

**PUBLIC HEARING ON DEVELOPMENT OF CROWN CEMETERIES, VARROVILLE  
(MACARTHUR MEMORIAL PARK)**

I am Dr Jimmy Lopez, PHD in Education. <sup>+ CPA. A FILIPINO AUSTRALIAN</sup> Campbelltown has been my home for more than 25 years where I raised my family. I am a religious and civic Filipino community leader having founded 6 community associations to provide mutual help and assistance to Filipino families in need. Campbelltown is also home to more than 1,200 Filipino families, 82% are Catholics and the rest are Christians.

We welcome and support the development of Crown Cemeteries for MacArthur Memorial Park at Varroville as the logical choice for a modern cemetery with parklands for recreational use because of the scenic hills. The Development will provide 130,000 burial spaces to solve the impending shortage of burial spaces in the Greater Sydney in the next 20 to 30 years.

What I feel is more important is that it will provide a much need service to our communities in Campbelltown, where we do not have a cemetery of the proposed size and scale. And nobody should deny our community and for that matter, any other communities who needs the vital cemetery services.

For more than 20 years, the Campbelltown Council failed to address the communities' needs for cemetery services when there was an attempt to develop a cemetery in 1997. I have seen a lot of development in Campbelltown, roads, transport, public services, but not this kind of service.

Varroville is very accessible to the community, we do not need to travel a long way to visit our deceased loved ones. I feel it is very unfair and selfish that a ~~small interest~~ group would deny us an accessible cemetery land and will cause us to travel hundreds' of kilometres.

As a matter of culture and belief, we believe in pre-arranging our memorial needs to protect our family and provide us with peace of mind knowing that all final arrangements have been attended to and we can keep our family together in one final resting place in a beautiful place like scenic hills.

We are happy to see that the proposed MacArthur Memorial Park considers in its plan a Filipino lawn section where our community can celebrate culture and religious belief in remembering our deceased loved ones. As founding president of the Santo Nino Filipino Association of Campbelltown and MacArthur, our community can find a place where we can celebrate our

religious devotion to our Patron, the Holy Child of Cebu. We celebrate this annually, and having an accessible place is a boon to the community.

*ADVANCE*

2017 newspaper reports of NSW government studies that there will be shortage of burial land in the next 20 to 30 years and hence increasing prices. Not only it will be hard for our community to find burial spaces to keep our families together, but the prices will be prohibitive. The community needs now and in the future, affordable burial spaces. MacArthur Memorial Park, being a crown cemetery and therefore, a not for profit organization - a cheaper alternative for the community compared to the privately owned cemetery at Leppington. The prices of burial land in Leppington was recently increased to \$7,480 last 1 March 2019.

The Filipino communities in Campbelltown and MacArthur districts strongly support the propose MacArthur Memorial Park and urges the planning commission to approve it.

Thank you.



*J L OPEZ*

*25/3/2019*