

## Media Release

### Denise Ora appointed to lead Metropolitan Memorial Parks

Monday, 18 December 2023

The newly established Board of Metropolitan Memorial Parks has announced that Denise Ora will be its inaugural chief executive officer (CEO) as the organisation looks to secure the future of interment services for the community.

Ms Ora is currently the chief executive of Botanic Gardens of Sydney which she has led since 2019.

Metropolitan Memorial Parks is the NSW Government's Crown cemetery and crematoria operator and provides a vital service to the community at one of life's most significant stages. It is responsible for more than 400 hectares of crown land across eight iconic cemeteries in Sydney and Newcastle.



The CEO appointment marks the end of a successful merger and governance reset of the organisation over the past six months as part of the NSW Government's strategy to strengthen the Crown cemeteries sector to better enable it to address its future challenges.

During her period as CEO of the Botanic Gardens, Ms Ora oversaw the construction of the new National Herbarium of NSW, the establishment of the Australian Institute of Botanical Science and the Gardens' first ever comprehensive Living Collections Strategy, the unification of the Gardens' digital channels and brands, and the digitisation of the globally significant Herbarium collection.

Her appointment followed an extensive open search process overseen by former administrator (and now Board chair) Ken Morrison, run concurrently with the Government's Board establishment process. The new Board has moved quickly to interview short-listed candidates and finalise the appointment.

Ms Ora will commence on 5 February 2024. Current chief financial officer (CFO) Simon Officer has been appointed as acting CEO until that time.

#### **Chair of Metropolitan Memorial Parks Ken Morrison said:**

"The Board is delighted to secure an experienced leader of Denise's calibre to lead the organisation at this important phase.

"With our governance reset now complete, Metropolitan Memorial Parks can turn its focus to the communities we serve, ensuring we have the interment supply they need for the future."

**Incoming CEO of Metropolitan Memorial Parks Denise Ora said:**

“I am truly honoured to be appointed as the inaugural CEO of Metropolitan Memorial Parks.

“I look forward to working with the new board, staff, and all stakeholders in delivering on Metropolitan Memorial Parks’ commitment to meet the changing needs of our diverse communities by creating and managing serene and dignified spaces providing solace, remembrance, and a sense of community for all.”

**Minister for Lands and Property Steve Kamper said:**

“When the Minns Government took office the Crown cemeteries sector was in disarray. With the new board and CEO in place, Metropolitan Memorial Parks can now focus on the task at hand, delivering for the people of NSW.

“I congratulate Denise Ora on her appointment and look forward to working with her on the challenges ahead.”

**Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Paul Scully said:**

“Denise Ora’s leadership at the Botanic Gardens of Sydney has accomplished many important achievements including the completion of the new National Herbarium of New South Wales, the digitisation of the state significant herbarium collection, and the launch of the Australian Institute of Botanical Science.”

ENDS

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