



The Greater Metropolitan
Cemeteries Trust

Lasting memories, peaceful places.

Strategic Plan 2019-2022

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The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust
Fawkner Memorial Park, 1187 Sydney Road Fawkner, Victoria 3060
PO Box 42 Fawkner, Victoria 3060
☎ 1300 022 298 🌐 www.gmct.com.au
📠 03 9355 3111 ✉ enquiries@gmct.com.au
Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust ABN 89 704 536 022



Introduction

Established by the Victorian Government in 2010, The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) is a community-focused organisation operating 19 cemeteries and memorial parks in Melbourne's metropolitan region.

GMCT is accountable to the state government and to the people of Victoria. We are therefore pleased to share with you our strategic vision and roadmap for 2019-2022.

The role we play in our communities is fundamental: providing front-line care for those who have lost a loved one, and looking after those they have lost. Our services provide comfort and closure to families and individuals in their times of need, and our cemeteries provide peaceful places for commemoration and reflection.

Situated in the north, east and west of Melbourne, GMCT cemeteries account for more than 650 hectares of public space. As our population grows and Melbourne's urban footprint expands, these open spaces will be maintained as important community assets for generations to come.

As the architects of these special places, it is vital for us to reflect our city's rich cultural diversity and support the customs, traditions and funerary practices of its people. Our dedicated staff work hand-in-hand with partner organisations and community groups to ensure the sustainability and longevity of these core cultural practices.

Our public cemeteries are archives of lives lived, and we are the committed custodians of the history and heritage they represent. Although our work is firmly rooted in the cultural history of our city, we also look forward to a future that empowers all Victorians to make informed end-of-life decisions, and that provides new and sustainable ways to commemorate our loved ones.

Our cemeteries and memorial parks have been here for generations; we're here for our communities now, whenever they need us; and we're planning ahead to ensure our cemeteries and memorial parks will be preserved for generations to come.

This strategic plan reflects the goals we have set to ensure we honour and embrace our multicultural city's history and heritage, serve the communities who need us now, and plan ahead for memorial parks that will meet the changing needs of future Victorians.

Our strategic plan has been informed by ongoing consultation with our communities, visitors, GMCT staff, members of the funeral industry, cultural, religious and special interest groups, members of our community advisory committee, local residents and local and state government.

Building on our history

The formation of GMCT in 2010 brought together eight existing cemetery trusts responsible for hundreds of years of collective history and cultural heritage.

We are responsible for the care and maintenance of 19 cemeteries and memorial parks 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. GMCT is proud to carry forward the traditions that have developed across these unique sites, and to provide generations of Victorians with compassionate service and clear guidance during their times of need. Our cemeteries provide peaceful resting places for many of Melbourne's prominent historical figures, including Dame Nellie Melba and her father, David Mitchell. Our city's history is important to us, but we also strive to adapt to changing community needs as Melbourne continues to rapidly grow and change.

GMCT plays an integral role in the wider community services system. We work hard to ensure the services we provide are responsive to the diverse range of cultural beliefs and practices we encounter. In recent years GMCT has introduced new green burial options, and played a more active role in community conversations about planning ahead. Increasingly, we are exploring the place of digital technologies and online memorialisation to meet the emerging needs of our communities.

As our communities and religious groups continue to evolve, our priority over the next three years will be to ensure we meet their needs and expectations now and into the future. We will continue to listen to our communities and explore new and innovative approaches to remembrance, balancing innovation with our role as custodians of our communities' shared history, and actively integrating history and heritage considerations into master-planning activities.

Above all, our core focus remains constant and rooted in the present – providing exceptional, compassionate service to all those who have lost someone, and looking after those they have lost.





