FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DRAFT CARR VILLA MEMORIAL PARK MASTERPLAN

City of LAUNCESTON

Carr Villa Memorial Park Draft Masterplan

The Carr Villa Memorial Park (Carr Villa) Draft Masterplan recently released has been developed with a forward-thinking approach to meet the evolving needs of our community, while preserving the park's historical, cultural, and environmental significance.

The Masterplan seeks to address a complex range of priorities, including interment needs for the next 100 years, heritage protection, community expectations, environmental values, and operational sustainability. We understand this has resulted in community concerns, especially regarding the balance between preserving bushland and identifying land for future interment.

We recognise that changes to a cherished space like Carr Villa may raise questions, and we've carefully considered many factors in shaping the draft plan's direction.

The decisions within the draft plan reflect our commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the park, while balancing current and future burial, memorial and community needs. We have prioritised using the existing footprint of Carr Villa, as it offers the best opportunity to expand thoughtfully, while maintaining the strong connections people have with this special place.

In the FAQ section below, the following questions have been answered to provide background and context as to the draft plan's development.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a masterplan needed for Carr Villa memorial park?

Carr Villa has served the Launceston community for over a century. The draft masterplan is a forward-thinking strategy designed to ensure Carr villa continues to meet evolving deathcare needs, honours its heritage and environment, and remains a place of remembrance, reflection, and community connection for the next 100 years.

Why is the Carr Villa Masterplan Important?

The draft Masterplan is crucial because it takes a forward-thinking approach to interment planning, optimising space to accommodate both traditional and emerging burial practices. This ensures long-term certainty for the community, allowing Carr Villa to remain a meaningful place of reflection and remembrance for generations to come.

By establishing a clear future direction, the Masterplan creates a solid foundation for guiding future developments, ensuring they align with the plan's vision and values. The plan not only addresses current needs but also ensures Carr Villa continues to serve the community in a sustainable and respectful way, preserving its heritage and natural beauty for future generations.

How was the draft masterplan developed?

The draft Masterplan was developed through a rigorous, research-driven process that prioritised listening to the community and learning from expert advice. Consultants McGregor Coxall, leaders in sustainable landscape planning and design, were appointed to support the plan's development.

Expert advice, via environmental and vegetation assessments were central to the development of the draft masterplan. A comprehensive site analysis was conducted, which included reviewing City of Launceston strategic documents, natural value assessments and reports and conducting on-site visits. In addition to the consideration of expert advice, community engagement has been central to the draft plan development.

The development process also included extensive community consultation to gather input from various stakeholders, ensuring that the draft plan reflects the values of those it aims to serve. A multi-criteria assessment (MCA) played a crucial role in guiding decisions, helping balance the community's interment needs, and avoiding areas of highest conservation value with the preservation of Carr Villa's natural and cultural environment.

How has the community been involved in shaping the draft Masterplan?

Community engagement has been central to the Masterplan's development. The draft plan has been shaped by two rounds of public consultation undertaken through the Tomorrow Together platform in 2024, face-to-face internal and external stakeholder meetings, Councillor workshop, engagement with Friends of the Carr Villa Flora Reserve, and conversations with funeral industry representatives, provided valuable insights into the diverse needs of our community, ensuring the draft plan reflects shared values and priorities.

In respect to engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal People, we deeply respect that engagement in this process is self-determined, and we acknowledge the importance of fostering meaningful and respectful relationships. While we have not yet received confirmation of interest or availability to participate, we remain committed to ongoing engagement. As our relationship continues to grow through the City of Launceston's Aboriginal Partnership Plan, we will actively seek opportunities to collaborate and ensure that the voices of Tasmanian Aboriginal People are included in shaping the future of Carr Villa.

What new initiatives have been proposed to support visitation to the site?

The draft masterplan proposes a range of initiatives designed to better support visitors, particularly those experiencing grief. New accessible toilet facilities, improved wayfinding, and a new open-air pavilion will provide spaces for quiet reflection, small memorial services, and community connection, while maintaining a respectful and peaceful atmosphere.

Recognising the emotional challenges many visitors face, the masterplan prioritises intuitive navigation, integrated signage, clear arrival points, and universally accessible pathways. Digital wayfinding tools are also being explored to assist visitors in easily locating graves or services, reducing confusion and stress during difficult times.

In addition, the plan focuses on human comfort, ensuring shade, shelter, and seating are thoughtfully placed, and encourages gathering spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and calm. Environmentally sustainable design principles will guide materials and planting choices, providing natural shade, cooling, and beautiful seasonal experiences that create a soothing and supportive environment for all who visit.

Why is there a play space proposed for a cemetery?

Cemeteries today are evolving to serve as places of remembrance, reflection, and connection, the proposal to include a children's nature play space next to the children's cemetery offers a unique and supportive environment for families who are grieving. The approach proposed is different to a traditional playground environment, the aim is quite the opposite, providing a peaceful, natural space, where children and parents can reflect, heal, and connect.

