

# 2023

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# KULANGOOR

MASTERPLAN REVIEW 2023

Sunshine Coast Council



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022, Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) commissioned Everlon Studios to review past and current cemetery planning at the site in context with the contemporary and emerging cemetery needs and trends. The current site Masterplan was completed in 2004 by Argo Architects and has not been reviewed since that date. This Masterplan Review 2023 is timely to address the community change in attitude and perceptions of cemetery land use over the last 2 decades.

The primary objectives of the review were to consider;

1. Current and future interment capacity and interment preferences for the site.
2. Current asset condition, including landscape and future maintenance considerations.
3. Provide conceptual development plans for adaptable future interment offerings.
4. Provide conceptual development plans for future Capital investments, and/or, third-party partnerships.

This Report provides guidance and recommendations for future investment in infrastructure and memorial choice to service the needs and growing expectations of the local community. It aims to be strategic in direction, tactical in nature and be informed by council internal stakeholders, records and databases together with Everlon Studio industry research. In summary, the Report Recommendations are included and have been prioritised for timeline horizons.

The proposed future development of Kulangoor Cemetery aspires to be the best of its kind in the region, draws from learnings by other successful cemetery operators throughout Australia and is adapted for the local conditions. It is agile and scalable to provide a wide variety of interment designs and options over a wide price range and is aligned with community expectations.

The master planning has considered the following key conditions.

- Significant Land availability at Kulangoor.
- Councils desire for infrastructure and amenities that promote passive recreation and accessibility in line with the Open Space Strategy.
- A changing landscape of community needs and expectations.

The review has considered the existing site area which includes for an adjoining parcel of land owned by council to the west. The total of land is approximately 198,000 square metres and comprises of;

- Existing interment land and associated infrastructure – 30,100 square metres
- Potential Infill sites within existing infrastructure – 10,100 square metres
- Undeveloped land suitable for interments and infrastructure – 39,500 square metres
- Land for environment (not suitable for interment) - 118,300 square metres

This report in conjunction with the master plan drawings constitutes the Masterplan Review 2023.

INTRODUCTION

The Kulangoor Masterplan Review 2023 seeks to reimagine and demystify the cemetery to be a trusted and reassuring sanctuary that evokes feelings of warmth, comfort and peace that connect people with nature and community. To this end, the review proposes;

- Places for reflection, memorial and respite for communities as well as new public open space
- The Traditional Owner’s, Community and Stakeholders are directing the design solutions that will embody ownership of the cemetery in the broader community
- A new model for the cemetery that is equitable, practicable, flexible, and provides increased accessibility to all for cemetery services
- A holistic cemetery design in response to the environment, sustainability, and an innovative approach to development

Review Framework

The revised Master Plan is aligned with Councils Strategic Planning framework and contributes to councils more broader community planning objectives. These include:

- Sunshine Council Cemetery Plan 2019-2028
- Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041
- Sunshine Coast Council Environment and Livability Strategy 2017
- Sunshine Coast Excellence in Engagement Framework 2021

Information and data have been provided by council, Australian Bureau of Statistics and cemetery sector research. It is an evidenced based approach that supports the Master Plan review 2023.

The Review Framework is as described in Table 1 below.



Table 1- Review Framework

## **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a significant development opportunity for the Sunshine Coast Council and one of cultural and social significance for the wider community. This master plan revision promotes the organised development of the site currently known as Kulangoor Cemetery, which is located on Ackerman Road in Kulangoor. Kulangoor Cemetery currently caters for burials in lawn graves, monument graves and interment of cremated remains in memorial walls and under trees.

It is proposed to greatly increase the interment options available to the public and provide both choice and address the changing cultural needs of groups within the community. The master plan review also considers the growing demand for cremated remains interment and new interment options such as 'Natural Burials.' It provides a strategy for a wide variety of interment designs and types over a wide price range. In catering for a greater proportion and diversity in interment of cremated remains, this master plan review also responds to concerns of government and planning authorities about efficient usage of land resources.

The revised site master plan utilises and compliments the existing roads, interment land and infrastructure. The surrounding properties and site constraints have been considered in the arrangement of interment sites, buffer zones and supporting infrastructure to ensure a mutually acceptable solution. Kulangoor Cemetery has significant potential for development.

