

Dear Sirs and Madams,

It is important to note that as church owned and community operating cemetery we perform a great service in providing affordable internments to members of our community. Because we operate without marketing departments and instead of a commercial basis our focus is to provide a service to our community our prices are lower than most other cemeteries in the Greater Sydney area.

Because the cemetery occupies a non-renewable resource that is land and our intention is to provide perpetual internment our method of providing for continual cemetery existence is by perpetual sustainable growth of the cemetery with expansion to new lands. As the report recommends that the State Government takes over the acquisition of new lands for cemetery use, in order to avoid competition between cemetery trusts for the same parcels of land, we wish that church and community owned cemeteries that wish to acquire more land, are also included in the creation of new cemeteries. The alternative would be that smaller cemeteries would have to compete with the State Government for acquisition of new land, something that we wish to avoid.

As a heritage listed cemetery that has been operating for more than 150 years the cemetery has a large amount of legacy costs. While larger cemeteries like Rookwood are able to employ stonemasons that maintain their old monuments, this is impossible for smaller cemeteries. While the report indicates that families will be responsible for monument maintenance from now on, in our experience this is not likely to happen more than 50 years down the track, when the monuments have aged and families would be hard to track down. It is also more likely than not that the descendants will be unwilling to contribute towards the maintenance of a monument belonging to some forgotten ancestor. The cemetery however has a responsibility towards visitors to keep them safe from unsafe monuments. As most historical cemeteries, even if technically operative, have little income it is essential that a trust is made that will assist in the maintenance of historical cemeteries.

Regards

Andrew Sarikakis

Smithfield Cemetery Coordinator