



## Grave Subsidence Fact Sheet No 2

### Topping up subsided graves

Remembrance Parks Central Victoria (RPCV) staff & contractors conduct regular checks of recently backfilled graves as well as monitoring graves in general after periods of rainfall. RPCV staff will arrange works accordingly for graves they identify as requiring attention.

### What causes grave subsidence?

When graves are initially dug, the dirt removed is lumpy and irregular, particularly when it has high clay content. In a cemetery setting, we do not compact the backfilled material to exclude air spaces. Over time, the soil on a backfilled grave will appear to 'sink', although this is just the process of the air escaping and loosened dirt settling into place. The amount and rate of sinkage will depend on a range of factors, such as:

- Soil type
- Grave location
- Depth of grave(s)
- Number of burials – one, two or three burials
- Amount of rainfall
- Groundwater levels

Heavy and prolonged rainfall in particular will contribute to grave subsidence and in some cases ongoing subsidence.

### What to do if you notice grave subsidence?

RPCV recognise that seeing the sinkage of the surface of a grave can cause distress to the bereaved, unfortunately, it is a 'natural' phenomenon that affects all cemeteries. Since grave subsidence can also be an Occupational Health and Safety issue for visitors to their sites, RPCV conduct a program of backfilling and top dressing and appreciate community communication to assist with this ongoing issue. If you notice a grave that has subsided please take note of the grave's location (such as the name on the memorial or area of the cemetery) so that we can locate the grave on our system. Contact our Customer Care Team who will log a maintenance request and we will attend to these requests in a timely manner.

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### What is grave subsidence?

Grave subsidence refers to the appearance of graves 'sinking'. This is an entirely natural process caused by loosened soil settling into place.

Whilst the sinkage of the surface of a grave can cause distress to the bereaved, it is a 'natural' phenomenon that affects all cemeteries.

Grave subsidence is a process that RPCV manages and rectifies when necessary and it should not be cause for concern.