

MAUSOLEUM OSSUARY, KARRAKATTA CEMETERY

480. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:

I commend the minister on his announcement of Australia's first mausoleum ossuary at Karrakatta Cemetery.

- (1) Will the mausoleum ossuary be restricted to the skeletal remains that have been previously entombed in full-sized crypts for a number of years or will it be available for skeletal remains of more recent origin?
- (2) Noting that mausoleum ossuaries are an ancient tradition of southern Europe, will access to the 96 compartments in the ossuary be restricted or will access be available to skeletal remains of Anglo-Saxon origin; if not, does the minister support this discrimination on ethnic grounds?

Hon Barry House: Did the minister pick his space?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

I thank the members for the question and the interjection. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

- (1) The advice I have received indicates that in order for a deceased person's remains to be moved from the mausoleum to the ossuary, the deceased is required by our law to have been embalmed in the first instance. Only at the expiration of a number of years - the number escapes me at the moment - can the deceased person's remains be removed from the mausoleum to the ossuary.
- (2) The process by which people gain access to the ossuary is not to be based, insofar as I have been briefed, on any discriminatory provision that would enable the ossuary to be available only to people of southern European extraction. I expect the ossuary to be available to any person who is able to afford access to it. The access fee is expensive.

I hope that adequately answers the question. I commend the Metropolitan Cemetery Board for the work it has done in making available a mode of burial that is clearly sought by a significant section of the Western Australian community.