

## Draft Policy

# Private Memorials in Public Parks and Natural Areas

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Community and Natural Resources  
Natural Resource Management  
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# **Private Memorials in Public Parks and Natural Areas**

## **Policy Objective**

This Policy explains how Council will respond to requests for permission to establish memorials for deceased persons in public parks and natural areas.

The Policy describes how Council will manage unapproved installations of memorials for deceased persons in public parks and natural areas.

## **Policy Background**

Council is occasionally approached by friends or relatives of deceased persons who wish to commemorate them by installing a plaque or memorial in a public area. Council does not generally give permission for such memorials, however installations of plaques, paint and other materials are being placed in public parks and natural areas, particularly along the coast.

Typically, preferred areas have high natural scenic values and are sometimes highly visible and visited.

Council understands the desire to memorialise loved ones, especially in places that were important to them or related to their passing. However, the cumulative visual and character impact of establishing numerous private memorials is not considered acceptable.

From a community values and natural area management perspective memorials can become a prominent and personalised feature imposed upon shared public space. Council is concerned that single memorials normalise the practice, leading to additional memorial installations close by or in similar areas. This is contrary to the expectations and preference of a large number of people who seek to enjoy natural areas in an unaltered way.

The Tweed Coast Regional Crown Reserve Plan of Management sets out NSW Government policy for management of the Tweed Coast Headlands. The key management objectives for the headlands are to preserve significant visual amenity and to protect natural and cultural values. Installation of private memorials in prominent locations within the coastal environment is inconsistent with this policy.

## **Policy**

### **Criteria for placement of memorials**

Council will not generally permit plaques and memorials commemorating deceased persons to be placed in public parks or natural areas.

In certain circumstances they may be allowed, but will only be considered where they meet the following criteria:

1. They commemorate a deceased individual who was a member of the Tweed community and who has made a substantial contribution to the Tweed community.
2. The contribution of the individual was extra-ordinary and over and above what might reasonably be expected through paid employment or their voluntary contribution to the community, and that contribution stands out from others who may have also made a valuable contribution.
3. A request to place a plaque or memorial commemorating a deceased individual will only be considered where the individual has been deceased for at least one year, to allow for appropriate development of historical perspective.

Plaques or memorials may also be considered where they:

4. Commemorate a significant historical or cultural event which has a profound meaning for the broader Tweed community, or is of national or state significance. The subject of a requested plaque or memorial must have a clear association and strong significance to the location proposed for the plaque or memorial.

Requests for plaques and memorials will only be considered where they are consistent with, if existing, a Council plan for the proposed area of open space. If there is no master plan or concept plan for the proposed area of open space then the request must be consistent with Council's Open Space Strategy and the land's public purpose.

Recognition of significant donations for open space infrastructure by community associations (e.g. barbeques, picnic shelters, picnic settings, playgrounds, buildings etc) may be acknowledged by way of a plaque permanently mounted on or adjacent to the infrastructure.

Placement of plaques or memorials in public open space must have prior written approval from Council.

### **Memorials on public land not managed Council**

Requests for the placement of a plaque or memorial within open space that is managed by, but not owned by Council (Council managed Crown Land), will initially be assessed by Council, referring to this policy. If a proposed memorial is assessed by Council as being acceptable, conforming to qualifications outlined in this policy, the request will be referred to Crown Lands for final approval.

### **Considerations for approval of memorials**

If approved in accordance with this policy, the placement of a plaque or memorial should be consistent with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development.

The placement of a plaque or memorial in public open space must not detract from the aesthetic value of the space, nor have a negative impact on the use of the site by the community.

### **Process for memorial applications**

Persons making enquiries regarding the installation of a plaque or memorial should be referred to this policy.

Applications for the installation of a plaque or memorial will be accepted from a variety of sources including individuals, groups and clubs, and should be made to the General Manager.

Applications must be in writing, and must demonstrate in detail how the proposed memorial accords with this policy. Applications should include the type of plaque or memorial, the proposed design (including dimensions, wording, colour, and materials) as well as the preferred location.

Initial review of the application will be made by Council.

If assessed by staff as conforming, a report will be made to the Director of Community and Natural Resources for final consideration. Requests for plaques or memorials may also be referred to Council, or Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee for approval in some circumstances.

Final approval for the design and layout of any plaque or memorial rests with the General Manager.

Once approved, the manufacture and installation will be by the applicant. In some instances and at its own discretion Council may contribute toward the cost of the manufacture and/or installation.

### **Memorials not approved in perpetuity**

Council does not guarantee to retain approved plaques and memorials in perpetuity. Normally a plaque or memorial will be retained in place for as long as practicable, with the following exceptions:

- The area in which the item is sited is to be redeveloped.
- The use of the area in which the item is sited changes significantly in character and the item is not deemed suitable for the site.
- The structure or support on which the item is located is to be removed or permanently altered.
- The item has been vandalised and is no longer viable.

Council does not guarantee approval for replacement of the plaque/memorial.

### **Other options and exclusions**

Council will consider the possibility of families donating a tree in lieu of a memorial. Donations would only be considered on the condition that no plaque would be installed, with decisions regarding the species and location of trees to be made by Council.

This policy does not cover the naming or renaming of parks, reserves or Council facilities.

### **Removal of unauthorised memorials**

Plaques or memorials which have been placed in Council land or Council managed Crown Land without Council approval will be removed.

All reasonable efforts will be made to identify and contact the persons responsible for placing the item to advise them of this policy, and the proposed removal. Reasonable attempts will be made to hold a removed item for collection by the persons responsible for its placement.

### **Review Period**

The policy is to be reviewed every 10 years or earlier if required.

### **Useful Links**

[Tweed Shire Council website](#)

[Office of Local Government](#)

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