PRESTON CEMETERY

900 PLENTY ROAD, BUNDOORA, VIC 3083





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 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). 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. 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

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

Preston Cemetery is situated on the east side of Plenty Road, north of the Darebin Creek, and includes a small cemetery dating back to 1845 which was called Strathallan Cemetery or Darebin Creek cemetery. The current cemetery is 9.5 hectares acres in size. The older sections of the cemetery are heavily monumental in style with few trees or plantings and feature mostly Anglo European family names. The massive Mausoleum and elaborate more modern graves, in contrast, indicate a large post war Italian influence in the Darebin community. It has been in continuous use since 1845, making it one of the state's earliest cemeteries.

The original Strathallan Cemetery was situated on land held by one of the first settlers, the McLean family from the island of Coll, Scotland, and several family members were buried there. 12 The family donated one acre of land from their estate, already holding many graves of local people, to be used as a cemetery for local pioneers in 1864. 13 The first Trustees for Strathallan Cemetery were local settlers: Jonathon Boadle, John Cooper, William Emms, Alexander Brock and Malcolm McLean. 14

The original Strathallan Cemetery section holds the graves of approx. 1,000 local pioneers. ¹⁵ McLeans later sold their holding to the government to establish Mont Park Mental Hospital. ¹⁶ The Trustees managed the cemetery, which had several plots of land resumed from the grounds of Mont Park over the years to enlarge its capacity, until it was handed over the Town of Preston Council in 1922. ¹⁷

City of Preston requested, and received, a larger parcel of land from the Mont Park grounds in 1925. The Trustees agreed on a new site layout which had roads radiating out from the central gates, leaving the old part of the cemetery untouched. Throughout 1930, the planning work for the site develops the radial plan for the new cemetery section pegging out some 4,800 grave sites. The Cemetery reopened as Preston General Cemetery on 1 January 1931 with nearly 5,000 sites available. Work continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s developing the site to cater for demand. The site of the site o

The widening of Plenty Road in 1961, and again in 1982, caused the loss of land and forced the re building of fences, gates, gatehouses and car parks.²¹ Reflecting the change in makeup of the community towards a growing number of post war Italian families in the area the Trustees, the City of Preston, began to plan for a Mausoleum from the 1970s onwards.²² The first stage opened in 1996 and was completed in 2011.²³ In 2015, there was a new release of 600 sites for monumental graves, the first new offering for many years.²⁴



FUNCTIONS:

INTERNMENT, ENTOMBMENTS, MEMORIALISATION AND COMMEMORATION, CHAPEL SERVICES

Preston General Cemetery contains the graves of 33 casualties of 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
- 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

Preston Cemetery Timeline

- 1830s McLean family, brothers Allen, Donald and Malcolm, arrived from the Isle of Coll off the west coast of Scotland possibly via Tasmania and/or New Zealand.²⁵ Allan and Malcolm farm together at Strathallan in the Darebin Creek area
- 1837 Surveyor Robert Hoddle spent some months from June to October 1827 laying out the foundations for the parish of Jika Jika which included all the areas of Preston and Northcote as well as other areas and noted the McLean house was already in situ²⁶
- 1838 Neil Campbell bought land, adjacent to the McLean's family holding, which included the site of the later cemetery at sale of Crown Land on 12 September 1838.²⁷ He bought the 1035 acres of Keelbundoora 10 at 15 shillings an acre for a total of 776 pounds 5 shillings.²⁸
- 1838 The Strathallan property was managed by Neil McLean, son of Allan McLean, who died in 1844²⁹
- 1842 December Neil Campbell sold land to Malcolm McLean (part of which became Mont Park and LaTrobe University and this land remained on five to seven years leases until the 1880 except for one portion, being a deed of gift for a public cemetery (Strathallan Cemetery) which was made in December 1864³⁰
- 1844 4 November 1844 death of Allan McLean (age 80), the elder of the family and the earliest recorded burial³¹
- The burial of Mrs Hannah McLean, (wife of Allan McLean) on 9 February 1846 aged 73 years³²
- 1847 William Howe, the government surveyor, surveyed the road to Whittlesea (Plenty Road) and noted the cottage of Neil McLean on the west side of the Whittlesea Road and a chapel on the area of the small burial ground by now owned by the McLean family on the east hand side of the road³³
- 1850 Australian Colonies Government Act separated Victoria from the colony of New South Wales which led to the Victorian Acts of Parliament regulating boroughs and town as well as roads³⁴
- 1854 Act passed which determined that land set aside for cemeteries would be controlled by Trustees or local government³⁵
- 1857 Death Notice in The Argus recorded the death of Elizabeth, aged 5 years, youngest child of Malcolm McLean of Strathallan, Darebin Creek, in Edinburgh on the 6 June 1857³⁶
- 1860 A later death notice (1874) records the death at 9 Minerva St Glasgow, the death of Malcolm McLean merchant, only surviving brother of Mrs Dr Gibson of Flemington³⁷

