

*With Care and Courtesy*

Mrs Leslie Williams, MP

The Hon. Mr Matt Kean, MP Minister for Fair Trading

Dear Member and Minister

I am writing regarding the consultation paper put out at the end of July suggesting that regulation changes that would affect the funeral industry.

When I heard about this paper I contacted my association, particularly as it says that there had been consultation with industry around the suggested policy changes. The NSW Funeral Directors Association indicated that they had not been consulted I am very surprised by this, as we have industry associations like this to try and ensure that stakeholder interests are represented. The department could have liaised with the NSW Health Department to ascertain who have certified mortuary's and send advice of the suggested consultation and regulations to Funeral directors.

I believe that the suggested regulation changes do not in any way represent the concerns of my community or customers. I provide several options to any family to ensure that the costs associated with a funeral service are appropriate to their budget and the service they require. I provide a written copy of the costs as a quote at the arrangement process. I have not had complaints around pricing, quotes or the cost.

I do sometimes have people ring and ask for pricing quotes and I provide these over the phone, or can provide a written quote for them, if they want it. However, in regional areas this is not common, and we do not provide a standard basic package, other than a no service delivery only cremation.

There are already businesses out there that provide this service and will get comparative quotes for families. I don't see where there is a market failure that requires the government to step in and require independent businesses to list prices.

If this comes in I look forward to this service being extended to all competitive service industries - I have a wedding to plan in the future, and would love the government to do the price check for me on venues, catering, flowers, advertising/invitations, celebrants, vehicles etc. just like a Funeral director has to provide as part of their professional services in organising a Funeral.

I hope you do share my concerns that this proposal does not appear to be coming from any evidence base, as there have been no complaints raised with my association by Fair Trading, nor with my business personally. If there have been complaints made to Fair Trading there is no evidence in the paper about the number, the nature or the outcomes of those complaints. There appears to have been no consultation. There are lots of impacts that the regulation has not foreseen in the Funeral industry, including additional costs to my doing business and increasing red tape.

This does not seem to have been a consultative and collaborative process and I am disappointed.

Could you please make representations on my behalf to ensure that this regulation does not proceed without engagement with stakeholders.

Yours faithfully

Karen Starr  
Manager

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