

# Burial without a conventional coffin

## Options for burial in NSW

A person may have a religious, spiritual, or cultural reason for burial without a coffin, or it may be a personal preference. Regardless of the reason, it is possible, with the appropriate permissions, to be buried in NSW without a conventional coffin. Growing numbers of NSW consumers and families are seeking alternative options for burial which meet their beliefs, values, and preferences.

The following options are increasingly available, can be used at conventional cemeteries, and can be discussed with a funeral director:

- caskets made of willow, wicker or wool;
- cardboard coffins, which can include customisable designs;
- biodegradable scattering tubes, earth urns, corn starch urns or salt urns;
- biodegradable burial suits made from mushrooms and other micro-organisms; or
- burial shrouds made from biodegradable material, such as 100% cotton, bamboo, linen, or wool.

If you wish to have a shrouded burial, there are additional steps that need to be taken.

## Steps required in NSW to be buried in a shroud

In NSW, a conventional coffin or casket is required for burial or cremation. However, an application can be made to NSW Health for burial of a deceased person in a grave outside of a coffin ([Application for burial of a body which is not placed in a coffin](#)). This is commonly referred to as a 'shrouded burial', because the body is placed in a shroud rather than a coffin. Some cemeteries in NSW have arrangements in place for certain community or religious groups, meaning an individual exemption is not required. The application asks if you have negotiated and reached agreement with the cemetery authority which has agreed to carry out the burial. NSW Health suggest that this step should take place before completing the application form.

A family member, funeral director or cemetery operator can seek approval for an exemption from NSW Health on your behalf. Funeral directors and cemetery operators can help you develop your shrouded burial plans, or those of your loved ones.

## Contact details

Further information can be obtained from Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW, 4 Parramatta Square, Parramatta, NSW, 2124

Mail address: Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta, NSW 2124

Email: [ccnsw.info@cemeteries.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ccnsw.info@cemeteries.nsw.gov.au)

Phone: 02 9842 8470