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## **Disappointment over repeated failure to increase funeral grant**

The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand is disappointed the Government's budget has once again failed to include an increase for the Work and Income Funeral Grant.

The Funeral Grant is a means-tested grant available to those with extremely low income who need help paying for a funeral but the current \$2,559.20 won't even cover average burial costs.

Chief Executive Gillian Boyes says National has missed an opportunity to address a problem the Association had been raising since the Grant was last reviewed over 20 years ago.

"We know the low level of this Grant disproportionately impacts Māori and Pacific Peoples who are the very communities who need to spend more at death because of their cultural preference for burials.

"And we know without the funds for a meaningful farewell, those families will struggle more with grief, or, if they have borrowed money, will struggle with death debt. We think this was an opportunity for National to show compassion," says Ms Boyes.

Ms Boyes says its members are on the front-line and too often see the devastating impact on vulnerable families if they are not able to farewell their loved ones with appropriate dignity and respect.

"We will continue to advocate to Government for an increase that gives greater parity to the assistance available through the ACC Funeral Grant."

**ENDS**

### **Media Contact:**

**Gillian Boyes**

CEO, Funeral Directors Association

Ph: 029 200 8985 | Email: [gillian@funeraldirectors.co.nz](mailto:gillian@funeraldirectors.co.nz)