

# GREEN BURIAL PLANNING

& WHAT ARE THE *ALTERNATIVES* ?



with Adriane Weller,

End of Life Doula & Natural Burial Advocate



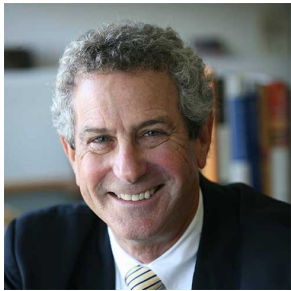
*Haliburton Highlands*  
**GREEN BURIAL SOCIETY**



# END OF LIFE DOULA



There is a deep cultural aversion to talking about dying. There is almost a superstition that if you talk about dying, you're inviting it into your lives. Yet by discussing our wishes for what happens as we approach the end of life, we can drastically increase the chances that our dying will actually play out as we hope.



*~ Dr. Ira Byock  
Palliative Care Physician*

# OVERVIEW

- ❖ Disposition in Ontario
  - ❖ Conventional Burial & Cremation
  - ❖ Green Burial
  - ❖ *Alternatives*
  - ❖ Environmental Impacts
- ❖ Green Burial Planning
  - ❖ In General
  - ❖ In the Algonquin Highlands!!
- ❖ Additional Reflections
- ❖ Resources
- ❖ Q & A

# LAWS



It matters that we live in **Ontario**

- ❖ *Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act*
- ❖ *Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO)*

# TERMINOLOGY

Non-standardized,  
therefore varied,  
and,  
sometimes confusing

# CONVENTIONAL DISPOSITION



GREEN BURIAL

NATURAL BURIAL

WELL, HE NEVER FIT IN, SO  
THIS IS HOW HE WANTED  
TO BE REMEMBERED.



There is  
no one  
*definition* of  
Green Burial

# GREEN BURIAL

Most commonly cited components -

BODY - No embalming, direct earth burial

CONTAINER - Shroud or biodegradable container;

no grave liner or vault

LAND – Emphasis on protection, conservation

And - Markers, Burial depth, Land maintenance, ...

# A GREENER WAY TO GO - NATURAL BURIAL CEMETERY

From preparing bodies to burying them in natural settings, the green burial movement is attempting to make death more environmentally friendly and, in some ways, closer to the way it was in the past. A comparison:

## CONVENTIONAL BURIAL

Burials use formaldehyde embalming and long-lasting caskets and burial vaults. Burial density 1,200 per acre.

A **conventional grave site**, often landscaped and well-maintained, features a large headstone made of granite or flat bronze. Fertilizer and pesticides may be used on the grass.

Below ground, a casket made of steel, finished wood and copper rests inside a concrete vault capped by a thick concrete lid.



