

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Is cremation more expensive than burial?**

Generally cremation is cheaper than burial. However, you should discuss the matter with a funeral director or Woongarra Crematorium staff, who will be able to advise you of the precise cost.

## **How popular is cremation today?**

There are currently around 135,000 deaths in Australia each year and some 56% of these (or around 76,000) result in cremation. However, both the number of deaths and proportion of cremations are slowly increasing. In urban areas where cremation facilities are more readily available the rate approaches 70%.

## **Is cremation an option for people of all faiths?**

Cremation is usually not acceptable within Orthodox Judaism, Islam and Eastern Orthodoxy. However, most Christian de-nominations approve cremation, and it is the preferred method among Hindus and many Buddhists.

## **May Catholics choose cremation?**

Although burial is its traditional choice, the Roman Catholic Church has accepted cremation for decades. Not only has the practise of cremation become more socially acceptable, but the church no longer considers there to be a danger that Christian cremation will be associated with non-Christian belief, or with a denial of such doctrines as the resurrection of the body, immortality of the soul, and the existence of eternal life. The Church recommends the cremated remains be disposed of in a way that indicates respect of the body of the deceased person. A memorial in a public place is favoured that even in death the deceased person's committed to Christianity is still pro-claimed.

## **What religious ceremony can I have with cremation?**

Services for burial and cremation are much the same apart from the form of committal service at a crematorium chapel. You may arrange for a clergy person of your choice to conduct the service at the crematorium. The form of service should be discussed with the Clergy or Celebrant and the Funeral Director.

**Do I have to sign anything?**

Yes. If you are the executor or the next of kin (or authorised by either to do so) you will be asked to complete an application of cremation and the crematorium's authority forms. You will also be asked to indicate your intention regarding disposal of the cremated remains. If you are undecided, please tell the crematorium staff, who may advise you of their arrangements for short-term storage of remains.

**What happens at the crematorium on the day of the funeral?**

The coffin can be brought into the chapel and placed on the catafalque (committal table) prior to the mourners entering and taking their seats.

Another option is that pallbearers will carry the coffin into the chapel to commence the service. During the service (usually towards the end) the coffin may be removed from view by lowering or by screening with curtains.

After the service mourners may inspect the floral arrangements before leaving the chapel. Families who wish to view the cremation need to advise their Funeral Director in advance to arrange this

**What happens to the coffin after the service?**

It is withdrawn into a committal room where the nameplate of the coffin is checked with the cremation order to ensure correct identification with the label giving all the relevant information. This identification then stays with the remains until the final placement.

**Does the cremation take place immediately, or are the coffins stored up until a number are ready to be cremated?**

Cremation will take place as soon as practicable after the service.

**Is the coffin cremated with the deceased?**

Yes

**What happens about handles and other fittings?**

Some crematoria remove the metal fittings because of the adverse effect their chemical composition can leave on cremation chambers and also because licences issued by the Environment Protection Authority necessitate this.

Any fittings removed are destroyed. Most fittings are however made of plastic and these are not removed but cremated with the coffin or casket.

**What about precious metals and other metals?**

The temperature at which a modern cremator operates (usually between 400°C and 800°C) is such that metals are fused together with other materials so that they are not recognisable and have no salvage value. Any metallic material resulting from a cremation is disposed of in accordance with the instruction of the cremation authority (usually by burial within the crematorium grounds).

**What do you recommend to people about leaving items of jewellery on a body?**

Once the crematorium has accepted the coffin it may not be opened. Jewellery can remain with the deceased for the cremation. Another option is that jewellery can be removed soon after death and placed in with the ashes.

**Is more than one coffin cremated at one time in a cremator?**

No. The only exceptions permitted to this rule may be in the case of a mother and baby or twin children. Some crematoria may accept both in the same coffin, if the next of kin specifically request the two be cremated together, and permission is obtained from the relevant authority.

**Can I be certain I get the right cremated remains?**

Yes. As explained, each coffin is identified on arrival and its specific identity label accompanies the remains throughout the process of cremation, cooling and packaging. Then each container is finally checked and labelled.

As each cremation chamber will only accept one coffin and the remains must be withdrawn before the cremator is used again, all remains are kept separate throughout the process.

### **What does preparation of the cremated remains entail?**

When the cremation is complete, the remains are withdrawn from the cremator into a cooling tray. When cool, the remains are placed into a machine that removes metallic materials (including nails, wire and prostheses) and reduces any large residue to a fine, pale ash. The granular remains are then sealed in a suitable container (urn) identified by the name of the deceased person.

### **How can I ensure that I am cremated when I die?**

Clear instruction in writing should be given to the person who will be responsible for your funeral when you die. These instructions are not binding in law, unless written in your will, so you should ensure that the person you instruct is someone who will carry out your wishes. The final decision rests with your executors.

### **Can I keep the cremated remains if I want, or must I dispose of them?**

In most instances deposition of the cremated remains is the responsibility of the administrators of the estate. They may dispose of the remains by various means, but they may also arrange a lasting memorial to provide a place where family and friends can pay their respects.

### **What can be done with cremated remains?**

Cremated remains may be buried in a grave, kept in an urn, strewn in a memorial garden or cemetery, scattered at a favourite site, or placed with a lasting memorial at a crematorium or memorial gardens. Woongarra have many options available. Bereavement specialists strongly recommend a memorial that will be publicly accessible in the long term. A memorial can become an important focal point for mourners and commemorates the life of the deceased person for future generations. Memorials are a popular site to visit on Anniversaries, Birthdays and Fathers/Mothers Day etc.

### **What memorial options are available?**

Most cemeteries and crematoria provide a wide range of traditional and modern memorials including: wall niches, trees, shrubs, garden positions, family estates, etc. A visit to the Woongarra Crematorium with staff may be very helpful. Bookings are preferred.

### **If I wanted to know more about cremation, how should I go about it?**

Woongarra Crematorium have understanding staff available to assist with any queries, and appointments or inspections can usually be arranged at a convenient time. Woongarra are a proud member of the Australasian Cemeteries & Crematoria Association.

