



Plaques and Memorials Policy 2024

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

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Approved by Council:	<Date>
Responsible Officer:	Executive Officer, Parks, Trees & Trails
Department:	Built Environment and Infrastructure
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Introduction

As stewards of the Yarra Ranges' natural beauty, Council acknowledges our privilege in having an array of picturesque spaces that our community values and feels connected to. These landscapes serve as both places for contemplation and gathering spots for shared experiences. Council also understands the connection to our unique environment many residents in Yarra Ranges have and, in many instances, have contributed to, and the wish to use that connection in their memory.

Public infrastructure and open space play a significant role in the social and cultural heritage of the Yarra Ranges. The significance these hold for residents and visitors results in many requests for the placement of commemorative plaques and memorials every year.

While Council understands the desire to commemorate individuals in a tangible way in spaces that connect us to their memory, too many plaques and memorials in our open space risks diluting the very essence that draws us to these natural landscapes.

Therefore, as Council considers new applications for memorials, we must carefully consider the balance between the desire to commemorate events or individuals and the intended purpose and on-going enjoyment of the unique natural environment of the Yarra Ranges and uncluttered public space.

Experience shows that the vandalism of plaques and memorials, along with the limited maintenance Council can provide, can create further concern for families already grieving.

This policy has been created to provide direction for decisions in relation to new plaques or memorials proposed to be sited on, or in, Council owned or managed public infrastructure and open space.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide direction for decisions made in relation to new plaques or memorials to be sited on or in Council owned or managed public infrastructure and open space.
- set guidelines and community expectations around appropriate commemoration of people or events that have significantly contributed to the social or environmental history of the Yarra Ranges.
- provide clarity for family members and friends who enquire about plaques and memorials in our parks, reserves and streets in commemoration of loved ones.
- offer alternative memorial options for open spaces, such as trees or park furniture.
- maintain a balance between the intended purpose, environmental values and aesthetic and emotive quality of our public infrastructure and open space.
- recognise that memorial plaques in public spaces should be for the commemoration of significant events or remembrance of people of enduring significance.

Policy Scope

This policy covers plaques and memorials on Council owned or managed infrastructure and land, including buildings, reserves or parks, along with guidelines for dispersal of cremation ashes. All new plaques and memorials will be required to conform to this policy, except for the following:

- signage, displays boards, banners, public artworks or temporary roadside memorials.
- war memorials, which require approval by other authorities.
- informal naming of places or facilities, as administered by Yarra Ranges Council.
- formal naming of roads, places or facilities, which are guided by Naming Rules for Places in Victoria, as administered by Yarra Ranges Council.
- bequeaths of land or buildings.

Administrative amendments

From time to time, circumstance may require minor amendments be made to this Policy. Where this does not materially alter the Policy, such amendments may be made administratively by the Chief Executive Officer.

Any amendment which materially alters the Policy must be approved by resolution of Council.

Definitions

Plaque: A flat tablet of metal, stone or other material which includes text and/or images which commemorate a person, event or historical information relative to the location or a new public artwork of significance.

Memorial: An object or infrastructure, including seat or table, trees and shrubs, which is established in memory of a person, association, anniversary or event.

Open Space: Refers to all land owned and/or managed by Council that is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone or Public Conservation Resource Zone and is available for public access. Typically, open space includes parks, gardens, trails, habitat corridors, utilities reserves, waterways, sports grounds, playspaces and conservation reserves. It does not include vacant municipal land zoned for other purposes.

Infrastructure: Refers to physical structures and facilities associated with Council owned land and public open space.

Park Furniture: A bench, seat, picnic setting, platform or shelter located within public open space.

Community Organisation: Any organisation engaged in charitable or other community-based activity operating under Australian law.

Revision history

Version	Date	Summary of revisions

Plaques and Memorials Policy Criteria

Consideration for plaques and memorials will given to:

- an individual or association that has contributed significantly to the cultural, political, environmental or social aspects of the development of the Yarra Ranges for a minimum of 25 years or have been recognised for a significant achievement or event.
- an individual or association strongly linked to the Yarra Ranges municipality and its history.
- an individual or association that has made an enduring contribution over and above what might be reasonably expected through paid employment or voluntary contribution.
- consideration of other awards the individual may have received. e.g., Australia Day Honours.
- a significant anniversary of an event unique to the history and development of the township or location.
- historical or other information relevant to the proposed site/location of the plaque or memorial.
- plaques recognising the donation of park furniture from recognised community organisations.

Any application must demonstrate broad community awareness and support for the individual or association.

Applications for public memorials will generally not be considered within two years following the death of a person to allow for the development of historical perspective and for consideration of the criteria for significance.

Proposed sites for plaques or memorials should meet the requirements of Council planning documents and regulations, not create community safety risk, and not impede the function of Council asset or service.

Memorials commemorating the death of pets and animals are not permitted on public infrastructure or open space.

Open Space assets donated from community organisations should be reflective of Councils asset suite.

