

Steve Kamper

Minister for Small Business
Minister for Lands and Property
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Sport

**Media Release****Next steps to fixing our Crown cemeteries**

Friday, 8 December 2023

The Minns Government has taken the next step towards fixing the cemeteries mess created by the indecision and infighting of the former Coalition Government. The appointment of a new professional board will help lead the delivery of new burial supply in Sydney and address the challenges the cemeteries sector currently faces.

The appointment of the board brings an end to two-and-a-half-years of Administrator management of the now merged organisation and is part of the Government's strategy to ensure Sydney has well run operators and the ability to focus on sufficient supplies of burial space and the challenges of the future.

Through the work of Administrator Ken Morrison, it has been established that Metropolitan Memorial Parks (MMP) is now able to be self-sufficient. Through increased investments in perpetual care funds, managing expenses (including through streamlining the executive leadership team), and re-assessing future needs, the long-term future of MMP has been secured, resulting in operating finances now \$3 million ahead of budget and a fully-funded perpetual maintenance fund, reversing a shortfall estimated to be \$241 million in 2019.

Over the past six months the NSW Government and MMP, led by Administrator Ken Morrison, have been undertaking a significant change process to prepare for the establishment of the new board. This includes:

- Successfully merging the three former cemetery land managers into a single new entity under a new brand of MMP
- Strengthening and streamlining the executive leadership team
- Completing further analysis on the issue of limited burial space and options to bring new supply online.
- Developing a transitional business plan to guide operations pending the board's commencement.
- Establishing new contemporary risk, compliance and probity frameworks and governance processes, addressing previous weaknesses identified by an independent health check.

An extensive open recruitment process was undertaken to source qualified candidates for the board of MMP.

The board, initially consisting of six members including a chair, has been appointed for three-years to control the affairs and govern the strategic direction and financial management of MMP, which

provides a vital service to the community and manages eight Crown cemetery sites in Sydney and Newcastle.

The skills-based board brings a diverse mix of experienced directors from various backgrounds including in financial management, governance and risk management, organisational performance, stakeholder management, commercial strategy, and legal skills.

One of the new board's first items will be to consider potential CEO candidates to run MMP. A shortlist of candidates has been prepared on the basis of an extensive market search process, with a view to finalising the appointment as the first act of the inaugural board before the end of the year.

Minister for Lands and Property Steve Kamper said:

“The appointment of this new board is part of the NSW Government's ongoing work to fix Sydney's Crown cemetery sector, including ensuring we have enough burial space for future needs and that respectful and affordable burial and cremation services are available for all.”

“After the March election, the Minns Government moved quickly to address the mess left behind by the Coalition. In the first 8 months, the NSW Government has provided certainty on the structure and leadership of the Crown cemetery sector and promoted transparency by releasing an independent report into the previous government's OneCrown arrangements.”

“Metropolitan Memorial Parks has an exciting future. I look forward to working with the new Chair and board and the future CEO on new supply options to ensure it can deliver on its mandate into the future.”

Board members of the Metropolitan Memorial Parks

- Ken Morrison (Chairperson) – Mr Morrison has shown exceptional leadership and in-depth knowledge as the appointed Administrator for Metropolitan Memorial Parks. He is an experienced chief executive with key strengths in leadership, property development, stakeholder engagement and governance. Ken was previously the Chief Executive of the Property Council of Australia.
- Kathy Jones – Ms Jones is a highly experienced senior executive with strengths in business, commercial enterprise, property, stakeholder engagement, risk management and human resources. Her current board memberships include Karitane, the Women's Advisory Committee of the NUW Alliance in Western Sydney and the Property Council of NSW's Precincts Committee.
- Alice Spizzo – Ms Spizzo has an impressive legal and professional services background with experience across the property, planning, environment, and housing sectors with strong technical skills in legal, governance and risk frameworks. She is currently a board member for Homes Tasmania Board, Sydney Regional Planning Panel and Women's Housing Company.
- Professor Roberta Ryan – Professor Ryan has a strong social planning background and experience as a board member and chair providing strategic input on social and community outcomes. She also has experience with NSW government committees. Roberta is a Professor of Local and Regional Governance, Executive Director of Institute for Regional Futures and Director of Hunter Research Foundation Centre at the University of Newcastle.
- Arthur Diakos PSM - Mr Diakos has extensive finance and governance experience. His commercial and business acumen has contributed to financial outcomes, growth, and success through strategic financial planning in previous executive and board roles. Arthur has held senior executive roles across several government agencies including the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), NSW Department of Justice and Transport for NSW.

- Mark Bloom – Mr Bloom has a strong financial services background and has demonstrated financial and commercial expertise to deliver positive results, growth, and revenue uplift as a board director. Mark has held senior executive roles at organisations including Westfield and Scentre Group. He is currently a board member for ASX listed companies AGL Energy, Pacific Smiles Group, EBOS Group and Abacus Storage King.

MEDIA: Jonathan Symons | Minister Kamper | 0407 488 158