

a

Administrator

A person appointed by the court to manage the estate when there is no valid Will or appointed Executor.

Advance Health Directive

A legal document that outlines an individual's preferences and instructions for medical treatment and care if they become unable to make decisions for themselves.

Alkaline Hydrolysis

Alkaline hydrolysis is a process for the disposal of human and pet remains using lye and heat, and is an alternative to burial or cremation. In Alkaline hydrolysis, the body is put into a stainless-steel drum filled with potassium hydroxide and 95 per cent water. The drum is heated to around 93 degrees Celsius and the human remains are liquified over a few hours until only the bones remain. The bones are returned to the family as ashes in a similar method to traditional cremation. The waste water is returned to the water cycle.

Anniversary

The anniversary of a significant date in the life of someone who has died, such as their death, birthday or wedding.

Aquamation

See Alkaline Hydrolysis.

Ashes

The remains of someone who has died after their body has been cremated.

Ashes Casket

An ashes casket is a box for burying the ashes of someone who has died.

Attestation Clause

A statement at the end of a Will that confirms it has been signed and witnessed according to the legal requirements.

b

Beneficiary

A person who is entitled to receive assets or benefits from the deceased person's estate.

Benevolent Fund

A benevolent fund is a charitable trust established by trades, armed and civilian services, charities or individuals to provide financial support to people affiliated with it, such as members of a specific profession. Some benevolent funds provide grants to the eligible dependents of people who have died.

Bequest

A bequest is property, money or land left to someone in a Will.

Bereaved

The bereaved are people who are grieving for a person who has died, usually a member of their immediate family or a close friend.

Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is a period of paid or unpaid time off work after the death of a close family member, such as a parent, spouse, child or sibling, to attend the funeral and cope with the initial feelings of grief.

Bereavement Support Organisation

A bereavement support organisation is a service, usually a charity, that provides practical information and psychological support, such as grief counselling, to people who are bereaved.

Bereavement Support Payment

A bereavement support payment is financial support from the government after the death of a spouse or partner.

Bereavement

Bereavement is the experience of someone close to you dying.

Bier

A bier is a moveable frame for transporting a coffin in a church or crematorium, or before burial in a cemetery.

Biocremation

See Alkaline Hydrolysis.

Body Donation

Body donation is the act of leaving your body to a medical school for scientific research after you have died.

Book of Remembrance

A book of remembrance is a book kept in a crematorium to record the names of people who were cremated at it. Many crematoria turn the pages of a book of remembrance every day so that the names of people memorialised in them are displayed on the anniversary of their funeral.

Burial at Sea

Burial at sea is the committal of a person who has died into the sea, usually in a specially adapted coffin at designated sites; mostly for people with a connection to the sea, such as fishermen or people who have served in the navy.

Burial Fees

Burial fees are the cost of leasing a grave to bury the coffin or casket containing the body of someone who has died, or an urn containing their ashes.

Burial Ground

A burial ground is an area of land owned by a council or private organisation where the bodies or ashes of people who have died are buried.

Burial Plot

A burial plot is an area of a cemetery reserved in advance by a person or family, for burial when they die. Sometimes they are large enough for multiple burials.

Burial

Burial is the act of placing a coffin or casket containing the body of someone who has died in a grave. Urns containing cremated ashes can also be buried.

C

Capacity Assessment

An evaluation of an individual's mental and cognitive abilities to determine if they have the capacity to make decisions regarding their estate and personal affairs.

Casket

A casket is a type of coffin distinguished by its rectangular shape.

Catafalque

A catafalque is a stand or support on which to place a coffin or casket, sometimes decorated or covered with a decorative drape called a pall.

Celebration of Life

A celebration of life is a funeral ceremony or memorial service that focuses on positive memories of the person who has died, rather than the protocols of traditional funerals; usually humanist or civil.

Cemetery

A cemetery is an area of land for traditional burials, usually attached to a Christian Church or Jewish Synagogue, or owned by secular organisation such as a council or trust.

Cenotaph

A cenotaph is an empty tomb or monument in honour of a person or people who are buried elsewhere.

Certificate of entitlement

A Certificate of entitlement records the details of the plot and the owner of the right of interment for that plot.

Churchyard

A churchyard is a cemetery attached to a Christian church.

Codicil

A legal document that modifies or adds to an existing Will.

Coffin

A coffin is a box made from wood or biodegradable materials such as willow or cardboard, containing the body of someone who has died for burial or cremation.

Colourful Funeral

A colourful funeral is a type of funeral that ignores traditional protocols and practice, such as black clothing, to focus on celebrating positive memories of the person who has died.

