

Submission  
No 1

## INQUIRY INTO FUNERAL INDUSTRY

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Mrs Dorothy Bremmer

**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 11/04/2005

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**Theme:**

**Summary**

Dear Sir,

I would like to make some comments about the funeral industry.

A year before my husband died he prepaid for the simplest funeral he could find. He would have liked not to have a wooden coffin as he regarded it as a waste of timber, but this was not available in NSW. I believe it is in Tasmania where a cardboard coffin is acceptable and can be creative in design and decoration. He chose a plain wooden coffin @ \$450. It was not the cost but the principle he disliked.

There was also a funeral directing service fee of \$2200. This seemed to be a standard fee but not really explained. Was it for notifying all the relevant agents? It seemed a lot. We conducted a "wake" for him at home a week after his cremation. Other fees were clear. The total was \$3426.60 in 2001.

Many friends commented they would like something similar, as simple as possible.

In Germany in two places I know of, the cemetery is more like a park or garden where the village people meet, tend family graves and those of friends. A grave site is "rented" for 30 years at the end of which time it can be renewed for another 30 years or the plot becomes available for someone else. (Cremation was not usual). Headstones were not ornate and could be removed if the family chose.

A few years ago we saw a series on ABCTV, possibly by Jonathan Miller, about life from conception to the grave. In the last episode, a man dying of cancer chose to move to Ireland, where the regulations allowed him and his family and friends choose what they felt was appropriate. It would be worth looking at when discussing the topic. After legal and health requirements are fulfilled we should be able to choose, as people did in the past, not so very long ago. Some might choose a pyramid, some a shroud.

*Dorothy Bremner*

*P.S. I enclose a copy of what my husband wrote about his wishes & a photocopy of a photo I took in de Ligne cemetery, Oldenburg, Germany in 1992*

*I have had myeloma for several years now and as it is an incurable disease I have made arrangements with a funeral director and paid for disposal of what is left of me. As I cannot be buried in a garden or forest where I would do some good, cremation has been opted for with the cheapest possible coffin. Even then as a carpenter I object to the waste of good particle board not to mention the pollution!*

*There will be NO funeral service, neither Dorothy nor I being religious. Upon my death Dorothy will contact the funeral parlor and they will take it from there. No flowers, no tears, but do please plant a tree, if you think well of me. If not still plant one anyway!*

*Afterwards there is going to be a "wake". Sufficient funds are available to give all my friends and relations food and drink. I have had a good and happy life and I would like you all to give me a good and happy send off. There will be a piper to play me home. I request three tunes in particular "My Home", "The Bonnie Lass o' Fyvie" and perhaps "Loch Rannoch".*

*The last part of my life here in the Shoalhaven has been especially enjoyable and rewarding and I feel I have been able to leave a small part of this planet slightly better than I found it. Can anyone wish for more?*

*So cheerio and good health.*

*PS Copies to our children*

Signed.....

*signed by Ian Bremner*

Witnessed.....

*witnessed by John Hatton MP*

