

INQUIRY INTO FUNERAL INDUSTRY

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Partially Confidential

LifeArt Australia has developed a number of products for the funeral industry, including Enviroboard coffins, the first cardboard coffin designed to meet the aesthetic, functional, occupational health and safety requirements of the Australian funeral industry.

The products were designed after researching consumer, industry and regulatory requirements and subjected to the testing requirements of the Funeral Industry Council of NSW. The testing was carried out by the independent testing laboratory Testsafe Australia.

The Enviroboard coffin features functional carry handles capable of supporting up to 120kg laden coffin borne by 4 or 6 pall bearers, standard thumbscrews allowing the lid to be opened and closed for viewings. It is able to be refrigerated, and withstand all funeral home and crematorium or cemetery handling processes.

We have already begun to sell the premium LifeArt coffins which are customised with a personalised design for each person. These are available in Enviroboard and MDF.

We are currently setting up for production of the standard Enviroboard coffins. With volume there is scope for price reductions, making cardboard coffins a viable competitor for the value part of the coffin market.

Cardboard coffins have the potential to become an increasingly important part of a sustainable funeral industry. For this to occur, the functional and aesthetic requirements must be met to ensure consumer and industry acceptance. While aesthetics are best determined by those who buy and sell, functionality must meet a minimum standard to ensure the health and safety of both the public and the funeral industry staff.

We support fully the requirement for coffins to be tested against minimum regulatory standards. We found the funeral industry to be co-operative in our research and development once we proved ourselves to be willing to design a cardboard coffin that met functional requirements as well as consumer price requirements.

LifeArt Australia has shown that it is possible to make a cardboard coffin available through funeral homes at an acceptable price for both funeral home and the customers seeking value funerals. Further cost reductions will come from an increasing demand which will provide production and distribution efficiencies.