



IMPORTING OR EXPORTING HUMAN REMAINS OR ASHES

GENERAL INFORMATION

If you intend to bring human remains or ashes into Australia, or take them out of Australia, it may be helpful to contact a funeral director or a customs broker to assist you with the process. Funeral directors and customs brokers can be located through local telephone directories or by an internet search.

There are no Customs and Border Protection charges that apply to import or export human remains or ashes.

IMPORT

There is no need to make an import declaration when human remains or ashes are imported into Australia.

If you intend to import human remains or ashes into Australia you should contact the Australian Embassy in the country from where the remains are to be exported prior to importation into Australia. The source country may have specific requirements or conditions associated with the movement or export of human remains or ashes.

EXPORT

There is no need to make an export declaration when human remains or ashes are exported from Australia.

If you intend to export human remains or ashes from Australia you should check with the Embassy or Health authority in the destination country regarding any requirements that may be in place.

HUMAN REMAINS

When imported human remains arrive in Australia they will be assessed and cleared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Biosecurity.

The person responsible for making the arrangements to import or export human remains¹ should seek advice from the local health authorities. There may be a need to obtain a death certificate for administrative reasons (see over page for document requirements).

In Australia, contact The Department of Health and Ageing on:

Switchboard: 02 6289 1555

Freecall: 1800 020 103

Email: enquiries@health.gov.au

HUMAN ASHES

There are no quarantine or permit requirements for the importation of human ashes into Australia. If you are carrying human ashes with you when travelling to Australia, you must declare the human ashes to DAFF Biosecurity on arrival in Australia.

If you plan to carry ashes with you, it is advisable to contact the airline or shipping line prior to travelling. Those organisations may have requirements to be met when human ashes are carried by a passenger.

¹ Regulation 8 of the *Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations* does not apply to human remains destined for interment or other religious or cultural ceremonies for the deceased to take place outside Australia.

If human ashes are imported:

- as or with unaccompanied personal effects (UPEs), they will be cleared as your UPEs
- through international mail (Post), the goods will be cleared without any declaration requirements and will be delivered by Australia Post
- as cargo (with a bill of lading), when necessary Customs and Border Protection will facilitate clearance without any declaration being required.

For further information regarding DAFF Biosecurity requirements please contact the department on telephone: 1800 020 504 or 02 6272 4578, or email biologicals@aqis.gov.au

MOVABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Certain human remains may fall under the category of Cultural Heritage. Human remains of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (including bark and log coffins used in ceremonial burial) cannot be exported. Other human remains that have been removed from their place of discovery for 50 years or more may require a permit to be exported.

For more information regarding Cultural Heritage requirements go to www.arts.gov.au/movable

COMMERCIAL ACQUISITIONS

Human remains (partial or complete) that are acquired commercially, for a commercial purpose or for a purpose other than cultural or religious ceremonies for the deceased, are subject to normal clearance requirements. The value of the goods will determine if a self-assessed clearance declaration, an import declaration or export declaration is required. In some cases permits may be required.

INFORMATION

For information on any Customs and Border Protection matter visit our website www.customs.gov.au or contact the Customs Information and Support Centre on 1300 363 263 or email information@customs.gov.au

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR IMPORTING HUMAN REMAINS

To arrange for Customs and Border Protection and DAFF Biosecurity clearance for human remains you or a representative may be required to provide:

- a copy of the death certificate
- a certificate issued by the local health authorities stating death was not caused by communicable disease
- full flight or shipping details to the destination including air waybill or bill of lading
- the name and address of the consignee who must be:
 - » a licensed funeral director
 - » an entity approved for disposal of bodies, or
 - » a scientific institution which will undertake work such as an autopsy
- the passport or the passport number of the deceased person
- contact details for the next-of-kin.