



**Joint Submission:**

**Central Coast Council** – Janine McKenzie (Unit Manager Business Enterprise) & Christie Flippence (Section Manager Cemeteries)

**Lake Macquarie Council** – Andrew Bryant (Manager Community Partnerships) & Donna Davis (Cemeteries Management Officer)

As Members of the Cemeteries & Crematoria Association of NSW, both Central Coast and Lake Macquarie Council's concur with the Associations submission, however there are a number of questions that we would like to provide further comment. They are as follows:

***Question 3 What type of land is the most likely source of increased cemetery capacity in Sydney? The Hunter/Central Coast/Illawarra region? Other regional areas?***

Both the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie Local Government Areas (LGA's) have a mixture of Council owned and Crown land cemeteries.

In the first instance, expansion and further development of current cemetery sites is the preferred option to increase capacity.

The current practice of both LGA's is for cemetery sites to be smaller in size and localised rather than regional. Both areas have private operators who have a more regional emphasis. Therefore the focus for **both councils** is to source small, localised parcels of land in areas of demand.

***Question 4 Are there other costs involved in developing land for use as a cemetery?***

Both Central Coast & Lake Macquarie Councils do not have direct experience with site development for cemetery purposes.

***Question 6 Who should have responsibility for maintaining closed cemeteries in perpetuity?***

We have concern about private operators/organisations including churches who relinquish cemetery sites once they reach capacity.

Legislation and clear direction surrounding the transfer of sites to local government needs to be considered. In particular, consideration needs to be made for perpetual maintenance liability of sites with clear guidelines around agreed funds to transfer with the site.

***Question 12 Is competition between cemeteries likely to lower costs? If so, are there ways to address barriers to the ability of cemetery operators to compete with one another?***

In general, yes costs may be lowered. However, generally speaking local government operators are able to maintain affordable prices and cater for options that may not necessarily be the most cost effective for the operator. For example offering of full monumental sites or monumental lawn beam sites which may attract higher maintenance costs but cater for a market that other operators won't necessarily provide.

***Question 18 What should the form of recommendations of this review be with respect to perpetual maintenance reserves?***

An additional methodology or guideline for the calculation of perpetual funds for sites relinquished and handed to government.



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**Question 23 Should fees for interment rights vary with available cemetery capacity?**

Variability of interment fees, particularly sites with limited capacity allow a cemetery operator the ability to maximise the perpetual maintenance fund opportunity for that particular site. For many local government operators, it would allow a chance to accumulate as much as possible prior to the site closing. Many of these same operators have been undercharging for some time and now have a limited window of opportunity to allow perpetual fund growth.

**Question 24 Which community impacts should we consider as part of this review?**

Mindfulness that everybody is a buyer in this inevitable market.

Assurance that there is a minimum, acceptable level of bodily disposition **that is inclusive** for all members of the community.

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