## **TOPOGRAPHY**

The main parcel of land contains a ridge of highly weathered basalt - stiff clay composition, which runs along a North-West to South-East axis. The ridge reaches a maximum elevation of 32 metres above Datum within the site in the Southeast corner. The main parcel also contains tributaries of Ferntree Creek, which drain the site to the North. The lowest elevation on site is approximately 11 metres above datum. Slopes on the site average 1 in 10 to 1 in 12 between the ridge and the tributaries; however, 1 in 5.5 slopes exist in this area. The tributaries have been dammed to create ponds and small lakes.

Another ridge that rises to 31 metres above the site datum before leaving the site to the South dominates the area close to Ferntree Creek Road. The average slopes off this ridge are 1 in 8 to 1:10; however, slopes as steep as 1 in 5.5 exist in this area. This area has the only significant east facing slopes on site.

## **GROUND CONDITIONS**

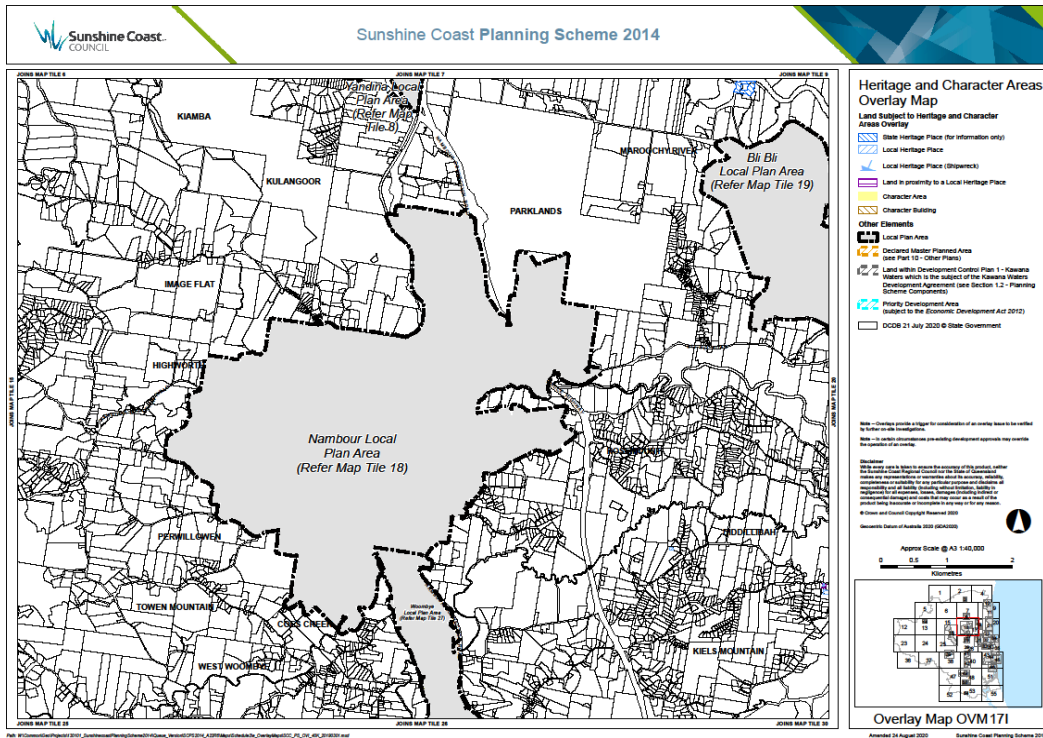
The generally stiff clays and highly weathered basalt are ideal for maintaining vertical earth excavations generally without the need for shoring.

A small area of land on the eastern slope in the Existing Interment Land lawn grave section has been identified as not suitable for burial purposes due to a suspected underground spring water. The Masterplan Revision 2023 has taken this into account and recommends Infill Site 5 be developed as a garden for cremated remains.



## Heritage and Character Areas

The subject land has no Heritage and Character overlays.



## Commercial Site

Opportunities for community and business partnerships has emerged with Site 9, as illustrated below. This site has direct frontage to the Nambour Connection Road and presents new commercial opportunities in supporting cemetery operations in partnerships with 3rd party complimentary business/s eg; Funeral Director operations, Multi-purpose Function facility, Crematorium. Other uses could be Kulangoor Cemetery administration and sales relocation.

