EDITORIAL

Two years ago the encroachment of the public roadways in the Melbourne General Cemetery was the subject of lawsuit. A practice which had obviously been going on for years was 'suddenly' discovered. It has also begun at Box Hill in a small way but that has yet to be discovered. Had this depredation occurred in the last century it would have raised a storm the first Sunday. The emotional and spiritual importance of our cemeteries has declined for a number of reasons just as their historic importance is being recognised. Cemeteries are a wonderful mirror of their times. They tell more than they mean to about those therein and those left. They tell a lot about Australia. Where else can one learn so clearly the bitter sectarianism of the nation than in the cemetery always as rigidly segregated as a Texan cow town.

Cemeteries are a rallying point for most fields in our own world. They are held in high regard not only by genealogists and historians but by architects, urban planners, botanists and landscape architects.

Our great cemeteries are today, just as their value is being appreciated, facing threat from the legislation which consents to memorial parks by a thorough programme of destruction.

The dismissal of several managing trusts in recent years, or rather the need for those dismissals, is an indication of the current sad state of affairs. The issue will we hope alert many people to the problems confronting our great cemeteries. In other times the appeal for help, consideration and conservation would have been to our hearts and souls: now it must be made to our minds.