

Fact sheet

Draft Perpetual Care Framework for consultation

November 2025

Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW (CCNSW) is seeking feedback on a draft Perpetual Care Framework

“Perpetual care” means the ongoing respect for and maintenance of a cemetery, even after interments are no longer carried out there. Perpetual care is important because cemeteries and crematoria are places of remembrance and reflection but also places for community connection and recreation. They support community and cultural practices and form part of our shared history. The draft Perpetual Care Framework sets out a plan to ensure these special places are cared for, respected, and accessible for generations to come.

This fact sheet summarises the draft Perpetual Care Framework. You can also find this information in video form on our website.

Understanding the interment industry

Funeral directors and cemetery operators

If you have organised a funeral, you have probably dealt with a funeral director. You may not have dealt directly with a cemetery or crematorium operator.

Funeral directors help families organise a funeral or memorial service. Cemetery and crematorium operators manage the cemeteries and crematoria, including the grounds, interments, records, and ongoing care. CCNSW regulates these operators to ensure services meet community expectations and to empower the public to make informed decisions during one of life’s most difficult times.

Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW (CCNSW)

CCNSW regulates the interment industry - the cemetery and crematorium operators who provide burial and cremation services - and aims to empower the public to make informed decisions during life’s most sensitive times. Our vision is that all people in New South Wales 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.

The framework looks beyond the traditional cemetery lifecycle

There are four phases in a traditional cemetery lifecycle:

1. In the **planning and establishment** phase, the operator acquires land and establishes basic infrastructure.
 2. A cemetery's **active** phase has frequent burials and ash interments. The active phase is marked by high visitation.
 3. The **transitional** phase occurs when interments and visitation begin to decline.
 4. In the **inactive** phase, the sale of interments (burials or cremations) has ceased, and visitation has declined further.
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Modernising the cemetery life cycle

The traditional cemetery life cycle isn't the only way to think about cemeteries. This framework is an opportunity to think about what a more modern cemetery life cycle might look like, and ways in which cemeteries can remain vibrant and valuable spaces into the future while continuing to be maintained with dignity and respect.

The framework outlines a set of possible 'future states' for a cemetery, outlining different ways that a cemetery might look or operate in the future.

We suggest three distinct types of 'future states' as part of a 'modernised cemetery life cycle':

- **prolonging the active phase** of the cemetery by unlocking new supply, for example through renewable tenure or cemetery renewal
- the **cemetery becoming inactive**, with a suitable level of maintenance that ensures safe access but may look different than the traditional maintenance style of an active cemetery
- **converting the cemetery** to a complementary use, for example a public park.

The last option is currently only available to council operators and requires Ministerial approval.

Two proposed new regulatory requirements

The draft framework aims to ensure that:

- the remains of people interred in cemeteries will always be treated with **dignity and respect**
- the memorialisation practices and beliefs of **all religious and cultural groups are respected**, both at the time of interment and into the future
- the approach to perpetual care supports ongoing **financial sustainability** of the sector and minimises cost impacts for people and their families
- the future states of cemeteries maximise their public value, in line with **community needs and expectations**, while considering place-based approaches.

It proposes 2 rules that cemetery operators must follow. Both ensure that operators deliver perpetual care but also plan for it early and consider a range of future states when doing so - as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Proposed new regulatory requirements

	Requirement	
	Provide perpetual care to a minimum level	Develop a plan for carrying out perpetual care
Applies to	All operators	Larger operators with a category 1 or 2 licence
Operator actions	Ensure safe access and basic grounds maintenance	Prepare a Perpetual Care Statement and submit it to CCNSW
Summary	Allows maintenance and access levels to change over time, provided the cemetery remains safe and respectful.	The statement would set out how they plan to carry out perpetual care and how they have considered different future states, as well as how this will be funded.

Under the Framework, interment right holders, typically the family and descendants of the deceased, remain responsible for any ongoing repairs or cleaning of a monument.

Have your say

We want your feedback on any or all parts of the draft Framework. Your feedback will help shape the final Perpetual Care Framework to ensure the long-term care of our cemeteries as spaces for everyone to access and use safely and respectfully.

Before you begin, you may find it helpful to download the draft Framework document from our website.

There are two ways to provide your feedback on the draft framework:

- by completing our online survey
- by emailing ccnsw.regulatoryreform@cemeteries.nsw.gov.au.

Feedback on the draft Perpetual Care Framework closes **11:59 PM on Friday, 27 March 2026**.

We value your feedback, and we value your privacy. Please note that responses may be shared publicly, unless you request confidentiality.