- 1860 At least 3 burials had taken place, Ann Watts aged 86 died 23 January 1860; Sally Chapman aged 36 died 13 December 1860 and James Partington aged 9 died 21 December 1860³⁸
- 1864 December Malcolm McLean donated an acre of land on the north eastern side of the present cemetery for a burial ground for early pioneers which later held approx. 1,000 pioneers and their descendants, and this land presumably held the remains of Allen McLean and family³⁹
- 1864 First Trustees for Strathallan Cemetery were appointed:
 Jonathon Boadle, John Cooper, William Ems, Alexander
 Brock and Malcolm McLean⁴⁰
- 1867 Trustees seek help from Board of Land and Works, after noting the cemetery would fall under the Cemeteries Act, to help the Trustees gain funding for necessary works to the site and this would primarily be fencing of the 1 acre cemetery⁴¹
- 1870 26 August Epping, Merriang, Whittlesea, Morang and Woodstock District Roads Boards amalgamated into Shire of Darebin⁴²
- 1871 23 June Shire of Darebin was divided into 6 ridings, Northcote, Preston, Gowerville, Moran, Epping and Woodstock but the area was too large to be managed as such⁴³
- 1871 September Shire of Jika created effectively giving Preston and Northcote local government⁴⁴
- 1883 Northcote riding separated from Shire of Jika and became Borough of Northcote⁴⁵
- 1885 Shire of Preston established on 11 September⁴⁶
- 1909 Land is purchased by Government for new Insane Hospitals including the former Strathallan and Mont Park Estates and Mont Park Mental Hospital was established next door to the Strathallan Cemetery⁴⁷
- 1911 Strathallan Cemetery Trustees applied for a 2 acre extension of land to extend the cemetery up to Plenty Road⁴⁸
- 1915 Public Health Department raised concerns about suitability of land around Strathallan Cemetery for burials⁴⁹
- 1917 March a 2 acre extension to the original cemetery was gazetted as reserve for burials, land taken from adjoining Mont Park Hospital grounds⁵⁰
- 1917 Trustees began discussions with Preston Council to establish a public cemetery for the northern suburbs, as Coburg cemetery was almost full, on the site of the Strathallan Cemetery⁵¹
- 1917 Master of Lunacy and Chief Secretary took an interest in burials and Secretary of the Trustees agreed that all burials of inmates from Mont Park would be made free of charge⁵²



- 1922 22 March Preston became a Borough⁵³
- 1922 24 May Two months later Preston became a Town of $11,000 \text{ people}^{54}$
- 1922 Preston Town Council took over management of Strathallan Cemetery and acquired some adjoining land⁵⁵
- 1922 Preston Town Council began to negotiate for a much larger extension to Strathallan Cemetery⁵⁶
- 1924 Preston Town Council sent a deputation to the Chief Secretary seeking extra land from the Mont Park grounds to extend the cemetery⁵⁷
- 1926 14 July Preston became a City⁵⁸
- 1926 Gazettal of a large parcel of land, 19 acres 1 rood, from the grounds of Mont Park for an extension to the cemetery and at this point it was noticed the original cemetery had never been gazetted⁵⁹
- 1927 Differences of opinion arise between City of Preston and Dept. of Health over the suitability of the site for a cemetery. City of Preston engineering section had shafts sunk and samples taken and decided site is suitable. Mr WH Clowes from the Dept. of Health Inspectorate believed the site was unsuitable but has common ground with Council in that the lowest part of the site was agreed by Council and DoH to be most unsuitable 60
- 1928 Gazettal of original cemetery land which had never been officially gazetted as such plus the additional land made the entire cemetery 23 acres 1 rood bounded by Plenty Road, Darebin Creek and the Mont Park Hospital grounds⁶¹
- 1928 City of Preston gazetted as Trustees on 7 November officially taking over administration of Strathallan Cemetery under the Cemeteries Act 1915⁶²
- 1930 New Regulations issued by City of Preston for burials under the new Cemeteries Act (1928)⁶³
- 1930 Trustees agreed on a new site layout and work commenced on this plan which had road radiating out from the central gates leaving the old part of the cemetery untouched.

