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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BAN ON FUNERALS OUT OF STEP WITH THE NATION

The Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) has expressed its dismay with the South Australian government's announcement it was suspending all funeral services.

The President of AFDA, Andrew Pinder, said the total ban on funeral services is unprecedented and unconscionable.

"We cannot comprehend why the South Australian Government has made such a drastic and never before experienced total ban on funerals. We are not unsympathetic to the present COVID-19 outbreak in the state and the Government's responsibility to its people, but denying even limited, socially distant funerals is a step entirely too far.

"We are calling on the South Australian Government to show compassion to its people and follow the examples set in other states, including Victoria, and implement safe and small funerals for families to respectfully pay their respects," Mr Pinder said.

The AFDA has also warned that without funerals proceeding there can be complicated logistical problems that could impact the state for some time.

Mr Pinder said: "Storage space for bodies is not unlimited and if funerals are banned for more than 6 days plans for emergency storage will need to be implemented. Similarly, if coffin manufacturing is not allowed to keep pace with the number of deaths there will be further delays in funerals, not to mention the obvious health and general hygiene consequences."

The AFDA has worked collaboratively with state and federal governments through the pandemic and its members have implemented the highest standard of COVID-19 protection for its funeral directors and mourners.

Mr Pinder said: "We call on the South Australian Government to engage with the AFDA so we can assist it in immediately recommencing funerals for those families that are now waiting to bid their loved ones farewell."

The Australian Funeral Directors Association is the national peak industry body with members in every State and Territory representing approximately 60% of all deaths in Australia.

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