

## About Cremation & Cremated Remains

### Cremation

Cremation is the main alternative to burial around the world today. Despite what many people believe, cremation is accepted by almost all religions. It is an ancient practice as many cultures believed fire was a purifying agent. The Greeks used cremation as long as 3000 years ago and it was a status symbol in Rome. Cremation was discouraged during the spread of Christianity because of pagan connections and due to the belief that it may interfere with the soul's existence after death. For various other reasons, including timber shortages, the practice of cremation declined over the centuries.

The popularity of cremation varies around the world today. In Australia, about 55% of the 130,000 deaths each year are cremated. This percentage is increasing steadily each year. In the UK, around 70% are cremated, 27% in the USA and over 99% in Japan. In many other countries, such as Italy, Ireland and many African nations, it is less than 10%

### The process of cremation

Following a funeral service the entire coffin or casket is placed into a specially made cremator. The ornaments and fittings also remain with the coffin, except the nameplate which is removed as part of the identification process. Reaching temperatures of almost 1000 degrees Celsius, the process normally takes two to three hours. Heat and evaporation consume all organic matter, leaving primarily bone fragments. These remains are then carefully removed and cooled before any remaining metal is removed. They are then processed into finer particles and placed into a container for delivery back to the family or funeral director. Cremated remains are usually available the following day.

Under strict legislation and guidelines, the cremation process is handled very professionally in Australia. Correct identification of the cremated remains is guaranteed at all times due to carefully controlled labelling practices. As each cremator can only hold one coffin or casket, only one body can be cremated at a time.

For further information about cremation in Victoria, please see the following websites:

Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria  
Fawkner Crematorium and Memorial Park  
Neangar Memorial Park (Bendigo Crematorium)  
Altona Memorial Park  
Springvale Crematorium (The Necropolis)

[www.ccav.org.au](http://www.ccav.org.au)  
[www.fcmp.com.au](http://www.fcmp.com.au)  
[www.bencemtrust.com.au](http://www.bencemtrust.com.au)  
[www.altonamemorialpark.com.au](http://www.altonamemorialpark.com.au)  
[www.necropolis.com.au](http://www.necropolis.com.au)

### Cremated Remains

After cremated remains are returned to the family after the funeral, many people wonder what they should do. Today, there are a wide range of options available for cremated remains that are worth considering before making a decision.

URNS – An increasingly popular option for cremated remains is a cremation urn. The ashes are transferred into the urn of your choice which can then be kept in the family home. From terracotta to pewter, T.J. Scott and Son have a wide selection of urns available.

**INTERMENT** - Ashes may also be interred into family graves. Generally, the ashes are placed in a pocket at one end of the grave so as not to allow for normal burials and to avoid the disruption of existing burials.

**SCATTERING** – Cremated remains may be scattered in a place that is fitting. As there are no public health issues with cremated remains, this can be anywhere, as long permission has been granted. Of course this is not an issue if scattering is done at a family home or at sea.

**TRANSPORTATION** – Often family members may wish to transport all or part of the cremated remains. Ashes may be taken on domestic flights without any problems; however it is always advisable to notify the airline and to have a copy of the death and cremation certificates. International flights are more complicated and you may also have to contact the consulate of the country you are travelling to.

**MEMORIALISATION** – Many cemeteries have a range of options for the memorialisation of cremated remains. This means having the ashes interred or installed somewhere with a plaque as a lasting tribute to a loved one. Memorial walls and rose gardens are the most common options for this kind of tribute. Wooling Hill Garden Estate provides a number of options for memorialisation in a tranquil setting within the Macedon Ranges. Please see the following page for further details.