



Rookwood Cemetery uses technology to help families say farewell

While there is no replacement for saying goodbye in person, live video-streaming is an option that bridges the gap. The grief of losing a loved one has been exacerbated by the new rules in place to manage the COVID-19 health crisis and many families are finding it difficult to farewell their loved ones.

Rookwood General Cemetery understands the difficulty that families, particularly large families, are experiencing when gathering for a funeral to say goodbye is no longer an option.

With Government regulations restricting funerals to 10 people¹, Rookwood General Cemetery has actioned several changes that enable visitors to implement social distancing, while also creating opportunities for family and friends to say goodbye.

Burial and cremation services will continue to be offered seven days per week, and chapel facilities may be utilised in accordance with the one person per four square metre ruling. Both the Saint Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church and the All Souls Ceremonial venue can accommodate 10 guests. In addition to this, the All Souls offers live video-streaming enabling family and friends to watch the funeral of their loved one from anywhere in the world.

These offerings ensure that elements of Greek Orthodox funerals can be maintained, including the viewing of the deceased. These venues can also be used for Trisagion prayer and Mnimosino memorial services.

Rookwood General Cemetery also provides access to cemetery mapping

software, to help family and friends find and view their loved one's location within the cemetery. This technology can be used to view the burial site online, and to locate it when visiting the cemetery in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Rookwood has also implemented social distancing measures for all meetings with clients and families, from virtual meetings and DocuSign for completing forms, through to outdoor meetings and personal protective equipment for those that still require a face-to-face appointment.

During these unprecedented times, it is important for communities of all ethnicities to consider new ways of mourning. Clinical psychologist and University of Wollongong lecturer, Dr Emanuela Brusadelli, told the ABC recently; «Because the normal rituals are not possible at the moment, it is very important for us — and our mental health — to create new ones to help ourselves understand what is happening. [It] helps us face the strong feelings we have and helps us to understand and accept this new situation.»²

Rookwood General Cemetery hopes the changes it has adopted will help families manage this emotional time by providing relatives and friends with ways to farewell their loved one in a way that is meaningful to them.

To learn more about the changes Rookwood has made to comply with the new restrictions, visit

www.rookwoodcemetery.com.au/important-community-notice

For more information contact Rookwood General Cemetery:
info@rookwoodcemetery.com.au | 02 8575 8100

¹ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules>

² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-11/coronavirus-funeral-rule-and-grief/12140510>



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