Furthermore, it provides for more public visibility/connectivity and redress's accessibility and site access. The Masterplan Review 2023 has included provision for such a facility.



Illustration – Site 9, Future Commercial uses

## UNDEVELOPED AREA – Future Burial Infill Sites

The existing site can provide approximately 30,000m<sup>2</sup> of further development in support of Burial Sites as illustrated below. Future Burial Sites will require additional infrastructure in the form of road extensions, pathways, service corridors etc. These Undeveloped Infill Sites and associated infrastructure can be developed progressively and as interment demand directs. In summary, the undeveloped land would provide for approximately 35 years of future burial sales.

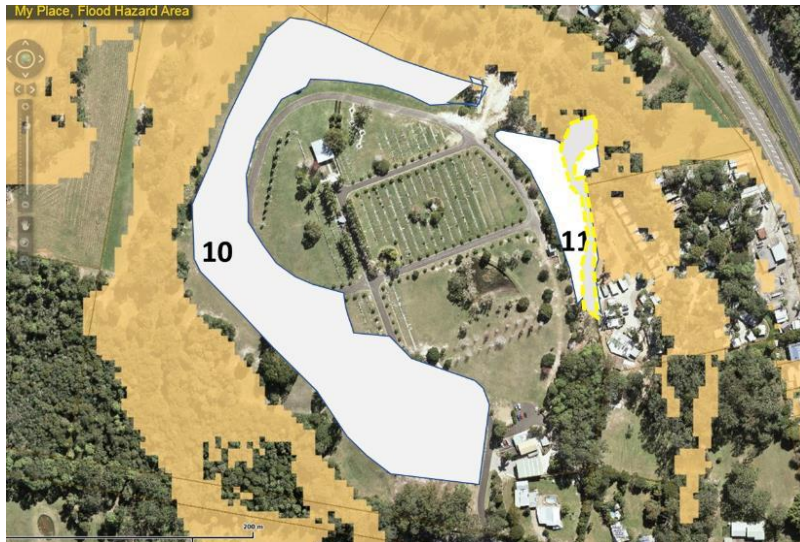


Illustration - Undeveloped future burial sites 10 & 11

## UNDEVELOPED AREA – Adjacent Site 12- potential for Burial Sites

Land vested in council to the west of the existing Kulangoor site has been considered in the Masterplan Review 2023. The site is densely vegetated and currently inaccessible and not utilized as illustrated below. While there are some planning constraints these are considered manageable with the proposed future development directions. The Masterplan connects this site and makes available approximately 26,850 m<sup>2</sup> of land in support of Burial Sites.

Burial sites in this area would be restricted to low impact, low density, burials/interment offerings. Burial density in this area includes for retention of 60% native vegetation and 10% for infrastructure. Approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup> of this land would be available for products such as Natural Burials and cremation memorialisatation that would add approximately 13 years of future burial capacity.





## EXTERNAL CONDITIONS / TRENDS

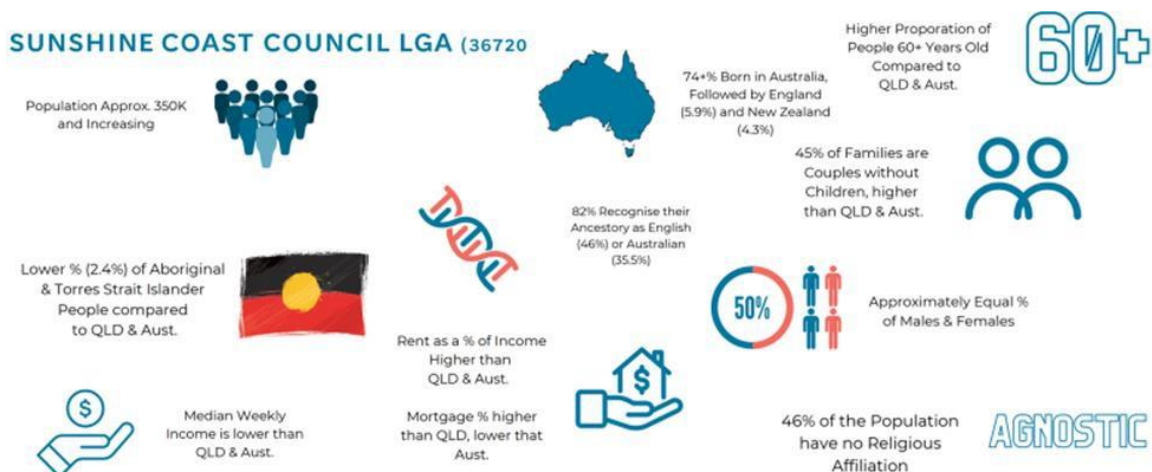
Everlon Studios and its association partners consistently research and monitor current and emerging consumer trends and best industry practice to ensure our products and services align with contemporary expectations. Our insights reveal today and tomorrow customers are trending in directions as described in the illustration below. Where applicable to the capability of Kulangoor Cemetery, these trends have been incorporated into the design and flexibility of the Masterplan Drawing.

