



## Frequently Asked Questions

*Your Local*  
Community Funerals



*We are here to help you every step of the way*

Personal | Professional | Available 24 hours every day

## Why should I choose Community Funerals?

Unlike many large funeral businesses, our business owners live locally and work within the business ensuring that you receive a unique and personal level of service.

We have highly experienced Funeral Planners who provide extraordinary care, compassion, and impeccable personal service at all times.

We personalise and tailor every service to the needs and desires of each family; we can provide contemporary celebrations to the most traditional of services.

## What do you do when someone dies?

When someone dies it can be difficult to know what to do. If you feel overwhelmed, take the time to call a family member, or a friend, who can support you at this time. What you do next depends on where the person died, and how the death occurred.

If someone has passed away at Home and a doctor has attended and issued a life extinct or cause of death certificate then you can call us and we will organise to transfer your loved one into our care.

If someone has passed away at a Nursing Home or Private Hospital, then the staff will usually contact the nominated Funeral Director.

If death occurs in a Public Hospital, the hospital administration will complete formalities such as the Cause of Death Certificate, however it will be up to the family of the deceased to contact the Funeral Director. It is usual for people to be unsure of what to do in the immediate aftermath of a bereavement. We take you through the initial steps and provide advice on other things you may need to think about when someone you know dies.

## When does the Coroner become Involved?

If the doctor is unable to determine/certify the cause of death then the police will need to be contacted. The police will then make contact with the Coronial staff.

These legal processes take time and can not be rushed.

The types of cases that the Coroner may become involved in are:

- death other than by natural causes, including a violent act, accidental or unusual causes
- if the death occurred whilst the person was under anesthetic (or within 24 hours of the administration of an anesthetic)
- unexpected or when the cause of death is unknown
- death of a person in police custody or in a prison
- in an institution such as a drug or alcohol rehabilitation centre.

A Government appointed Funeral Director will transfer the deceased to the Coroners mortuary.

A post mortem examination, also know as an autopsy, may be conducted to establish the cause of death.

An autopsy is a post mortem examination of a body performed by a medically qualified pathologist using scientific means. It may be required by the State Coroner to determine the cause of death. During an autopsy the body is examined externally first, then is opened so internal organs can be examined. If required, organs may be removed for further tests. Families need to be aware that an autopsy can delay the Funeral.

It is appropriate to appoint a Funeral Director regardless of whether the Coroner will be involved. The Funeral Director will then liaise with coronial staff regarding release of the deceased into their care.

### **Do more families chose burial or cremation?**

In recent years the number of families selecting cremation is increasing. In the majority of States throughout Australia cremations would outnumber burials.

### **What is the difference between a coffin and a casket?**

Coffins are tapered at the head and foot and wide at the shoulders. Caskets are rectangular in shape and are generally constructed of more expensive timbers or metal.

## How much does a funeral cost?

With so many choices and options available to families the cost of a funeral can vary significantly. The type of Funeral service you select, your choice of coffin/casket or whether you chose cremation or burial will influence the overall cost.

At Community Funerals we will discuss your needs and then provide you with a detailed account.

## What allowances exist for funeral expenses?

Centrelink offers a number of bereavement payments to Australian residents – see further details below. Entitlements can change without notice and we recommend you contact your nearest Centerlink Office for confirmation and additional information on 13 23 00.

### **Single Pensioner:**

The estate will receive one full pension payment after the person's death.

### **Married Pensioners:**

Surviving partners will receive a further 14 weeks of their spouse's pension and generally this is paid as a lump sum.

### **Carers Pension:**

Carer's are entitled to a further 14 weeks pension and this will be paid fortnightly. If the deceased was single/widowed/divorced, there may be additional entitlements.

### **Sole Parent Pension:**

The parent is entitled to a further 14 weeks and this will be paid in a lump sum.

### **Bereavement Allowance:**

A bereavement allowance is a short term income support payment, usually paid for up to 14 weeks, for someone whose partner has recently died.

### **Widows Allowance:**

If the surviving wife has no recent workforce experience and she is over 50, she may be entitled to receive a benefit. Please check with Centrelink with respect to the payment entitlements.

Other allowances may be payable through the following institutions:

- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Insurance Companies
- Motor Accident Commission
- Private health funds
- Victims of Crime

### **What is embalming and when is it required?**

Essentially, Embalming is the process of replacing bodily fluids with chemical fluids for the purposes of:

- Preservation of the body
- Infection control
- Enhancing the presentation of the deceased

Embalming can be minimal or unnecessary in some instances; partial for the benefit of families wishing to 'view' and/or when the funeral may be within a week; or full embalming as may be expected in some cultures or when the body is to be repatriated interstate or overseas.

### **Do we have to have a Viewing?**

No you don't. The choice is entirely yours. A viewing provides family members with the opportunity to see and spend time with the deceased prior to the funeral. For some cultures it may also occur during the funeral.

Your Funeral Planner will discuss with you whether you would like to have a viewing or not.

### **Who is responsible for making funeral arrangements?**

The person who has legal authority to make funeral arrangements is the Executor. However, the responsibility can be waived by mutual agreement to the next of kin or family friend. It is important to understand that whoever signs the authorisation for a funeral service to proceed will be financially responsible for the funeral cost. This person will also have authority to liaise with either the Cemetery or Crematoria.

### **What is a eulogy?**

A eulogy is a written tribute given at a funeral service. Generally it will be delivered by someone who is close to the deceased. Eulogies are an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the person, their achievements and the impact that they have had on those around them. .

### **How does a funeral service differ from a memorial service?**

For a funeral service the deceased is in attendance, however, for a memorial service this is not the case.

### **What is the role of the celebrant?**

Families appoint a funeral celebrant to present and lead the funeral service on their behalf. They will also organise the Order of Service.

Generally the celebrant will meet with the family to explore the deceased's life and achievements and to ensure that the service is as exactly as they would like.

## What is a pre-arranged funeral?

A pre-arranged Funeral is one where the family and Funeral Planner establish and document the funeral requisites and services which they may utilise in the future.

Information that may be required include: the contact person after your death, important personal information including marriage(s), children and parental details, which will be recorded on a death certificate. Decisions can also be made regarding the location of the funeral service, burial or cremation options, nominated clergy or celebrant to conduct the service, and personal wishes including readings, pallbearers, flowers, donation requests and music.

Payment of the funeral is made when the service is conducted.

This option can provide peace of mind and remove the need for a loved one to arrange a funeral and make difficult decisions at the time of death.

## What is a pre-paid funeral?

A pre-paid Funeral is one where the family and Funeral Planner establish the funeral requisites and services that they wish to contract and pay for now at today's prices, for provision at a future date.

When planning a funeral decisions need to be made on the type of service and its location along with the content, music, readings, poetry and order of service, whether there will be a burial or a cremation, the choice of a coffin or a casket, the selection of funeral notices, deciding on floral tributes and looking at various options.

Anyone can take out a Pre-Paid Funeral Plan regardless of their age or state of health.



**Mossman & Port Douglas Community Funerals**

*(formerly Crimmins Funerals)*

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