



DATE: 2 September 2013

NEW LEGISLATION TO REFORM CEMETERIES & CREMATORIA

NSW Government is continuing with stage two of its landmark cemeteries and crematoria reforms with the release of draft legislation. The Department of Primary Industries announced today that an Exposure Draft of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Bill 2013* will be available this week.

The new legislation will regulate cemetery and crematorium operations across all three sectors of the interment industry. Its primary purpose is to ensure there is sufficient land to meet current and future burial needs in NSW and that people continue to have equitable access to cemetery and crematoria services.

“The Bill will introduce consistent governance and regulation of cemeteries and crematoria to ensure they maintain satisfactory levels of accountability, transparency and integrity,” a departmental representative said.

The Bill provides a sound framework for long-term planning and management of cemeteries and crematoria on Crown, local government and private land. A new agency, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW, will provide strategic oversight of the interment industry. The agency will be led by an independent Board, which will have functions and powers enabling it to work with all sectors of the industry to find solutions to the issue of diminishing cemetery space.

The Board will develop strong linkages with the NSW planning system and establish benchmarks for cemetery space. The Board will also be responsible for ensuring that the burial needs of all religious and cultural communities are respected and protected.

The legislation provides for the introduction of optional renewable tenure burial for new graves. Renewable tenure burial will not be retrospective or operate where it conflicts with cultural practice, and perpetual tenure burial will continue to be available.

A comprehensive consultation program on the draft Bill is well underway, with all key stakeholders with an interest in the area of cemetery reform being consulted. All sectors of the industry are being given the opportunity to comment on the content of the legislation, and the input of major religious, cultural and community groups, relevant state government agencies and local government representatives has been sought throughout the drafting process.

The consultation program is on track to be completed by 20 September, after which the Bill will be finalised for introduction into Parliament during the Spring Session.

The Exposure Draft Bill and explanatory material will be made available through the Crown Lands website (crownland.nsw.gov.au) during the first week of September. Comments are welcome by 20 September and can be emailed to cemeteries.reform@lands.nsw.gov.au.

ENDS

For further information contact:
David Harley
Tel: (02) 9436 3315