...and looking ahead

Since our inception in 2010, GMCT's strategic direction has followed a roadmap aimed at integrating the eight original trusts, finding efficiencies and improving the ways we work together across a large geographical area. During this period we have implemented a range of significant initiatives and improvements across our operations and corporate governance frameworks. We have developed a land strategy, reviewed and reconfigured vital business functions, streamlined and improved the integrity of our operational processes and service delivery, implemented significant new technology platforms, and improved our employee engagement and training across the organisation. Importantly, we have established a firm foundation based on customer care and community engagement, positioning GMCT as a vital front-line provider in the community services sector.

We are proud of the team's hard work and commitment to our organisational values and strategic priorities. Our culture has been built on firm foundations, and this has provided a strong stepping-off point as we move towards a future grounded in an excellent customer experience and strong community networks, positioning us as a trusted partner for our communities, stakeholder groups and the funeral sector.

The coming years will focus on integrating and leveraging digital technologies to ensure we continue to deliver the best possible customer experience. We are working hard to build a responsive and respectful suite of services, and to continually improve our processes. With a renewed emphasis on the relationships we build with customers, families and communities over time, we will invest significantly in customer insights, market research and ongoing community engagement to ensure our actions, decisions and initiatives align with current and emerging community needs and expectations.

We will continue to set a high benchmark with respect to our central role within the broader sector, particularly in supporting Class B cemetery trusts and building strong relationships with funeral directors, stonemasons, and other industry stakeholders.

About us

With dignity and kindness we provide the final care for those who have passed, and help support families and communities as they reckon with loss.

Our 19 cemeteries and memorial parks, spread across greater metropolitan Melbourne, have been here for generations. Many of these cemeteries are sites of cultural and historical significance, and GMCT proudly preserves the shared history of our communities for the benefit of future generations.

We are stewards of these special places, appointed by State Government to maintain them, and the traditions they represent, in perpetuity. We provide burial, cremation and memorialisation services to meet the needs of all the communities we have the privilege of working with.

We also provide a variety of venues, including spaces for ceremonies and receptions to accommodate a variety of services and cultural practices, with cafes and floristry available at selected sites.

GMCT equally looks ahead, ensuring the rich and diverse cultural traditions that take place on our sites can adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world. We're developing new memorial parks and new, sustainable memorial types, embracing modern technology to ensure future Victorians can count on us too.

We invite feedback and input into our many projects and initiatives, with our Community Voice Panel giving Victorians the opportunity to understand and contribute to our decision-making processes.

GMCT embraces the diversity of the communities we work with and reflect this in the people we employ. We come from a range of backgrounds and age groups, and bring different perspectives to our work, united by a clear commitment to providing compassionate service.

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



Whenever our support is needed, we are ready to be there, responding with sensitivity and kindness.

We consider every situation to be unique, and strive to understand the needs of customers and colleagues so we can put them at the heart of everything we do.



We respect the rights, traditions and beliefs of every individual, family, community and culture we work with.

We respect, support and recognise our colleagues so we can empower one another to do the same for the communities we serve.



We have the courage to hold ourselves to account, and recognise our individual and collective responsibility for ethical, honest and considered conduct.

We hold ourselves and each other to the highest standards of professionalism and compliance.



Our cemeteries and memorial parks have been here for generations, and will be here for generations to come.

We use our resources wisely, plan effectively, and look after our environment and ourselves to ensure that GMCT contributes to a more sustainable future.

Our structure

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

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

- setting the strategic objectives of the trust
- determining priorities and major projects
- reviewing the progress and performance of the organisation in meeting its strategic objectives
- risk management

Trust members participate in a number of committees. These trust committees review and provide advice on the performance of our team in relation to the responsibilities and commitments of the organisation.

The current trust committees are:

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

Our model

GMCT is a self-funded, not-for-profit entity, receiving only limited funding for specific initiatives through the Department of Health and Human Services cemetery grants program. We are committed to managing costs, income and investments strategically, ensuring the financial stability of our enterprise and honouring our responsibility to maintain our cemeteries in perpetuity.

Proceeds from the sale of products and services go directly into funding the delivery of burial, cremation and memorialisation services, capital works, and our perpetual maintenance obligations set out in the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act (2003)*. The pricing of products and services are, in turn, regulated through the Department of Treasury and Finance cost recovery guidelines.

