



ABOVE: Broome Cemetery Japanese/Chinese/Muslim section, Broome

INTRODUCTION

The information sheet provides advice on how to restore a gravestone on a State Registered site.

ASSESSMENT OF THE GRAVESTONE

The restoration of a gravestone should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The way a gravestone is conserved depends on the material and nature of damage.

Some gravestones may only require very basic maintenance works. Families or the management body could carry out this maintenance, if the correct procedures are followed.

Other more complex works will require the involvement of a professional tradesman or heritage advisor.

Any works proposed for a gravestone located within a State Registered Place will always require the submission of a formal referral to the Heritage Council of Western Australia.

The referral is to consist of a detailed scope of works and information on who will be carrying out the proposed works.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE WORKS

These are minor works that do not require a professional tradesman, work may include:

- The general cleaning of the headstone with correct techniques (for example: use of water solutions, no wire brushes, no metal instruments, no acidic cleaners, no household cleaners)

- Basic weeding that does not damage stonework

RESTORATION WORK

All works over and above general maintenance will require professional skills.

The family or management body is to contact a monumental mason/specialised tradesman and receive a quote and scope of works.

When seeking quotes from a monumental mason/specialised tradesman, it is essential to advise that the grave is part of a State Registered heritage site and that the proposed works are to conserve the maximum possible original fabric.

The professional must also be advised that a detailed scope of works will be required for consideration by the Heritage Council of Western Australia prior to the undertaking of works.

Works of this nature will usually involve:

- Broken headstones
- Lead lettering replacement
- Removal of graffiti
- Conserving inscriptions
- Remediating leaning monuments
- Conservation of ironwork
- New elements
- Relocation of monuments
- Plinth repairs
- Kerbing and grave fencing
- Cracking masonry

The repair and retention in situ of a broken or damaged monument is strongly advocated. Repair is almost always better than replacement, even with a careful replica. Replacement means the loss of the original monument, fabric and the patina of age.

Further Information

For further information on appropriate conservation techniques of gravesites refer to the Historic South Australian Graves and Cemeteries Conservation Guidelines, prepared by McDougall and Vines for the Department of Environment and Heritage, Government of South Australia, May 2004.



ABOVE: Volunteers cleaning iron work. Gwalia Cemetery, Shire of Leonora

Image credit: Tanya Henkel

For further information, please contact

Heritage Council of WA
Locked Bag 2506
Perth WA 6001

T: (08) 6551 8002
FREECALL (regional): 1800 524 000
E: info@dplh.wa.gov.au
W: www.dplh.wa.gov.au