A nature play space, integrating natural elements such as logs, rocks, and plants, would provide support to families and children as they process their emotions through creative, open-ended play while being close to the memory of their lost loved ones. A space of this nature fosters a sense of continuity, allowing families to honour and remember their children in a gentle, comforting setting.

Given the proposed location, engaging with families of children in the children's cemetery will be essential to ensure the space is developed respectfully.

What will an open-air pavilion be used for?

The open-air pavilion will provide a sheltered, peaceful space for small gatherings, funeral and memorial services, commemorative events, and quiet reflection. Designed to blend with the natural surroundings, it will support both personal remembrance and respectful community connection. Importantly, it will not include BBQ facilities, maintaining Carr Villa's calm and respectful atmosphere as visitor needs continue to evolve.

Does the plan propose music or large events at Carr Villa Memorial Park?

No. The draft Masterplan does not propose large-scale events like music festivals.

When the draft plan refers to opportunities for partnerships and activation, we mean small-scale, respectful activities that align with Carr Villa's role as a place of remembrance, reflection, and quiet community connection. This could include heritage tours, guided walks, environmental initiatives, commemorative events, or educational programs, all designed to honour the significance of the site.

The plan also explores the idea of partnering on activities like park runs; however, these would take place outside the cemetery grounds, on existing tracks and open spaces, ensuring the dignity and sensitivity of Carr Villa are maintained.

What types of burial and memorial options will be included in the future?

The draft masterplan recognises the evolving preferences of the community, including the increasing popularity of cremation (now representing 70% of choices), natural burial, and alternative memorialisation options. Importantly, burial continues to be a requested end-of-life choice and plays a significant role in many cultural and religious traditions, which will continue to be respected and supported.

As part of this 100-year plan, we aim to offer a variety of burial and memorial choices that respond to the diverse needs, traditions, and beliefs of the community. Future design will remain fluid and adaptable, ensuring that as community preferences change, Carr Villa Memorial Park continues to meet the evolving needs of those it serves in an informed, respectful, and meaningful way.

Is Carr Villa about to run out of burial space?

No. Even without any immediate development, Carr villa has capacity for a range of burial and ash placement options for the next 25 years.

Does the draft masterplan propose to clear undeveloped bushland for future burials?

The draft does not propose widespread or indiscriminate clearing of bushland.

The City of Launceston remains committed to protecting the site's natural character while ensuring Carr Villa continues to meet the evolving deathcare needs of the community. We value the importance of the site's undeveloped bushland, particularly areas known for their high ecological value and the presence of endangered species. The approach proposed attempts to carefully balance the need for future interment space with the protection of the site's natural environment.

A Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) was introduced to guide the balance of interment needs with the preservation of natural assets. This rigorous, research-based approach, considered environmental, cultural, and operational factors guided the proposed future planning direction. The MCA identified where minimal, carefully considered development may occur to support community needs, particularly as cremation, natural burial, and alternative memorial options continue to grow in popularity. The expansion areas were selected to optimise space for interment while respecting the site's heritage, ecology, and overall character.

While the draft plan includes future investigation of low-sensitivity bushland for interment needs, it also calls for comprehensive environmental assessments and planning controls to guide any future decisions. The masterplan does not authorise any development, it sets a long-term direction subject to further planning, statutory processes, and community engagement. The City of Launceston is committed to complying with all relevant state legislation and environmental regulations in the management of Carr Villa Memorial Park.

Is the Flora Reserve part of identified areas for future development?

No. The Carr Villa Flora Reserve will remain untouched.

The City of Launceston recognises the Flora Reserve holds significant natural and ecological value and has taken care to avoid any direct impact to the Reserve, or areas identified as having the highest environmental values. The Reserve will continue to be protected and supported through current conservation efforts.

This area, which holds significant natural and ecological value, is not identified for any future development and will continue to be protected and supported through current conservation efforts of the City of Launceston Open Space and Sustainability Team.

The City of Launceston remains committed to protecting and managing the natural values of the bushland outside of the Reserve. This includes implementation of the internal *Carr Villa Bushland Management Plan 2024*, which continues to guide conservation activities such as weed control and vegetation preservation of the bushland.

Was consideration given to environmental and vegetation assessments when identifying areas for future development?

Yes, environmental and vegetation assessments were central to the development of the draft masterplan. A comprehensive site analysis was conducted, which included reviewing City of Launceston natural value assessments and reports and conducting on-site visits. This process ensured that areas for potential development were carefully considered with full awareness of the site's environmental and ecological features.

For example, the *North Barker Carr Villa Bushland Vegetation Assessment 2019* report was one report considered during the development of the draft plan. Its findings have helped inform the understanding of the site's ecological character, species richness, and the broader relationship between the bushland, the Carr Villa Flora Reserve, and the cemetery as a whole.

The comprehensive analysis of relevant reports has influenced the careful delineation of any proposed expansion areas. With the additional support of a rigorous Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) MCA process, these indicative development zones were selected to avoid areas of highest conservation value.

Why does the plan not investigate a brand-new site for burials, rather than using the existing undeveloped bushland?

