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MEDIA RELEASE

### **RPCV Trust Members Meet to Provide Fact Check to Member for Northern Victoria**

Two members of the Remembrance Park's Trust, Chairperson Marg Lewis and Chair of the Finance Committee, Mandy Cooper, today met with Northern Victoria, MP Wendy Lovell to provide reassurance that all funds received by the organisation have been placed into reserve.

We invited Ms Lovell to meet as she recently raised concerns that cash funds that came with the transfer of the Pine Lodge and Kialla West cemeteries in the 2021-2022 financial year have not been accounted for or used appropriately.

"Both cemeteries came with assets and liabilities. The process for their transfer started in 2017 and transfer was in mid-2021 so there was significant, due diligence and discussion over that four-year period," Chairperson of the RPCV Trust Ms Lewis said.

"I want to reassure the community that RPCV has and will always fulfil the business transfer agreements and maximise the funding we have for the operation of all our cemeteries and reserve funds for their maintenance after they have closed," Ms Lewis said.

"On 7 July 2021, Pine Lodge transferred \$454,229.04 and Kialla West transferred \$78,238.71 totalling \$532,467.75 to RPCV. On 8 July 2021 RPCV transferred \$532,467.75 into our reserve account.

"RPCV has a perpetual maintenance fund to look after all our cemeteries once they reach their capacity and can therefore no longer generate an income. Both of these cemeteries have the capacity for burials for over 100 years, for Pine Lodge the estimate is between 130 and 160 years and for Kialla West it is over 350 years.

"There was no requirement in the business transfer from Greater Shepparton City Council that the \$532,467.75 be put aside for perpetual maintenance only. Nor was there a requirement that these funds only be utilised for Pine Lodge and Kialla West cemeteries.

These funds were transferred from operational accounts.

This claim, that the funds should be reserved for perpetual maintenance of Pine Lodge and Kialla West cemeteries, that has been asserted by Ms Lovell is without any factual basis and we have now clarified this," Ms Lewis concluded.

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During the meeting Ms Cooper explained RPCV's audit processes noting that "RPCV prepares its financial statements in accordance with accounting standards and template reports after completion of the end of the financial year. They are audited by a Victorian Auditor General Office approved independent auditor and then made publicly available in our Annual Report that becomes publicly available after it has been tabled in Parliament." Ms Cooper said.

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