
Cemeteries Memorialisation Guideline



July 2025



Northern Grampians Shire Council
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Cemeteries Memorialisation Guideline



Responsible director

Responsible officer

Functional area

Review date

Director Corporate Services

Cemetery Trust Secretary

Cemeteries

July 2029

Purpose

To ensure that Northern Grampians Shire Council employs a consistent approach to establishing and altering memorials within its cemeteries that complies with the requirements of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003* ('the Act') and the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025* ('the Regulations')

Background

Northern Grampians Shire Council has been formally appointed to properly and efficiently manage and maintain the Pleasant Creek (Stawell) and St Arnaud public cemeteries.

Council understands and supports the importance to individuals in placing tributes at memorial sites with a range of memorial items for sentimental, cultural or religious reasons and is committed to ensuring that such memorialisation is respectful, inclusive and safe for all.

Council understands that memorial items must be:

- respectful to the deceased and all visitors
- durable (with the exception of fresh flowers and temporary memorials)
- safe for all visitors, cemetery workers, volunteers, and wildlife
- supportive of the aesthetics, standards, and general nature of the area of the cemetery
- respectful of and acknowledge cultural diversity.

All rights of interment for graves, cremation and memorial only positions are held by the holders of the right of interment, who have primary responsibility for determining and consenting to the establishment or alteration of a memorial and maintaining a memorial.

Memorials are usually arranged sometime after the burial or the interment of cremated remains, once the family is ready to take the next steps.

Scope

The guideline covers the standard memorial requirements in the Pleasant Creek (Stawell) and St Arnaud cemeteries.

"memorial" means a monument, tombstone, headstone, ledger, cenotaph, plaque or other method of memorialising a deceased person where that memorial is within the cemetery.

Guideline

Application to establish or alter memorials

Anyone wishing to establish or alter a monument, memorial, headstone, or plaque at the cemeteries must submit an application to council in writing using the appropriate form (see step 4).

A full memorial, monument or headstone must meet the minimum requirements of the Australian Standard AS 4204:2019 Headstones and cemetery monuments, or its successors.

Process for submission and approval of establishing or altering a memorial

Step 1: enquiry

Person makes enquiries with a stonemason or council to establish or alter a memorial.

Step 2: obtain quote and relevant information

The stonemason or council (St Arnaud plaques) provides a quote for memorial and information regarding processes and procedures.

Step 3: if quote accepted

If person accepts quote, then an application for permission to establish or alter a memorial must be submitted to council by:

- the stonemason on behalf of the customer
or
- the person/holder of the right of interment who is seeking to have the memorial established/alterd.

Step 4: documentation for application

Applications must be submitted on the '***Application to Establish or Alter a Memorial or Place of Interment***' form (available via council website or the Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria [website](#)) and can be submitted to council either by:

- The stonemason on behalf of the client
- The person/holder of the right of interment who is seeking to have the memorial established/alterd
- Any interested person or family member who can provide council with suitable documentation to support the application.

All applications for permission to establish or alter a memorial must be accompanied by:

- payment of the relevant cemetery fee (see Department of Health website for fee schedules)
- a plan/design of the proposed memorial
- the proposed wording of memorialisation and translation (if applicable)
- the written consent of the holder of the right of interment or a statutory declaration and/or any supporting documentation that may be required by council to process application.

Step 5: consideration of application

Council has 45 days from receipt of the application and all relevant information to either approve or refuse the application, however, council will endeavour to either approve or refuse the application within 14 business days in writing and:

- will consider details of dimension limits for memorials and the suitable design as applicable to the relevant area in the cemetery
- does not permit the use of brick or masonry blocks
- does not permit any inscriptions that may cause offence
- will not approve plans for memorials which incorporate provision for garden beds
- does not permit the erection of timber memorials or structures apart from temporary grave markers.

Applications may be refused if the proposed memorial is deemed to:

- be unsafe, dangerous or not of a sufficiently permanent nature
- be incompatible with this guideline regarding the general nature and standard of surrounding memorials or the nature and character of the cemetery
- not comply with prescribed requirement of a particular area within the cemetery, model rules or for any reason the council sees fit.

