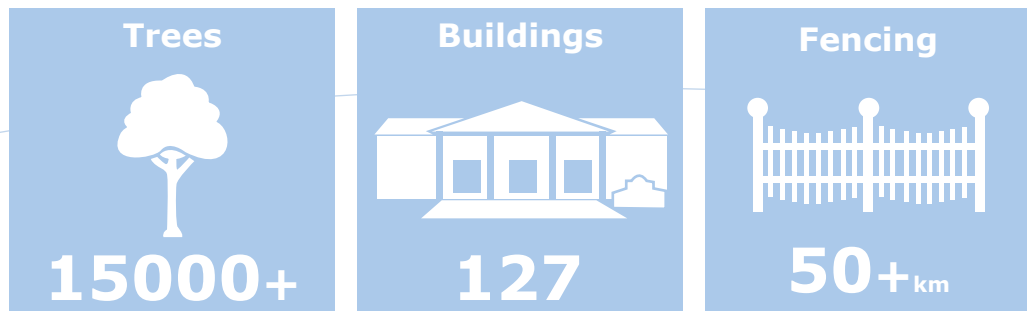
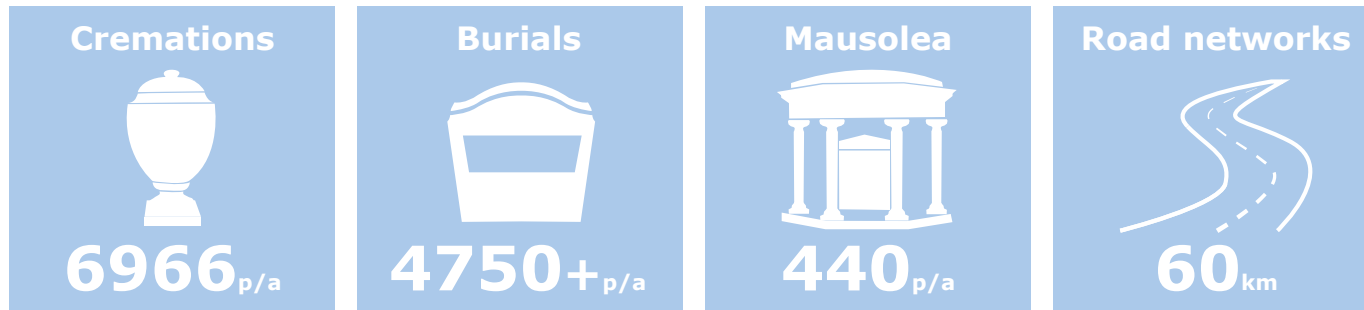
Trust members are accountable for the good governance of the corporation, including:

- setting the strategic objectives of the trust
- risk management
- determining all material policies governing operations
- reviewing the progress and performance of the trust in meeting its strategic objectives.

In consultation with the trust, members participate in a number of trust committees. These committees provide review or advisory services to help execute trust responsibilities. The current trust committees are:

- audit and risk management committee
- community advisory committee
- executive performance and remuneration committee
- finance and investment committee.

## GMCT AT A GLANCE: IN 2016



## AT A GLANCE: TOWARDS 2021

Towards 2021, GMCT as an organisation will continue to evolve. The impact of an ageing population indicates demand for products and services will continue to grow, and we need to ensure we have the resources to respond, both in terms of staff and infrastructure. We know we need more diversity in our staff profile, both in terms of gender and cultural mix, to provide exemplary customer service and to adequately meet the needs of our communities. Changing trends and digital memorialisation will impact our traditional service offer, and we need to have the internal capability to respond to these trends.

## OUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

GMCT works with a number of stakeholders across the funeral and cemetery sector, local communities and government. We greatly value these relationships and the positive impact they have on our business and service delivery.



