

Interment Industry Scheme for NSW

October 2022

Introduction

To make sure people in NSW have access to sustainable, affordable and dignified burial and cremation (interment) services, the NSW Government has introduced the Interment Industry Scheme which includes a licensing system for the interment industry.

The Scheme requires cemetery and crematorium operators to meet consistent standards for clear, plain language contracts, cemetery maintenance, pricing transparency, customer service and respect for people's religious and cultural requirements.

Clear, consistent information and standards give families the comfort of knowing what to expect from operators, and the ability to make informed choices.

The standards also help cemetery and crematorium operators meet community expectations.

A draft version of the Interment Industry Scheme, developed in conjunction with NSW's interment sector, was exhibited for public review and feedback in June – July 2022.

During the consultation period, CCNSW engaged with industry, cultural and faith groups, Aboriginal community representatives and the broader NSW community and received clear support for the scheme. In fact, more than 75% of people surveyed during the consultation period expressed support or strong support for licensing the interment industry.

On 14 October 2022 the Interment Industry Scheme was introduced by regulation under the *Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2013* and is being implemented in stages from July 2023 to October 2024.

CCNSW is developing material and templates to help ensure operators are aware of and equipped to meet their licence obligations.

CCNSW will continue working with industry throughout the lengthy implementation period and beyond, toward a strengthened and responsive sector, embracing diverse and emerging interment practices, and making provision for the needs of the future.

What is interment?

Interment is the burial of human remains or cremated ashes in a grave or cemetery plot, or placement in a mausoleum, crypt, vault, columbarium, niche wall or other similar structure. Ash interment specifically refers to burial or on-site storing of cremated remains.

Licence conditions

All cemetery and crematorium operators must be licensed to carry out burials and cremations. The Interment Industry Scheme includes 4 licence categories with differing requirements according to the number of burials and/or cremations carried out. The licence categories include:

- Category 1: over 100 interments per annum
- Category 2: 50 – 99 interments per annum; crematoria only operators
- Category 3: fewer than 50 interments per annum
- Category 4 “caretaker licence”: inactive, with exemptions for interments in limited circumstances

To comply with their licence conditions, operators (depending on their category) will need to meet the following requirements:

Conditions A1-3 Provide standard contract terms and conditions for interments

Operators must clearly explain contract details and pricing to help customers understand what they are buying and on what terms. Operators must give customers time and privacy to review their contract before signing.

Conditions B1-6 Ensure cemeteries are safely and respectfully maintained

Following on from CCNSW’s voluntary maintenance guide, the Scheme sets minimum requirements for cemetery grounds maintenance, including landscaping, roads, and building maintenance, to ensure operators know and meet the minimum standards for people’s final resting places.

Conditions C1-2 Make pricing more transparent and comparison of products easier

To help people compare prices, operators must publish a clear, easy-to-find price breakdown of their least expensive products and their Basic Adult Burial, Basic Ash Interment and Basic Cremation costs. Operators must make customers aware of their least expensive products before customers sign a contract.

Conditions D1-6 Introduce industry wide customer service standards

Although many operators provide a great service to customers, for the first time, all operators are being held to the same clear standards including respecting personal choices, providing complete information about products or services, and communicating supportively to people who are culturally and linguistically diverse or have specific communication needs.

All cemetery and crematorium workers must be appropriately trained and must understand the customer service standards expected of them, so that customers know what to expect from operators and operators are equipped to meet community expectations.

Conditions E1-2 Ensure respectful interment for people of all religions and cultures

NSW is a proudly diverse community with many religions and cultures, each with rules and practices for interment. The Interment Industry Scheme includes principles that help operators meet the religious and cultural requirements of NSW communities. There is also a set of principles for meeting Aboriginal cultural and spiritual requirements, in recognition of the unique importance of Sorry Business to Aboriginal people.

More information on the licence categories, conditions and key dates is available in fact sheets on the [CCNSW web page](#).

When new conditions will come into effect

New conditions are in sets (A-F) and compliance will be required progressively by operators with the first licence conditions (contracts, customer service, information disclosure) coming into force in October 2023 and the last (maintenance and pricing transparency) in July 2024.

Operators will be applying for licences in groups, with all operators to be licensed and compliant with all applicable conditions by October 2024.

For more information on application assessment periods (when each operator group's licence applications will be assessed), criteria to determine an operator's licence category of licence conditions, and the stages determining when licence conditions A-F will come into force, please see the Implementation and transition fact sheet [on our website](#).

About CCNSW

CCNSW is an independent statutory agency created in 2014 under the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013* as NSW's interment industry regulator. CCNSW's vision is that all people in NSW have access to sustainable and affordable burial and cremation services that are respectful of culture and faith and provided in a consistent, transparent and accountable manner.

As well as regulating cemetery and crematorium operators, CCNSW provides information to help customers make informed decisions.

For information on interment rights or advice on planning for burial and cremation, contact CCNSW as follows:

Phone: 02 9842 8473

Email: ccnsw.info@cemeteries.nsw.gov.au

Web: industry.nsw.gov.au/cemeteries-crematoria

Address: Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta, NSW 2124