 Throughout 1930 the planning work for the site developed the radial plan for the new cemetery section and pegged out some 4,800 grave sites⁶⁴
- 1931 Cemetery reopened as Preston General Cemetery on 1 January.1931 with nearly 5,000 sites available and work continued on the remaining layout⁶⁵
- 1931 Meeting was held between the City of Preston Mayor and Gordon Webber MLA over Council's expenditure and projected costs for setting up the cemetery and the need for financial assistance to carry out all the necessary works. The total costs (projected and reimbursable) was already £8,029 and included purchase of the timber cottage already on the site⁶⁶

- 1931 Fire at Preston Council in the electricity department may have destroyed documentation relating to Preston Council's administration of Preston Cemetery although this seems unlikely⁶⁷
- 1931 Anecdotal evidence has always suggested that a bushfire at Preston Cemetery burnt the Strathallan Chapel and destroyed pre 1931 burial records but no evidence in any file suggests a chapel or other building similar was on the site at that time or had been burnt down although the cemetery records of burials prior to 1931 does not exist⁶⁸
- 1931 New burial records commenced⁶⁹
- 1933 March Trustees borrowed 4,000 pounds for improvements at cemetery⁷⁰
- 1933 August Tenders called for new entrance gates and brick lodge at Strathallan Cemetery⁷¹
- 1934 Preston Cemetery (now referring to the whole site) became Preston General Cemetery⁷²
- 1934 March Cemetery, with new Lodge, officially reopened as Preston General Cemetery by Councillor Zwar, a prominent businessman and politician⁷³
- 1948 Discussion and consultation occurred over the possible construction of a crematorium at Preston, opposed by both Springvale Cemetery and Fawkner Cemetery as the only crematorium operators, as it would introduce competition. Eventually this proposal was dropped⁷⁴
- 1961 Land along Plenty Road frontage was resumed to allow for Plenty Road to be widened which meant the removal of fences and gates and required the caretaker's cottage to be shifted and repaired, although costs were recovered from the Roads Board⁷⁵
- 1969 Decision was made to close the denomination sections and draw up new plans for the site 76
- 1970 Discussions began on the construction of a Columbarium (Mausoleum) for the site to cater for the growing local Italian community⁷⁷
- 1982 Commencement of further negotiations for more land to be resumed to widen Plenty Road to allow an extension of the tram service past the cemetery to facilitate transport to LaTrobe University with costs to be covered by the Tramways Department. This necessitated further work to the site including new fencing, new gatehouse and toilets and kiosk and the relocation of carpark⁷⁸
- 1994 Government approved the construction of Mausoleum in Victoria⁷⁹
- 1996 First stage of Preston Mausoleum completed with 768 crypt spaces⁸⁰

