

Submission
No 16

INQUIRY INTO FUNERAL INDUSTRY

Organisation: Sea Burials Australia

Name: Mr Guye Richards

Telephone:

Date Received: 25/05/2005

Theme:

Summary

Sea Burials Australia
Po Box 400 Merimbula NSW 2548
23 May 2005

25 MAY 2005

Director, Standing Committee on Social Issues.

With reference to the enquiry as noted in the Local Government Weekly, Issue 15/05

Terms of reference: That the Standing Committee on Social Issues enquire into the funeral industry.
1. b "the availability and affordability of burial spaces and options for increasing the supply of spaces"

I submit : The available space beyond the continental shelf is a virtually untapped zone as far as use for burials (at sea) is concerned. The viability of utilising some of the accessible deepwater (at least 2000 metres depth) in selected areas of beyond the continental shelf, where the certainty that the remains of the deceased would be undisturbed is an option to Australians. This gives many people a third option other than land internment or cremation. A large number of persons are now enquiring as how to make arrangements to be buried at sea.

As far as affordability is concerned, the general cost is often less expensive than land internment due to the facts that: * There is no expense in purchasing a coffin or casket as the sea-going casket is re-usable.

*There no costs involving grave digging and refilling, headstone placement or other appropriate site marking.

*No ongoing costs as far as burial plot maintenance is concerned.

*Less expense in body preparation as burial at sea requires that embalming using hazardous (for the environment) chemicals is not done.

I trust this information will be of use to your committee.

A point to be noted , however, is that when the previous Minister for The Environment, The Hon David Kemp was in the Ministry a partial waiver of the sea burial fee was made available to Sea Burials Australia, To be passed on to the family of the deceased. This partial waiver meant that the cost of sea burial was reduced by a significant amount (\$900) to assist the family with carrying out the final wishes of their dearly departed.

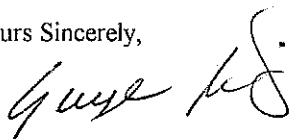
The current Minister of The Environment, The Hon Ian Campbell, has revoked this arrangement and is now asking that the full fee of \$1,000 be paid.

The *Environment Protection(Sea Dumping) Regulations 1983* Prescribes a fee of \$1,000. However the Minister may waive the fee or part thereof where it is considered necessary or desirable to do so.

In your Committee's enquiry, this may well be a relevant item to consider when looking into the costs involved with burials for the People of Australia.

I am happy to be able to assist The Committee with any further data as may be required.

Yours Sincerely,



Guye Richards
Sea Burials Australia