Step 6: approval or refusal of application

Council approval will be in writing and may include advice to the applicant of any particular terms and conditions of the approval. Council may cancel an approval if these terms and conditions are not complied with. Any specifications relating to the establishment or alteration of memorials within the cemetery are contained within this guideline and made publicly available via the council website.

If council refuses an application, it will provide written notice of this decision to the applicant with supporting reasons.

Council may require a person to remove or alter a monument at their expense if that person has established or altered the monument without the appropriate approval.

If a person fails or refuses to remove or alter the monument, council may either remove or alter the monument or dispose of as it sees fit; and recover the costs associated in doing so.

Step 7: construction and inspection of memorial

Works cannot commence until the council's approval has been received in writing.

Any work must be undertaken by either a monumental mason or another party accepted by the council as equipped, experienced, and insured to do so. Council may request evidence of the requirement.

Council or a contractor engaged by the council may inspect a memorial for compliance with the terms and conditions of the approval. Council may require the removal of a memorial where these terms and conditions have not been complied with, or where the memorial has been established or altered without the council's consent.

Plot identification: each memorial should be indelibly and legibly identified on the memorial in accordance with the requirements of council.

Photo evidence of completed memorial must be provided to council for records purposes.

Step 8: maintenance of memorial

The holder of a right of interment is responsible for maintaining any memorial that has been established on their place of interment in a safe and proper condition. Council is empowered to issue directions in relation to the maintenance of memorials. If council considers a memorial to be unsafe, and:

- if the holder of the right of interment fails to take the appropriate action requested by council, then with the written consent of the Secretary to the department, council may repair or take down and remove or dispose of the memorial. Costs and expenses associated with maintenance can be recovered from the holder of the right of interment
- if the holder of the right of interment is not contactable, the council may, with the written consent of the Secretary to the department, repair or take down, remove and dispose of the memorial.

Mementos and planting

In compliance with the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 schedule 2 Model Rules*, a person must not place the following items on a memorial or place of interment:

- Ceramic or glass items that are fragile or breakable
- Metal items that are likely to rust or deteriorate, metal spikes or any sharp items
- An item likely to cause a risk to health or safety
- Alcohol or tobacco products
- Balloons and wind-chimes or other noise-making items
- Items which may be considered offensive or derogatory
- Items that extend beyond the boundaries of the place of interment.

Loose objects may be permitted if they do not pose a safety risk, are positioned on the approved memorial and do not inhibit the maintenance of the cemeteries or encroach on another grave/plot.

Council may remove and dispose of these listed items along with any dead flowers or any other item that is in poor condition or blown to areas out of the right of interment e.g. artificial flowers.

Digging or planting anything in the cemeteries by persons other than council employees or persons authorised by council is an offence without the prior written approval of the council.

No fencing of any kind is permitted in the lawn and garden/rose areas.

Theft or damage

Council is unable to accept any responsibility for the theft or damage of any item of memorialisation unless the damage can be shown that it was caused by the responsibility of council.

Memorial types

Full memorials, also known as monuments, cover the entirety of the burial plot and can be:

- Made of natural stone or concrete
- Generally, consist of headstone, pillars, ashlar, kerbs and ledger (slab) or chips (or a combination of the components)
- A chapel may be placed at the head of the grave.

Headstone

- A headstone, made of natural stone, is an upright grave marker which may include a base

Full memorials and headstones are arranged by a stonemason at both cemeteries.

Plaque

- A bronze plaque mounted directly to the concrete plinth/beam
- A bronze plaque mounted in ashes rose garden or rose bush
- A bronze plaque mounted on a niche wall
- A bronze or granite plaque mounted on a garden wall.

Plaques for the St Arnaud Cemetery can be arranged with council or a stonemason. Plaques at the Stawell cemetery are generally arranged with a stonemason.

Note: Memorials or accessories must not extend beyond the right of interment.

Temporary memorials

Council will permit a temporary white wooden grave marker (subject to it being maintained to the satisfaction of council) of a height not exceeding one metre or temporary name plate, staked immediately in front of the concrete plinth in lawn areas, or at the head of the plot in monumental sections.

