

Cemeteries & Crematoria Program Newsletter

December 2003

Changes in Cemetery Trust Membership

Please keep the Cemeteries and Crematoria Program of the Department of Human Services (the Department) informed of **all** changes to the status of members in your Trust.

Should Trust members be nominated for a position on the Trust (eg. Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer), resign from the Trust or change address/contact telephone number, these changes should be communicated in a letter addressed to the Department.

Trust Member Appointment Access

The Governor in Council makes all appointments to Cemetery Trusts. Whilst members of the community can be "elected" at public meetings of a Cemetery Trust, the formal appointment of a Trust member can only be made by the Governor in Council. This is achieved by submitting a properly completed nomination form, endorsed by the Trust Chairperson, to the Department.

When submitting Trust member nominations to the Department please describe the process used to attract and select nominees. When vacancies occur on a Trust, or where a Trust wishes to appoint further members, the Trust is required to advertise the vacancies within their local

community. Trust positions occupied by Trust members whose 5 year term of appointment are about to expire should also be advertised upon receipt of the expiry reminder letter.

Vacancies should be advertised in the local newspaper/s. If the Trust cannot afford to advertise through the local newspaper, please advertise Trust vacancies through a local community organisation, shop front window, library or annual general meeting to which the public is invited. Please attach a copy of the advert to the Trust member nominations form sent to the Department.

Resignation from Cemetery Trusts

Trust members who wish to resign from their position are required to advise the Department of their intention in writing. A resignation form is available from the Department upon request.

Recognition of Trust Member Service

Please contact the Department for Certificates of Appreciation for retiring, or long serving, members of your Cemetery Trust.

Insurance for Construction Work at Cemeteries

Those Cemetery Trusts that are undertaking "construction works" within the cemetery should discuss their insurance

coverage with VMIA as these works require a specific insurance policy.

Please contact Stephen Owen at the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority on (03) 8601 5912 or email: s.owen@vmia.vic.gov.au for further information on Construction Works Cover.

Required Documentation for Cemetery Fee Increases

Fee increases submitted to the Department that exceed the recommended fee scale should contain a rationale for the increase. These details should be provided in a letter addressed to the Department and have a separate sheet attached listing the existing charge for all items to be increased.

The formal Governor in Council document, itemising only the proposed increases and signed by three Trust members, remains unchanged. The Department will also look at proposed fees before they are signed by Trust members if requested.

Craftsman Press Discount

Material to be published in the Government Gazette is given a 15% discount if submitted through the Department. To qualify for

the discount please email the material to John Bernabo at:

john.bernabo@dhs.vic.gov.au

Those Trusts that do not have email access should contact the Department to find out how they can receive the discounted rate.

Overdue Abstracts of Accounts

Trusts are reminded that all 2002 abstracts of accounts should already have been submitted in accordance with the Cemeteries Act 1958. Outstanding abstracts need to be presented to the Department as soon as possible. Any Trust experiencing difficulty completing the abstracts should contact the Department for assistance.

Trusts are also reminded to provide certificates that detail the balance of investments and accounts. Trusts with reserves in excess of \$25,000 (i.e. the balance of bank accounts, investments, lawn cemetery reservation funds and perpetual maintenance trust accounts) are required to provide an audited statement of their accounts.

Competitive Neutrality Modelling

The Minister for Small Business has requested that the Victorian Small Business Commissioner monitor the market practices of Cemetery Trusts in Victoria to ensure compliance with the principles of competitive neutrality. This monitoring will continue on an ongoing basis and the Commissioner will report regularly on the compliance of Cemetery Trusts.

All Trusts are reminded that the pricing of memorialisation goods and services are required to be

transparent, and that the full costs are to be factored in. This includes:

- the input purchase price of memorial, monumental or other material goods,
- the cost of administration and,
- the applicable fees in relation to siting, inspection and maintenance as applied to externally provided goods.

Further to this, correspondence issued by Trusts to bereaved parties are not to imply that they are the only supplier of memorial, monumental or other material goods, or related services. Parties are to be made aware that alternative options exist beside those available through Cemetery Trusts.

Trusts requiring advice on applying full cost reflective pricing, if they are deemed to be operating a significant business enterprise, can contact the Competitive Neutrality Unit for guidance in this matter on (03) 9651 2509.

Cemetery Maintenance Standards

During the past year the Department has received a number of complaints regarding poorly maintained cemeteries. Trusts are reminded that under the Cemeteries Act 1958 they are responsible for administration and maintenance.

The Department can provide a small maintenance grant to those Trusts with insufficient resources to conduct routine maintenance. Trusts wishing to apply for a grant should make a request to the Department in writing. In your application please detail the amount required by the Trust and how the funds will be used. It is requested that successful Trusts provide the

Department with before and after photographs of the maintenance work conducted.

Contact the Cemeteries & Crematoria Program

Please direct any enquiries regarding the information contained within this newsletter to:

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