

To Whom it May Concern

Please see below feedback from Cessnock City Council on the Review of Interment costs and pricing in NSW. A cover sheet is attached and I consent to the submission and my name to be published.

Cessnock City Council has been heavily involved in providing data for this review and generally supports the draft recommendations. Feedback is provided on specific draft Recommendations 2, 3, 26 & 32.

**Draft Recommendation 2.** That the industry scheme introduce an operating licence for cemetery operators which meet an activity level threshold.

**Feedback** - As an operator of 10 cemeteries with varying interment rates, Council is keen to understand more about how the activity threshold would be determined.

**Draft Recommendation 3.** That CCNSW modify its Code of Practice for Cemetery Maintenance to include specification of minimum standards of maintenance for cemeteries. This specification should be made mandatory by the Industry Scheme.

**Feedback** - Council is interested in how this would be calculated. Levels of service for cemeteries across the state and even within some Local Government Areas vary significantly therefore setting a benchmark will require some analysis and engagement with operators and the community with regards to expectations.

**Draft Recommendation 26.** That CCNSW develop, within 12 months of the release of IPART's report, a central website to enable consumers to compare prices for interment services in one place.

**Feedback** - A great initiative that is fully supported and in the future should also include funeral director/home costs.

**Draft Recommendation 32.** That all licensed cemetery operators should be required by a condition on their operating licence to develop renewable tenure products.

**Feedback** This is strongly opposed and not supported if Cessnock City Council meets the threshold for licencing. Council considered renewable tenure on 12 December 2018 and resolved as follows:-

1. That Council notes that the Berejiklian Barilaro Government's new Cemetery and Crematoria Regulation 2018 which allows cemeteries to disinter human remains as little as 25 years after the burial and sell the plot to another party;
2. That Council notes that during a recent review of the Cemetery and Crematoria Regulation 2018, a range of church groups, indigenous representatives and the broader community were simply unaware of the new regulation;
3. That Council notes concerns the new laws may create two classes of burial rights in NSW;
4. That Council does not offer renewable interment rights at any of its cemeteries;
5. That Council writes to the Premier, The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP advising that Council strongly opposes any law change that allows the reuse of burial plots and requests the NSW Government to urgently look for alternate solutions to address the need for more cemetery space.

Regards,



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**'I acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the Wonnarua land on which Cessnock City Council offices and operations are located and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future.'**

**I am working remotely and my hours are 8.10am – 4.00pm Mon, Tue & Thurs; 6.30am – 3.00pm Wed & Fri.**

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