



Speech by

Barbara Stone

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

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FUNERAL INDUSTRY

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (11.51 am): Earlier this year I made a speech in this House about being green when it comes to funerals. I want to thank the *Courier-Mail* for picking up on my speech and publishing an article on this subject. After I gave my speech and the article appeared in the *Courier-Mail*, along with other members of parliament I received questions and opinions from people within the funeral industry and from community members. I am very pleased that this debate has started in our communities.

With the increase in our population, cemeteries have become vast acres of monuments, some not visited, with all care left to councils and trusts to look after them. Recently there have been articles in local papers regarding council laws and requests for families to limit what they leave on their loved one's gravesite, which has sparked debate and also has drawn attention to the maintenance that is required. I say to those councils and to others to consider natural bush cemeteries. Green cemeteries require little maintenance, as the idea is to encourage reforestation and also encourage native wildlife flora and fauna.

During my time as a member of parliament I have had a number of people come to see me regarding their experiences with the funeral industry. Usually they have had bad experiences and they are looking for an avenue through which to complain. Often the outcome they want is for other families not to experience what they went through at such an emotional and sad time. The other inquiries that we probably all receive are about pricing. We also often hear from people about what is really required for funerals rather than a full sales job that many of my constituents say they experience.

When I raised this issue with Metropolitan Funerals, they certainly said that they were interested in hearing from MPs and from the community and quickly offered to arrange a forum. I want to thank Mr Brian Gill, who is the general manager of Metropolitan Funerals, and Ms Annette Lourigan, the community relations manager, for organising a forum this Friday at Metropolitan Funerals, Mount Gravatt.

At this forum we will hear from a wide range of guest speakers about pricing, practices, standards and the challenges that face the industry. This forum will also provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions. The member for Pumicestone and I will certainly be putting forward our views and the feedback that we get from our communities.

(Time expired)