## NATURAL BURIAL

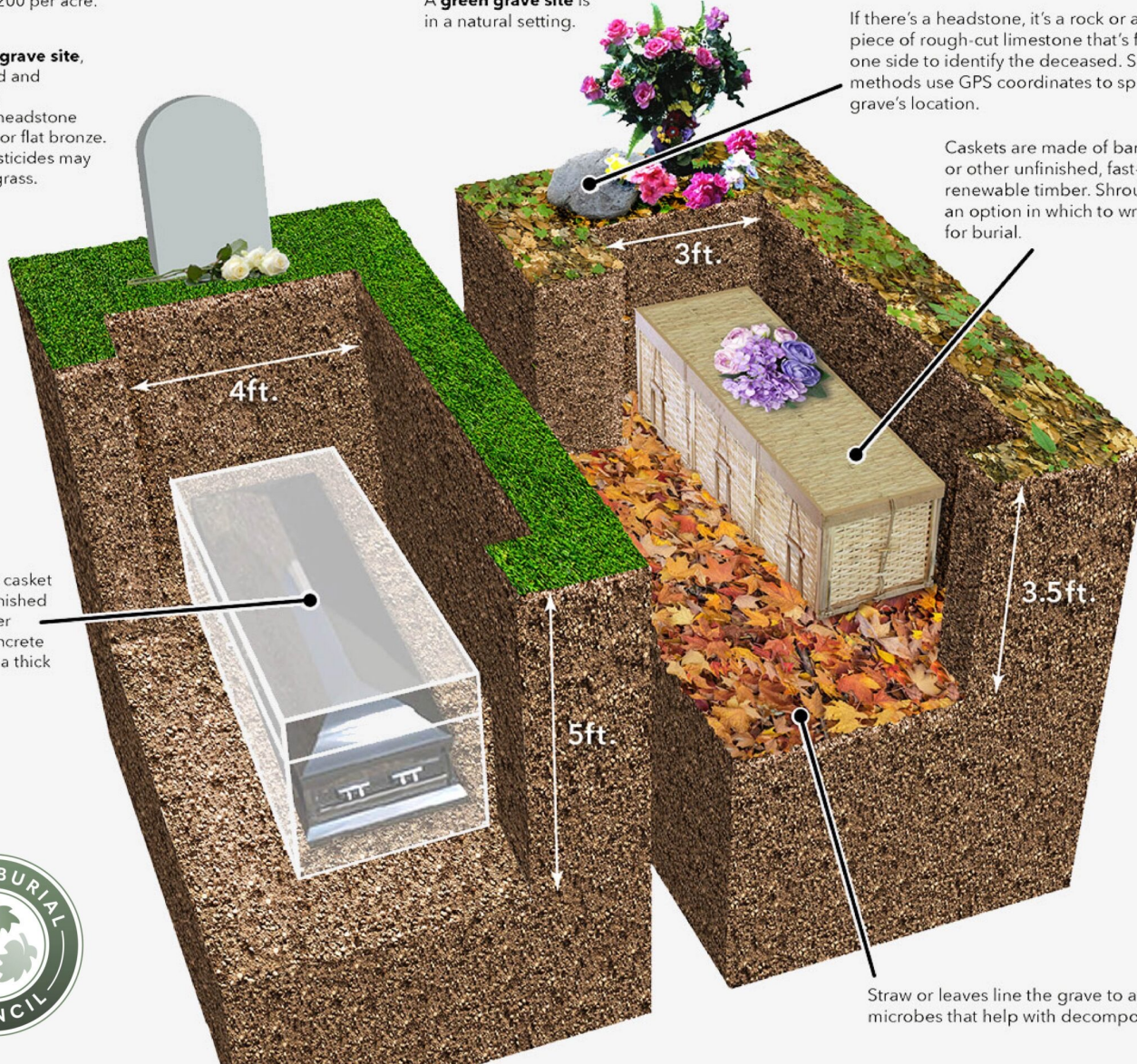
The natural, or green, burial method uses no embalming fluid or a formula that is not formaldehyde-based. Burial density limited to 500 per acre.

A **green grave site** is in a natural setting.

If there's a headstone, it's a rock or a piece of rough-cut limestone that's flat on one side to identify the deceased. Some methods use GPS coordinates to spot a grave's location.

Caskets are made of bamboo, wicker or other unfinished, fast-growing and renewable timber. Shrouds are also an option in which to wrap the body for burial.

Straw or leaves line the grave to add microbes that help with decomposition.



# GREEN BURIAL

Reclaiming Death Care practices that are more natural,  
instinctive, nourishing, and ecologically sustainable for  
people, wildlife and our planet

Renewal of ancient practices of caring for our own dead

Naturally lead to re-engagement & participation with death

# GREEN BURIAL CEMETERIES

- ❖ Hybrid
- ❖ Dedicated
- ❖ Conservation

and 'Green-Friendly'

# GREEN BURIAL CEMETERIES IN ONTARIO

- ❖ Hybrid - 15 now / 10 in the works

(Havelock, Roseneath / Muskoka)

