

# Submission to NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria on Internment Services Levy Introduction



**CENTRAL NSW  
JOINT ORGANISATION**

Bathurst  
Blayney  
Cabonne  
Cowra  
Forbes  
Lachlan  
Lithgow  
Oberon  
Orange  
Parkes  
Weddin

13 May 2024

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Submission to Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW on Introduction of Internment Services Levy**

Joint Organisations (JO) were proclaimed in May 2018 under the NSW Local Government Act 1993. The Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) represents over 177,000 people covering an area of more than 51,000sq kms comprising the eleven Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Lithgow, Oberon, Orange, Parkes and Weddin.

Tasked with intergovernmental cooperation, leadership and prioritisation, JOs have consulted with their stakeholders to identify key strategic regional priorities. The CNSWJO Strategic Plan can be found here: [Strategic Plan & Regional Priorities - Central Joint Organisation \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/strategic-plan)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the changes to the Internment Services Levy proposed by NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria (NSWCC), to be introduced 1 July 2024 and for your presentation to General Managers on 2 May.

The introduction of a new fee for councils currently free burial approval requires and should be afforded appropriate communication time for regional communities. A regulation made in mid-June with introduction on 1 July is highly inappropriate. Consideration of the delay of the regulated fee of six months should occur to allow Councils to properly communicate with its community.

The current delay in the making of the regulation does not permit appropriate exhibition within Councils currently exhibited Operational Plan incorporating its fees and charges. This would require an amendment at the last minute to Council's publicly exhibited document.

This places Council staff in the position of requiring an unadvertised non communicated fee to community members who are applying to bury their loved ones. It is suggested that this is an emotionally charged time in people's lives and surprises are not what these people need. This level of emotional conflict can be managed but only with the appropriate level of notice and communication. The Information package includes "Cemetery and crematorium operators, and funeral directors are invited to attend one of our upcoming events in April-May 2024, where you will be able to speak with CCNSW, learn more about some of the important changes underway in the sector (including the levy), and to hear from your industry peers. Operators and funeral directors will be invited". Could you please provide advice as to these events and will there be any regional or rural areas?

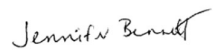
Finally, I provide advice from the discussion at the General Manager's Advisory Committee where they raised;

- Concerns that this is a metro focussed initiative that will have unintended and unfortunate consequences for regional communities, for example members advise that our aboriginal people dig their own graves by hand and this levy flies in the face of the objective of the program of cultural sensitivity;
- Concerns that this seems to be a fee to manage a complaints service; and
- The broader consequences including financial impacts around planning and maintenance for cemeteries is the big unknown.

The General Managers would appreciate more time being spent on better understanding impacts for regional communities of these changes and thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback,

Please contact Ms Jenny Bennett on 0428 690 935 or send an email to me at [jenny.bennett@centraljo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jenny.bennett@centraljo.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenny Bennett".

Ms Jenny Bennett  
**Executive Officer**  
Central NSW Joint Organisation