

# Cemeteries & Crematoria Program

## Newsletter

July 2003

### 1. MAINTENANCE GRANTS

Last financial year's grants have been distributed. A total of \$81,000 was made available by Public Health. Many projects will rely on volunteer labour to implement and will draw on local suppliers throughout country Victoria.

In the new financial year we will endeavour to make an initial round of grants by December with a second round towards June. Please forward details of any proposed works, estimated cost and the amount of funds and voluntary input available locally for the projected project.

### 2. ABSTRACTS OF ACCOUNT

A reminder if you have not yet returned your abstract to please do so as soon as possible as this is a statutory requirement under the current legislation. Trusts with reserves in excess of \$25,000 should provide an audited statement of their accounts.

Certificates as to the balance of investments and bank accounts at the end of the period should also be supplied to facilitate scrutiny of your trust's financial position. Please forward returns to the Cemeteries and Crematoria Unit.

### 3. TRUST MEMBERSHIP

Cemetery trusts are advised that since the approval of the Cemeteries (Incorporation of Trusts) Regulations 1995 they have become incorporated under the Cemeteries Act 1958.

Accordingly cemetery trusts now comprise members who should no longer be referred to as trustees. Your trust is in effect a statutory corporation of government that has its own legal entity and is capable of suing and being sued.

### 4. RENEWAL OF TRUST MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

Trust members appointed since 9 May 1996, whose five-year appointments are due to expire, are reminded that they need to reapply for appointment by completing a nomination form and completing the resume section in particular. A copy of the current application form is included for this purpose.

Notices are normally sent to affected trusts and completed nomination forms are required to be returned at least two months prior to the expiry date for those members who wish to continue.

While every effort will be made by the Department to remind Trusts when the terms of individual members are about to expire, it is the responsibility of trusts to monitor their appointments and take the necessary action for any reappointments and resignations.

Under the latest guidelines it is necessary for the Cemeteries & Crematoria Unit to collect additional information on Cemetery Trust members to meet annual reporting requirements.

Information now required includes the number and percentage of:

- women on cemetery trusts,
- trust members from a culturally diverse background,
- indigenous trust members,
- trust members under 25 years of age, and
- trust members from rural and regional Victoria.

All cemetery trust members are now included in the *Group C Organisations* classification, and are bound by the *Guidelines for the Appointment and Remuneration of Part-Time Non-Executive Directors of State Government Boards and Members of Statutory Bodies and Advisory Committees* recently issued by the Premier of Victoria.

## **5. RESIGNATIONS**

If an individual trust member wishes to tender their resignation they should write a formal letter or complete a resignation form, available from the Department. Letter of resignation should be to addressed to the Governor in Council, care of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Unit

## **6. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**

The Department welcomes the opportunity to recognise the invaluable role played by volunteer trust members in operating cemeteries in Victoria.

Certificates of appreciation are available for retiring members by application to the Unit.

## **7. COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY**

The Competitive Neutrality Unit (CNU) has been set up by the Victorian government to ensure that publicly owned entities (such as cemetery trusts) compete fairly with private enterprise.

The CNU has recently finalised an investigation into the pricing activities of certain cemetery trusts.

This investigation has found that the current pricing of memorialisation goods and services available through trusts is not transparent. The CNU has advised the Department that this may bring rise to occasions where all costs may not have been fully factored into the final pricing of memorialisation goods and services offered by some trusts.

The CNU recommends that trusts should factor full costs in setting prices for memorialisation of goods and services, including:

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

any identified CN adjustments including a rate of return of 8% (in this context) the percentage return required by government on the total assets employed by an agency to undertake a business activity.

## **8. APPLICATIONS FOR FEE INCREASES**

A brief explanation or rationale for any proposed fee increases should be provided along with the standard paperwork. However please do not

show comparative figures on the actual form which is submitted to the Governor in Council and which appears in the Government Gazette. Would you also indicate whether the fees are new or are based on existing fees? We are happy to look at proposed fees before trust members sign them. Fees increases are taking a little while to get through the system at the moment so please be patient and send them in as soon as possible.

All Trusts are advised that any notice that needs to be gazetted in the Government gazette are given a 15% discount if the notice is emailed to John Bernabo:

cemeteries&crematoria@dhs.vic.gov.au

John will in turn forward the email to Craftsman Press after the item is scheduled and sent to Governor in Council.

## **9. CONSERVING CEMETERIES**

The National Trust of Victoria has published a practical guide to the conservation of monuments. It advises how to clean and repair monuments and iron railings, how to maintain cemetery buildings and structures and how to care for cemetery plantings among other things. The cost of the new publication is \$29 with a \$3 mailing cost and is obtainable by ringing 9656 9800 or fax 9650 5397. While the restoration of monuments is the responsibility of holders of rights of burial the book may be a good reference source for cemetery trusts.

## **10. Email ADDRESS**

If a trust or a trust member would prefer to receive this newsletter by email please send a message to:

cemeteries&crematoria@dhs.vic.gov.au

## **11. CONTACT DETAILS**

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments regarding this newsletter or any other issues you would like to discuss.

The Cemeteries and Crematoria Unit can be contacted on:

Tel: 9637 4044 or 1800 034 280;  
and Fax: 9637 4290.

Our postal address is:

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