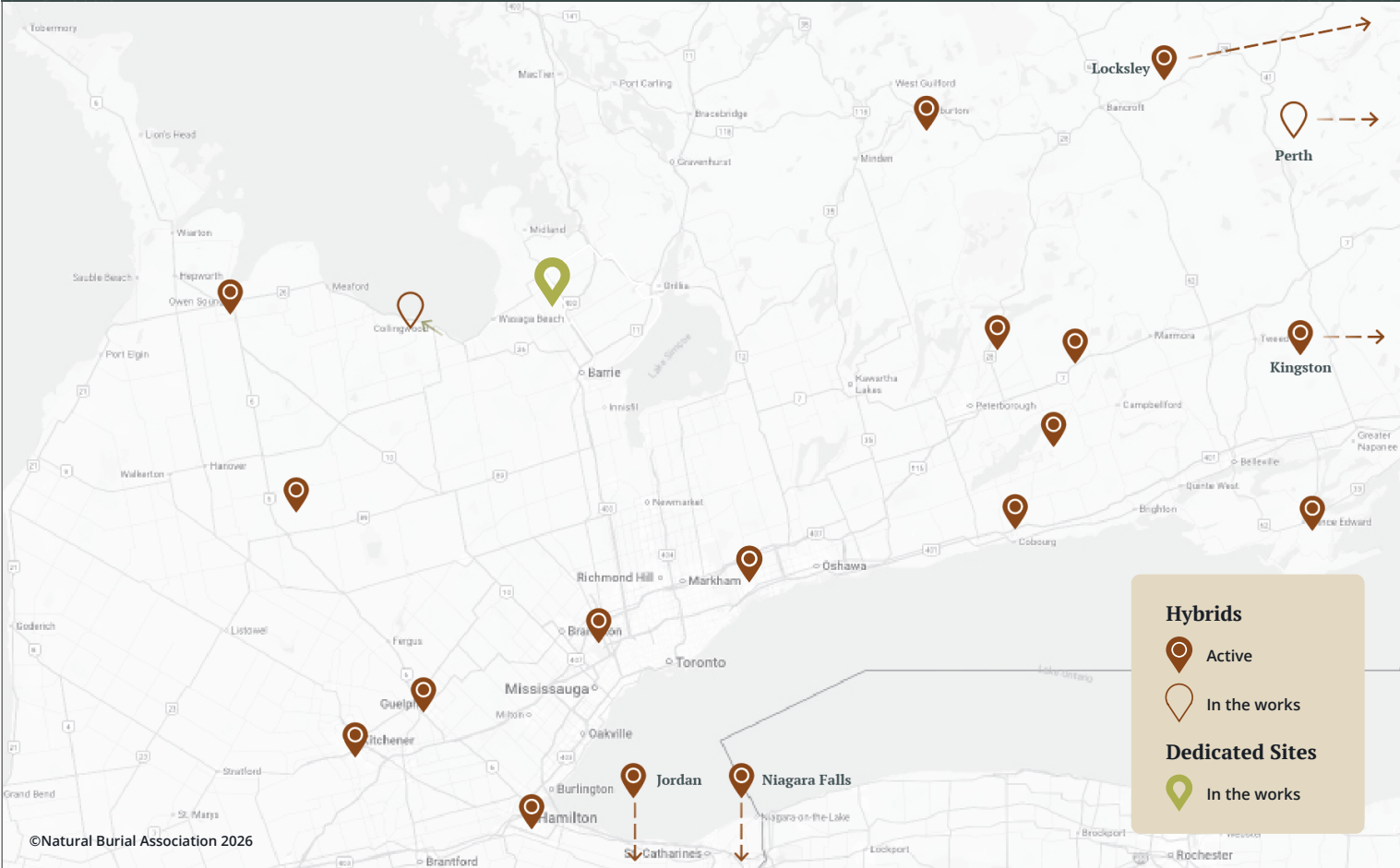
- ❖ Dedicated – 3 in the works

(Oro-Medonte, Bobcaygeon)

- ❖ Conservation – not yet!

