SYDNEY’S FIRST NATURAL BURIAL GROUND

Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly today opened Sydney’s first natural burial ground, saying that it offered a cheaper, more environmentally friendly choice for families when it came to farewelling loved ones.

Mr Kelly said commended the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust’s initiative at St Francis Field, within the grounds of Kemps Creek Cemetery in Sydney’s west.

“Natural burial grounds respond to an emerging need within the community for an interment option more environmentally friendly than traditional burials or cremation,” Mr Kelly said.

“Burials will be in biodegradable coffins and will not be marked by traditional headstones – instead they are designed to blend back into the natural setting of the field.

“This in turn reduces the need for manicured grounds and reliance on chemicals – creating a low carbon option.

“The latest GPS technology is used to ensure the location of the deceased is noted and recorded.

“Tenure is also limited to 30 years, with the option to renew if desired. In this way the St Francis Field may become a sustainable burial ground for Sydneysiders for generations to come.

“The Government supports natural burial and sees this as the first of a number of natural style burial grounds in Sydney – following the footsteps of Lismore’s Bushland Cemetery and picking up on a popular trend in places like Tasmania and the UK,” Mr Kelly said.

Member for Liverpool, Paul Lynch, said natural burial grounds allowed cemeteries to be established with less impact on any remnant bushland,” Mr Lynch said.

“No doubt natural burial grounds will become a popular option for many families over time,” Mr Lynch said.

Mr Kelly said that the Government would continue to work with its Crown Cemetery Trusts in exploring more opportunities for natural burial grounds and other sustainable ways of managing the State’s cemeteries.

“Together with renewable tenure, natural burials are just other way of making better use of a scarce resource, while still maintaining a wide range of options to cater for the personal, cultural and religious preferences of Sydney’s diverse community,” Mr Kelly said.