Such a marker will be permitted to remain for a period of two years following the burial or until a permanent monument is constructed; whichever comes first.



Example of a temporary grave marker

Council recognises that some cultures use a temporary structure to house lit candles at a grave site and may permit a temporary candle box constructed of non-combustible materials only for a period of two years – but only prior to construction of a permanent memorial and with written approval of the council. Council will consider the environmental and safety risks prior to providing this advice.

Any approval of a temporary structure to house lit candles will include the condition that no flame is to be lit during days of Total Fire Ban, and any restrictions during the Fire Danger Period must be complied with.

Temporary memorials:

- are not allowed to be placed until an interment has taken place
- must be placed and kept within the Right of Interment area
- must be maintained in good order
- must not be fixed to the foundations.

Monuments section - Pleasant Creek (Stawell) and St Arnaud cemeteries

Plot dimensions 4ft or 1.2 meters x 8ft or 2.4 meters

- Memorials can be single, double or triple or vault
- May include photos on headstones, plaques or markers
- May include up to two vases
- May include addition of plaque at base of ledger
- Types: Full memorials, headstones, plaques or markers or combinations.

See appendix 1 for component names and example of memorial dimensions

Headstone and base in Pleasant Creek (Stawell) cemetery lawn sections

Plot dimensions 1.2 meters x 2.8 meters

- single monuments allowable
- must be constructed of a natural stone or material
- must be fixed to the concrete plinth and must not extend beyond the boundary of the plot (dimensions 1.2m x 2.8m)
- may include up to two vases within the base
- maximum dimensions must not exceed the following:
 - Headstone and base overall height = 530mm
 - Headstone height = 430mm (with a 50mm allowable variance for a custom shape)
 - Headstone width = 780mm
 - Headstone depth – 70mm
 - Base width = 910mm
 - Base depth = 305mm
 - Base height = 100mm

See appendix 2 for examples of three most popular lawn monument shapes with dimensions.

St Arnaud Cemetery lawn sections plaques

Plot dimensions 1.2 meters x 2.65 meters

- must be constructed of bronze 381mm x 216mm maximum three plaques per lawn grave
- can include photo
- must be fixed to the concrete plinth.

Council encourages plaques to be installed within the first twelve months from interment at the St Arnaud lawn cemetery, however, right holders may discuss this requirement with council if any difficulties prevent the installation within this timeframe.

See appendix 3 for dimensions and example.

Niche walls and Lawn Wall plaques

St Arnaud - 203mm x 152mm

Pleasant Creek (Stawell) – 135mm x 135mm

Rose gardens

St Arnaud - 203mm x 152mm

Pleasant Creek (Stawell) – 375cm x 375mm (granite)

Rose Bush plaques

St Arnaud - 135 x 115cm

Pleasant Creek (Stawell) – 135mm x 135mm

Records

Records of applications and responses to establish or alter a memorial or place of interment will be managed as per council records management procedures.

Memorialisation records that may be kept by council include:

- approvals, plans, inscriptions, installation, alterations, inspections
- actions to manage memorials that are not in a safe and proper condition, approvals, removals, repairs, safety audits, correspondence with right of interment holders (right holders)
- preservation of memorials of public interest
- investigations, reports, advertisements, correspondence
- insurance, engagement with memorial suppliers.

Council will ensure *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Freedom of Information Act 1982* requirements are maintained for listed records.

Legislation and Standards

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003

Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025

Australian Standard AS 4204-1994 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Director Corporate Services and Cemetery Trust Secretariat to establish and maintain this guideline.

Review

Assessment of the guideline will be undertaken every four years to ensure it remains current with the council's goals, processes, aims and requirements and as a means by which to reduce council's exposure to risk.

Triggers for an earlier assessment include legislative changes and introduction of new systems or procedures.

Communication and implementation

This guideline will be communicated to the public via the council website and provided directly to relevant industry providers of memorial services and funeral directors within our community.

Consultation with relevant service providers and Department of Health guidance information was used in the development of this guideline.

References

Department of Health Public Health Cemeteries and Crematoria [website](#)

Department of Health – Manual for Victorian Cemetery Trusts

Definitions

Interment: The placement of human bodily or cremated remains in a grave or memorial e.g. rose garden or niche wall.

