

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** DUNKELD CEMETERY (NEW)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** off Victoria Valley Road DUNKELD

**STUDY NUMBER:** 371

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** outside

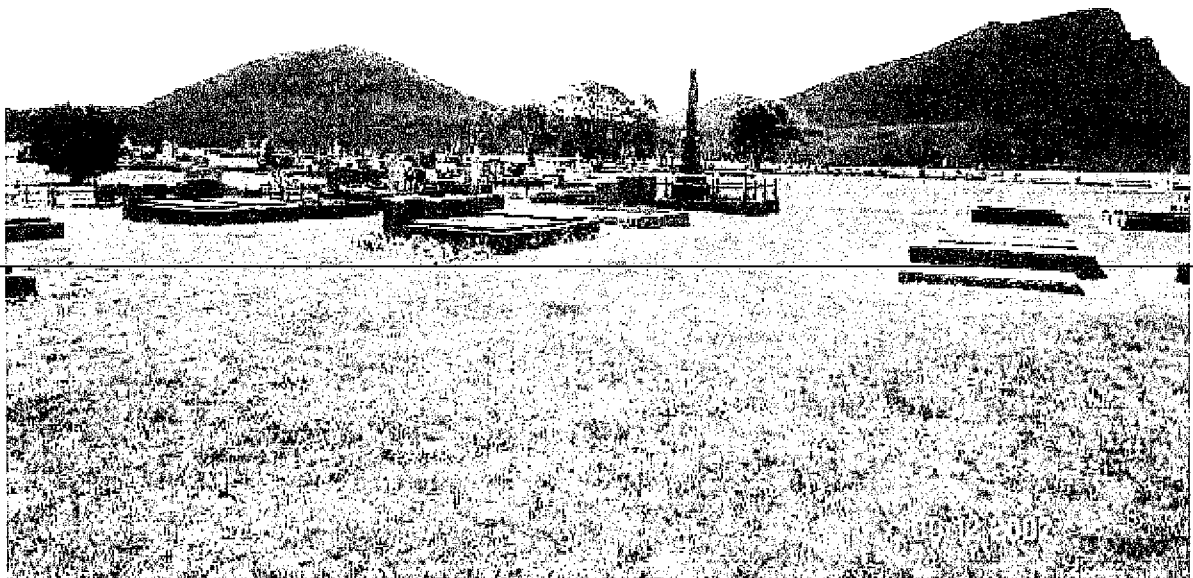
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 18    **SECTION:** ??    **PARISH:** PARISH OF DUNKELD

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 433 C22; VicRoads 73 G4; located at the eastern end of a gravel road, about 1.8kms north of the centre of the township

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Dunkeld Cemetery (New), off Victoria Valley Road, Dunkeld

**Image Date:** 9/12/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the surviving graves, monuments, fences, etc., plantings and the whole of the cemetery reserve.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The New Dunkeld Cemetery is located approximately 1.8 kilometers north of the township of Dunkeld, on a flat piece of land which is overlooked by the Grampians ranges.

The graves are grouped in the traditional manner, according to religious denomination. The headstones record the resting place of a large number of the pioneering individuals and families of the region.

## HISTORY:

The passing of the English Metropolitan Internments Act granted the Board of Health in London to provide burial grounds. This seems to have influenced legislation in the Australian colonies. Cemeteries were usually developed in association with particular churches or as a result of public meetings of concerned citizens. "In 1854, an 'Act for the Establishment and Management of Cemeteries in the Colony of Victoria' was passed by the Victorian Government forming the basis of cemetery management as we know it today. The Government had the power to appoint and remove trustees and lend or pay money for the establishment of cemeteries. The trustees were charged with the responsibilities to construct structures and avenues; impose rules and regulations to manage and protect the cemeteries; allow ministers of religion free access and religious denominations to build mortuary chapels; have the right to veto and remove inappropriate vaults and monuments; and to keep accounts and statements." [Sagazio, 'Our Heritage', p. 13] The passing of the 'Municipal Institutions Establishment Act' in 1854 became the basis of Victoria's local government. Local councils were given control over amenities including roads, bridges, streets, sanitation and public health. The 'Public Health Act' was also passed in 1854 and it was envisaged that local councils would also have the responsibility for management of public cemeteries. "Under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1889 the Minister for Health and the Department of Public Health became responsible for the management of cemeteries and the responsibility has remained within the Health portfolio since that time." [Sagazio, 'Our Heritage', p. 15]

Most small suburban and country cemeteries were simple in layout with graves in straight lines in either a grid or a design of winding paths. The latter was an influence from English cemetery design, particularly from John Claudius Loudon, and to a lesser extent American cemetery design, from such landscape garden designers as Calvert and Vaux. Plantings were typically those with a funereal iconography such as *Cupressus funebris*, *C. sempervirens*, various *Pinus* species, Laurels, Yews and Junipers. Their common quality was their evergreen and sombre foliage. In special cases trees, shrubs or minor plants were planted with specific association for the deceased. Cemeteries were subdivided into sections according to the major Christian denominations. In rare cases there were also sections for non-Christians, such as the Jews.

The Old Dunkeld Cemetery was temporarily gazetted 24th September, 1866, and made a permanent gazette 02 October, 1866 (Gordon, D, File Note), although the first burial for which a tombstone survives was in 1854, Daniel Gunn, who died 31/05/1854, aged 17 years. Many important early families from Dunkeld and the surrounding area have been buried in the Old Dunkeld Cemetery including the Ross family of Mount Sturgeon, the Gunn, Mereweather, Fry, Dickie, Templeton and Howell families.

