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### Temporary relocation of pioneer headstones

The pioneer headstones located at the entrance of the Willaston Cemetery are being removed for conservation. Constant exposure to the elements is creating irreversible damage to the façades of these headstones, consequently the headstones are being temporarily relocated to secure storage to ensure the longevity of these important connections to Gawler's pioneer past.

The headstones were placed at the entrance to the Willaston Cemetery in the 1990s and their reclined positioning means they are fully exposed to dust and rain which are both abrasive to stone. The draft Willaston Cemetery Conservation Plan noted that the engraving on the headstones was becoming illegible and recommended a process of obtaining gravestone rubbings to ensure that there was a permanent record.

In 2017 the Friends of Willaston Cemetery undertook this project and the Town of Gawler digitised the rubbings. Unfortunately, by that stage, two of the headstones had been so badly abraded by the weather it was not possible to ascertain what had originally been inscribed.

To minimise further damage the headstones are being relocated and placed under the care of the Cultural Heritage Centre. Council Staff are investigating options for creating a new display area at the entrance to the Willaston Cemetery that will both protect the headstones from the weather and respect the State Heritage status of this cemetery.

Specialist advice has been sought regarding the safe removal of the headstones and appropriate temporary storage.

"While many community members will miss seeing the headstones at the entrance to the cemetery, it is important they are protected from further deterioration. I look forward to working through options for an effective way to both display and preserve these important links to Gawler's early settlers," said Mayor Redman.



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The media may make contact with Mayor Karen Redman on 0421 839 359