Memorialisation: the placement of various memorials, for example headstones, plaques, urns, and vases on a place of interment.

Right of interment: A permit for a place of interment such as a grave for bodily remains or niche wall space for cremated remains.

Right holder: Right to make decisions about the place of interment subject to the approval of the cemetery trust, payment of the relevant fees and any conditions imposed by the trust.

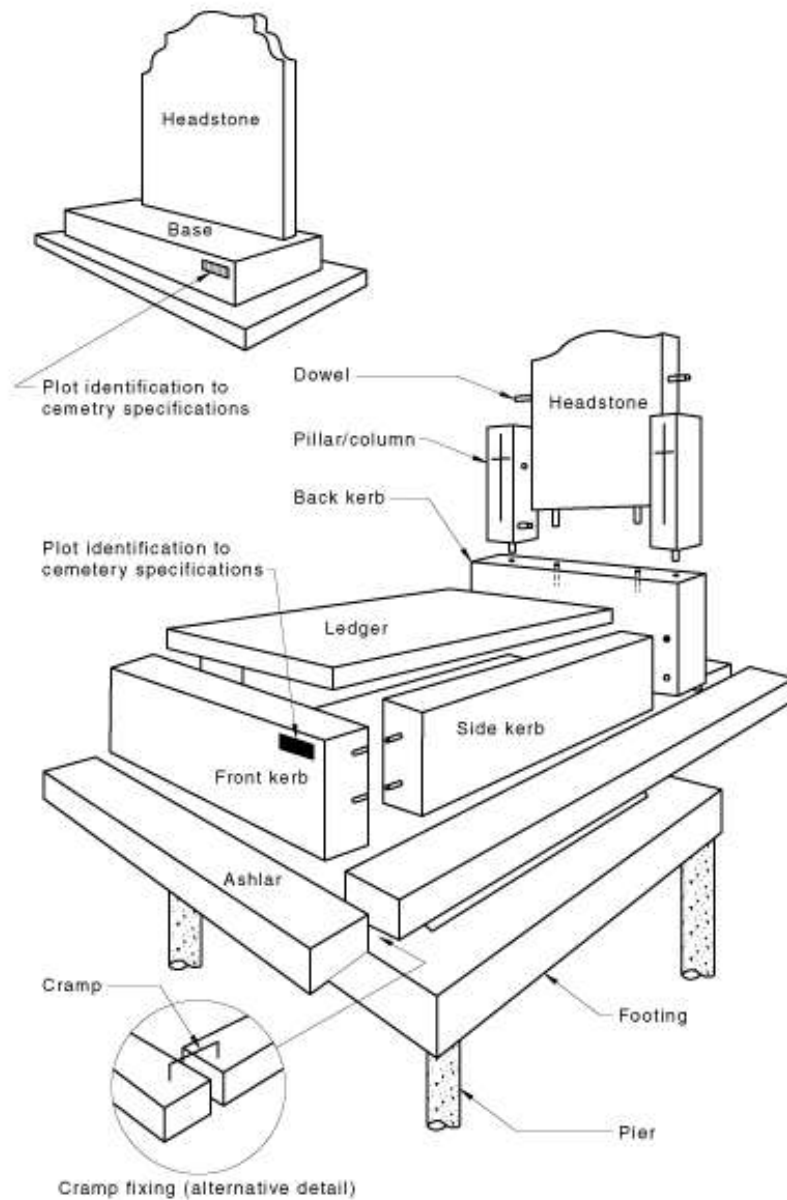
Review history

Date	Review details	Action
4 August 2025		Adopted by Council

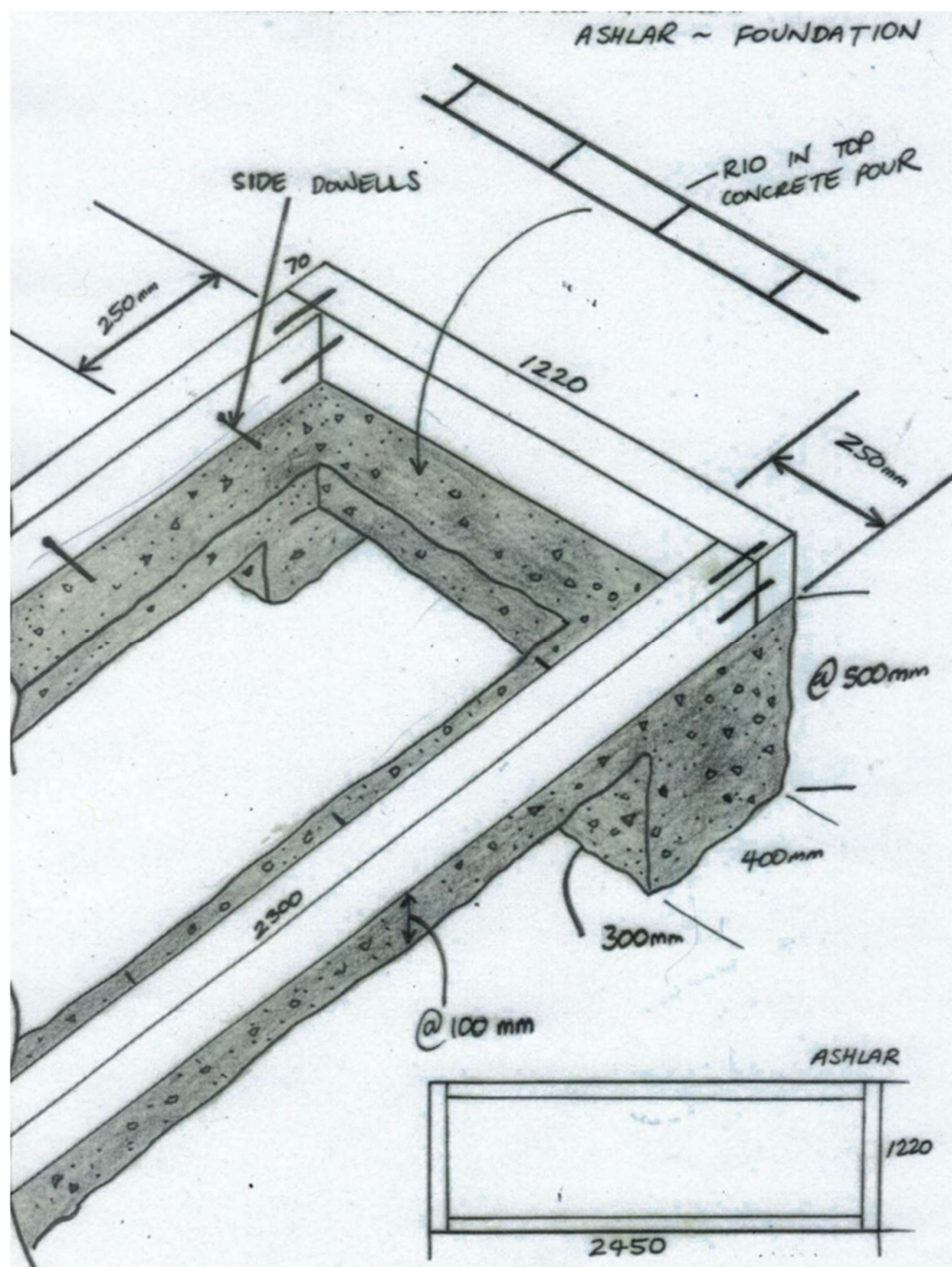
Appendix 1

Memorial components and dimensions example

Figure 1 — Monumental components

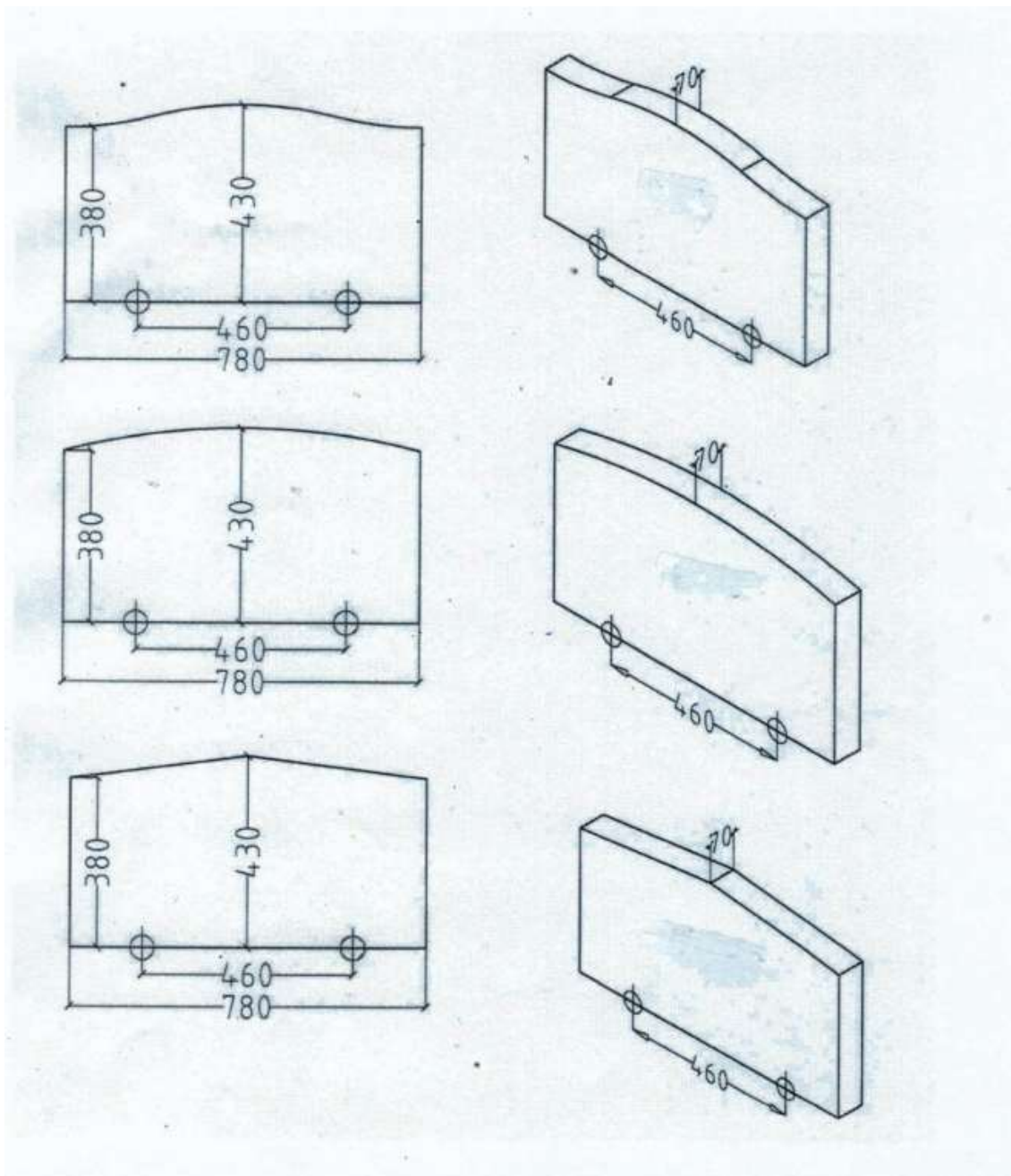


Footings example

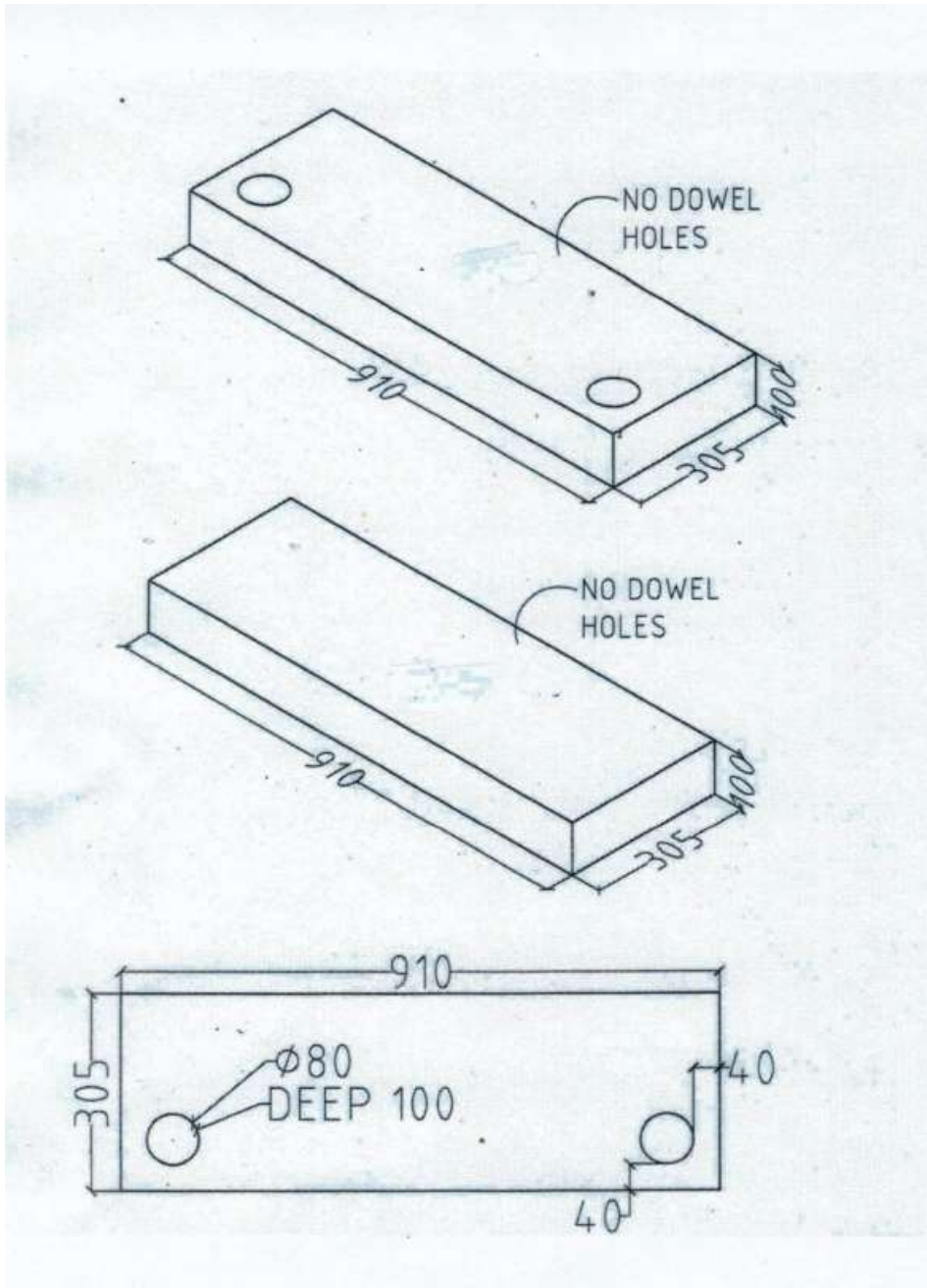


Appendix 2

Pleasant Creek (Stawell) Lawn Cemetery headstone dimensions (3 most popular)



Stawell Lawn Cemetery headstone (base) dimensions



Appendix 3

St Arnaud Lawn Cemetery plaque dimensions and example



Order Details

Order:		Printed on:	Jun 6, 2024, 9:56:12 AM
Customer:	Northern Grampians Shire Council	Created on:	null
Reference:	1234	Created by:	
Surname:	PLAQUE EXAMPLE	Progress:	Entered
Plot No.:	LA RT G1	Plaque:	381216
Fixings:	-	Dimensions:	381mm X 216mm
Instructions:	-	Colour:	Brown
Cemetery Instructions:	-	Border:	381216 Border No. 32
		Fonts Used:	MB_FLAT_FACE_96PT (N 28,32,60)
Plaque must be set out as per ArrowScript order			

Emblems

Emblem Name/Code	Emblem Type	Centered At	Size	Rotation
undefined (DDD)	standard	179mm from left x 41mm from top	20mm x 30mm	0°