

10.4. Memorial Plaques in Open Space Policy

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ENDORSED BY	Peter Massey, Acting Director Open Space and Environmental Services
ATTACHMENTS	1. Memorials in Public Open Space Policy [10.4.1 - 3 pages]
CSP LINK	1. Our Living Environment 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that applications for memorials within Public Open Space are managed on a consistent basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- In the past, Council provided the opportunity for individuals and groups wishing to commemorate a loved one by donating a seat with a plaque. The seat was required to meet Council’s design style manual and could only replace an existing seat. Council would then install the new seat at no cost.
- With requests increasing, there is an opportunity for the requests to be controlled through policy to ensure that Council can manage it on a consistent and transparent basis. The main objectives of this policy are to:
 - provide Council with a consistent approach to dealing with requests for memorials within Council open space.
 - establish criterion to assess and respond to requests by individuals and groups for the recognition of appropriate community members; and
 - define conditions under which Council will accept requests for memorials.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT** the draft Memorials in Open Space Policy be endorsed for public exhibition for a minimum period of 42 days.
- 2. THAT** a further report be provided to Council following the conclusion of the public exhibition period for the purpose of considering any submissions received and adopting the Memorials in Open Space Policy.

Background

North Sydney Council receives approximately 20 requests per annum from individuals and groups wishing to commemorate a loved one and/or respected person(s) by donating park furniture (usually a seat) with an attached memorial plaque for one of North Sydney's parks or reserves.

The decision to implement a policy is due to the number of requests for memorial seats being received. The cost of the seat and plaque (approximately \$1,500) initially deterred most people; however recently this has not been an issue, with most people happy to proceed despite the expense.

The related work has increasingly become an administrative burden and it is believed that a modified approach would be advantageous.

Report

The attached draft policy seeks to move away from a donation of park furniture and associated plaques to the planting of a tree, to align to the Council goal of increased tree canopy, and to reflect a more sustainable approach.

There are currently no eligibility criteria applicable other than the costs to supply the memorial.

The main objectives of the policy are to:

- a. provide Council with a consistent approach to dealing with requests for memorials within Council open space;
- b. establish criteria to assess and respond to requests by individuals and groups for the recognition of appropriate community members; and
- c. define conditions under which Council will accept requests for memorials.

The provisions (section 4) of the policy outline the details around the requirements, eligibility, and processes to follow when Council receives requests to install a memorial.

There would be a requirement to develop a Memorial in Open Space application form as part of this process, currently in draft form. This would be finalised if the policy is adopted by Council following community consultation.

Council has the following options in relation to this matter:

1. Take no action and continue with the current arrangement
2. The recommended option
3. Remove any form of memorial requests from the community.

These options are assessed in the table on the next page.

Option	Finance/Resourcing	Risk/Opportunity	Consultation
1.	- Cost of seat borne by applicant - Cost of installation borne by Council - Staff resources required to liaise with applicant. Resources required for furniture/plaque maintenance.	- Vast majority of popular seat/benches become memorials. -Opportunity for Council to save money in the cost of replacement seats.	No community consultation necessary.
2.	- No financial expense associated with the purchase of the tree. - Small amount of staff resources required to identify tree location and liaise with applicant	- Availability of tree planting locations limited and subject to negotiation with applicant. - Ability to control number of memorials across Council's open space. -Opportunity to increase Council's tree canopy. -More sustainable approach to memorials.	Public exhibition for 42 days as per Council policy and the opportunity for feedback to inform the policy as reported back to Council.
3.	No financial implications	- Community dissatisfaction if no opportunity to remember loved ones via a memorial.	No community consultation necessary.

Option 2, is recommended for the following reasons:

- Minimal requirements in resourcing;
- The control of the number of memorials across North Sydney open space; and
- Consultation process will be as per Council Policy with feedback considered in a further report to Council.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

Financial/Resource Implications

Financial implications are minimal and would be covered through Council's existing tree recurrent budget. Resourcing would only be a small amount of Council staff's time and would be covered through Council's existing recurrent budget.



DRAFT MEMORIALS IN OPEN SPACE POLICY

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Policy Owner: Director City Services and Assets

Category: Operational

Direction: 1. Our Living Environment

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1. North Sydney Council receives numerous requests from individuals and groups wishing to commemorate a loved one and respected person/persons through a memorial within one of North Sydney's open space locations.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that applications for memorials are determined and managed on a consistent basis.
- 1.3. The main objectives of this policy are to:
 - a) provide Council with a consistent approach to dealing with requests for memorials in within open space.
 - b) establish criterion to assess and respond to requests for a memorial by individuals and groups for the recognition of appropriate community members; and
 - c) define conditions under which Council will accept requests for memorials.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1. This Policy applies to all open space under the ownership or care and control of Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. Memorial - an object established in memory of a person e.g., memorial tree.

4. PROVISIONS

- 4.1. Approvals for a memorial may be granted by the following Council staff with reference to the criteria set out in the following policy procedure. This procedure may be altered by the General Manager.
 - a) Director City Services and Assets
 - b) Manager Parks and Reserves

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- c) Council Historian
- d) Council resolution

- 4.2. A request will be considered where a person is deceased and:
- a) has a recognised historical link with the locality of North Sydney.
 - b) is generally acknowledged as having made a significant contribution to the social, economic, sporting and/or cultural development of the community of North Sydney; and
 - c) is of good repute.
- 4.3. Council will only consider the donation of a tree (excluding a plaque) as a memorial. The location of the proposed planting will be in line with existing Tree management policies and be approved at the discretion of Council. No other type of memorial e.g., park furniture or standalone plaque will be considered.
- 4.4. Applications must be made via the *Memorials Application Form*. Applications must include a supporting statement for the nominee detailing how the nominee adheres to the criteria outlined in this policy.
- 4.5. Memorial trees will be of a required species and size that suits the proposed location and be determined by Council.
- 4.6. Consideration will be given to relevant Policies, Plans of Management, Masterplans, capital works programs, the safety of park users, protection of the natural environment, and ensuring the donation meets with general community expectations for the area, including due consideration of any indigenous connection with the site.
- 4.7 The applicant is required to meet all costs associated with the purchase and installation of the memorial.
- 4.8 The memorial tree will be subject to the same level of maintenance as other trees located within open space. The tree will remain in place for as long as it meets the useful life expectancy (ULE) as covered by Section 16 Tree and Vegetation Management of the North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1. Council's Manager Parks and Reserves is responsible for the implementation of this Policy and is the contact person for enquiries regarding memorials

6. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION

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The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies and documents:

- Urban Forest Strategy
- Street Tree Strategy
- Section 16 Tree and Vegetation Management of the North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013
- Relevant Plan/s of Management or Masterplans (as applicable)

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	[insert date]	Council	[insert min. no.]	2024/25

 Re-adopted by Council [insert date]