### Illustration - Consumer Trends



## DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE

The demographic and socioeconomic profile of the community consumers has been reviewed and informs the likely demand for Burial and Cremation memorial options (Illustration - Demographic Profile). These insights have been considered and reflected in the Masterplan Review 2023.



Source: 2021 Census Data, Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Illustration - Demographic Profile

## RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research has been undertaken to better understand the religious and spiritual demographic of the SCC community profile. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for the past 3 ABS census collections reveal some changing societal trends and indicators of cohorts as a percentage of local population.

Noticeable changes over the past 10 years indicate;

- Christianity has steadily declined by 18.6%.
- Non – Denominational has steadily increased by 23.2%.

- Islam and Judaism remain steady while Hinduism has slightly increased (0.4%).

Religious and Spiritual trending for the Sunshine Coast Region is listed below in Table 13 - Secular Composition.

Description	2011	2016	2021	
Buddhism (%)	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%	↓
Christianity (%)	62.8%	54.6%	44.2%	↓
Hinduism (%)	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	↑
Islam (%)	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	steady
Judaism (%)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	steady
Other religions (%)	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	steady
Other spiritual beliefs (%)	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%	↑
No religion, secular beliefs (%)	25.8%	33.8%	49.0%	↑
Religious affiliation - inadequately described or not stated (%)	8.2%	9.0%	7.3%	↓

Table - Secular Composition

These findings have been considered in the review in context with providing space planning areas for all denominations and others with varying rituals and practices.

## MEMORILISATION

### EXISTING CONDITIONS IMPACTS ON MEMORILISATION

A review has been undertaken to assess what current factors are having impacts at Kulangoor Cemetery. Future memorialisation installations with community relevance, and the capability of the site to deliver on these has been considered in the planning. Existing condition impacts have been noted on the illustration below, Memorialisation Impacts.

