



Plaques and Memorials Policy

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Officer Responsible	Manager Urban Services & Projects
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Strategic/Operational Policy

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OBJECTIVES

To provide a standardised and consistent policy framework for management of plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens, including existing, installation of new, and the assessment of new requests for plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens within public spaces in the Blayney Shire Council Local Government Area (Blayney Shire).

To ensure compliance with relevant legislative and Geographical Names Board (GNB) guidelines.

DEFINITIONS

“Plaque” - A flat tablet of metal, stone, engraved pavers (footpath) or other material which may include text and/or images that commemorate a person, event, or historical information relevant to a particular location. The tablet may be fixed to an object, building or hard ground surface located within public open space.

“Memorial” – An object (e.g., an obelisk) established to commemorate a person, group, association, or event. In the context of this Policy, memorial does not include a tree, but may include a memorial garden if proposed for a major public open space.

“Memorial Garden” – Memorial gardens are areas planted for a specific purpose, generally to commemorate a person or an historical event. Key features include the style and preferred plantings.

“Public Open Space” – Is all Council owned or managed land that is open or accessible to people, including:

- Council owned public open space including parks, bushland reserves and sports fields,
- Land managed by Council but owned by another body,
- Reserve furniture within public space (such as benches, picnic tables etc),
- Any other infrastructure within public space (such as picnic shelters, barbeques, playgrounds, fences etc), and
- Activity centre locations, including footpaths, median strips, public squares, recreation grounds and laneways.

SCOPE

This Policy covers plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens on Council owned or managed land, including streets, reserves, parks, or other public open space.

All new plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens will be required to conform to this Policy. Existing plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens in the Blayney Shire that predate this Policy, should not be taken as a precedent for the approval of any future plaques or memorials.

This Policy does not apply to cemeteries and crematoriums.

BACKGROUND

Public open space plays a significant part in Blayney Shire's social and cultural heritage and makes a valued recreational, environmental, and aesthetic contribution for people who live, work, and enjoy recreation in the Blayney Shire. Plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens provide recognition and can contribute to an understanding of events or individuals closely associated with the history or the community of the Blayney Shire.

Any decision regarding plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens needs to take into consideration the balance between the desire to commemorate events or individuals and the ongoing enjoyment of visually uncluttered public spaces.

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to enable Council to:

- Provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate significant historical events and persons or organisations closely associated with the leadership, cultural and social development of the Blayney Shire.
- Protect the intended purpose, environmental values, and aesthetic appearance of Council public space.
- Provide a clear and equitable framework to manage requests for plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens to be located within Council public space.
- Ensuring risks are adequately considered in relation to plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens on Council land.

Council recognises that plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens provide recognition and are important in celebrating significant historical events and individuals closely associated with the leadership, cultural and social development within the Blayney Shire.

General Principles

To protect the intended purpose and aesthetic appearance of Council owned or controlled public space. Council does not generally encourage installation of plaques and memorials on land owned or managed by Council.

Plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens will only be considered where they are consistent with Council's strategic and urban design vision for the proposed location. The proposal must be consistent with relevant Council strategies, master plans and the land's public purpose. It must not result in a change of use of the land, or not negatively impact the aesthetic or environmental value of public space.

They must meet all relevant planning and building requirements and are to be designed and sited in a way that will not damage the supporting structure or natural environment or create a public risk. They are to be constructed in a manner that will require little ongoing maintenance and will be resistant to vandalism.

Plaques attached to an asset like a seat, building, etc. must be durable and must have a life equivalent to the asset to which they are attached.

All costs associated with the design, construction, installation and maintenance of plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens are to be paid by the person/group making the request. Once approved, installation of any plaque, memorial, or memorial garden must be undertaken by Council (cost to be negotiated). Once installed they will become the property of Blayney Shire Council and may be entered into Council's Asset Register.

Maintenance of plaques and memorials must only be undertaken by Council. Community involvement in the maintenance of memorial gardens may be considered in some circumstances.

Council does not guarantee to retain plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens in perpetuity. Generally, they 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,
- Ongoing maintenance costs are prohibitive,
- In the case of a plaque, the asset to which it is attached has reached the end of its useful life; or
- The condition of the plaque or memorial is poor.

If a plaque, memorial, or memorial garden is removed for any of the reasons above, Council will not guarantee replacement, however replacement plaques or memorials of similar or different style or form may be considered. All reasonable efforts will be made to identify, contact, and advise relevant stakeholders (including family members).

