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**From:** Cr Peter Kearney <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, 13 October 2018 6:35 PM  
**To:** Local Government Division (DPaC)  
**Subject:** Submission for the Burials and Cremation Act Review from Peter Kearney  
**Attachments:** Submission to the Burials and Cremations Act Review from Peter Kearney.docx

Please find attached my personal submission to the Review.  
Peter Kearney

Cr. Peter Kearney

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Mob) [REDACTED]

13 October 2018

Submission on the Burials and Cremations Act Review.

I am writing to the Parliament to appeal to you.

If you are an older person who has lost a spouse, the parent of a young child lost to illness or accident; or really any surviving loved one who has experienced the death of a significant person, what happens to the remains of that person is very important.

Our history is full of examples that illustrate this fact. After the Great War (WW1) our state and communities erected many memorials to the fallen. Large sums of money were raised. Some say that these memorials were very important as the remains of those who died were not able to be returned to our shores. These memorials were all that the bereaved had to visit and gather around.

Now, as then, ashes and graves are very important aspects of the life of communities and families, even individuals. I still make occasional visits to the graves of two children, students at Hagley Farm School at the time, who died while quite young. Why do I do that? I'm not sure I can put it into words but I know that it is important to me.

Some of the discussion about the 'Sell off' of Anglican churches and graveyards has implied that for the faithful Christian, the remains after death have no continuing significance. That narrative says that for a Christian, the body after death is a shell, the spirit has left it and the soul is now with God. Concerns about graveyards really ought not to be of great importance to the committed Christian. The soul has departed so let's move on.

For the Parliament, that may not seem a relevant discussion. Parliament does not make decisions on theological matters. But some theological thinking at a point in time can be the basis of current decisions by responsible institutions. Decisions around graveyards ought to reflect the wider views of the community. Policy decisions ought to reflect the common practice of the wider community now and especially in the past: Reflect the thinking in past years that led to the graveyards and cemeteries we now have.

What I would ask is for Parliament to be representative of all the people and acknowledge that for the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians, the disposal, respect for and memorialising of remains is very important, for people of faith and those of no faith. There are psychological, family, community, heritage and historical reasons why parliament should treat this matter with the utmost seriousness as I am sure you will.

I am the Vice President of Save Our Community Soul (SOCS). Not a position I sought but one somewhat thrust upon me.

In that role I have become more aware that the current situation with regard to many cemeteries varies in complexity. Less complex are those with graveyards around existing churches, especially if the graveyard is currently receiving reservations for plots and where interments are taking place. Even less complex are Municipal cemeteries, such as Beaconsfield, which is fully managed by the local council. Much more complex are cemeteries that are less frequently used, in more remote areas and cemeteries that have high heritage significance.

I am aware that there is a register of cemeteries kept, I believe within the local government division. As with much of this space, the routines, records, and operations are very good for many current cemeteries but are no longer up to date for older or less used cemeteries. I understand how this can happen and I believe that it will now be attended to in the future.

All this work will take time and in the current situation time is very short. I would urge the Parliament to make the main things the priority. Yes there needs to be catch up but there are some fundamental amendments that are required now.

I would impress on the Parliament that the proposed amendments are very much what is needed and should be enacted straight away. Where there is complexity that presents problems and given the time frame available, these complexities should be noted to be dealt with when time allows for further and better consideration. They should not be a reason why the necessary urgent amendments to the Act, as proposed, should not be enacted now.

Cr. Peter Kearney