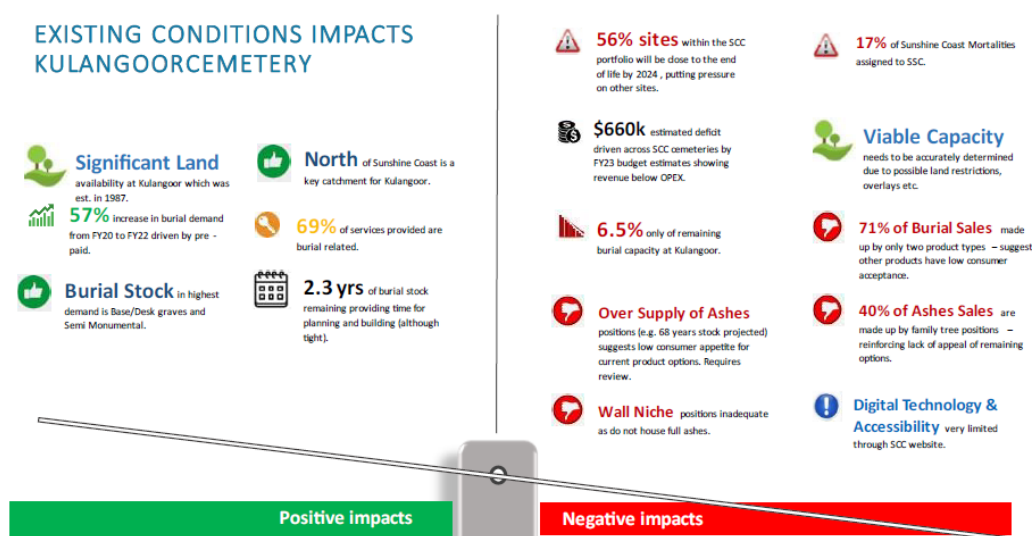


Illustration - Memorialisation Impacts



## LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

### Design Philosophy and Approach

Kulangoor Cemetery sits within a unique landscape setting which not only provides a beautiful, restful, and functional place of interment, but also provides a highly valuable resource in terms of its ability to contribute to the local and regional open space network. These contributions include opportunities to provide sensitively considered and appropriate passive recreation initiatives, while at the same time tapping into local land conservation initiatives to facilitate increased flora and fauna biodiversity. These initiatives are particularly relevant given the geographic location of the site nestled between the Mapleton & Parklands Conservation Parks.

The Landscape Masterplan philosophy and approach aims to explore these opportunities in combination with the site's unique landscape character by creating placemaking opportunities which will ultimately assist with creating increased awareness and interest resulting in improved visitation, usage, and increased interment product diversity and sales.

In developing the future landscape environment, it is important to also focus on spatial diversity where the current large open and largely undefined spaces may evolve into more intimate, safe & agile environments with their own individual but complimentary identity. In achieving these outcomes, it is essential to identify the spatial hierarchy as well as an appropriate plant material and external furniture palette including visually complimentary and functional interpretive Art and Architecture, which would also embrace the indigenous cultural heritage of the area.

Celebration of this indigenous cultural heritage should be centered around engagement with the relevant First Nation communities with reference to the local Gubbi Gubbi people. As far as practicable the insertion of art & architecture should reference and interpret these First Nations people recognising the importance of reconciliation through active collaboration.

Collaboration with our first nations communities provides opportunities to:

- Recognize Aboriginal people as the custodians of the land, giving them a voice to empower them to continue caring for country
- Protect and enhance the Aboriginal cultural values in Australian landscapes
- Support and participate in the movement of reconciliation in Australia

The Kulangoor natural landscape environment provides an exceptional canvas to further implement the above design philosophy while embracing the existing natural site attributes and incorporating them into a carefully orchestrated spatial arrangement with recurring visual themes.

The evolving masterplan will endeavor to provide connectivity and legibility for all of these elements where a careful balance of formal and informal design responses may be woven together to ensure a cohesive, diverse, and easily programmable landscape for future staged implementation.

### Amenity

Throughout the site it is intended that all pathways will be DDA Compliant with particular care taken in terms of final materials and pavement selections and the avoidance of steps and level changes requiring accessible ramps with handrails. Particular emphasis has been placed on the elderly and disabled, where travel distances between cars and grave sites has been minimised. Each landscape precinct has been designed ensuring the provision of passive rest areas for remembrance & reflection in combination with site shelter structures providing shade and seating throughout the site.

Other initiatives to improve overall visual and functional amenity include:

- Identification of opportunities to introduce calming water feature elements
- Complimentary small children's play areas in selected precincts
- Bioswales and boardwalks for flora and fauna appreciation and possible connection to the regional bushwalking network
- Interpretive artwork installations and thematic wayfinding using local indigenous themes.

## **Landscape Precincts**

The masterplan has been configured to respond to the strong visual axis and internal circulation strategy by creating a network of landscape precincts providing a sequential landscape experience where interment areas have improved definition and legibility, which in turn provides a more enjoyable and relaxing experience when visiting loved ones in the cemetery.

The following provides a brief summary of these precincts:

### **Precincts 1A & 1B**

To provide improved spatial uses and diversity to the Amenity building area, it is proposed to introduce portable seating and furniture where angled rows of trees will form an amphitheatre opening up to a performance stage with open lawn terraces fringed with linear niche wall interments and amenity planting.

### **Precincts 2 & 3**

Located in undeveloped land pockets, these small precincts to the immediate east of the Amenity building have been repurposed to provide a children's memorial garden and small ashes scatter garden using native floral patterns, with a small remembrance garden and children's play area also included in precinct.

### **Precinct 4**

This largely undeveloped precinct will provide a series of landscape 'rooms' which take advantage of the gentle slopes which fall away from the central ridge to the west. Providing multi-denominational graves and a Mausoleum, the pathway network in combination with selected avenue and amenity plantings provides improved legibility and includes a small passive recreation area and shelter structure nestled amongst existing trees.

