

Call for Affordable Burial Plots

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal released a Draft Report today which called for cemetery operators to offer affordable standard burial plots.

“Some consumers are facing high prices, confusing information and minimal options at a time when they are particularly vulnerable,” said IPART Tribunal member Ms Deborah Cope.

The report also calls for operators to make provision for caring for burial plots and cemeteries in perpetuity.

“Everyone has a right to a dignified burial. While many people choose cremation these days, it is important that those who want a burial are able to access an affordable plot that meets their needs, said Ms Cope.

IPART is recommending that cemeteries be required to offer a standard lawn grave burial plot. Cemeteries that serve particular cultural or faith groups should also be required to offer a standard burial plot that respects the requirements of that culture or faith.

“Cemetery operators need to ensure that the beliefs of religious and cultural groups are respected so that no one is disadvantaged and adequate and proper provision is made for all,” said Ms Cope.

The Draft Report also recommends that cemeteries be required to make financial provisions for maintaining cemeteries into perpetuity.

“People want to be confident that their loved ones’ graves will be cared for into the future. Our recommendations will help ensure that cemeteries are financially able to do this, even after all burial plots have been sold,” said Ms Cope.

One problem that people planning for a burial often encounter is a lack of information about prices, and different and sometimes confusing terminology about the products and services on offer.

“To provide greater transparency in cemetery pricing, we are recommending that all cemetery operators be required to publish itemised prices using consistent terminology. We are also recommending that the

NSW Government set up a website to allow people to easily compare prices across all cemeteries in NSW,” said Ms Cope.

The Draft Report also found significant opportunities for increased operational efficiency at Sydney cemeteries, especially in administration and overheads.

IPART will hold a virtual public hearing on the issue on 17 September. Further details are available at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au

The closing date for submissions is 2 October 2020. A full copy of the Draft Report is available at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au

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