



AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS URGE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT TO EASE CLOSE-CONTACT ISOLATION RULES FOR FUNERAL INDUSTRY STAFF

The Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) is urging the Queensland government to classify funeral industry staff as critical workers and allow them to return to work as close contacts if they have no COVID-19 symptoms.

The New South Wales and Victorian governments both recently extended their close-contact isolation exemptions to include workers in funeral, mortuary, crematorium and cemetery services, among other critical health, care and support services.

The AFDA is calling for similar exemptions for funeral industry staff in Queensland to prevent further delays in the already strained funeral services sector, which is under pressure due to the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases in the state.

The President of the AFDA, Adrian Barrett, said that without close-contact exceptions, the ability of funeral staff to manage the deceased and funeral services in an effective, timely and respectful manner will come under significant strain.

“Our members, the majority of which are small and family-owned businesses, are already experiencing delays in conducting funeral services, a situation resulting from mandatory self-isolation requirements for close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases,” he said.

“Funeral service delays impact not only the broader community, who must consequently wait longer to farewell their loved ones, but our capacity to store the deceased as well.”

“The availability of storage facilities for the deceased will be severely reduced if this situation is not addressed soon.”

The Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) is the peak industry body with members in all States and Territories representing around 60% of the 160,000 deaths in Australia annually.

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