

### **Vandalism to the last Pioneer Cemetery in the heart of Wollongong.**

Early in January news broke that vandals had desecrated the last intact Pioneer Cemetery in the heart of Wollongong. It was a shock to the members of the society.

On visiting the cemetery we were amazed to see so many people coming in to look at their ancestors graves. There were many citizens with no connection to those buried there but just wanting to have a look at what had happened. This is the second vandal attack on local cemeteries in just over 12 months. The first attack was on a grand scale at Wollongong Lawn Cemetery at Kembla Grange.

Just to see the damage done in Wollongong would have been perpetrated by more than one person. One old monument approx 3 meters high on a 40 cm square sandstone block would have needed at least four persons to dislodge it from its position. Some of the older sandstone and marble headstones which stood for more than a century have now been reduced to rubble. Exactly 25% of the monuments have suffered some form of damage. Four graves have already been repaired by family members.

Though we all have taken an interest in the magnitude of the damage to these graves all of us ask what pleasure or satisfaction anyone gets from desecrating the last resting place of the dead. We can only hope that Wollongong City Council will expedite tree removal and the erection of a security fence around the whole 10 acre cemetery site. No doubt, this will give many of us a little more sense of security for our families' graves.

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