



9 handy hints for choosing the right funeral director



1. What choices of funeral providers are available?



2. Are all funeral directors in NSW qualified?

There was a time when all funeral directors had their own hearse, their own transfer van and their own mortuary.

Nowadays, anyone can call themselves a funeral director, and many have done so, though they may only have a phone, website, smart clothes and a laptop.

Where is the business located?

Use Google maps to see the address they work from, using street view in particular.

Are they a member of an association like the National Funeral Directors Association of Australia?

Are they licenced to create playlists of music for your ceremony?

3. Comparing funeral directors



Check reviews and recommendations

Look for Google reviews or ask friends and family for recommendations.

Positive feedback often indicates a reliable director. Beware of reviews where a standard acknowledgement is given, indicating a lack of care and respect.

Assess their communication

A good funeral director should be clear, compassionate and willing to answer all your questions. They should give you time to tell your story and describe what is important to you, before starting their necessary processes. If they seem rushed or dismissive, it could be a red flag.

Evaluate their services

Compare what different directors offer. A reputable director will provide a range of services and options, while a less reliable one might push you towards specific packages without consideration for your needs.

Do they have a funeral home where you can meet them?

Are they open to showing you all areas of their premises?

What are the differences between funeral directors?

A discount service provider may offer a low price because they only take care of the remains of the deceased and generally provide nothing more. They often operate from a small office or shared mortuary, with less than complete facilities and little or no space to even meet with the family, let alone support the event.

Be aware when contacting national brands, as your call may be answered by a centralised call centre that handles multiple trading names, owned by the same parent organisation. This situation raises concerns about healthy competition, as noted by consumer advocates.

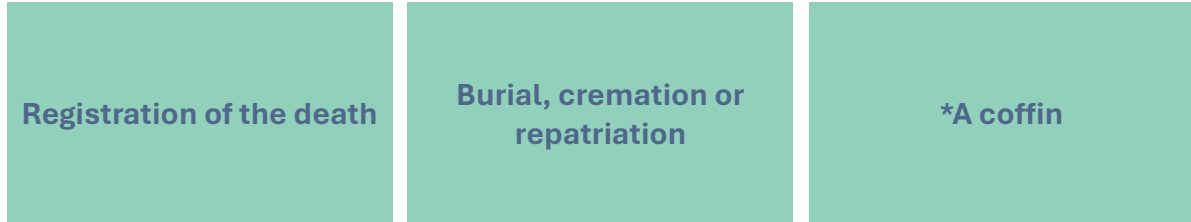
In contrast, a true full-service funeral home is designed to take great care of your loved one, plus provide the facilities and staff required to support events of all sizes. A true full-service firm will have access to large, comfortable facilities, professional employees available when needed, a private mortuary and service guarantees that assure your satisfaction.

Although the total price is certainly important, it's really about what you are receiving for that price. In other words, it's about value for money. Regardless of how much you spend on a memorial service or funeral, if the experience does not meet the emotional needs of your family, you've spent too much.

If you're interested in learning more, feel free to get in touch.

4. What is mandatory?

In NSW the following are mandatory and are organised by the funeral director:



Everything else is optional. However, these options are critical to your experience and will help you on your pathway through mourning. The value of a funeral comes from the total experience that you have. The memories of the experience remain long after the funeral is over.

**Cultural exceptions apply*

5. How soon do I have to decide?



Do not feel pressured into taking immediate action

After a loved one dies, take a moment to breathe. It's okay to take your time before making arrangements. Lean on family and friends for support, and don't hesitate to ask for help in co-ordinating tasks.

When to make arrangements

Timing can be tricky. You don't have to rush into decisions. Most funeral homes understand the emotional stress and will allow you time to think. However, if you're in a hurry, start calling potential directors as soon as possible to gather information.

Fear of overspending

To combat worries about costs, establish a budget beforehand. Ask each funeral provider for a breakdown of services and total costs upfront. This transparency will help you avoid surprise expenses.