This operating model necessitates a strategic approach to managing our investments which helps to grow our perpetual maintenance reserves, and also empowers us to acquire land to meet demands for cemetery space as Melbourne's population continues to expand.

We implement strategies and plans to manage costs, balancing income with outgoings and fluctuations in the economy to ensure the long-term sustainability of our enterprise.

Our communities

GMCT is proud to serve a diverse range of communities in one of the most multicultural and cosmopolitan cities in the world. Every year, we welcome over a million visitors to our sites and support over twelve thousand families, representing a wide a range of traditional and contemporary religious, cultural and social expectations.

GMCT is committed to ensuring our cemeteries remain relevant to their local communities. We achieve this by working closely with Melbourne's diverse cultural, religious and special interest groups, including dedicated friends groups associated with our various cemeteries.

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.

With sound governance and a proven track record in financial responsibility, GMCT benefits from strong, future-focused leadership.

Our management team works to a clear purpose: to serve and support our diverse communities, now and for many generations to come.

At a glance

19

public cemeteries and memorial parks across
Melbourne's north, east and west



Over **\$11m**

investment in
capital projects



More than

4,500

burials per year



More than

6,500

cremations
per year



Over

1 million

visitors annually



Over

\$8m

investment in new stock annually



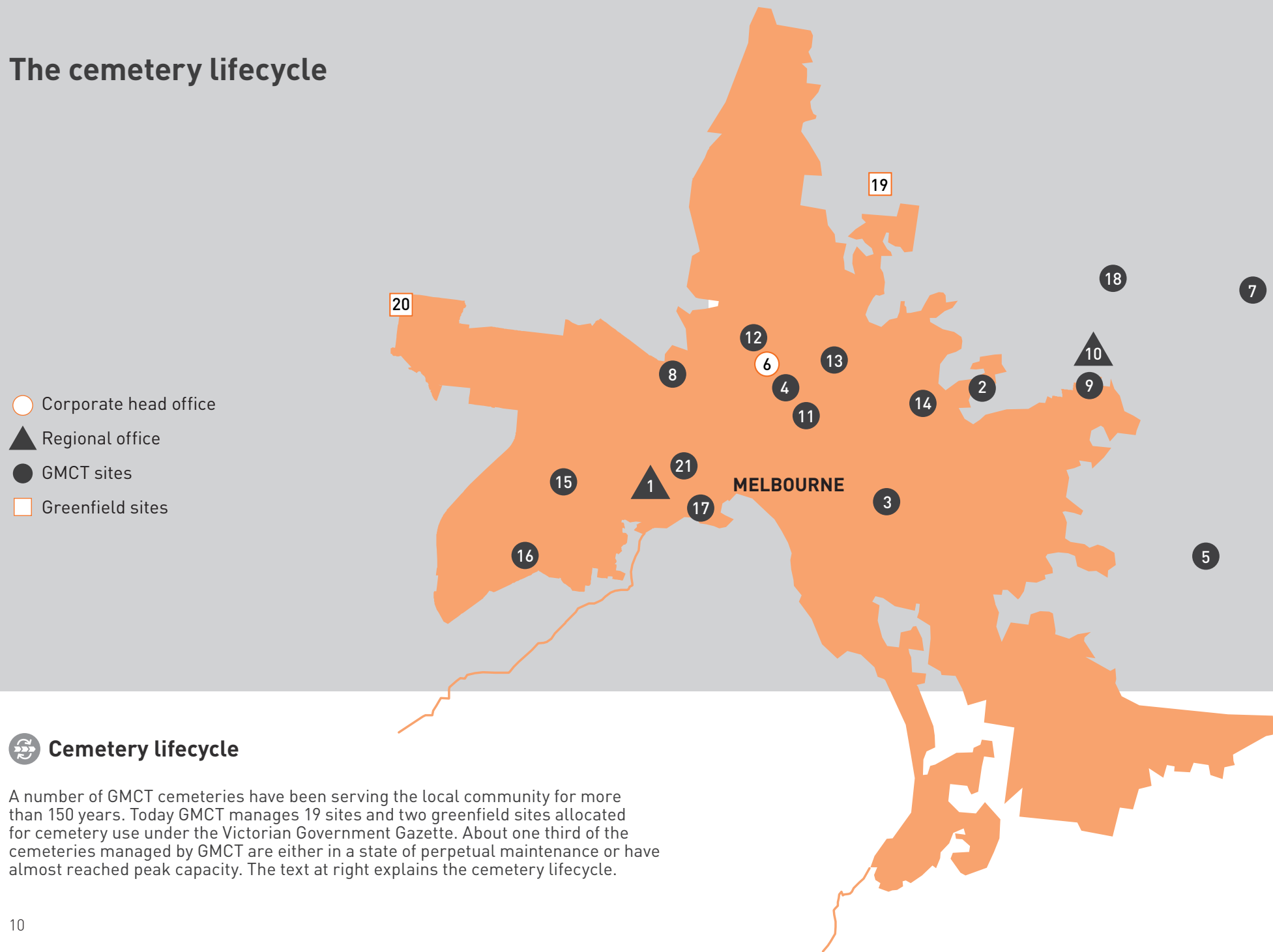
More than

450

mausoleum interments



The cemetery lifecycle



Cemetery lifecycle

A number of GMCT cemeteries have been serving the local community for more than 150 years. Today GMCT manages 19 sites and two greenfield sites allocated for cemetery use under the Victorian Government Gazette. About one third of the cemeteries managed by GMCT are either in a state of perpetual maintenance or have almost reached peak capacity. The text at right explains the cemetery lifecycle.

SITE

LIFECYCLE STAGE

1	Altona Memorial Park	Active
2	Andersons Creek Cemetery	Transitional