# IN ONTARIO - NATURAL BURIAL ASSOCIATION

## Natural Burial Grounds in Southern Ontario



OTHER DISPOSITION  
*ALTERNATIVES*

# ALKALINE HYDROLYSIS



# HUMAN COMPOSTING



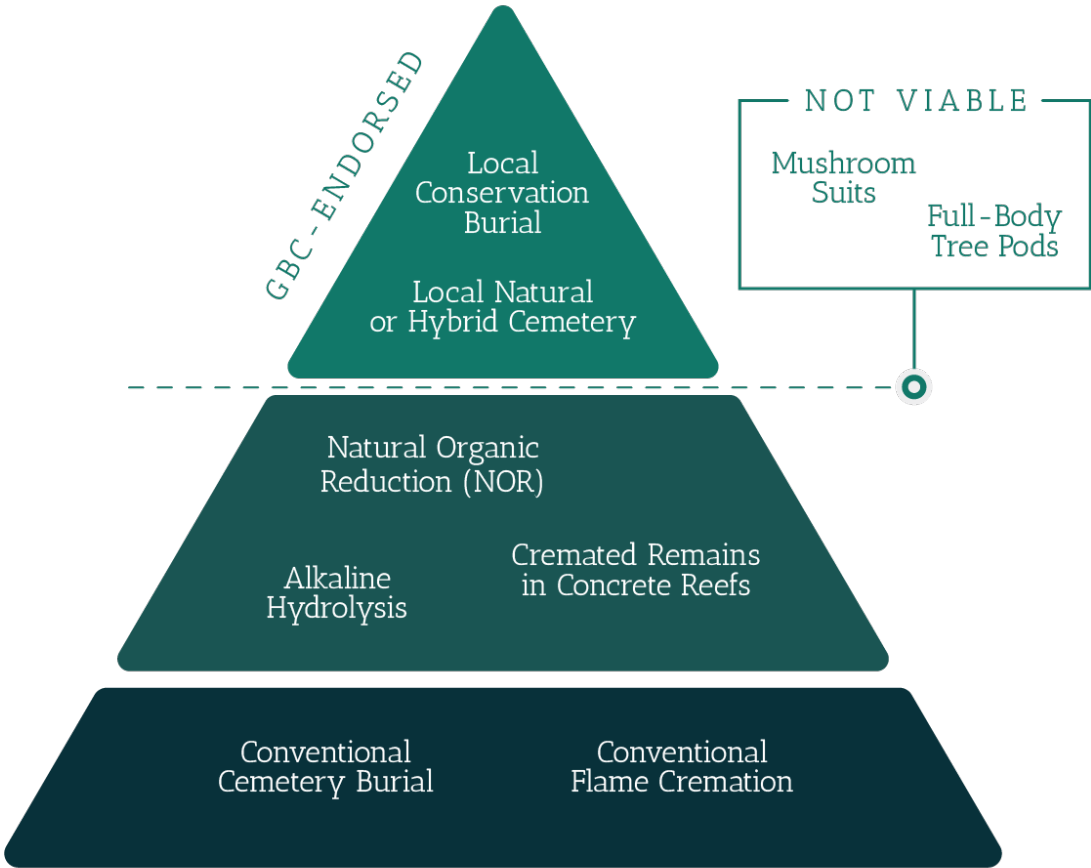
# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Environmental Comparison of Body Disposition Methods Chart

METHOD	NET CARBON FOOTPRINT	FUEL EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT OF LEFT-OVER PRODUCT FOR DISPOSAL	LAND ACREAGE PROTECTED	ENVIRO COSTS OR BENEFITS
<b>Conservation Burial</b>	+Sequesters 25 lbs. CO <sub>2</sub> per burial, 10 tons per acre.	—Transportation to the cemetery.	-0-	+Unlimited. +Strategic component of a complete land conservation plan.	+Land protection. +Nutrient contributions to soil communities.
<b>Human Composting</b>	—Indeterminate greenhouse emissions	—Sowing, watering, harvesting, processing, transporting of alfalfa, wood chips, bulking agents to facility; storage. —Construction, heating, cooling, maintenance of facility and its operating units. —Transporting of finished material.	—1+ cubic yard of leftover material 10 – 15 lbs. pulverized bone ( <i>calcium phosphate and sodium, 11.8 pH, 200 – 2000 x what plants can tolerate</i> ).	-0-	—Materials acquisition. —Facility maintenance. —Trucking of leftover materials. —Smothered plant and soil communities in surface disposal. +Restoration of depleted soil if intentionally tilled or incorporated.
<b>Alkaline Hydrolysis</b>	—Up to 250 lbs. CO <sub>2</sub> per person. —Most AH waste will be turned into carbon and nitrogenous GHG by public wastewater treatment facilities.	—Electricity or propane to heat 100 gallons of water under pressure 3-12 hrs. —Processing and transportation of potassium hydroxide (lye).	—100 – 300 gallons of effluent. 10 – 15 lbs. pulverized bone ( <i>calcium phosphate and sodium, 11.8 pH, 200 – 2000 x what plants can tolerate</i> ).	-0-	—Potential algae bloom from phosphorus run-off due to scattering. —Tree ringing ( <i>girdling</i> ) from burial close to tree roots. —Disposal of effluent (no state EPA has permitting).
<b>Flame Cremation</b>	—Up to 250 lbs. CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per person. —Mercury, particulate emissions into air and waterways.	—Up to 500 gallons of fuel, usually natural gas, to burn @ 1700 to 2000° for 3-4 hours.	—7-10 lbs. pulverized bone ( <i>calcium phosphate and sodium, 11.8 pH, 200 – 2000 x what plants can tolerate</i> ).	-0-	—Potential algae bloom from phosphorus run-off. —Tree ringing from burial close to tree roots. —Mercury poisoning of air and water.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