### **Precinct 5**

This east facing gently sloping area is subject to ground water inundation and is unsuitable for burial sites. The precinct has therefore been redefined in a radial pattern for ash memorials with a wetland planting theme. The introduction of a small passive remembrance garden and shelter structure provides added amenity and opportunities to reinforce the precinct character with a range of complimentary wetland plant species.

### **Precincts 6A – 6D**

Precinct 6 provides a significant reconfiguration and visual enhancement of the existing pond and immediate environs. It is proposed to augment the shape of the existing pond and introduce a combination of built elements as a central focal feature and passive recreation area including a boardwalk and jetty, a connective water cascade, central pond water feature, contemplation gardens, site shelter structure and a small children's play area.

The gentle slopes to the east of the pond will have curved burial sites set amongst several existing significant trees. To the south of the pond existing ash memorial trees will have improved purpose and legibility where the new circulation network will improve the visitor experience including a new informal meandering pathway system for additional ash gardens.

### **Precinct 7**

This gentle west sloping precinct is framed by the existing pond and dense wetlands to the east and the new connective water cascades to the south. The precinct will respond to the adjacent large central burial sites by providing a continuation of the N/W – S/E orientation of graves which in combination with selected avenue and amenity plantings will provide additional strength, unity, and connectivity to the masterplan.

### **Precincts 8A & 8B**

This area proposes a more organised parking area with improved pedestrian connectivity providing a viewing area from the highest part of the site and includes an site orientation a meeting place with way-finding information. Here the pathway network picks up the central visual Axis 2 providing a central connective pathway through the centre of the site. Immediately below the car-park gentle slopes provide a large area of elevated north facing burial sites overlooking the whole of the cemetery below.

### **Precinct 9**

This precinct identifies the potential for a new development site and future primary site entry off the Nambour Connection Road. This entry is subject to further investigation and would include a collective design response which sits in harmony with the adjacent low-lying wetland areas.

### **Precinct 10**

Precinct 10 provides the largest area of new interment opportunities with a diverse range of varying angled slopes and orientations creating a linear parkland between the Ring Road and low-lying wetland tributaries of Fern Tree Creek. The landscape design response aims to create an integrated pathway and planting arrangement based on 'First Nations' interpretive patterns using culturally significant tree species.

Interment opportunities include burial sites above the RL 14.0 flood contour and elevated ash memorials beyond in combination with bio-swales and boardwalks. This Precinct provides opportunities for increased biodiversity through the introduction of a wide range of native grasses and wetland species increasing local flora and fauna biodiversity and potential connectivity to the regional bushwalking network while also raising awareness of the site and improving its local status as a preferred place of interment.

### **Precinct 11A & 11B**

These precincts appear as a visual extension of Precinct 10 and comprise those low-lying areas to the north and north-east of the site between the Ring Road and new development area Precinct 9. Here the landscape design provides a carefully considered integration of existing trees and lowland forest with a continuation of the 'First Nations' themed pathway and planting patterns, and wetland planting themes.

Precinct 11A provides for burial sites set amongst avenues of native tree planting in respectful contrast to Precinct 11B where a network of informal meandering pathways provides a large area for a range of elevated ash memorials with a wetland planting theme.

### **Precinct 12**

This precinct identifies a future stage expansion using lands above the RL 14.0 flood contour located to the south-west of the site and accessed by an elevated road and pedestrian bridge. With limited area available for an expansive road network this precinct comprises a carpark and meandering pathway network where visitors may enjoy the experience of the natural bushland setting. Remembrance and ash memorial gardens are provided along with several site shelter structures all set within a strong and diverse native planting theme.

### **Site Entry Statements**

To provide an elevated level of respect and enhanced arrival experience for those visiting the site, the existing entry area will be upgraded in combination with the proposed introduction of a new primary entry road connected to the Nambour Connection Road.

The existing entry area will be upgraded using a combination of existing significant trees and new native palm plantings while the new entry statement alongside Precinct 9 will comprise a significant but appropriately scaled entry sign with complimentary native palm plantings. The new entry road will provide a strong linear statement using a boulevard of culturally significant trees set amongst a row of interpretive low art-walls based on First Nation's themes.