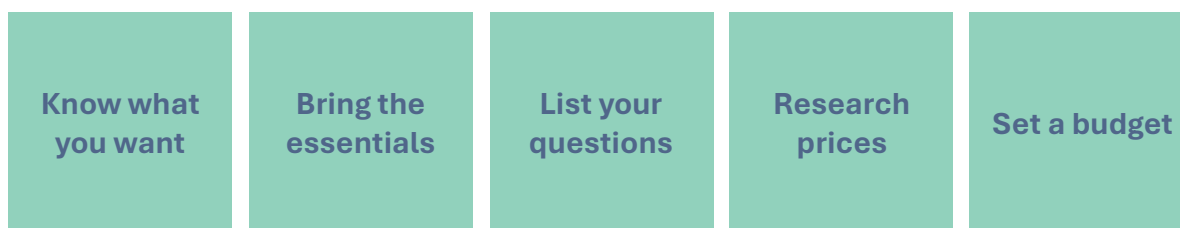
Fear of choosing the wrong funeral director

Trust your instincts. If something feels off, don't hesitate to walk away.

6. What if I want to change my mind?

Even if a funeral director has your loved one in their care, if you feel uncomfortable, you can seek the assistance of a funeral director with whom you are comfortable. They will start the process of taking over the funeral arrangements for you. There will be a small fee for an extra transfer but it may be worth it for your peace of mind.

7. Preparing to make funeral arrangements



Know what you want

Before you head in, think about the kind of service you're looking for. Are you leaning towards a burial or cremation? Do you have any special wishes from the person who has died? Jot these down to keep your thoughts organised.

Bring the essentials

Make sure to have important documents like the birth, marriage certificates and grave ownership documents if they are readily available. This will make the process smoother and help the funeral director give you the best options.

List your questions

Write down any questions that come to mind about the services, costs, and logistics. It can be anything from what kind of coffins are available to what the timeline looks like.

Research prices

Check out average costs for services in your area. Knowing the typical prices will help you spot any inflated costs.

Set a budget

Have a rough idea of what you're comfortable spending. This will help you make choices without being overwhelmed by options that don't fit your budget.



8. During the funeral arrangement

Take notes

**Ask about
personal touches**

**Be honest about
how you feel**

**Follow up
afterwards**

Take notes

Bring a notebook or use your phone to jot down important points. It's easy to forget details when emotions are running high, so having notes can help you remember what was discussed.

Ask about personal touches

Don't hesitate to ask about how you can customise the service. Whether it's special music, favourite flowers, or a slideshow, personal touches can make a big difference. A good funeral director should ask what is important to you early in the arrangement meeting.

Be honest about how you feel

It's okay to show emotions during this meeting. If you need a moment or feel overwhelmed, just let the funeral director know. They will support you.

Follow up afterwards

Once you leave, take some time to review your notes and any materials you may have been given. If you have more questions or need clarification, talk to the funeral director. They're there to help you through this process.



9. Financial tips

Shop around

Choose affordable options

Consider direct cremation or burial

Check payment terms

Shop around

Don't feel pressured to settle with the first funeral home you visit. Check out a few options and compare services and prices.

Choose affordable options

Opt for basic caskets or urns instead of premium ones. You can often find beautiful yet budget-friendly choices.

Consider direct cremation or burial

These options are often more affordable since they eliminate many extra services. Ask about these alternatives if you're looking to save money. You may also think about using a crowd funding platform or approach some local charities.

Check payment terms

Be suspicious if a substantial deposit or full payment is being demanded up front. Ensure that you understand how and when to pay for the service.

Final advice

Planning a funeral can be overwhelming, especially with family dynamics at play. We only have one opportunity to get this right, so it's vital to have a funeral director who guides you through the process, is sympathetic to your circumstances and helps you create a service that leaves you with no regrets about how you say goodbye.

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