1999	Stage 2 of Preston Mausoleum completed which added 3,048 crypt spaces and a Chapel ⁸¹ Lot 4 2002/PP228556 added to southern boundary which was purchased from LaTrobe University and is used for	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 ⁹⁵
2004	vehicular access and maintenance works ⁸² 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 ⁸³	2013	May 2013 La Trobe University Mont Park Working Group began work to investigate the possible internment of former Mont Park Residents within an area of land outside the original Strathallan Cemetery but no remains were located?6
2005	Findings of Auditor General's Review were reported to Parliament in May 2005 ⁸⁴	2015	New release of 600 sites for monumental graves ⁹⁷
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 ⁸⁵	2015	New Regulations to the Cemetery and Crematoria Act released ⁹⁸
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 ⁸⁶		ston Cemetery Name List
		1844	Darebin Creek Cemetery ⁹⁹
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 ⁸⁷	1846	Darebin Creek Cemetery ¹⁰⁰
		1860	McLeans Cemetery ¹⁰¹
		1861	Darebin Creek Cemetery ¹⁰²
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	1863	McLean's Cemetery Darebin Creek ¹⁰³
		1864	Strathallan Cemetery ¹⁰⁴
		1868	McLean's Cemetery, Darebin Creek ¹⁰⁵
	Wyndham ⁸⁸	1928	Strathallan Cemetery cited in Gazette when City of Preston become Trustees ¹⁰⁶
2010	16 February Governor in Council allocates the property, rights and responsibilities of the Preston Cemetery Trust to Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust ⁸⁹	1930	Preston (Strathallan) Cemetery Gazetted as established and opened ¹⁰⁷
2010	1 March -first meeting of the Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust ⁹⁰	1930	Strathallan Cemetery – City of Preston issues new regulations ¹⁰⁸
2011	Government releases a discussion paper "Victoria's Cemeteries and Crematoria: Options for Legislative Change ⁹¹	1931	Preston General Cemetery - 1 January opening of Preston General Cemetery ¹⁰⁹
2011	Third stage of the development of the Preston Mausoleum completed giving a three level structure with below ground internment space 92	2010	Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Preston Cemetery ¹¹⁰
		2015	Preston General Cemetery ¹¹¹
2012	April - Blessing of the new wing of the Preston Mausoleum by Archbishop Hart, the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne ⁹³	2015	Preston Public Cemetery ¹¹²
		2015	Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Preston Cemetery ¹¹³
2012	Preston Mausoleum at this stage holds 8,216 individual crypts making this the largest Mausoleum in the southern hemisphere ⁹⁴		,



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ARCHIVES

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Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust Annual Reports 2010 – 2015

Preston Public Cemetery Annual Report, 2009-2010

Burial Register beginning 17 January, 1931 (previous destroyed by fire)

Register of memorial inscriptions 27 December 1851 – 1982 (compiled by GSV/AIGS in 1987)

ARCHIVES - HEALTH DEPARTMENT ARCHIVE

Files headed Preston Cemetery, var including correspondence and Annual Reports to the Dept. of Health

Strathallan Cemetery historical file, Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation Unit, Department Of Health Victoria

Preston Council 89/203 City of Preston Council Central Records file, Preston General Cemetery 2/84-1/90

ARCHIVES - PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE: SELECTED RELEVANT MUNICIPAL RECORDS

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PROV, VA 4204, VPRS 3158/P000/71, 01/10/1930 – 18/12/31, Criminal Record Book, 2 February 1931 (re Council fire)

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PROV, VPRS 11104/1/13, Preston Council Minutes, Letter received from Charles Roe re blasting at cemetery, 16 December, 1929; letter, Town Clerk,

PROV, VA2864 VPRS 7471/P1000/2, Outward Letter Book, Lunacy Department

Maps and Plans

City of Darebin (Figure 1, 2 & 3) State Library of Victoria:

Map of land of Neil Campbell bounded by Darebin Creek, SLV (Figure 15)

Extract from plan of the surveyed line of Whittlesea Road where it crosses Darebin Creek, 1847, SLV

Map showing the establishment of the cemetery, CPO Plan redrawn 1950, SLV (Figure 18) Cemetery reserves, SLV

Location of Burials, Mont Park Hospital Reserve, 1910-1940, Latrobe University, 2014 (Figure 17)

Newspapers, Reports and Articles

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The Age 1854-

Government Gazettes

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

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Resources, last updated 2015, published by The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, http://www.gmct.com.au/resources/

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FOOTNOTES

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- 2 Cemeteries Act 1944, Act No. 5025
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- 4 Auditor General Victoria, Results of Special Reviews and Other Investigations, Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Trust, Review of Expenditure and Related Matters, May 2005
- 5 Auditor General, *Review of Major Public Cemeteries*, June 2006
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- 7 See Amendments to the Cemetery and Crematoria Act, 2003
- 8 Review of the Government and Management of Class A Cemetery Trusts, May 2013
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- 20 Public Records Office of Victoria: Preston Cemetery: Department of Health File (incorporating material from Office of Crown Lands and Survey) 1850s –, File CEM 575
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- 23 Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust Annual Report, 2011-2012, p. 6
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