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| Frequently asked questions |
| Performance support program for Class B cemetery trusts |
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# What is the performance support program?

The performance support program (the program) will provide six Class B cemetery trusts with a tailored independent review of their governance, operational and financial management for the 2021-2022 financial year. The program is currently in its seventh year of operation. The objectives of the program are to:

* assist individual trusts to identify and manage risks
* help the department to identify trends and issues that are relevant across the sector.

# I am a member of a trust that has been selected to participate in the program:

## Why has the trust been selected for participation?

Trusts are prioritised for participation based on a number of criteria including:

* the trust’s income and activity level (income is compared across the state and within local government areas to capture the significance of less active trusts in smaller regional communities)
* the trust’s membership and attendance at governance training
* any specific governance or operational issues that might have come to the department’s attention.

## Does this mean there are concerns about the trust’s performance?

Trusts are prioritised for participation based on the criteria set out above. A high score across one or more of these criteria does **not** mean there are presently any problems at the trust.

A trust can be performing very effectively but not have systems in place to help it manage issues that might emerge. A key objective of the program is to help trusts identify and manage these risks before they become problems.

## Who will be conducting the review?

The department has engaged an organisation called NTT to conduct the reviews. The NTT review team will contact the participating trusts to introduce themselves and to begin scheduling and planning.

## What does a review involve?

The review team will look at what the trust does and whether this aligns not only with mandatory requirements (such as legislation) but also guidelines, recommendations and best practice. This process will allow the review team to prepare a report that contains guidance tailored to the needs and circumstances of the particular trust.

The review team may identify matters that the trust simply has not had the time or reason to consider. This type of risk identification can help trusts put in place strategies to proactively avoid problems.

The review team’s tailored guidance is likely to include recommended actions for the trust to complete within an agreed timeframe of up to nine months. Approximately nine months after the initial review, the review team will contact the trust to review the actions the trust has undertaken.

## What does the trust need to do?

To obtain the most benefit from participating in the program, it is important that the trust engages actively with the review team.

The trust might wish to nominate a member or employee to be the primary point of contact with the review team, although it is likely that the review team will need to meet with various members and employees throughout the process of the review. It is important that all trust members are kept informed of the progress of the review.

The review team will provide draft terms of reference before beginning the review so the trust can offer feedback. This is the trust’s chance to make sure the review is tailored to its particular circumstances and any areas of uncertainty it might have.

The trust will need to provide any documents or information requested by the review team. If the trust is unsure what is required, ask the review team for clarification and they will be happy to assist.

The review team will summarise the recommendations from the review in a report. Before the report is finalised, the team will provide a draft to the trust for feedback. This is the time to let the review team know if you think that something has been overlooked or misunderstood.

## When will the review take place?

The review will commence soon after the trust is notified of its participation.

Please talk to the review team about the trust’s needs and preferences (for example, face to face or electronic participation).

The trust will need to review the recommendations in the draft report prior to its finalisation. It may be necessary for the trust to schedule a special meeting (in person or via email) for this purpose.

## Will the outcomes of the review be published?

The department will not publish the report that the review team develops about each cemetery trust. The review team and the department will use the outcomes from each review to prepare a yearly report that identifies trends and issues of relevance across the sector. No individuals or trusts will be named in the yearly report.

The yearly report is published online at [Cemeteries and crematoria reports](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/cemeteries-and-crematoria/cemeteries-and-crematoria-reports-and-factsheets) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/cemeteries-and-crematoria/cemeteries-and-crematoria-reports>.

## Does the review mean the trust does not need to have its abstract of accounts audited this year?

No, the review does not replace the financial reporting requirements for Class B cemetery trusts (the Abstract of Accounts).

## I am not happy with the conduct of the review. Who can I provide my feedback to?

The Cemetery Sector Governance Support Unit (the unit) encourages you to raise any concerns that come up during the review with the review team in the first instance. Often, matters can be resolved through clear, calm and direct communication.

If this is not successful, you can raise your concerns with the unit. Keep in mind that the review team is engaged for their independence and expertise, so the unit will not direct them in their conduct of the review.

If, after the review, you have suggestions as to how the process can be improved, feel free to pass these ideas on to your review team or to the unit.

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