



## **Department of Aboriginal Affairs Funeral Assistance**

The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs contributes a Discretionary Grant towards the costs of funerals to the NSW Aboriginal community. A payment of \$300.00 is made directly to the Funeral Directors to assist with the costs.

When applying for the Discretionary Grant within DAA, you must complete an application form and also include the following documentation:

- Confirmation of Aboriginality
- Death Certificate
- Tax Invoice – received by Funeral Directors

Usually, the turnover for payment may be between a week to a fortnight, depending on the documentation.

Upon contact with DAA, the usual cause of distress is as follows;

- The cost of the funeral
- The requirement from Funeral Directors that the funeral costs be paid up front
- The difficulty for family and other community to attend the funeral
- The difficulty and cost of bringing the deceased 'home' from another State or distant town.

Within DAA, the support person who is responsible for the funeral grants is of Aboriginal descent. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is cognisant of the sensitivity, pressure and cultural awareness which are experienced at such a time.

### **Other organisations which may assist**

- Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
- Salvation Army
- Anglicare
- Uniting Church
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC)
- Hillsong Church

The above agencies may assist with contribution to the Funeral, contribution to the Wake, contribution to the petrol for travel, organisation of a bus to carry family/community to and from the funeral.

## **Community Contacts**

The Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Liaison Officers in Public Hospitals, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Community Elders are the usual representatives of family/community seeking assistance for travel to and from funerals, not withstanding that the majority of clients are direct family.

## **Government Contacts**

Centerlink, Legal Aid, Police are a few of the services and Government Agencies that contact DAA for information regarding funerals.

## **Cost to Community**

There are multiple deaths in Aboriginal communities with some families burying up to 4-6 members in one year, with the extended family system in Aboriginal communities, this means that many people are directly affected by multiple funerals. The cost to families/communities of multiple bereavement is prohibitive.

## **Funeral Funds**

It may be of interest that the Department of Fair Trading has produced information for Aboriginal Communities on Funeral Funds.