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| Cemetery Sector Governance Support Program newsletter |
| Edition 1, 2021 |
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# Contact us

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| Phone (freecall) 1800 034 280Fax (03) 9096 9186Email the Cemetery Sector Governance Support Program <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>[Visit the Cemeteries and Crematoria webpage](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria>**Postal address**Cemetery Sector Governance Support ProgramDepartment of Health PO Box 4057Melbourne VIC 3001 |

# Welcome

Welcome to the Cemetery Sector Governance Support Program’s (the program) newsletter.

# Donating trust funds

Cemetery trusts cannot donate funds to charities or other not-for-profits. Providing donations is not within the scope of a cemetery trust’s functions as defined by the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003* (the Act). The function of both Class A and Class B cemetery trusts is to properly and efficiently manage and maintain each public cemetery for which it is responsible. Although the Act gives cemetery trusts the power to spend money, trusts’ actions must be consistent with their functions under the Act. Trusts must also consider their obligations in relation to funding the perpetual maintenance of their public cemetery.

Cemetery trusts can receive donations from organisations or members of the public, however, the donor should be aware that donations to cemetery trusts are not tax-deductible.

# Data security reporting

In July 2020 the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner’s (OVIC) Information Security Unit met with members of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria to discuss the Protective Data Security Plan (PDSP) reporting requirements for Class B cemetery trusts. Following these productive discussions, OVIC developed a PDSP template specifically for Class B cemetery trusts to clarify the information security requirements for the sector.

To date, OVIC has received PDSP responses from 352 Class B cemetery trusts. OVIC thanks cemetery trust members for their work on the PDSPs and looks forward to continuing to educate and work with the sector to enhance the information security practices of each trust.

For those trusts yet to submit their 2020 PDSP to OVIC, we encourage you to do so. Information packs and templates were sent out via hard and soft copy in mid-2020 to assist with this process. For help and advice, please contact the OVIC Information Security Unit by emailing OVIC <security@ovic.vic.gov.au> or calling (03) 8684 1616.

# Class B appointments

## New application form and guidelines

At the beginning of this year, the program introduced a new *Application for appointment to a Class B cemetery trust* and Class B cemetery trust applicant guidelines. Both documents are available on [the program’s webpage](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/publichealth/%20cemeteries-and-crematoria/appointments/class-b-appointments) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/publichealth/ cemeteries-and-crematoria/appointments/class-b-appointments>.

All applicants seeking appointment to a Class B cemetery trust are required to read the guidelines and complete Parts A to G of the application form. The guidelines contain important information about the department’s use of personal information, probity checks and conflicts of interest. Applicants are required to declare on the application form that they have read the guidelines and agree to the application’s terms.

If the trust endorses the application, the trust chairperson is required to complete Parts H and I of the application form. Please note that the new application form includes questions for applicants who may be directly related to other trust members or applicants. This means that trusts no longer have to complete a separate letter of support for applicants who are directly related to other trust members or applicants.

## Appointment rounds

To streamline the Class B appointment process, applications for all new appointments and reappointments are now managed by the program in four annual appointment rounds.

This means that if a current trust member intends to seek reappointment for a consecutive term, the completed application will need to be submitted to the program by a specified date to ensure their application is processed in the appropriate appointment round.

The following table shows the current member term of appointment expiry dates and corresponding deadline for completed applications to be submitted to the department:

| Term expiry date | Application deadline |
| --- | --- |
| 30 April |  5 February |
| 31 July | 14 May |
| 31 October | 13 August |
| 28 February | 10 December |

If an application for reappointment is received after the corresponding appointment round deadline, it will be processed in the following appointment round. This means that when the applicant’s term of appointment expires, their trust membership will lapse, so they will no longer be an active trust member.

If a trust member’s term of appointment lapses, they will not be eligible to vote at trust meetings but may continue to attend meetings as an observer if the trust agrees.

## Notification of expiry of term of appointment as a trust member

The program notifies trust members whose term of appointment is due to expire *by email,* provided the member has provided the department with a current email address.

The program will also notify the primary contact at any trust with members whose term is about to expire *by email*.

Please check your email (and ‘junk’ email folder in case these notifications have been diverted). To check the term of appointment dates for members of your trust please download the [*List of current members appointed to Victorian cemetery* *trusts*](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/appointments) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/appointments>.