Existing plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens

Existing plaques, memorials and memorial gardens will generally be retained in place for as long as practicable, subject to exceptions listed above. Non-compliant / unauthorised plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens will be removed by Council as soon as practicable. Where possible, Council will attempt to contact the community organisation, next of kin / family to return the non-compliant / unauthorised plaque or memorial.

New Plaques initiated by Council

Plaques may be installed by Council on Council owned or managed land, buildings, or structures to commemorate an opening of a new or refurbished Council building or facility, or a historically significant event, or site.

Where project funding has been provided by an external agency, such as the NSW or Australian Government, and acknowledgement of the funding agreement is required in the form of a plaque, the layout and wording of the plaque will be in accordance with the funding agreement.

Plaques installed by Council will be funded by Council. Council may seek a financial contribution from funding partners if applicable.

Requests for new plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens initiated by the public

Council will consider requests for new plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens on land owned or managed by Council, including those from private individuals and community groups. They will only be considered where the following criteria are met:

- They are strongly linked to the Blayney Shire community and recognise:
 - an act of bravery,
 - returned service men and women,
 - a substantial / significant contribution to leadership, cultural or social aspects (e.g., famous sports identities, educators, etc.),
 - a significant contribution to development or a shared community history (e.g., industry, civic, or community leaders), or
 - the contribution has been exceptional and extends beyond what might reasonably be expected through paid employment or voluntary contribution to the community.
- For individuals being commemorated:
 - they will not generally be considered until the significant person has been deceased for at least one year, to allow for appropriate development of historical perspective. Approval will be sought from a deceased person's next of kin or appropriate relative(s) where practicable. However, in exceptional circumstances Council may approve plaques or memorials commemorating significant living persons at Council's discretion.
 - they include substantiated / verified evidence of the persons significant contribution. Further, Council may undertake community consultation (including with the Blayney Shire Local & Family History Group) to substantiate the significant contribution.
- They commemorate a significant historical or cultural event which has a deep meaning for the broader Blayney Shire community or are of national or state significance.

Additionally, the subject of a requested plaque, memorial, or memorial garden must also have a clear association with and strong relevance to the proposed location and must not have been commemorated elsewhere in the Blayney Shire Council area already.

Memorials including open space public seating with attached plaques will be considered only where they meet the requirements of this policy and are consistent with Council's strategic and urban design objectives for the proposed site, including any masterplans for the site.

Significant donations for public space infrastructure (e.g., barbeques, picnic shelters etc.) may be acknowledged by mounting a plaque on or adjacent to the infrastructure.

Council approval can be sought for memorial gardens from Community groups. Applications made will need to include the site and proposed location, design (including preferred plantings), and demonstrate that community consultation has been undertaken.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Placement of plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens in public open space requires prior written approval from Council. Persons making initial enquiries should contact Council.

If the applicant(s) wishes to proceed with a plaque, memorial, or memorial garden in a public space, they must satisfy the requirements of this Policy, including the provision of substantiated / verified evidence to support the request.

New plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens initiated by Council

Plaques, memorials, or memorial gardens initiated by Council must comply with this Policy.

The final layout, wording, or style shall be submitted to the relevant Asset Custodian for approval. The wording, layout, or style may vary as appropriate based on the needs of the facility/event.

Final approval for the design and location of any proposed plaque, memorial, or memorial garden may be subject to a Council resolution.

Requests for new plaques and memorials initiated by the public

Applications for new plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens must be in writing and must demonstrate compliance with this Policy. They should include all relevant details including proposed text, images, garden style (including preferred plantings) as well as the preferred location.

Review of the design and layout, wording and location of any proposed plaque, memorial, or memorial garden will be undertaken by relevant Council staff in accordance with this Policy. A Council resolution may be required to approve the installation in some instances.

Any request for the placement of a plaque, memorial, or memorial garden within public space that is managed by but not owned by Council will initially be assessed for compliance with this Policy. If assessed by Council as compliant the request will be referred to the landowner for final approval. Approval from other responsible authorities may be required if a plaque or memorial is proposed on land controlled by legislation.

Once approved, the design, manufacture and installation will be coordinated by Council and all costs will be borne by the applicant. In some instances, Council may contribute toward the cost of the manufacture and/or installation.

Plaques, memorials, and memorial gardens placed in Council public open space 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 to return any removed item to them.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

NSW Government, Geographical Names Board, *Commemorative naming fact sheet*. September 2018.

Blayney Shire Council, *Roads, Street and Bridge Names Policy (25F)*.

End

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