



Introducing Project Cultivate

- Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) is exploring ways to sustainably enhance and manage our horticultural assets at our historic and heritage sites, with the environment and the future in mind.
- A pilot program of works, Project Cultivate, at Melbourne General Cemetery (MGC) has commenced, and works will take place onsite between May and November 2023, covering around 15% of the site.
- Project Cultivate aims to convert many currently unplanted monumental areas of the cemetery into a flourishing native grassland, through the application of 1400m³ of organic mulch and 127,000 indigenous plants.

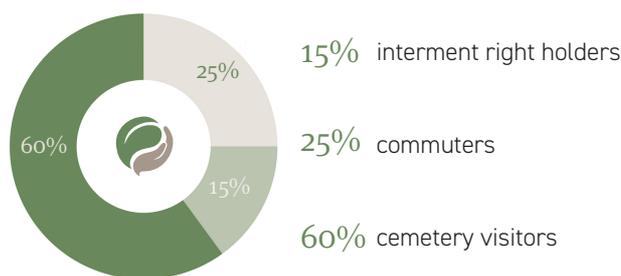
For more information about Project Cultivate, please visit our website at smct.org.au/cultivate or contact us at community@smct.org.au

Understanding community expectations

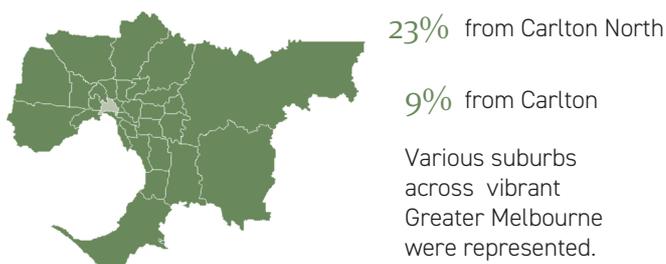
Before starting the project, SMCT spoke with stakeholders including government, Traditional Owners and the City of Melbourne to align our plans, approach and understanding. These ongoing discussions continue to inform our work today. SMCT also undertook surveys, and conducted a series of in-person activities exploring community expectations for cemetery horticultural management. Research conducted on our behalf involved a diverse group of 124 participants, with 109 at Melbourne General Cemetery and 15 at Brighton General Cemetery (a site with similar challenges).

Methods included in-person interviews and online surveys as well as focus groups, including two sessions with local community and two with Holders of Right of Interments. An online survey was also shared with Cemetery Friends Groups and stakeholders. A public version of this survey was later shared with our broader community and continues to feed into our understanding.

About the research



Local connection



Continuing the conversation

The research and community engagement activities revealed an overwhelmingly positive response to Project Cultivate from the Victorian public.

We are interested in knowing how our communities want to see, feel, visit and experience our historical cemetery spaces and will continue to use this research to guide our long-term planning. We encourage you to have your say and complete the survey.



Understanding community, celebrating cemeteries

From our research, we found Project Cultivate aligns seamlessly with the Victorian public's perceptions of historical cemeteries

66%

believe cemeteries should be a "natural space for the conservation of plant and animal life"

A natural sanctuary

Many would like to see increased greenery and reduced soil erosion

A connection to history and culture

Many people already use MGC as a peaceful space for commuting and recreation and visitors take pride in the history of the space and environment

Honouring history and nature

Respondents identified and supported the environmental benefits of the project including improved biodiversity, with many respondents viewing the celebration of native plants as respectful of the cemetery's history

Support for Project Cultivate

Identified positive outcomes of more sustainable planting at heritage cemeteries

60%

were satisfied with the overall state of MGC, while many would like to see increased greenery and reduced soil erosion



"the right thing to do" for the environment



56%

believe cemeteries should be used for recreation (e.g., relaxation, exercise, and dog walking)

Respondents rated the proposed changes

8.1/9

on average, demonstrating the community's desire for positive transformation

"...it acknowledges what was, and what has been there, and beautifies the area and gives back to the people buried there"