The Board of Public Health reported the old Cemetery site at Dunkeld to be "unsuitable for the purposes owing to the stony nature of the ground, and recommend[ed] that a new site be obtained as soon as possible." (Letter, dated 24 April, 1900 to Minister of Lands, Lands & Survey Department, Melbourne from Shire Secretary, C. Dufton, Shire of Mount Rouse).

The cemetery had been located on a granite filled stony rise, and as a result, from the earliest burials there was difficulty in digging graves to a suitable depth. A letter from Mr. Germain in 1899 complains that "It is almost impossible to dig a grave deeper than four feet ...coffins are not more than 18 inches below the surface" (File Note 11/12/1899).

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From correspondence between the Department of Land and Works (or Survey) and various interested parties, it appears that the cemetery was never well cared for. Various descriptions note that the cemetery is in an unkempt state, overgrown with thistles and long grass, or covered with weeds. When questioned, the Cemetery Trustees stated that they had been unable to contract anyone to undertake the work, although they had continually advertised by tender.

As a result of complaints, an inspection was undertaken by T. E. Dunkley in 1900 to determine the condition and suitability of the site to continue as a burial ground. The report found that the site was not suitable for a burial ground as the granite filled earth made digging below four feet impossible without blasting through stone, and the porous soil meant that in "winter time when a grave is dug it is said to soon fill up with water, and at times rocks have to be placed on top of a coffin to keep them from floating up until the grave is filled in" (Dunkley, 1900). He also described the condition of the cemetery at that time as "one of careless neglect and shows a want of even ordinary care in those responsible for its good keeping" (ibid.).

Despite this report, burials had to continue in the old cemetery until a new site could be found. The Shire of Mount Rouse wrote to the Department of Lands and Survey in April of 1900 requesting that the Crown sell land reserved (but no longer used) as a quarry (10 acres on allotment 52 B 2, in Parish of Dunkeld), for the purpose of purchasing privately owned land for a cemetery reserve. The Shire of Mount Rouse stated their reason for this request was that there was no suitable available Crown Land in the vicinity of Dunkeld.

The last burial in old cemetery was Elizabeth Howell, who died 14/03/1904 aged 71 years, who was buried in March 1904.

The first burial in the new Dunkeld Cemetery was in 1905. Many important families from Dunkeld and district are buried in the new Dunkeld Cemetery, including the Beveridge, Cameron, Crawford, Dickie, Fry, Howell, McArthur, McIntyre, Mereweather, Simpson, Young families. The Dunkeld New Cemetery continues to be used as a burial ground today.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 9: Marking the phases of life

9.7 Dying

9.7.1 Dealing with human remains

9.7.3 Remembering the dead

## **INTEGRITY:**

Good degree of integrity

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Dunkeld New Cemetery is a ten acre allotment set on flat land overlooked by the Grampians Ranges, off the Victoria Valley Road, some 1.8 kilometers north of the township of Dunkeld. The cemetery was gazetted in about 1904, and the first burial took place in 1905. The cemetery is the second which Dunkeld has had, and early cemetery, located some distance south east of the township was used from 1854 to 1904, but was condemned as unsuitable, due to the difficulty in digging graves on a rocky outcrop. The new cemetery has a range of burials, both large and small memorials, with very limited plantings on a few graves. The Cemetery is in very good condition, and retains a high degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The new Dunkeld Cemetery is of historical, social and architectural significance to the township of Dunkeld and

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the Southern Grampians Shire.

## What is significant?

The new Dunkeld Cemetery is of historical significance as an enduring record of those who have lived and died in the community, as a reflection of passing phases, ways of life and death, particular events, and as documentary evidence. It is of social significance for reflecting the customs and tastes of the community, for reflecting different religious values, and for reflecting different economic and social status. It is also important as a place of passive recreation. The new Dunkeld Cemetery is of architectural significance for its range of tombstones, memorials and iconography reflecting the aesthetics of different periods and groups within the community. It is also of interest for its overall design and position within the broader landscape.

## COMPARISON:

SSG 0130 Balmoral Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Balmoral  
SSG 0135 Coleraine Cemetery, Lower Hilgay Road, Coleraine  
SSG 0180 Tarrayoukyan Cemetery, Tarrayoukyan Rd, Tarrayoukyan  
SSG 0041 Glenthompson Cemetery, Scott Street, Glenthompson  
SSG 0325 Old Cemetery, Scott Street (extension), Cavendish,  
SSG 0113 Boram Boram Cemetery, Boram Boram Lane, Penshurst  
SSG 0261 Byaduk Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Byaduk  
SSG 0??? Branhholme Cemetery, off Henty Highway, Branhholme  
SSG 0291 New Hamilton Lawn Cemetery, Henty Highway, Hamilton

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

### HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

| Author                         | Title  | Year | Page    |
|--------------------------------|--|------|---------|
| Celestina Sagazio, ed.         | Cemeteries, Our Heritage   | 1992 | 13 & 15 |
| David Gordon                   | File Notes - Dunkeld Cemetery  |      | n.d     |
| David Gordon                   | Personal Communication 09/12/2002  | 2002 |         |
| Department of Lands and Survey | File Note - Dunkeld Cemetery, Mount Rouse Shire  | 1899 |         |
| John Bond                      | Letter to Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Survey, September 13, 1866                   | 1866 |         |
| Office of Lands and Survey     | File Note - Dunkeld Cemetery, Mount Rouse Shire 24/09/1866                                 | 1866 |         |
| T. E Dunkley                   | Report of Inspection undertaken to ascertain condition of Cemetery and suitability of site | 1900 |         |