

ACT Public Cemeteries Authority

Ms Sandra Lambert AM  
Chair, ACT Remuneration Tribunal  
PO Box 964  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

## ACT Remuneration Tribunal 2019 Spring Review

Dear Ms Lambert,

I refer to your correspondence of 27 August 2019 inviting submissions to the review of the remuneration of statutory office holders for the forthcoming financial year and provide the following submission on behalf of the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority.

The ACT Public Cemeteries Authority (the Authority) is an independent statutory authority established under the *ACT Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003* (the Act) to effectively and efficiently manage public cemeteries and crematoria.

The Authority currently manages and operates three public cemeteries at Gungahlin, Woden and Hall that service the ACT and surrounding community. Cemeteries are important spaces for the community and the Authority ensures that all matters related to its services (burials and internments) are handled with dignity and respect.

The key purpose of the Authority is to ensure the equitable availability of interment options and maintain burial capacity in the medium to long term for the ACT community. The Authority strives to operate as an efficient Government business with a strong customer service focus and is ultimately responsible to the Minister for Transport and City Services for the good governance and successful operations of the Authority.

The Authority comprises of a CEO, deputy CEO and 15 employees (administrative and operations). The current Authority Board comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair and 7 members. The Board meet Bi-monthly and has 2 sub-committees that meet as a minimum 5 times per year.

Committee	Role
Audit, Risk and Governance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To provide recommendations and advice to the Board on risk management activities, including internal audit, risk, WHS, fraud, undertaken by the Authority.</li></ul>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To provide recommendations and advice to the Board on financial management and activities undertaken by the Authority.</li><li>- To provide recommendations and advice to the Board on potential business development opportunities, stakeholders and reputation management issues, and marketing activities undertaken by the Authority.</li></ul>

### Office

Gungahlin Cemetery  
Sandford Street  
Mitchell ACT 2911

### Postal Address

PO Box 37  
Mitchell ACT 2911

### Contact

**T** 02 6204 0200 **F** 02 6207 1624  
**E** [cemeteries@act.gov.au](mailto:cemeteries@act.gov.au)  
**W** [canberracemeteries.com.au](http://canberracemeteries.com.au)

Hall Cemetery is a small rural cemetery with limited capacity that is reserved primarily for the residents of the Hall region. Woden Cemetery is now fully subscribed, with no new burial sites available for purchase. Further, the ACT Government has decided not to extend Woden Cemetery. Gungahlin Cemetery is open and between 25 and 40 years capacity depending on whether it remains the only cemetery in the ACT.

In 2017 an Inquiry was held by the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services into the management of cemeteries in the ACT. The Inquiry report made a number of recommendations. The ACT Government subsequently agreed to these recommendations and commenced a comprehensive community engagement process on cemeteries and crematoria in the ACT in October 2018.

During the consultation process it was identified that a number of religious and cultural needs are not currently being met by the services offered in the ACT, which range from requiring access to natural flowing water to details of how actual cremations are carried out. Currently, there is only one privately owned crematorium in the ACT and it was recommended that a second crematorium was required as the current privately owned Crematorium was not meeting the needs of the community.

The Authority Board has been working together with the Minister and representatives from Transport Canberra and City Services (the Directorate) on several of the key recommendations from the Inquiry, the results from the Community Engagement, exploring the Authority to operate a Crematorium, along with the recent announcement by the Minister announcing an allocation in the ACT budget Mid-Year review of \$921,000 for stage one design and costing work on Southern Memorial Park (a new cemetery and crematorium to be located on Mugga Lane near Hume).

The Directorate have written to the Board of its intentions to engage collaboratively with the Board in all aspects of the Southern Memorial Park project, noting the expertise that the Board can provide in this matter. The Board has subsequently created 2 additional sub-committees to assist in meeting these important strategic obligations:

Committee	Role
Legislative Review Taskforce	- To undertake a legislative review of the Act and regulations, and to be able to provide input into the 2019 Government review.
Southern Memorial Park (SMP)	- To provide strategic and operational input into the development of the Southern Memorial Park

The Tribunal currently classifies the Authority as a Decision-Making Board within a Level 2 remuneration band paid per-diem. With existing responsibilities and the recent expansion of activities of assisting in the SMP Project and Legislative Review, I submit the attached submission to the Tribunal to increase the Base remuneration Per-Diem for Authority Board Members.

The proposed increase in remuneration for Board Members will be covered as part of the Authority's budget.

I look forward to the Tribunal's favorable decision on this matter and would be pleased to discuss it further on 02 6204 0207

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Bartos  
Chair  
ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Board  
18 September 2019

**Submission to the ACT Remuneration Tribunal  
2019 Spring Review Part-time Holders of Public Office  
ACT Public Cemeteries Authority**

**ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Board - Remuneration**

Board Members of the Authority are currently remunerated as Part-time Holders of Public office, where the Base remuneration (Per Diem) covers all activities undertaken by the office holder in performing the duties of their office.

The Authority Board has been recognized by the Tribunal as a decision-making board with a Level 2 remuneration on a Per-Diem rate.

The ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Board remuneration is referenced in Table 1: Remuneration rates for Part-time Holders of Public Office (specific figures as per the table):

<b>COLUMN 1 Board, committee etc.</b>	<b>COLUMN 2 Position</b>	<b>COLUMN 3 Base remuneration (Per Diem)</b>	<b>COLUMN 4 Base remuneration (Per Annum)</b>
Public Cemeteries Board	Chair Member	\$540 \$465	- -

The Authority currently manages and operates three public cemeteries at Gungahlin, Woden and Hall. The Authority's functions are to effectively and efficiently manage public cemeteries and crematoria for which the Minister has appointed the Authority as the operator.