Columbarium

A columbarium is a building used for storing cremation ashes, usually with recessed niches for individual urns.

Committal Service

A committal service is a ceremony at a graveside where the coffin or casket containing someone who has died is buried.

Condolence Message

A condolence message is a letter or card sent to someone after one of their loved ones has died.

Contemporary funeral industry

Refers to the standard funeral industry as it exists in contemporary society.

Coroner

A coroner is a local government official, usually a Magistrate responsible for investigating the circumstances of someone's death if the cause or identity of the person are unknown.

Cortege

A solemn procession, especially for a funeral.

Cremation Jewellery

Jewellery that is designed to keep the cremated ashes of someone who has died.

Cremation memorials

A right of interment for a cremation memorial can be purchased for a limited period of 25 years, or in perpetuity.

Cremation Tattoo

A cremation tattoo is a tattoo with the ashes of someone who has died mixed into the pigment.

Cremation

Cremation is the process of burning a coffin containing someone who has died; also refers to the funeral ceremony that precedes it.

Crematorium

A crematorium is a building in which coffins containing someone who has died are burned. Cremations are usually preceded by funeral services attended by the family and friends of people who have died.



d

Danse Macabre

Danse macabre is a genre of art, literature and music that started in the Middle Ages, which depicts death as an inevitable conqueror of life and a social equaliser.

Death Certificate

A death certificate is a certificate issued to confirm that someone has died when their death is registered at a registry office.

Death doula

See End of life doula.

Death guide

See End of life doula.

Death literacy

The knowledge and understanding of end-of-life and death care options. It is knowledge needed to plan well for end of life.

Death Mask

A death mask is a mask made from plaster or bronze cast from an impression of someone's face after they have died. They were common until the 19th century, but are no longer made.

Death midwife

See End of life doula.

Death Notice

A death notice is an announcement placed in a newspaper announcing someone's death and details of their funeral.

Death walker

See End of life doula.

Digital legacy

A digital legacy is the combined total of a person's assets that exist online or electronically after they die, such as social media accounts, email accounts, online payment accounts, air miles, digital music and films.

Disbursements

Disbursements are bills paid by a funeral director to third parties, on behalf of a family arranging a funeral. These cover costs such as crematorium fees, flowers and hire of a venue for a reception.

DIY Funeral

A DIY funeral is a funeral organised by a bereaved family without the services of a funeral director, although they might receive advice from one.

Dying Intestate

When a person dies without leaving a valid will, their estate is distributed according to the laws of intestacy.

e

Eco-Funeral

See Green Funeral.

Embalming

Embalming is the process of preserving the body of someone who has died before the funeral.

End-of-life consultant

See End of life doula.

End of life doula

Also known as called Death doula, an end-of-life consultant, a death walker, a death midwife, a death guide. A person who provides non-medical support to a dying person and their family.

Enduring Power of Attorney

A legal document that grants someone the authority to make financial and legal decisions on behalf of another person, even if that person becomes mentally incapacitated.

Estate Planning

The process of arranging and organising a person's affairs to ensure the orderly distribution of their assets after death.

Estate

An estate is everything owned by a person at the time of their death, including finances, money indebted to them, shares, property and personal possessions.

Estate

The total sum of a person's assets, property, and liabilities at the time of their death.

Eulogy

A eulogy is a speech given at a funeral in honour of the person who has died, usually by a close family member, friend or celebrant.

Executor

An executor is someone named in a will as the person responsible for managing the estate of someone who has died, usually a close friend or family member. See Will.

Exhumation

Exhumation is the removal of a body from a burial site, usually for reburial elsewhere, which requires a permit.

f

Family Provision Claims

A claim made against an estate by an eligible person who believes they have not been adequately provided for in the Will.

Family Trust

A trust established for the benefit of family members, often used for asset protection, tax planning, and wealth management.

Flameless cremation

See Alkaline Hydrolysis.

Floral Tribute

Floral tributes are flowers purchased for the funeral of a loved one who has died, or sent to the family by well-wishers.

Funeral Arranger

A funeral arranger is a person who works for a funeral director to arrange the funeral for someone who has died. Funeral directors can sometimes be described as arrangers.

Funeral Celebrant

A funeral celebrant is a person who leads a funeral service. Their duties generally include giving a eulogy in memory of the person who has died. They may be a cleric for a particular religion, or a civil or humanist celebrant.

Funeral Director

A funeral director is a person who arranges a funeral for someone who has died on behalf of a bereaved family. They can organise every detail of a funeral, including preparing the person who has died for cremation or burial, completing paperwork, liaising with churches, crematoria and celebrants, providing funeral transport and pallbearers and arranging funeral flowers, orders of service and music.

