

# CEMETERY STATUS QUO REPORT AND MASTER PLAN



## 10.0 CEMETERY STATUS REPORT AND MASTER PLAN

BKS (Pty) Ltd Engineering and Management (BKS) was appointed by the Breede Valley Municipality for a Status Quo Assessment of the existing cemetery facilities and a Cemetery Masterplan for the Breede Valley municipal area. In doing so, BKS was assisted by Khuthele Projects (Pty) Ltd (Khuthele).

The existing cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area of jurisdiction can be classified as municipal (owned, operated and maintained by the Breede Valley Municipality), semi-private (operated and maintained by specific religions or church denominations) and private (owned, operated and maintained privately).

Most of the existing cemeteries within the Breede Valley municipal area are located in the following four urban centres:

- **Touwsrivier.** Two open (operational) municipal cemeteries, one closed municipal cemetery.
- **De Doorns.** One open municipal cemetery, one closed municipal cemetery, one semi-private cemetery, one private cemetery.
- **Worcester:** Five open municipal cemeteries, two closed municipal cemeteries and 14 semi-private cemeteries of which two are closed.
- **Rawsonville:** Two open municipal cemeteries, one closed municipal cemetery.

The condition and state of the existing cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area is very poor compared to acceptable norms and standards. The municipal cemeteries can be classified as demarcated areas for burial, as there is little evidence of acceptable cemetery infrastructure and facilities. The few facilities provided have mostly been vandalized. The inadequacy of facilities and infrastructure is considered as one of the main problems concerning cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area. It is difficult to contemplate that the community in the area, and the next-of-kin of people who have passed away, would accept this status. As such facilities have a major impact on the perception of tranquility and adequacy in the bereavement of the next-of-kin, more attention needs to be given in considering basic facilities. The very poor geotechnical soil conditions exacerbate the poor image of the cemeteries in the region. This image may be considered as an embarrassment to the Breede Valley Municipality.

Land required for burial space in the Breede Valley municipal area should, due to the lack of accessibility and travelling distances between areas, not be determined for the region as a whole. Each cemetery/cemetery service area needs to be evaluated individually due to the local burial patterns.

Based on the findings of the status quo and the needs assessments the following is proposed for utilization of cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area:

- Utilise both the existing municipal Touwsrivier and Steenvliet Cemeteries until full capacity is reached. This is expected to be reached within one year. It is recommended that additional land be allocated and planned as soon as possible. Ideally this should be done in consultation with the stakeholders. Alternative solutions include expanding either or both of the existing cemeteries, or developing a new cemetery to serve the Touwsrivier area. Based on the current population projections approximately 3 ha of land would be required to cater for a design period of 30 years.
- Continue to utilize the existing municipal Weltevrede Cemetery in De Doorns as is the case presently. The burial trends will be influenced by religion/church denomination and relevant burial costs. Based on current population projections, it is expected that the existing cemetery capacity would last about 70 years.

- ✦ The existing municipal Sandhills Cemetery has sufficient capacity to serve the Sandhills community for a period of more than 100 years.
- ✦ Use the existing municipal Hartebees River Cemetery mainly for the burial of paupers and farm workers of the Worcester area. The estimated cemetery lifespan is seven to eight years where after burials are proposed to be continued in a new regional cemetery for Worcester.
- ✦ Additional land for cemetery purposes is urgently needed in Zwelethemba. Based on a current burial rate of approximately 160 burials per year, this relates to a required land need of approximately 4 ha to cater for a 30 year planning period. It is proposed to expand the Zwelethemba Cemetery in Worcester as soon as possible to include the area between the existing cemetery and the Worcester/Robertson railway line. Planning can be based for using the expanded Zwelethemba Cemetery primarily for the Zwelethemba community.
- ✦ The Breede Valley Municipality can continue using the existing municipal De Wet Street and Aande-Doorns Cemeteries in Worcester until full capacity is reached within one and five years respectively. Because of some of the semi-private cemeteries have already or are reaching full capacity, both these cemeteries could be filled even sooner.
- ✦ Develop a new sub-regional municipal cemetery to serve the Worcester area as soon as possible. Excluding the consideration of the Sandhills and Zwelethemba Cemeteries the Worcester area will require approximately 30 ha of land for cemetery purposes for the 30 year design period between 2004 and 2033.
- ✦ Utilise both the Grey Street and De Nova Cemeteries in Rawsonville until the latter has reached full capacity which is expected to be within two years. Thereafter, either continue with all burials in the Grey Street Cemetery after closure of the De Nova Cemetery or determine the need of an additional cemetery of at least 0.6 ha through public consultation with the community and stakeholders.

It follows that land allocated to cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area is going to be fully utilized in the short term. It is therefore urgent to plan and reserve land in the very short term, to avoid a crisis in the area. In addition, infrastructure should be provided to at least a basic level of service. It is essential that the Breede Valley Municipality plan and reserve sufficient land for the future for cemeteries. It is proposed that the following additional land requirements should be addressed in the short term (during the 2004/2005 financial year):

- ✦ New cemetery for Worcester.
  - ✦ It is proposed that this cemetery be developed as a new sub-regional cemetery, and that it should be large enough to serve the local community for a sufficiently long period to justify the provision of proper cemetery facilities.
- ✦ Extension of cemetery land:
  - ✦ Land adjacent to and between the existing cemetery in Zwelethemba and the Worcester/Robertson railway line.
  - ✦ Land adjacent to both the existing cemeteries in Touwsrivier (Touwsrivier and Steenvliet) or as determined through community consultation.
  - ✦ Land adjacent to the existing De Nova Cemetery in Rawsonville or as determined through community consultation.

This implies that the land mentioned above should be identified, tested, procured and reserved for cemetery development. Such land should be sufficient for the medium term. The goal should also be that all cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area should be provided with proper and adequate

infrastructure and facilities. In addition to the development and provision of facilities for the proposed new Worcester Cemetery, which should be used as a pilot project for the upgrading of all existing cemeteries in the Breede Valley municipal area, it is proposed that the following be done with regard to cemetery infrastructure and facilities at various cemeteries:

- Proper access roads.
- Fencing (particularly fencing that cannot be easily stolen such as electric fencing).
- Water supply.
- Toilets.

Over time, some landscaping should be provided. The most urgent needs related to the municipal cemeteries are the following (not including those required for the new cemetery in Worcester):

- Fencing and ablution facilities at Touwsrivier Cemetery.
- Fencing and ablution facilities at Steenvliet Cemetery (Touwsrivier).
- Ablution facilities at the Weltevrede Cemetery (De Doorns).
- Fencing, water supply and ablution facilities at Sandhills Cemetery.
- Fencing, water supply and ablution facilities at Hartebees River Cemetery.
- Access road, fencing to and public ablution facilities in Zwelethemba Cemetery.
- Ablution facilities at Grey Street Cemetery in Rawsonville.

Excluding water supply to the Sandhills and Hartebees River Cemeteries, it is proposed that the Breede Valley Municipality budgets at least R1.5 million to cater for the abovementioned proposed infrastructure and facilities to be provided and/or upgraded. Since the De Wet Street and De Nova Cemeteries are nearing their full capacity status no infrastructure and/or facilities upgrading is proposed.

In addition, the existing Cemetery By-laws of the Breede Valley Municipality are outdated and inadequate. It is proposed that new bylaws be promulgated for the Breede Valley municipal area to enable the Breede Valley Municipality to adequately develop, manage and control its cemeteries.