The program places advertisements for trust member vacancies. These ads seek expressions of interest from the public for all vacant positions on the trust. The ads support transparency in the appointment process and promote community awareness and involvement.

Where possible and appropriate the program will advertise in a publication preferred by the trust. As some regional papers have ceased print production, ads might appear in a digital version of the publication only. To check on your trust’s preferred publication as currently listed, please download [*Preferred publications for Class B advertising*](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/appointments/recruitment-and-advertising) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/appointments/recruitment-and-advertising>.

# Performance Support Program

NTT undertook performance reviews at seven Class B cemetery trusts for the 2019–20 financial year.

The review process is currently in its fifth year and each review provides participating trusts with an independent assessment of their governance, operational and financial management performance. The key objective of a performance review is to assist trusts to identify and manage risks associated with their operations and governance.

The information gathered from these reviews also provides the department with information that helps us to review and update materials, training, guidance and advice provided to the sector.

The department has released a de-identified
2019–20 annual report for the Performance Support Program, which is available on the cemetery website.

The report summarises a number of common themes that emerged in the 2019–20 performance reviews. Trusts should review these findings to determine if there are lessons or opportunities to improve their own governance performance.

Common themes identified in the report were that several trusts did not have in place:

* a financial budget, forecast or strategy to plan and manage the long-term viability of the trust
* an instrument of delegation to authorise trust members/officers to undertake functions and exercise powers under the Act
* documented policies and procedures for contract management including assessment of contractor performance
* a central register to record complaints
* adequate risk management activities (financial and non-financial).

For more information please refer to the [report on the health.vic website](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/publications/reports-and-fact-sheets) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/publications/reports-and-fact-sheets>.

In conjunction with the sector, the department has developed several new policy templates to assist Class B cemetery trusts. These templates are designed to improve trust governance performance. These policies and procedures can be found on the [program’s webpage](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/governance-and-finance/policy-templates) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/governance-and-finance/policy-templates>.

# Cemetery Grants Program

The first round of the 2020–21 Cemetery Grants Program closed on 30 November 2020, with 68 trusts receiving grants totalling $827,844.98.

The second round of the 2020–21 program will close on 31 March 2021. Trusts that apply for a grant in this round will be notified of the outcome in May 2021.

Please note there are limited funds available for grants and priority will be given to applications for funds that address occupational health and safety issues and those trusts that need IT equipment to improve their service delivery. Partial grants will be considered for those trusts that can contribute to the proposed project from their own funds.

To apply for a grant, a cemetery trust must submit the application form before work begins. Applications should include two quotes for the proposed expenditure and photos of the relevant area (if appropriate). If a trust is unable to obtain two quotes, a written explanation of why this is not possible must be submitted. Previous grants must be acquitted for the grant application to be considered. A current ABN is also required for the grant funds to be transferred.

Trusts are required to email applications to the department <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>.

Visit the [Cemeteries and crematoria website](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/grants) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria/grants> for the application form and more information.

# CPI increase to fees effective 1 July 2021

As outlined in s. 43 of the Act, all cemetery trust fees of $50 or more are to be increased by the consumer price index (CPI) rate each year. The CPI rate for this year’s increase is 1.3 per cent. This adjustment to trusts’ fees will be effective from 1 July 2021.

Notices confirming each trust’s CPI-adjusted fees for the financial year 2021–22 will be distributed by mail in March 2021.

# Right of interment and interment register

The department has sourced printed copies of the ‘Right of interment and interment register’. If your trust requires a new copy in order to maintain appropriate records of interments, please email the program and we will arrange to post a copy to you.

# Governance and operational training

The governance and operational training programs for Class A and Class B cemetery trusts provide trust members with practical and relevant information and materials about their role. All trust members and trust secretaries are eligible to attend these department-funded training programs.

The program is delivered by Our Community, and more information has been attached. To register for a workshop, please visit the [Institute of Community Directors Australia website](https://www.communitydirectors.com.au) <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au>.

For more information, help with registrations or to arrange a governance and operational training workshop by request, please contact Our Community directly:

Emily Moore

Our Community

Phone: 9320 6808

Email Emily <learn@ourcommunity.com.au>

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| To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1800 034 280, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email the Cemetery Sector Governance Support Program <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>.Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health, March 2021ISSN 2208-8830 (print) 2208-8849 (online/PDF/Word) [Available from the Cemeteries and Crematoria webpage](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/cemeteries-and-crematoria>Printed by Razer Graphix, Bayswater |