Funeral Home

A funeral home is the premises of a funeral director's business where they look after people who have died and arrange funerals.

Funeral Hymn

A funeral hymn is a traditional religious song played at a funeral, such as The Day Thou Gavest, Abide with me or All Things Bright and Beautiful.

Funeral Notice

See Death Notice and Obituary.

Funeral Plan

A funeral plan is a scheme by which someone can pay for their own funeral in advance of their death so that their family does not have to do so.

Funeral Procession

A funeral procession is a ceremonial convoy of vehicles driving at a slow speed to the venue of a funeral. It is often led by the funeral director on foot, followed by the hearse carrying the coffin of the person who has died and other cars containing members of their family.

Funeral pyre

a pile of wood on which a corpse is burnt as part of a funeral ceremony.

Funeral Service

The funeral service is a ceremony, led by a celebrant, before the burial or cremation of someone who has died, in which tributes are given by their family and friends, including eulogies, readings, and music.

Funeral Spray

See Floral Tribute.

Funeral

A funeral is a ceremony to commemorate someone's death, before they are buried or cremated, which can be either religious or non-religious, and can feature a eulogy, readings, and songs that reflect the person's life.

g

Garden of Remembrance

A garden of remembrance is an area of land attached to a crematorium where memorials, such as plaques, remembrance roses, and

private gardens, are installed to commemorate someone who was cremated there after they died. Ashes can also be scattered in there.

Grave

A grave is a place in a burial ground where a coffin containing the body of someone who has died is buried, usually with a memorial erected above it.

Gravestone

A stone marker for a grave. See Headstone.

Graveyard

An alternative name for a cemetery, usually one that is older or attached to a church. See Cemetery.

Green Funeral

A green funeral is a funeral that uses environmentally-friendly practices and materials, such as natural burial and biodegradable coffins. It is sometimes referred to as eco-burial, green burial, natural burial or woodland burial.

Grief Counsellor

A grief counsellor is a therapist who specialises in supporting people who are grieving after a bereavement.

Grief Meditation

Grief meditation is the practice of spending time focusing on being present in the moment and ignoring distracting thoughts and feelings caused by grief after a loved one has died.

Grief

Grief is the emotional and physical experience of loss and pain experienced by a bereaved person after someone close to them has died.

Guardianship

Legal responsibility for the care and well-being of a minor child or incapacitated adult.

h

Headstone

A headstone is a memorial made from hard material, such as granite, marble, sandstone or slate erected above the grave of someone who has died, with details of their life and an inscription, such as a line of poetry or verse from the Bible. Sometimes called a headstone or tombstone.

Hearse

A hearse is a vehicle specially designed to carry a coffin or casket in a funeral procession.

Hospice

A hospice is a medical facility that provides palliative care for adults and children with terminal illnesses and life-limiting conditions.

Human composting

See Natural Organic Reduction.

Hymn Sheet

A hymn sheet is a piece of paper with the words and music for a hymn written on it.

i

Inheritance Tax

A tax imposed on the assets or property inherited by a beneficiary from an estate. In Australia, there is no nationwide inheritance tax, but some states may have duties or taxes that apply.

Inquest

An inquest is an investigation by a coroner in Australia, if the cause of someone's death, or their identity, is unclear.

Interment Fees

See Burial Fees.

Interment

Is the placing of a corpse in a grave. If a loved one dies, you need to make arrangements for the interment so that people can bid the deceased farewell. Interment comes from root words meaning "to place inside," and in this case it's the placing of someone inside the earth, for burial. When you purchase a grave or cremation memorial, what you purchase is called a right of interment.

Intestacy

Intestacy is generally the situation that exists when a person dies without a legal record of what should happen to their property. This can happen in one of three different ways – they die without a will, they die with a will that is invalid or they left a will, but it did not include all their current property.

Intestacy Laws

Laws that determine how an estate is distributed when a person dies without a valid Will.

j

Jazz Funeral

A Jazz funeral is a traditional funeral in New Orleans, Louisiana, featuring parades led by jazz bands.

k

Keepsake

A keepsake is a small item purchased or made in memory of someone who has died, such as jewellery.

I

Lair

Lair is a Scottish word for a burial plot or grave.

Letters of Administration with Will Annexed

A court document granted when there is a valid will but no appointed executor, and an administrator is appointed to carry out the terms of the Will.

Letters of administration

Letters of administration is the legal authorisation to act as the administrator of the estate of someone who has died. See Estate, Administrator, Probate and Will.

