

# Modern and Traditional Funerals



## What is a 'traditional' funeral?

While many people have a quite conventional view of what constitutes the funeral service, the reality is that the form of the funeral service has changed substantially over the last 100 years.

While the key elements of respect for the deceased and care of the bereaved remain the same, it was not that long ago that funeral directors were called Undertakers. They were actually known as Furnishing Undertakers – their *undertaking* was to supply the *furnishings* to the funeral.

The furnishing undertaker was often the local carpenter or builder who would make the coffin for the family. In the case of my grandfather Carl Uebergang, the function of undertaker was inherited when he purchased a Gippsland hardware store in 1932.

In the days of the undertaker, the person who died would stay at home until the day of the funeral. The family, or someone close to the family, would dress and prepare the deceased in the family home and place the deceased in the coffin provided by the undertaker.

The role of the undertaker gradually changed, taking over preparation of the deceased and having more involvement in arranging and directing the funeral requirements, hence the term 'Funeral Director.'

These days, there is a move back towards more family involvement. Instead of leaving all of the details to the 'Funeral Director,' families are more likely to have their own ideas on what should and shouldn't take place in the ceremony.

I see this as a good thing as it enables funerals to become much more personal and reflective of the needs of the family when celebrating the life of a loved one.

In some respects, I think the 'Funeral Director' might now be more aptly named the 'Funeral Facilitator' to reflect the role of a person who responds to the needs of individual families, rather than run the whole process.

At Gippsland Funeral Services, we understand those different needs. Some people want us to fill the more traditional role of 'Funeral Director', while others want more say.

What is clear is that the nature of funerals is constantly changing and at Gippsland Funeral Services we listen to what you want, then act on your needs.

As my grandfather Carl used to say, he didn't care how many funerals he looked after, but each one would be well conducted. It is a simple philosophy that has served three generations well.

Scott Rossetti

Third Generation Funeral Director

Three Generations of Caring Service

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