

DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Web: <u>www.strathfieldhomebushhistory.org</u> Email: strathfieldhistory@gmail.com

21 September 2025

Metropolitan Memorial Parks

Re: Objection to Proposal for Redevelopment of Carnarvon Golf Course and Coleman Park, Lidcombe, for Rookwood Cemetery Expansion

Dear Sir / Madam,

On behalf of the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society, we write to formally and strongly oppose the proposal to redevelop Carnarvon Golf Course and Coleman Park, Lidcombe into an extension of Rookwood Cemetery. We also firmly object to any suggestions concerning converting Hudson Park, Strathfield into cemetery land.

Our objections are as follows:

Inappropriate Use of Public Parkland

- Carnarvon Golf Course and Coleman Park are Crown Land public recreation reserves. To repurpose them as cemetery land is inconsistent with their intended Reserve purposes for public recreation.
- These sites support active and passive recreation: sports and recreation, casual walking, family gatherings, etc. Removing them would deprive the local community of important health, social, cultural and recreational assets.
- Lidcombe and nearby suburbs are growing in population due to the increase of unit developments, creating reductions of private open space. Repurposing open and recreational space into cemetery land will reduces access to open space for current and future communities.

Cemetery land demand

The need for additional burial land in Sydney, especially Western Sydney is acknowledged and it is important to find solutions, however the repurposing of land occupied by Carnarvon Golf Course and Coleman Reserve would only satisfy demand for burial space for a limited period as his land will inevitably run out of burial space. A long-term solution for Cemetery land in Western Sydney is required which does not involve turning land that is currently being used and needed for parks and recreation into

extended cemetery spaces. The State Government must identify appropriate sites further west for longer term solutions.

Rookwood Cemetery was originally dedicated in the 19th century far away from Sydney and inner city areas when Sydney was much smaller and places like Rookwood were largely unpopulated. Finding solutions to this ongoing problem requires more than a quick grab of nearby parks and open spaces. This will not solve the long-term problem of demand for Cemetery space and especially burial sites.

Opposition to Hudson Park, Strathfield as Cemetery Land

We specifically object to any plans to convert Hudson Park, Strathfield, into cemetery land. The local Member for Auburn, Ms Lynda Volt MLA, has publicly stated that Hudson Park Strathfield should be considered as a possible site for cemetery extension. In media reporting ("MP slams plan to convert Sydney golf course into cemetery ...", Australian Golf Digest, 19 August 2025), Ms Lynda Voltz MP, Member for Auburn, sharply criticised the plan to convert Carnarvon Golf Course into a cemetery and pointed out that Hudson Park had earlier been identified (in 2012) as a potential cemetery extension site, but questioned why that has not been more seriously considered. While we respect the representations Ms Voltz is making on behalf of her community opposing this proposal, particularly the loss of recreational and social amenities for Lidcombe and Auburn, the same argument applies to the Strathfield community if Hudson Park were also considered for cemetery expansions.

Hudson Park is a valued public amenity with historic, environmental and recreational importance; converting it would be a serious loss to the Strathfield community. Strathfield Council has also made significant investments into the upgrade of this parkland to meet current and future population needs for open and recreational space. It would be totally inappropriate for this land to be repurposed as a cemetery.

If the land occupied by Carnarvon Golf Course, Coleman Reserve or Hudson Park is repurposed as cemetery land, it would establish an alarming precedent that public open space can be repurposed for land uses not consistent with their historic and established community usage.

For all these reasons, we call on the relevant authorities to:

- 1. Reject the proposal to convert Carnarvon Golf Course and Coleman Park into expansion of Rookwood Cemetery.
- 2. Reject any repurposing of Hudson Park, Strathfield as a cemetery extension.
- 3. Ensure full, transparent, and meaningful public consultation, including with community groups such as this Historical Society.
- 4. Commit to preserving the integrity of public open spaces and recreation facilities in planning decisions.
- 5. Investigate and propose alternative solutions for burial space that do not involve loss of public parkland.

We request that our objection be placed on the official record, that this letter be provided to all decision-makers, and that we be included in any further consultations or hearings.

Yours faithfully,

Management Committee Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society