

“Our baby has died”

— FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

You are numb, shocked, bereft, frightened, and at a loss to know what to do next. These are quite possibly just a tiny number of a million emotions you are currently experiencing.

Your life may previously have been untouched by death – and you never expected that you would find yourself faced with the need to arrange the funeral of your newborn.

These pages contain information for the short term, and perhaps the answers to some of your most immediate questions.

Meeting with the Funeral Consultant

Tobin Brothers Funerals and Frances Tobin Funerals by Women are committed in the care we provide to parents and families who are touched by the death of a baby or child.

Your Funeral Consultant will be a caring professional, who will act as your guide and support leading up to and including the funeral. They will be able to meet with you either in hospital, on your return home, or at one of our many branches across Melbourne or Echuca.

Your Funeral Consultant will provide you with information and options regarding the type of funeral services available to you, along with the associated costs. They will focus upon your own personal needs and wishes, including those of a religious or cultural nature.

You will not be rushed. You will be given as much time as you need in which to think about, absorb and discuss information and options – so that your ultimate decisions will be informed ones.

Changing your mind, as your feelings change is most common. Know that your Funeral Consultant will understand this.

Why have a funeral service for a baby?

A funeral service enables you to acknowledge the “realness” of your baby, no matter its gestation. It publicly recognizes that your baby was a person, and that your baby has “lived” within you – even should your baby have been born still, or before its due date. A funeral service publicly acknowledges the eternal place your baby will hold within your family unit and your lives.

Family, friends and colleagues will also be affected in some small, or not so small a way, by the death of your baby. They often feel powerless to help, or to know what to say. A funeral service provides family, friends and colleagues an invaluable opportunity to show their love and support for you through their attendance and participation. In attending they are also provided an opportunity to acknowledge and express their own feelings – their sense of loss and grief.



Can we see our baby again?

Your Funeral Consultant will discuss this with you in detail. They will do everything possible to ensure that further parenting time is facilitated. Time spent with baby can include one or many opportunities leading up to and including the day of the funeral. You may choose to keep this time private, just for yourselves – or you may wish to invite siblings, grandparents, extended family or friends, to share this time with you.

You may be able to partake in, or assist in the bathing and dressing of your little one. You may be able to spend time holding, cuddling and getting to know your baby. Not all options are possible in some cases. Decisions may be limited by the condition of your baby's body. Your Funeral Consultant will discuss fully with you, any changes in your baby, or reasons that some options would not be advisable. The final decision however, will always be yours.

You may wish to place special items (treasures) in your baby's coffin – a letter, prose or poetry; a picture, photographs, special toys or blanket. You may wish to take photographs or video.

If viewing/parent time is not possible, or if you decide it is too confronting, parents will be given the opportunity to spend "quiet time" with baby's closed coffin. Any "treasures" you may wish baby to have, can be placed into the coffin by our staff on your behalf.

Can we take baby home?

Following transfer from hospital, babies often remain in the care of our staff at Tobin Brothers. However, following preparation by our trained mortuary staff, if baby's condition permits, you can take your baby home (or have your baby returned to you at hospital) – for an afternoon, overnight, or until the funeral - if this is what feels right for you.

Do we need to meet with a Funeral Consultant?

The answer is yes. Even should you decide that you do not wish to hold a service for your baby – but simply wish us to arrange for baby to be cremated or buried – there is still a need for at least one parent to meet with a Funeral Consultant. There are various documents which require your signature in order for burial or cremation to be permitted. Be assured that your Funeral Consultant will be sensitive to your needs in this area, and will ensure that the process is simplified wherever possible.



What is involved in arranging our baby's funeral?

There are many issues for consideration that will require decisions, when you are ready to do so. They include:

Where and when will the funeral be held?

Who will lead the service?

Who will attend/participate in the service?

Burial or Cremation?

Which Cemetery or Crematoria?

What type of Grave?

What do we want to have happen to the Cremated Remains?

Floral Tributes.

Newspaper Notices.

Coffin.

Viewings/Parenting Time.

Clothing for your baby.

Options for "memory collection".

Memory Collections

There are many things which can be done to make your baby's funeral special – and to assist you in the collection of precious memories. You may have creative ideas of your own. Whatever your wishes are, please know that your Funeral Consultant is there to support and assist you in any way possible following the death of your baby and leading up to and including the funeral.



How much will our baby's funeral cost?

Detailed cost information will be provided by your Funeral Consultant, but generally speaking the cost of an infant's funeral is greatly reduced to that of an adult funeral. There are two main areas of cost involving the funeral of an infant:

The Professional Service Fee of the Funeral Director. Tobin Brothers Professional Service Fee includes: transferring baby into our care, body preparation, viewings, preparation and lodging of all documents following the funeral, staffing at viewings, staffing of funeral held in a church, or one of Tobin Brothers Chapels (and includes the use of our chapel for this service), one appropriate chauffeur driven vehicle for both the parents and baby, and a white lacquered coffin. An account is sent out to you within a week or so of the funeral.

Disbursements. These are fees paid on behalf of the parents by the Funeral Director before, or at the time of the funeral. They include such things as Cemetery fees, Crematorium fees, Clergy Offering or Celebrant Fee, Floral Tributes, Newspaper notices etc. These costs can vary, and apart from the Cemetery or Crematorium fees, are mostly optional items, and are by no means essential to the funeral process. We ask for payment of the disbursements by the day of the funeral.

Note: Goods and Services Tax (GST) – 10% – is payable on all funeral related products and services.

Maternity Allowance - Are we eligible to receive this payment from centrelink?

Yes – if your baby was born at 20 weeks Gestation, or greater than 20 week's gestation – even if baby was born still – you are eligible to receive the full Maternity Allowance Payment. You will need to apply to Centrelink to receive this payment. Application paperwork will be provided to you by your Maternity Hospital.

Should you require more detailed information, or would like to engage the services of a Tobin Brothers Funerals or Frances Tobin Funerals by Women Funeral Consultant, please telephone our Funeral Advice Line on (03) 9500 0900.

**FOR 24 HOUR SERVICE AND ENQUIRIES
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FUNERAL ADVICE LINE: (03) 9500 0900
WWW.TOBINBROTHERS.COM.AU**