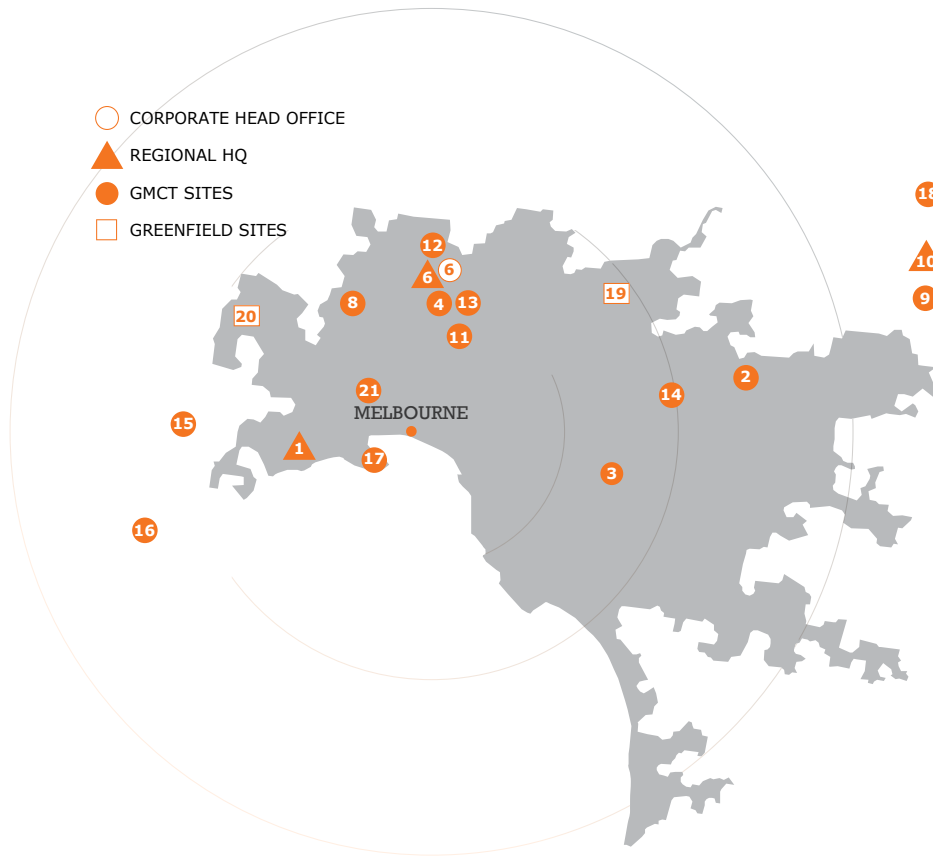


## OUR CEMETERIES - THE LIFECYCLE

Cemeteries within Victoria are considered to operate within five distinct stages, often described as a cemetery's lifecycle. GMCT manages 21 sites allocated for cemetery use, with many sites considered to be reaching peak capacity or to have entered a level of perpetual maintenance.



## OUR CEMETERIES AND MEMORIAL PARKS



Site	Region	Land ha	Stage in lifecycle
1	West	53.3	Active
8	West	14	Active
15	West	1.6	Perpetual
16	West	5.6	Active-Transitional
17	West	11.4	Active-Transitional
20	West	128.6	Establishment
21	West	10.9	Transitional-Perpetual
4	North	10.3	Transitional-Perpetual
6	North	113	Active
11	North	0.4	Perpetual
12	North	94.6	Establishment-Active
13	North	9.5	Active
19	North	83.2	Establishment
2	East	3.3	Active-Transitional
3	East	6	Transitional
5	East	2	Active-Transitional
7	East	3.8	Active-Transitional
9	East	4.5	Transitional-Perpetual
10	East	36.4	Active
14	East	3.9	Transitional-Perpetual
18	East	2	Active-Transitional



## OUR SECTOR IS MATURE BUT EVOLVING

Trends in GMCT's external environment greatly influence the way we conduct our business. These include:

### Changing consumer preferences

Industry demand is influenced by consumer preferences. Increasingly, consumer preferences for products and services are becoming more bespoke. GMCT will work to provide more tailored services based on a better understanding of our customers and strengthened partnering with the funeral industry.

### Rapid growth in social media and use of technology

The impact of social media and technology on our business is increasingly aligned with our aim to be future ready. GMCT is responding to better leverage these tools to improve communication, and drive effectiveness and efficiency in our processes. Through this strategy we will invest in a more innovative, digital-savvy workforce.

### A more corporatised funeral sector

The funeral sector is changing and becoming more competitive. To respond, GMCT is increasing our emphasis on family care, and delivering an excellent customer and stakeholder experience. We will also focus on building awareness of GMCT as a community partner and leading provider of remembrance and memorialisation services, and combating negative industry perceptions.

### Increasing financial pressure

Decreasing financial margins are putting pressure on long term financial sustainability. GMCT will explore innovative models of service delivery and implement processes to reduce costs and improve productivity to ensure we remain a viable organisation into the future.

### Attraction and retention of quality staff

There is an increasingly competitive environment for high quality and skilled staff. GMCT is continually looking for ways to improve employee engagement and satisfaction to support the success of our people within GMCT.





**The Greater Metropolitan  
Cemeteries Trust**

Lasting memories, peaceful places.

## **The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust**

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