## What's Actually Green?



# GREEN BURIAL PLANNING

IN GENERAL

## \* BECOME (WELL) INFORMED

As far in advance as possible

Legally accurate & quality resources –

- ✓ Ontario Death Care Law & Rights
- ✓ Cemetery Bylaws & Price Lists
- ✓ Local Providers & DIY Options

## \* ENVISION

If you were to create an entirely meaningful,  
personal, fulfilling Green Burial,  
what would that look like? ...

## \* APPROACH

Cemetery Managers (and other providers if as needed)

Ask if they will accommodate your Green Burial wishes

## \* ADVOCATE

Use your knowledge and resources

Seek support as needed

## \* CREATE YOUR PLAN

Compile your Green Burial wishes

Prepare and organize any associated documents & notes

Pre-arrange and or Pre-pay with Providers only if desired

## \* SHARE

Share your plan with family, friends, community,

Executor and or Next of Kin

The more people who understand and are aware the more  
clarity, support and ease there will be

## \* REVIEW (REGULARLY)

Life circumstances may change (for you or a loved one)

New Green Burial possibilities may become available

# GREEN BURIAL PLANNING

IN THE ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS!!!



*Haliburton Highlands*  
**GREEN BURIAL SOCIETY**

**ST STEPHEN'S CEMETERY**

- ✓ Green Burial section
- ✓ Year-round interment (GB section only)
  - ✓ Pre-need sales are open

**WELL DONE HHGBS !!!!**



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## DEER LAKE CEMETERY (COMING SOON!)

- ✓ Green Burial section
- X Year-round interment (yet!)
- X Pre-need sales (yet!)



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(UNDERWAY!)

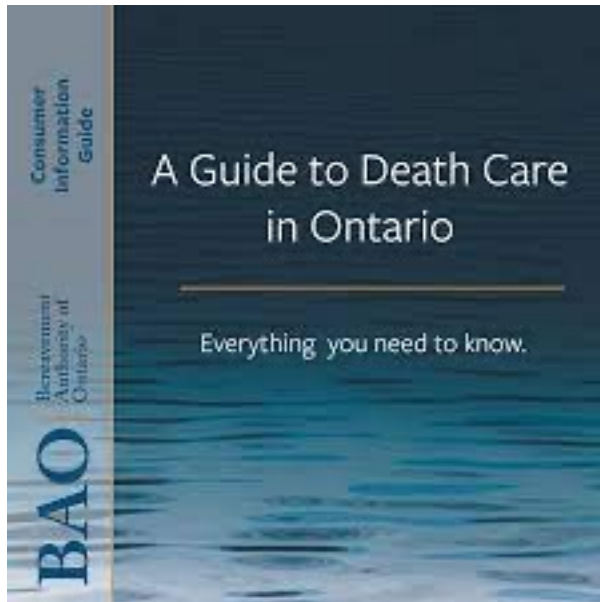
INVESTIGATION OF IDEAL SOIL DEPTH IN OUR ZONE  
FOR GREEN BURIAL & HUMAN DECOMPOSITION

# ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS

# ONTARIO DISPOSITION FACTS

- ✓ Funeral Providers & Cemeteries have the right to refuse caskets or shrouds
  - ✓ You should not be charged extra for using your own
  - ✓ If you would like to change death care arrangements you have already made this should be possible
  - ✓ It is legal for families to not use a Funeral Provider in caring for their own deceased (*Family-Led Death Care*)

# GUIDE TO DEATH CARE IN ONTARIO (BAO)



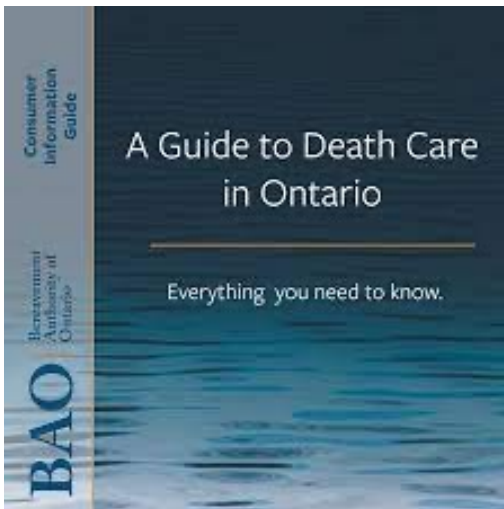
## SERVICES PROVIDED

The following chart outlines the types of services usually offered by Providers. You may purchase certain supplies, such as caskets, monuments, markers and flowers from any supplier, but you should notify your Provider prior to entering into a contract.