3	Burwood Cemetery	Transitional
4	Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery	Transitional-Perpetual
5	Emerald Cemetery	Active-Transitional
6	Fawkner Memorial Park	Active
7	Healesville Cemetery	Active-Transitional
8	Keilor Cemetery	Active
9	Lilydale Lawn Cemetery	Transitional-Perpetual
10	Lilydale Memorial Park	Active

SITE

LIFECYCLE STAGE

11	Northcote Cemetery	Perpetual
12	Northern Memorial Park	Establishment-Active
13	Preston Cemetery	Active-Transitional
14	Templestowe Cemetery	Transitional-Perpetual
15	Truganina Cemetery	Perpetual
16	Werribee Cemetery	Active-Transitional
17	Williamstown Cemetery	Active-Transitional
18	Yarra Glen Cemetery	Active-Transitional
19	Plenty Valley	Establishment
20	Harkness	Establishment
21	Footscray Cemetery*	Perpetual

*GMCT operates and maintains this cemetery on behalf of Maribyrnong City Council

1



2



3



4



5

Concept

The initial identification of need or opportunity and identification and acquisition of new land for cemetery use.

Establishment

Planning for the development of new greenfield sites and acquired land.

Active

The operation of cemeteries that have high visitation and interments and a wide range of services.

Transitional

Lessening requirement for infrastructure, continued but declining interment and services, medium visitation.

Perpetual

Cemeteries with minimal space available and low visitation rates, requiring ongoing maintenance and a focus on heritage.

Our sector is mature but evolving

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

Our communities are always changing

Demand for particular products and services is driven by community needs and expectations. As our communities grow and evolve, the products, services and customer experiences we offer our communities in their times of need must also adapt. GMCT is working towards gaining a deeper understanding of our customers, and partnering with the funeral industry to share our insights.

Technology is moving quickly

The fast pace of technology, and the social impacts of that technology on our communities, is a major consideration for GMCT as we work to align our enterprise with future directions in our sector. GMCT is embracing new technology to improve communication, efficiency and the customer experience.