Life Insurance Trust

A trust created to hold life insurance policies, ensuring that the proceeds are distributed according to the wishes of the policyholder.

Life Interest

An arrangement in a Will where a beneficiary has the right to use and enjoy a specific asset (such as a property) for their lifetime, but ownership eventually passes to another beneficiary.

Living Will

A living Will, officially called an advance care directive, is a document recording someone's advance wishes for end-of-life care, if they become unable to state their own wishes at the time.

m

Mausoleum

A mausoleum is a structure housing above-ground tombs.

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

A certificate issued within 48 hrs by medical practitioner, confirming the cause of someone's death, which must be presented to register someone's death.

Memorial Bench

A memorial bench is a bench dedicated to someone who has died, usually installed in a public park, garden or riverside.

Memorial Mason

A memorial mason, sometimes called a monumental mason, is a stonemason who specialises in carving and maintaining headstones.

Memorial Service

A memorial service is a ceremony to commemorate the death of someone in addition to a funeral, such as the anniversary of their death, or instead of one.

Memorial

A memorial is a public or private object, such as a piece of jewellery or bench, dedicated to someone who has died.

Mortician

A mortician, sometimes called a mortuary technician, is someone who prepares the body of a person who has died for burial or cremation, which may involve embalming and dressing them. If the person died as a result of injuries in an accident the mortician might also perform reconstructive surgery, so that their family can view them before the funeral.

Mortuary

A mortuary is a room, usually in a hospital or funeral home, where the bodies of people who have died are kept and cared for before they are collected for their funeral.



Mourning Clothes

Mourning clothes is a dress code for people in mourning after a loved one has died, such as a spouse, child or parent, that was especially common in the 19th century. The rules for Victorian mourning clothes were largely applied to women and required dressing in black for at least 6 months, and mostly black for several years.

Mourning Jewellery

Mourning jewellery is a type of jewellery worn in memory of people who have died. It was popular from the Middle Ages until the early 20th century, especially the 19th century. Victorian mourning jewellery was generally black, often made from jet, and decorated with meaningful symbols, such as teardrops, urns, hearts and snakes.

n

Natural Burial Ground

Sometimes called woodland burial grounds, a natural burial ground is a burial ground that only permits natural burials.

Natural Burial

Natural burial is a type of burial that requires strict conditions to protect the environment, such as not embalming the body of the person who has died, using biodegradable coffins and memorials made of natural materials, including wood or slate.

Natural Organic Reduction

The practice of human composting. Also known as Terramation. This is not legal in Australia. The process involves speeding up the decomposition process to transform a human body into soil in just a few weeks. This process has gathered a strong following in the US since it was first made legal in Washington state in 2021.

O

Obituary

An obituary is an announcement in a newspaper or website, announcing someone's death. Often it will describe their life and how much they meant to their family. It may also include details of when and where the funeral is happening.

Order of Service

An order of service is a sheet of paper with information about a funeral for people attending it, including a brief obituary for the person who has died, and words for prayers, readings and hymns.

Organ donation

Organ donation is the act of having organs and other body parts, such as heart, lungs, kidneys, or retinas, transplanted into another person; some organs, such as a kidney, can be donated by a living donor, but transplants are usually taken from a person who has died.

Ossuary

An ossuary is an above-ground container or chamber that contains the bones of people that have died.

p

Pall

A pall is a decorative drape traditionally spread over a coffin at a funeral.

Pallbearer

A pallbearer is someone who carries or escorts the coffin at a funeral. Usually either close family or friends of the person who has died, or professionals provided by the funeral director. Pallbearers are traditionally male, but women sometimes do it, regardless of whether the coffin is carried or escorted.

Palliative Care

Palliative care is medical and emotional support for a person who is dying, in a hospice, hospital or at home.

Post-mortem Examinations

A post-mortem examination is a medical investigation of the body of a person who has died, ordered by a coroner and carried out by a forensic pathologist, to discover the cause of their death.

Power of Attorney

A legal document that grants someone the authority to act on behalf of another person in financial and legal matters.

Power to Sell

A provision in a Will that grants the executor or trustee the authority to sell estate assets, such as property or investments, to satisfy debts or distribute the proceeds.

Pre-planned/Pre-arranged Funeral

A pre-planned or pre-arranged funeral is a funeral organised in advance of a person's death, often by the person themselves, and sometimes pre-paid with a funeral plan.

Probate

Probate is the legal authority to manage a loved one's estate after they die.