Due to the significance of the work that the Authority performs with the Community in regard to burials and internments it is important that the work that the Authority Board perform is reflected in the Per-Diems that are paid.

The Authority Board considers an increase to the Per Diem rate would accurately reflect the current performance of duties being executed by the Board recognising that extra activities have been requested from the Directorate.

The requested increase in Per Diem (per the table below) is a modest increase within the Level 2 Base remuneration band and will be accommodated within the Authority Budget.

<b>COLUMN 1 Board, committee etc</b>	<b>COLUMN 2 Position</b>	<b>COLUMN 3 Base remuneration (Per Diem)</b>	<b>COLUMN 4 Base remuneration (Per Annum)</b>
Public Cemeteries Board	Chair Member	\$590 \$510	- -

**The ACT Public Cemeteries Authority**

The Authority is established under Section 28 of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003. The Authority currently manages and operates three public cemeteries at Gungahlin, Woden, Hall and a Mausoleum at Woden Cemetery. The Authority's functions are to effectively and efficiently manage public cemeteries and crematoria for which the Minister has appointed the Authority as the operator.

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The Act requires the Authority to:

- operate on a sound financial basis;
- be managed by a governing Board that consists of at least four, and not more than 12 members;
- ensure the Board include at least four members who, in the Minister's opinion, represent the general community and religious denominations;
- appoint Directors for three-year terms and may be re-appointed at the discretion of the Minister;
- oversee that Directors may receive remuneration, which is set by a determination of the Remuneration Tribunal; and
- include the CEO as a member of the Board.

The key purpose of the Authority is to ensure the equitable availability of interment options and maintain burial capacity in the medium to long term for the ACT community. The Authority strives to operate as an efficient Government business with a strong customer service focus.

Underpinning the services offered, the Authority has adopted operating practices that safeguard the environment and the health and safety of its staff and visitors.

The ACT Public Cemeteries Board (the Board) of the Authority is responsible for the good governance and successful operations of the Authority. The Board takes governance of its operations seriously. In addition to the Act and the *Financial Management Act 1996* which together, in principle, serve as its constitution, the Board operates under a Charter developed by the Board. The Charter sets out the role, responsibilities and authority of the Board, the Chair, individual directors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within the governance framework of the ACT Government. From this flows all policies and practices of the Board and the Authority and its relationships, lines of communication, management and probity frameworks with its stakeholders which include the Minister, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), Authority staff, business partners and the community. Board directors and staff are all familiar with the underpinning concepts of transparency, accountability, responsiveness and fair play.

Customers and stakeholders of the Authority include:

- the community;
- funeral directors and stonemasons;
- suppliers of goods and services;
- our employees; and
- the ACT Government.

**Key Financial Data:**

Annual Budget	\$5.8m
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$9.0m
Non-Current Assets	\$7.4m
Liabilities	\$8.9m

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### **The Board**

The Board of the Cemeteries Authority is established under Part 3, Section 29 of the ACT Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003, which specifies the functions. The governing board has at least 4, and not more than 12, members and must include at least 4 members who, in the Minister's opinion, represent the general community and religious denominations.

Under the *Financial Management Act 1996*, the Governing Board is to ensure, as far as practicable, that the Cemeteries Authority operates in a proper, effective and efficient way. In this regard the functions of the Board include setting the Authority's policies and strategies, governing the Authority consistently with the *Financial Management Act 1996* and ensuring, the Authority complies with applicable governmental policies.

The Board meets bi-monthly. It is ultimately responsible to the Minister for the good governance and successful operations of the Authority. Under the Financial Management Act the Board is responsible for the appointment of the CEO. The Board provides governance to the Authority; management responsibilities are exercised by the CEO. However, the Board works closely with the Authority CEO to ensure that there are agreed performance reviews and incentive targets in place, and that KPI's are in place and met.

The Board has established sub-committees for Audit, Risk and Governance Committee and Finance Committee, which meet quarterly and bi-monthly respectively.

The Board has recently established two additional committees: Legislative Review Taskforce and Southern Memorial Park (SMP) to assist the Directorate in key recommendations raised by the 2017 Inquiry held by the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services into the management of cemeteries in the ACT.

The board currently consists of one Chair and 8 members with various backgrounds and qualification whom also represent the general community and religious views.

### **Summary**

The Authority currently manages and operates three public cemeteries at Gungahlin, Woden and Hall that service the ACT and surrounding community. Cemeteries are important spaces for the community and the Authority ensures that all matters related to its services (burials and internments) are handled with dignity and respect.

Due to the significance of the work that the Authority performs with the Community in regard to burials and internments it is important that the work that the Authority Board perform is reflected in the Per-Diems that are paid.

The Authority Board considers an increase to the Per Diem rate would accurately reflect the current performance of duties being executed by the Board recognising that extra activities have been requested from the Directorate.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Remuneration Tribunal agree to the increase of Base remuneration Per Diem fees of Chair and Members.

Mr Stephen Bartos  
Chair  
ACT Cemeteries Authority  
[stephenbartos77@gmail.com](mailto:stephenbartos77@gmail.com)