The funeral sector is diversifying

Cemetery trusts and the broader funeral sector are mutually dependent, and as the funeral industry continues to evolve, GMCT is working to build partnerships and share insights. We work with industry peak bodies, major funeral care providers, and small family run businesses to ensure we remain in touch with sector conditions and customer expectations.

Economic conditions are dynamic

As a self-funded enterprise, GMCT needs to respond strategically to emerging and shifting economic conditions. As our customers are affected by economic forces, GMCT will ensure that our financial model and investment strategies remains robust and sustainable for the long term.

The skills we need are in high demand

Like all other employers, GMCT operates within a competitive labour market. GMCT is continually looking for ways to improve employee engagement and satisfaction to support the success of our people, and to attract new people with the ideas, skills and expertise to help us achieve our strategic goals.



Focusing on the future

GMCT strives to meet the needs of our communities now and into the future.

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

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

1

Community connections

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

Measures of success

- Customer satisfaction
- Digital service enhancement
- Community engagement

2

Lasting stewardship

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

Measures of success

- Strong sector leadership
- Effective land and resource utilisation
- Remembrance and heritage reputation

3

Operational excellence

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

Measures of success

- Sustain revenue base
- Cost performance
- Perpetual funding
- Work process productivity
- Workplace safety

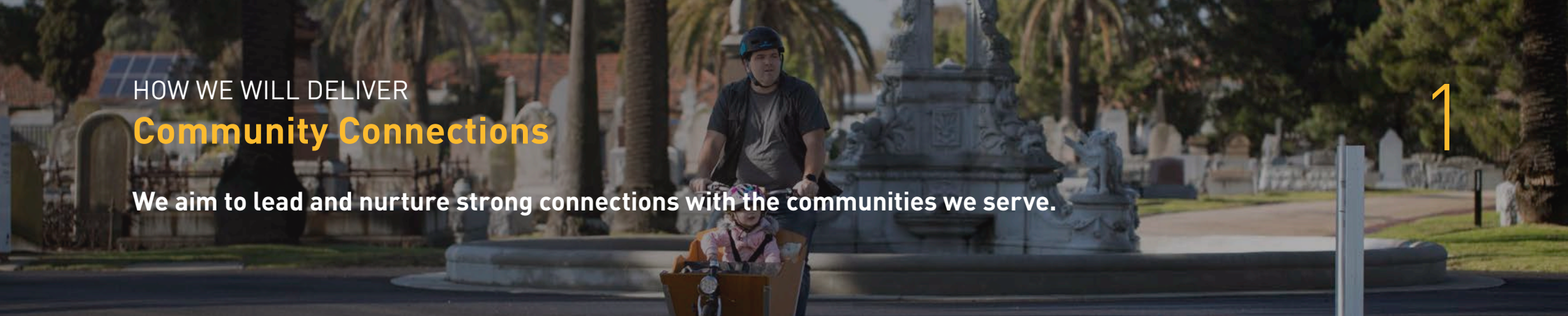
4

Change ready agility

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

Measures of success

- Workforce engagement
- Innovation profile
- Information proficiency



HOW WE WILL DELIVER

Community Connections

We aim to lead and nurture strong connections with the communities we serve.

1

Strategies	Over the next 3 years we will	Performance indicators
Embed a family and community oriented service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand and respond to community needs and aspirationsDeliver our community connections strategy, incorporating consumer insights, diversity and accessibility, and building strong community ties to support customer confidence in GMCT	Improved community satisfaction Improved community engagement
Enhance digital consumer connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enable our digital strategy to transform and grow our customer experience and service offering, allowing GMCT to respond to our changing customer needs	Increased proportion of online transactions (sales, bookings, or enquiries)
Build progressive community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and implement a community education outreach program to demystify industry perceptions, build community awareness of GMCT, and strengthen connections with our communitiesIdentify and respond to community need for religious / culturally tailored services through data insights	Positive trends on perceptions of GMCT community connection and leadership Increased satisfaction with religious / culturally tailored services

