

**21 February 2023**

## **Funeral Directors ready to provide support to Cyclone Gabrielle victims**

As the first funerals for victims of Cyclone Gabrielle begin, Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand President, Rachel Bennis, is reassuring the public there is plenty of capacity to provide families with a meaningful farewell.

Like the rest of the devastated communities in Hawkes Bay and Gisborne, funeral homes have suffered flooding, power outages and communication difficulties. However, with all funeral homes now back online and the standing up of the NZ Funeral Disaster Relief team, Ms Bennis says grieving families will have the support of their local funeral home.

“Any unexpected death is shocking, but in this case, families will be waiting for coronial post-mortems, may be unable to contact other family members for support and will be struggling with the day-to-day toll of living in a disaster region,” says Ms Bennis.

“Our local funeral directors can guide families through the process, including providing support on applicable funeral grants for families who might be struggling financially.”

The NZ Funeral Disaster Response team operated during the Christchurch earthquake and shootings and Whakaari White Island tragedies and is a network of funeral profession volunteers from the Funeral Directors and Embalmers Associations.

Response team head, Simon Manning says the response team volunteers can provide additional practical support for local funeral homes and can also co-ordinate transportation services to ensure loved ones go back to their families and their lives can be celebrated with them.

Ms Bennis says with so much devastation around them, families need to remember to take the time to grieve.

“The ritual of a funeral can provide some certainty for families when so much else is unknowable right now. We, with the response team’s help, are ready to provide that support to both families and to emergency services over the days and weeks to come.”

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**Funeral Directors**  
ASSOCIATION OF NZ

The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand represents funeral directing companies that undertake the majority of funerals in New Zealand. They are a group of caring professionals who are committed to ensuring that the families they serve receive high-quality funeral service. For more information, visit our website: [www.funeraldirectors.co.nz](http://www.funeraldirectors.co.nz)