



Clockwise from top left: Rev'd Robert Anderson / Purpose built charging trolley / The Creotal Cremator / Rev'd Robert Anderson & Rob Sprancis
Photography by Malcolm Bruce

KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PIONEERS IN PERINATAL CREMATION & MEMORIALISATION

King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women ("KEMH") located in Subiaco, Perth has recently installed a new Creotal Cremator (manufactured by North Geelong Company Austeng under licence from Furnace Construction Co. Ltd of the U.K). This cremator supercedes a previous Furnace Creotal Cremator that had been operating at the hospital for over 20 years. It is believed, to be, the only such cremator used exclusively for Perinatal deaths operating in the Southern Hemisphere.

The hospital, established in 1916 and is W.A.'s tertiary referral centre for complex pregnancy and high risk care. It offers world class care and wide ranging support to W.A. women with complicated pregnancies and infants born prematurely.

Rob Sprancis, (Managing Scientist for mortuary and anatomical pathology at the Hospital) comments that "... the Hospital prides itself in offering this unique service for still-born, premature babies or miscarriage up to 28 weeks which includes being able to provide individual ashes. The service was set up by a number of forward-thinking clinical specialists at the Hospital in the early 90's when it was realised that there needed to be a similar service that society provides to children and adults. Perinatal deaths still very much constitute a loss for the parents and this needs to be recognised to allow parents go through the same grieving process. The cremation option is a very popular service at the Hospital and provides solace and comfort to parents".

Apart from such immediate needs the Hospital also provides chaplaincy and social workers for counselling at this time. In addition, there is a rose garden on the Hospital premises where the ashes can be interred and memorialised. If the parents don't want the individual ashes, the hospital offers a monthly service held by Chaplaincy where the names are read out and a "certificate of recognition" issued. Mr. Sprancis also comments that it is important in this context to generate such concrete memorabilia as the certificate and other such items such as a locks of hair, hand and foot prints and photographs. These all contribute to help in the grieving process and provide recognition for a life that was not previously acknowledged.

Mr. Sprancis comments that the new wholly Australian made Creotal Cremator has been working well and was re-designed by Austeng with a different style of door so that it is much easier to operate and has a special purpose built charging trolley to make loading safer and easier. The control system has also been modernised.

Ross George, Managing Director of Austeng comments - "These Creotal Cremators are installed in overseas locations and could be considered in crematoria in Australia. The advantages of these specially tailored cremations which are designed for Perinatal and stillborn death is the guarantee of ashes and a greater quantity of ashes compared with a large furnace. It also seems to me that the compact cremator is a more fitting and dignified way of respecting such tiny lives".

Awareness of the importance of recognising loss in the circumstances of Perinatal death is now becoming more common. It is true to say though KEMH was and still is a trail-blazer in this very important area.

Any further queries please

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Any queries on the Creotal Cremator please

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