HOW WE WILL DELIVER Lasting Stewardship

2

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

Strategies	Over the next 3 years we will	Performance indicators
Sustainable resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enact the GMCT Land Strategy 2016 Develop infrastructure according to the Long-Term Financial Plan and budgeted capital projects Implement the Asset Management Accountability Framework Implement a future-focused sustainability strategy 	<p>Maintain adequate cemetery land supply as per GMCT Land Strategy</p> <p>Maintain adequate stock levels as per GMCT policy</p> <p>Improved asset management results</p> <p>Improved sustainability indicators</p>
Custodians of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an online family history and heritage hub, enabling and encouraging families and communities to understand cemetery history and heritage Develop internationally leading remembrance and memorialisation, focused on heritage and history and incorporating new innovations for families 	<p>Online availability of family history and heritage resources</p> <p>Level of online memorialisation innovation</p>
Influential policy collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively advocate for the sector at all levels and with key stakeholders, providing proactive thought leadership and positioning as a key influencer 	<p>Stakeholder recognition of GMCT as a key contributor to cemetery sector policy</p>

HOW WE WILL DELIVER

Operational Excellence

We strive for excellence in everything we do, empowered by innovative and effective technology, systems and processes.

3

Strategies	Over the next 3 years we will	Performance indicators
Process excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve GMCT policy, strategy and processes to deliver relevant and timely products and services that meet community needs Establish a simple and sustainable business process improvement framework supporting collaboration and process effectiveness across GMCT Continue to simplify our pricing structure to facilitate improved customer interaction and review our pricing to ensure long term financial sustainability is maintained Ensure that our reporting processes are contemporary, and promote high standards of performance and accountability 	<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>
Aligned workforce capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop our people into a technologically savvy workforce, that delivers our goals / objectives within a paperless office, and aligns with our digital strategy Initiate a workforce capability framework that supports development of a workforce confident in their skills and capabilities Foster a learning organisation culture that supports staff engagement and underpins our product and service delivery 	<p>Increased workforce availability</p> <p>Increase in role flexibility within GMCT</p> <p>Maintain annual staff retention rate of 90% (excluding GMCT initiated exits)</p> <p>Improved performance against OH&S standards</p>
Blended service partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide cohesion via new and enhanced digital experiences to support end customer needs Enhance our business to business (B2B) service model supporting strategic partnerships with funeral directors, stonemasons, Class B's and other key industry suppliers 	<p>Improved stakeholder satisfaction (funeral directors)</p> <p>Increased proportion of online self-serve interactions with key stakeholders</p> <p>Enhanced profile and influence with funeral directors and other industries</p>

HOW WE WILL DELIVER

Change ready agility

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

4

Strategies	Over the next 3 years we will	Performance indicators
Empowered, collaborative and 'can-do' workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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 agendaImplement a workforce strategy, incorporating a blueprint for career and performance development that supports recruitment, retention and staff growth	<p>Increased staff engagement</p> <p>Workforce performance meets or exceeds similar industries</p>
Integrated knowledge management culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish an enterprise view of integrated systems and data to improve our workplace efficiency, enabling GMCT to facilitate positive customer experiencesDesign and develop an effective digital collaboration platform to enable teams to work cohesively across all locations and environments, driving benefits across the entire GMCT network	<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">Initiate a staff profiling project to match role positions to personality attributes – driving more effective recruitment and setting up staff for successImplement a reward and recognition program that values staff contributions and supports career progression within and beyond GMCTImplement a cultural change program that supports collaborative learning and stimulates innovative "can-do" thinking and actions in our people	<p>Staff satisfaction with learning and development opportunities</p> <p>Maintenance of a viable innovation portfolio</p>



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT GMCT**

 1187 Sydney Road, Fawkner VIC 3060

 PO Box 42, Fawkner VIC 3060

 1300 022 298

 03 9355 3111

 enquiries@gmct.com.au