Since its establishment and dedication as a cemetery in 1905, the Carr Villa site has been the City's primary cemetery, and all burials have occurred with the understanding that the site is reserved in perpetuity for cemetery purposes. The site's footprint has remained consistent and forms part of the broader conservation estate. This long-standing function, combined with the scale of interment infrastructure and cultural significance to the Launceston community, makes its continued use a foundational consideration.

Regarding the suggestion to identify and relocate interment operations to a new cemetery site, the challenges are considerable. With over 60,000 interments and more than 6,000 'Exclusive Right of Burial' arrangements in place, Carr Villa cannot be closed without significant impact on many local families.

Additionally, acquiring, planning, and operating a new cemetery is a significant financial, logistical, and regulatory undertaking. Therefore, the current approach aims to investigate the use of the existing site, whilst balancing the city's future death care needs with the protection of Carr Villa's cultural, environmental, and community values.

Have identified expansion areas already been designed?

No, these areas have not been designed. They have been identified in the draft Masterplan as proposed future burial interment spaces, including natural burials.

While the draft plan includes future investigation of low-sensitivity bushland for interment needs, it also calls for comprehensive environmental assessments and planning controls to guide any future decisions. These recommendations reflect the Council's commitment to undertake comprehensive planning to support decision-making.

Any proposed development will be subject to a rigorous approval process, and additional assessments will help ensure that environmental, cultural, operational, and community considerations are thoroughly addressed before any implementation occurs.

Design will be led by the evolving deathcare needs of the community and will respond to emerging trends, including new methods of interment and the exploration of grave tenure options.

Why does the Master Plan not address future management practices for bushland areas?

While the draft Masterplan sets the long-term vision for the development and land use of Carr Villa Memorial Park, the detailed management of bushland areas is guided by a separate internal operational document, the *Carr Villa Bushland Management Plan August 2024*. This plan provides specific strategies for maintaining the undeveloped bushland, including active weed management, which has been a particular focus over the past six months.

The Bushland Management Plan ensures that the ecological values of Carr Villa are preserved through dedicated and responsive actions rather than broad strategies contained in the Masterplan. It also addresses operational needs such as the management of excess interment spoil, which is a continual challenge. Strategic spoil storage areas have been identified to reduce environmental impact, using planting buffers to screen operational activities and maintain the visual amenity of the site for visitors.

The approach taken in the draft masterplan for future development and the targeted Bushland Management Plan, ensures that Carr Villa can meet the evolving needs of the community while protecting its natural values.

There is a City of Launceston Greening Strategy, how does this align if you remove parts of the bushland?

The Carr Villa Memorial Park Draft Masterplan is fully committed to aligning with the City of Launceston's Greening Strategy, which prioritises the enhancement of urban green spaces and sustainable environmental practices. While the plan includes limited, carefully considered development in previously undeveloped bushland areas, the approach balances the need for interment space with the protection and enhancement of the park's natural environment.

The proposed development will focus on areas of lower ecological value, while leaving high-value bushland untouched. Furthermore, the plan includes robust strategies for landscaping and planting that will contribute to the broader greening objectives. This includes a strong emphasis on native planting, ecological restoration, and the creation of biodiverse habitats, which aligns with the city's commitment to increasing green cover and supporting local wildlife.

In this way, the Masterplan not only seeks to meet the growing deathcare needs of the community but also ensures that Carr Villa continues to play an important role in the city's environmental goals, enhancing green spaces while respecting and preserving the site's ecological integrity.

Why aren't you proposing to dig up existing graves and reuse them to make more space?

The draft plan does not propose digging up existing graves or reusing current burial sites. Carr Villa Memorial Park is committed to preserving the integrity of all current graves and ensuring that existing interments remain undisturbed. Since Carr Villa's inception, graves have been sold in perpetuity, meaning that families and loved ones were assured that graves would remain untouched permanently. We are dedicated to respecting the memory of those already laid to rest and honouring the community's wishes.

Any new developments or burial areas will be carefully planned to ensure they respect the integrity of existing graves, as well as the site's vegetation, ecosystems, and heritage. The focus is on optimising available land within the current footprint, exploring sustainable and respectful ways to meet future interment needs while maintaining the park's peaceful and respectful environment.

Will limited tenure be introduced into the design for future burial developments?

The draft plan recommends exploring the introduction of limited tenure interment options in future burial areas. Limited tenure allows burial sites to be leased for a set period, after which families can renew the tenure or allow the site to be respectfully re-used. Limited tenure grave ownership is practiced in various locations around the world.

Currently the Tasmanian legislation that governs the deathcare industry, the *Burial and Cremation Act 2019* and the *Burial and Cremation Regulations 2015*, does not accommodate this style of burial, therefore exploring legislative changes would need to be explored in the first instance.

What happens once the consultation period is closed?

Community engagement on the Draft Carr Villa Memorial Park Masterplan closed on 28 April 2025. All feedback and submissions received during the consultation period are being reviewed and carefully considered, as we work towards a refined draft master plan for future Council consideration.

We will continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses via the Tomorrow Together webpage.


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