Applications for plaques or memorials on public infrastructure or open space

1. Application

Applications for installation of a new plaque or memorial must be submitted either in writing or through the application form on Council's website.

Written applications must be forwarded to:

Mail: P.O. Box 105, Lilydale VIC 3140

Email: mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

The application must demonstrate in detail their conformance to this policy and include a supporting statement for the person to be commemorated, detailing how the criteria stated in the policy are met.

1.1. Application approvals

If the application is assessed as meeting the required criteria, the request will be forwarded to the relevant Plaques & Memorials Panel for consideration. The Plaques & Memorials Panel will have representatives of Governance, Parks Trees & Trails and a senior officer, as appointed by the CEO. Any delegated decision will be in consultation with the relevant Ward Councillor and Mayor.

A decision regarding the application will be provided in writing.

1.2. Alternate commemorative options

Where the installation of a plaque or memorial on Council owned or managed land is **not** supported, the following options may be supported by Council:

1.2.1. Attend a community planting day

Each year schools, community groups, environmental volunteers and the public help plant at various sites across the Council. These planting days help to build personal connections with the land. If you'd like to find out how to get involved contact Yarra Ranges Council's Bushland team via mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au.

1.2.2. Donation in memory towards Yarra Ranges Council's tree planting program

Trees are fundamental to the story of Yarra Ranges, shaping our cultures, values and communities. They are a prominent feature in our landscape, providing benefits to our health and wellbeing, community and culture, the environment, ecology and economy.

A donation towards Council's tree planting program can be made in memory of an individual.

- Tree planting must fit within the Yarra Ranges tree planting program and will be conducted according to the planting season.
- Tree selection and planting location will be decided by Yarra Ranges Council.

- Specific species selection and/or planting locations will not be accepted within the framework of this policy.

1.2.3. Memorial and other assets

Installation of park furniture such as a picnic table or park bench may be considered on Council owned or managed land (without a plaque, unless donated by a recognised community organisation).

- Memorial assets must fit the service levels set for a particular park or reserve, as stipulated in the Asset Management Plan.
- Asset selection and installation location will be decided by Yarra Ranges Council.
- Specific asset selection and/or installation locations will not be accepted within the framework of this policy.
- Recognition of sponsorship of the asset by a community organisation may be considered.

2. Costs of approved plaques, memorials or memorial assets

As the purchase, installation and on-going maintenance of plaques, memorials or memorial assets require significant resourcing, the applicant will be required to meet all costs associated with the design, manufacture, purchase and installation, as well as maintenance costs for a period of two years following installation.

Design or selection shall be completed in conjunction with Council's Design & Place team.

Full payment is required after approval of the application and prior to the ordering of the plaque, memorial or memorial asset.

3. Installation of approved plaques, memorials or memorial assets

Final approval for the design and layout, wording, and location of any new plaque, memorial or memorial asset rests with the Executive Officer, Parks, Trees & Trails and must align with Yarra Ranges Council's Asset Management Plan.

For plaques, the applicant is responsible for purchase and supply of the plaque to Council. For everything else, Council will arrange procurement and supply.

Following approval of an application, installation of any new plaque, memorial or memorial asset on Council owned or managed land shall be undertaken by Council.

4. Retention or relocation of approved plaques, memorials or memorial assets

Yarra Ranges Council does not guarantee the retention of any memorial, plaque or memorial infrastructure beyond ten years, due to deterioration of such assets over time.

Generally, a plaque or memorial will be retained in place for as long as is practicable, with the following exceptions:

- the area in which the item is sited is to be redeveloped.
- on-going maintenance costs are prohibitive.
- the asset to which a plaque is attached has reached the end of its useful life.
- the condition of the plaque, memorial or memorial asset is poor.

Council will not be responsible for the replacement of plaques, memorials or memorial assets which are vandalised, damaged or stolen. Standard maintenance activities such as graffiti removal will be undertaken as required.

If a plaque, memorial or memorial asset is removed or relocated for any of the reasons listed above, Council will not guarantee replacement of the plaque or memorial. An application for a new plaque, memorial or memorial asset may be considered.

All reasonable efforts will be made to identify, contact and advise the relevant stakeholders (including family members), should a plaque, memorial or memorial asset need to be removed or relocated.

5. Dispersal of Cremation Ashes

Yarra Ranges Council supports community members in remembering and celebrating the lives of loved ones through dispersal of cremation ashes on Council owned or managed land.

5.1. Dispersal of cremation ashes on Council owned or managed land

When dispersing cremation ashes:

- Consideration should be made for other public land users.
- Ashes must not be scattered within a 40m radius of other public land users.
- Ashes must not be scattered in playgrounds, on sporting ovals or other high use recreational areas.

5.2. Burial of cremation ashes on Council owned or managed land

Yarra Ranges Council does not permit the burial of cremation ashes on Council owned or managed land.

Review cycle

This policy is to be reviewed every 4 years, or sooner should changes be required.