



# ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH CANBERRA

<b>Policy on</b>	Churchyard and Columbarium
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Responsible agency	Rector
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## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

St John's mission is to 'bear public witness to Jesus Christ through Anglican worship and pastoral ministry, loving community and outward-facing mission.' This governs all we do as a Parish including policy development.

This policy is guided by The Master Policy of the parish and diocesan ordinances and polices, most notably the Governance of the Diocese Ordinance.

Legislation and related:

ACT Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2020

ACT Heritage Act 2004; ACT Heritage Register entry 20019

National Trust of Australia (NSW) Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2009.

## PRINCIPLES

### **The Churchyard and Columbaria**

The St John's churchyard consists of an historic graveyard, and three columbaria. The churchyard dates back to just before the consecration of the Church in 1845. The columbaria were established in 1962, 1991 and 2006, and are available to accept interments. There is a separate Campbell family columbarium in the Campbell enclosure.

The history of the churchyard and a list of burials and interments to 2010 will be found in J. Salisbury, *St John's Churchyard Canberra 1844-2010*, Parish of St John the Baptist, Canberra 2011.

Headstones are paid for by the next-of-kin, who remain responsible for their ongoing care and maintenance. The parish also charges a fee for burials and interments into graves, to help cover our ongoing maintenance of the churchyard in perpetuity. The Churchyard Administrator and Rector must be consulted and give their approval on all matters to do with graves and headstones.

The Church Office is the initial contact point for all requests for burials and interments. Matters relating to the graveyard and the Campbell enclosure are then referred to Churchyard Administrator. Matters relating to the columbaria are dealt with by the Parish Administrator. The Rector has overall oversight.

### **The graveyard**

Burials are no longer accepted at St John's following a notice to this effect in the Commonwealth Gazette of 31 July 1937. There are some specific exceptions:

- Those who hold Exclusive Rights Certificates, which were issued between 1920 and 1937, records of which are held in the Church Office.
- Bishops of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and Rectors of St John's Canberra, who die in office or who retire from active ministry after holding those respective positions, and their spouses.

- Descendants of George Campbell (d. 1881), whilessoever space is available in the Campbell enclosure, and as agreed by those descendants.

Under arrangements with the Rector, the ashes of family members can be interred in existing graves with the agreement of other descendants of the person so buried (see Procedures below).

### **The Campbell enclosure**

Requests for the interment of ashes in the Campbell family columbarium will only be accepted on the advice of the descendants of George Campbell (d.1881).

### **The columbaria**

Columbaria I and II are completely booked.

Persons with a close link with the Parish may book two places (for themselves and a close family member or partner) in Columbarium III and have their ashes interred at the request of their next of kin.

Ashes can only be interred in columbaria or graves. They cannot be scattered throughout the graveyard.

### **Role of the Rector and Churchyard Administrator**

The Rector has overall discretion and management responsibility in respect of all matters to do with the churchyard and columbaria, but may seek the advice of Parish Council from time to time.

The Churchyard Administrator is consulted in all matters of burial and interment into graves. The Administrator liaises with families about maintenance of graves and informs the Parish Office of any general ground's maintenance needed.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **1. Administration**

- a. The Churchyard Administrator will be appointed by Parish Council.
- b. The role of the Churchyard Administrator is:
  - i. to advise the Rector and Parish Council on any matter to do with the churchyard
  - ii. to liaise with those wishing to arrange burials and interments into graves in the churchyard
  - iii. to check eligibility of requests for burials, interments and other matters concerning gravestone and the use of the churchyard
  - iv. arrange for the maintenance of headstones

### **2. Burials and Interments**

- a. **Full burials**

- i. An applicant or next-of-kin must produce an Exclusive Rights Certificate, for the first and second burials respectively. Approval will depend upon space being available.
- ii. Arrangements for preparing the grave are to be made only after consultation with the Churchyard Administrator.
- iii. Costs for preparing the grave are the responsibility of the family.
- iv. Examples of accepted types of wording for headstones are available from the Church Office.
- v. The Churchyard Administrator is to approve the style and design of, and wording used on all headstones.
- vi. Costs of headstones and their maintenance are the responsibility of the next-of-kin.

**b. Interment in the columbaria**

- i. Ashes are interred in the plot of ground set aside for this purpose adjacent to the respective columbarium wall.
- ii. The Rector will approve the wording to be placed on the plaque affixed to the columbarium wall in the place reserved. The family will recommend up to six lines of text, with the name of the deceased being in block capital letters.
- iii. Examples of accepted types of wording are available from the Church Office.
- iv. Military insignia can be used on plaques, on the presentation of a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- v. Recognised post-nominals can also be used on plaques, provided the name and post-nominals do not take up more than two of the six lines of text available.
- vi. Plaques will be made by an approved supplier, in consultation with the Rector, arranged through the Church Office.

**c. Interment of ashes in graves**

- i. The ashes of descendants of people who are buried in the churchyard may be interred in family graves, provided their relationship to the person already buried and the approval of other next-of-kin, can be established to the satisfaction of the Churchyard Administrator.
- ii. If there is not an existing headstone, the next-of-kin will be required to provide one to the memory of the person already buried, and then a plaque to the memory of the person whose ashes are being interred.
- iii. The headstone and plaque should be in position before the ashes are interred.
- iv. Prior to the interment, the stonemason approved by the Churchyard Administrator, in consultation with the Rector, will, if possible, open the grave and close it afterwards. The cost will be met by the family.

**d. Headstones over unmarked graves**

- i. Next-of-kin can request approval to have a headstone installed on a grave for which no previous stone existed.
- ii. The cost is to be covered by the next-of-kin.
- iii. The Churchyard Administrator will arrange with the stonemason to have the headstone prepared and installed at a time convenient to the next-of-kin.
- iv. The Churchyard Administrator is to approve the style and design of, and wording used on all headstones.

**3. Fees**

- a. A schedule of fees for burials and interments will be approved from time to time by Parish Council on the advice of the Rector and Churchyard Administrator.
- b. The current schedule of fees will be available from the Church Office.
- c. Fees for interment of the ashes in the Campbell family Columbarium, of members of the Campbell family who are descendants of George Campbell (d.1881) or their family members, will be 50% of the approved schedule of fees.

**4. Reservation process (Columbaria only)**

- a. Requests for reserving space in one of the columbaria are made through the Church Office.
- b. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the applicants are asked to identify a suitable place from the maps available in the Office.
- c. The Rector then issues a certificate to the applicants indicating the space has been reserved.

**5. Reselling or otherwise disposing of a Columbarium reservation**

- a. Reselling, reallocation or bequeathing spaces for the interment of ashes in the columbaria is not allowed.
- b. Sites no longer required can be surrendered by Rector. A refund of the amount paid, less a handling fee, will be made.

**6. Safety in the Churchyard**

- a. The Churchyard Administrator will contact next-of-kin when headstones and memorials fall into a state of disrepair, requesting that the headstone or memorial be re-constructed.
- b. If next-of-kin cannot be identified, the Parish accepts responsibility for maintenance of headstones and memorials.