

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: News Editor

State's first cemetery in better shape

Albany's historic Memorial Park Cemetery now offers better access to its precious heritage that dates back to 1840 and beyond.

Headstones and gravesites have been restored and the cemetery grounds have been improved with the help of \$46,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

Memorial Park Cemetery was the first consecrated cemetery in Western Australia and is the burial place of early settlers, Noongar people, convicts, sailors and servicemen.

The Albany Cemetery Board gained Regional Grants Scheme funds towards a \$100,000 project that included restoring headstones, removing inappropriate trees, planting new trees, installing bollards to control parking and providing signs.

Project coordinator Peter Tomlinson said the Albany Cemetery Board had set out to beautify the cemetery to promote community ownership, which would attract visitors and help to reduce vandalism.

"The cemetery is something the community can be a lot more proud of now," Mr Tomlinson said.

"The restoration of the headstones has been excellent and the bollards are in place to keep vehicles off the grounds.

"We had some comments on the removal of a few trees, but only problem trees were removed – roots were lifting headstones and branches would fall and damage graves.

"The replacement trees are more appropriate and will enhance the cemetery in the long term," Mr Tomlinson said.

GSDC Board Chairman Peter Rundle said the project gave due attention to an important part of the state's history.

"The Memorial Park Cemetery offers local residents and tourists an insight into Western Australia's history," Mr Rundle said.



Building partnerships for regional prosperity

“Pioneers such as Patrick Taylor and Alexander Collie are buried there, along with members of the Spencer and Hassell families.

“Restoring graves, improving the grounds and providing signage will encourage visitors to appreciate the cemetery’s links to the state’s past,” Mr Rundle said.

Mr Tomlinson said the Albany Cemetery Board would continue to maintain the cemetery on a regular basis.

The Board plans to set up community walks through the cemetery grounds.

More than 60 gravesites were restored in the project, including the reinstatement of many headstones that had toppled and broken.

Toppled headstones that could not be pinned and fixed upright were fixed flat onto concrete plinths.

Media contact: Bruce Manning, ph. 9842 4888