



RECYCLING METALS FOLLOWING CREMATION

The recycling of surgical metals and the benefits to the Geelong community

The Geelong Cemeteries Trust participates in a State run program through the Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria (CCAV) that creates the opportunity to recycle surgical metals remaining after cremation. Any funds raised will be donated to Geelong bereavement charities.

If your loved one has had an orthopaedic implant during their lifetime, you may wonder what happens to the metals after cremation.

When a coffin or casket is cremated, not all metal components that have been surgically placed in the body of the deceased are destroyed by the heat. These metal components, as well as metal remains from the coffin or casket (staples, screws, hinges etc.) remain in the cremation chamber among the ashes.

The metals used for implants are special medical-grade stainless steel, titanium, tungsten and cobalt chrome. All are produced from non-renewable resources and all have recyclable value.

Why recycle?

Until recently, unless the family requested otherwise, it was accepted practice that after cremation, the surgical implants and other metals were separated from the remains and disposed of in the grounds of the cemetery, as the metals are unable to be ground for integration within the cremation ashes.

A very small percentage of families ask for the cremation metal to be returned and packaged separately to the ashes of the deceased, however the majority do not.

In a time when environmental issues are becoming more and more important to us all, we are realising that we cannot continue practices that are detrimental to our environment, without accepting the consequences of our actions sometime in the future.

The decision to recycle surgical metals remaining after cremation is an environmentally responsible one, and the fact that all proceeds raised are donated to charity, means recycling can have both an environmental and a broader social impact benefit.

Recycling of metals remaining after cremation is now fully accepted in over 15 countries across Europe, including the U.K. and also some states of the U.S.A. Over 450 cremation facilities now participate with a combined amount of around.

Where do the metals go?

The Geelong Cemeteries Trust, through the Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria (CCAV), has partnered with Austeng Pty Ltd, a Geelong company, for the collection and shipping of these metals to OrthoMetals, a fully certified and registered company based in the Netherlands.

OrthoMetals has more than 15 years of experience in conducting the collection and recycling of metals for crematoria worldwide, including many States in Australia, in the appropriate manner complying with existing local legislations.

Once the metals are received by OrthoMetals, they are recycled in the form of granulates to their original material. The process is a guaranteed recycling system to ensure that all orthopaedic implants are not able to be re-used.

What happens to the money raised from recycling?
The recycling of these metal items does generate funds. Any proceeds raised from metals collected from the Geelong Cemeteries Trust is forwarded to the CCAV for donating in full to Geelong bereavement charities.

What if I want to have the metal remains returned to me or my family?

Unless otherwise indicated prior to the cremation occurring, all metal items remaining after cremation will be recycled. However, if you would like to have the particular item returned to you, please advise your Funeral Director prior to the cremation. Our staff will make arrangements to keep the item and have it returned when the ashes are collected.

Please note that soft/precious metals melt during the cremation process and are dispersed throughout the remains of the cremator and are reduced to tiny granules. These cannot be recovered and returned to the family so it is recommended that all jewellery is removed prior to cremation.