Description of Service	Service Provider				
	Funeral Establishment	Transfer Service	Cemetery	Crematorium	Family of Deceased
Removing the body from the place of death	✓	✓			✓
Placing the body in a casket and delivering it to a cemetery or crematorium	✓	✓			✓
Registering the death	✓	✓			✓
Arranging to transport the body of the deceased out of Ontario	✓	✓			✓
Wash and dress the body	✓	✓*			✓
Transport the body to or from a place of worship	✓	✓*			✓
Hosting memorial services, celebrations of life and receptions including the rental of facilities (no body or cremated remains present)	Can be hosted by anyone				
Coordinating religious and non-religious funeral services or receptions including the rental of facilities (with the body or cremated remains present)	✓				✓
Embalming	✓*				
Providing caskets, urns, vaults and flowers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing in-ground graves			✓		
Providing crypts in a mausoleum			✓		
Providing niches in a columbarium			✓		
Providing monuments	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Providing places to scatter cremated remains			✓		
Providing openings and closings of graves, niches or crypts			✓		
Conducting cremation or alkaline hydrolysis				✓	
Providing viewing of cremation				✓	

\* Must have class 1 licence

# ACCURATE RESOURCES



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
Funeral Resources,  
Education & Advocacy

natural  
burial  
ASSOCIATION

# COST VARIATIONS

- ❖ Disposition (and Funeral) costs vary significantly
  - ❖ BAO Advises Shopping Around

# COST VARIATIONS IN ONTARIO

**Figure 10: Price Differences for Selected Services by Region<sup>1</sup>**

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

	North	West	Central	South	East
<b>Direct Cremation<sup>2</sup></b>					
High (\$)	3,550	4,170	3,377	3,920	3,900
Low (\$)	1,545	1,300	1,896	997	1,360
Difference (%)	130	221	78	293	187
<b>Funeral Services<sup>3</sup></b>					
High (\$)	4,675	5,490	5,785	5,510	5,590
Low (\$)	2,155	2,674	3,900	3,420	3,020
Difference (%)	117	105	48	61	85
<b>Interment Right – Indoor niche wall<sup>4</sup></b>					
High (\$)	2,560	4,116	3,165	8,030	4,375
Low (\$)	746	1,187	1,498	1,995	1,675
Difference (%)	243	247	111	303	161
<b>Interment Right – In-ground burial<sup>5</sup></b>					
High (\$)	3,582	3,744	2,970	23,426	6,575
Low (\$)	1,268	2,381	1,115	1,855	1,815
Difference (%)	182	57	166	1,163	262

1. These geographical regions are defined by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario for price comparison purposes. The Bereavement Authority of Ontario does not categorize the bereavement sector by region.

- North: areas such as Parry Sound, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and North Bay.
- West: areas such as Kitchener, Sarnia, Windsor, London and Niagara.
- Central: areas such as Peterborough, Northumberland, City of Kawartha Lakes, Huntsville, Muskoka and Simcoe County.
- South: areas such as Toronto, Peel, Durham, York, Halton, Ajax and Hamilton.
- East: areas such as Ottawa, Brockville, Belleville and Kingston.

# ADVANCE PREPARATION

❖ Advocacy, when required, takes time

❖ A GIFT to our Loved Ones

# RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH DEATH

Western culture is not meeting death well

No longer guided by a wholesome map

An important part of restoring this is restoring ...

# RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH EARTH

Our bodies are formed from Earth's elements

Natural burial returns our elements to Earth

- ❖ Offers nutrients

- ❖ Completes the cycle of Life



Choosing in Death what we Value in Life

Reimagining

how

Death

can

Feel





## End of Life Services with Adriane

[adrianeweller@hotmail.com](mailto:adrianeweller@hotmail.com)

(705) 706-3186