

**Submission
No 158**

**INQUIRY INTO CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA
AMENDMENT REGULATION 2018**

Organisation: Kenneally's Funerals

Date Received: 11 October 2018

Kenneally's Funerals

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10/10/2018

Ms Emma Rogerson

Senior Council Officer

NSW Parliament

Dear Ms Rogerson, I write in reference to the enquiry regarding the proposed cemeteries & crematoria amendment regulation 2018.

May I begin with I was only made aware of this enquiry via social media some 24hrs prior to its commencement and therefore was unable to make a submission or even able to attend, the communication from government on this major issue has sadly been missing, which is really disappointing.

I would hope you accept my late submission and if possible be able to discuss with the committee.

Kenneally's funerals are located in the south western suburb of Campbelltown, and have an office in East Hills and mortuary at Narellan. We have been established 15 years and provide funeral services to a wide spectrum of community from religious to non-religious services.

There are many communities who's preferred option of memorialisation at the time of death is burial.

My understanding is the committee wish to explore the option of renewable tenure for burial practices citing the long term shortage of burial space.

I see this as a major concern in the longer term regarding a burial licence for a period of years.

The loss of loved ones can have a long term impact on many people; the process of grief can be for many a long painful journey, to many the visitation to the grave of the loved one or friend in many ways brings comfort to those bereaved.

Some ten years ago I attended a discussion between government and community groups regarding the same issue, these groups were from Orthodox, Muslim, and Jewish groups who showed concern as did I.

To begin with, to purchase a grave on a burial licence for a period 25 years simply makes no sense.

A deceased who may be buried for that amount of time would need to be exhumed and the remains either cremated or dug deeper in the grave, and exercise that can prove to be costly.

Exhumations are an involved process that requires documentation and careful planning, and is a process that happens early in the morning, regardless constant exhumations can have an impact on

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I note that the Catholic Cemeteries and crematoria have had nothing but trouble with local government in the Campbelltown area for a cemetery to cater for up to 60000 burial plots.

The Rookwood Independent cemetery trust has had the same issue with the purchase of land in Western Sydney (Fern Hill). Why is this the case, we seem to clutter our suburbs with as many houses, shopping centres, and some lack thereof infrastructure, yet when it comes to a cemetery, Governments seem to back away fearing a backlash of public opinion.

Funerals are becoming an expensive item, with the biggest priced item being the purchase of grave staff and their mental wellbeing. I have exhumed mortal remains from a number of cemeteries and the skeletal remains are still there, in most cemeteries the decomposition process takes more than 25 years, which means the remains have not fully decomposed while the solid timber coffin can still be in tact.

To use the method of lift and deepen a grave can only be more costly and ultimately the consumer is the one who pays.

What happens to the monumental work that the family have paid for?, where does it go and would the family be reimbursed by the cemetery.

The same to be said of lawn grave plaques, do they get buried or where do they go and who reimburses the families.

I have had graves reopened where the last interment was some 40 years ago and the owner right of burial was still alive to authorise the interment of her son. Under the new proposal this would simply not be possible.

I believe there can be solutions to the longer term issue of lack of burial space.

Firstly i am more than certain if cemeteries would go through their records especially Rookwood you may find many unused graves that have been there for a long periods of time.

A proper public register of graves could be kept and updated every 5 years, when and if families or individuals change their minds regarding burial, the cemetery should purchase the grave back at the original price.

A complete media campaign in social media and print etc. encouraging those who may have unused burial sites to come forward to update the records of the cemetery and if they wish the cemetery pre purchase the grave from the family.

Sydney is vastly growing and the need for more land release for cemeteries is essential.

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Funerals are becoming an expensive item, with the biggest priced item being the purchase of grave.

The cost of graves in Sydney as opposed to those in others sates is expensive,

I would propose that government release land to the cemetery trusts and offer burial land at an affordable price.

Its often been discussed amongst many in the industry that some government run cemeteries are very financially sound , so money should not be the issue .

It's also worth noting that the sale of government run cemeteries to private enterprise as was mentioned in a media release is not the answer.

The committee needs to be mindful of the many multicultural communities and their burial practices and their religious beliefs, a burial permit for a period of 60years after the first internment may be an answer with a register of all owners of graves be at a central location as well as the cemetery.

I would strongly urge the committee to engage more with community as it appears that not all have contacted,

There is an abundance of land in Sydney metro region and beyond that does not need an overdevelopment of housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you and express my concern and I am willing to discuss this further

Sincerely

Gerald Finbar Kenneally JP

Managing Director

Kenneally's Funerals PTY LTD