Probate

The legal process of proving and validating a Will in court.

q

Quaker Funeral

A funeral service for a person who identified as a quaker in accordance with quaker beliefs and practices. Anyone can have a quaker funeral if they supported the values of quakerism, even if they were not a member of the Society of Friends during their lifetime.

r

Reception

Sometimes called a wake, a reception is a gathering after a funeral, which is usually less formal than the service, where mourners can meet to reminisce on the person who has died and support each other. Food and drink is usually served.

Renunciation

The act of voluntarily giving up or refusing the right to act as an executor, administrator, or beneficiary.

Repatriation

Repatriation is the process of bringing a loved one back to their home country if they died abroad.

Residuary Beneficiary

The person or entity named in a Will to receive the remaining assets of the estate after specific bequests and expenses have been paid.

Residue

The remaining assets of an estate after all debts, taxes, and specific bequests have been paid.

Resomation:

See Alkaline Hydrolysis.

Right of Interment

The right of interment belongs to the person named in the paperwork you submit at the time of purchase. It is the right to use that cemetery plot for a burial or for the interment of cremated remains. Once you have purchased a grave, your right of interment is generally granted in perpetuity. This means forever. A right of interment for a cremation memorial can be purchased for a limited period of 25 years, or in perpetuity.



S

Sadiversary

See Angelversary.

Scattering

Scattering is the act of distributing the ashes of someone who has died, usually in a place that was important to the person and their loved ones.

Senior Next of Kin

If a Will cannot be located, it is generally the Senior Next of Kin who is then responsible for all of the decisions. A Senior Next of Kin is the closest living relative. For example: spouse, legal partner, child, parent or sibling. Each organisation may have a different definition of Senior Next of Kin, so please check with the organisation you are speaking with.

Sky burial

A funeral practice in which the dead body is placed on a mountaintop to decompose while exposed to the elements or to be eaten by scavenging animals, especially carrion birds like vultures.

Small Estate

An estate with a relatively low value, typically subject to simplified probate procedures or exemptions from certain requirements.

Sorry Business

A term used by mob to describe the traditional practices surrounding death. It is a time when we come together to express our shared grief, to support one another, and to honour the lives of those who have passed. 'Sorry Business' can involve specific cultural rituals, obligations, and responsibilities that might vary across different communities.

Spousal Maintenance

Financial support provided by one spouse to another following the breakdown of a marriage or de facto relationship.

State Funeral

A state funeral is a funeral organised by the government of a country that follows pre-determined protocols, such as lying in state and military escorts.

Superannuation Death Benefit

A document that directs how a person's superannuation benefits should be distributed upon their death.

Superannuation

A retirement savings scheme where funds are accumulated throughout a person's working life.

t

Terramation

see Natural Organic Reduction.

Testamentary Capacity

The legal and mental ability of a person to make a valid will.

Testamentary Guardian

A person appointed in a will to have legal authority and responsibility for the care and upbringing of a minor child after the death of their parents.

Testamentary Trust

A trust established through a Will and comes into effect upon the death of the testator.

Testate

When a person dies leaving a valid Will.

Testator/Testatrix

(Male/Female) The person who makes a Will.

Thanatophobia

Thanatophobia is a persistent fear of death that can cause symptoms of anxiety and disrupt daily life.

The Chevra Kadisha

Literally means Holy Society, are a group of Jewish people who care for the deceased to prepare them for burial.

Trust

A legal arrangement where assets are held by one party (the trustee) for the benefit of another (the beneficiary).

U

Undertaker

'Undertaker' is an alternative, but old-fashioned, name for a funeral director. The term 'undertaker' was coined because they undertake to arrange a funeral for bereaved families.

Urn

An urn is a container for keeping the ashes of someone who has died, available in many different materials, shapes and styles.

V

Viewing

A viewing is the act of seeing the body of a person after they have died, in a mortuary or funeral home.

W

Wake

See Reception.

War Memorial

A war memorial is a public or private monument to the memory of soldiers or civilians killed in armed conflict.

Water Acclimation

See Alkaline Hydrolysis.

Water Cremation

See Alkaline hydrolysis.

Widow(er)

A widow is a woman whose husband has died. Men whose wives have died are called widowers.

Will

A Will is a legally valid document explaining how a person who has died would like their money and property to be distributed amongst family and friends. It must be signed by the person who has made the Will and witnessed by people who are not going to receive anything from it.

Woodland Burial Ground

See Natural Burial.

y

Yahrzeit

Yahrzeit is the observation of the anniversary of a death in the Hebrew calendar, traditionally by Ashkenazi Judaism; it is customary for observers to attend Synagogue and recite Kaddish prayers.



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