A Northern Beaches Guide to Saying Goodbye Your Way

Hello, I'm Karin.

If someone you love has just died, I am so sorry. And if you are simply thinking ahead, you are welcome here too.

One of the comments I hear most often is **"I didn't know we could do that"**

That is why I created this guide: to explain the first steps, share your choices and help you imagine a farewell that feels like your person.

You do not need a plan before you call.
0412 269 049

My belief is simple:

Every Life Has a Story. Every Farewell Should Too.



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If someone has just died

You do not have to know all the answers. Start with the help available where you are.

In hospital or aged care
The staff will guide you through the immediate steps.

At home, when the death was expected
Contact their doctor or palliative care team and follow the plan agreed with them.

If someone is unresponsive and you are unsure
Call Triple Zero (000) and follow the operator's instructions.

Once the immediate steps are underway, you can call me. You do not need to have chosen a coffin, a venue or a ceremony.

"Karin, I don't know what to do.
We can start there, together"



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You have more choices than you may realise

A traditional funeral may feel exactly right. A small, relaxed gathering may feel right too.

You can choose **burial, cremation or aquamation**, and decide separately **how and where you would like to say goodbye.**



You might choose:
- a church or chapel funeral
- a graveside ceremony
- a private cremation and a memorial later
- a gathering at home or by the water
- a wake as the main celebration of life.

There is no single formula. We begin with the person who has died.

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A farewell somewhere meaningful

Here on the Northern Beaches and around Pittwater, many of us have a strong connection to a place.

The surf club. The sailing club. The family garden. A favourite restaurant or a room overlooking the water.

Where did your person feel happiest? Where did their people naturally gather?

A suitable club, home or community venue may be a lovely setting.

Before booking, we will check permission, access, seating and the arrangements.

Outdoors, we will also plan for the weather.

"We created a unique Celebration of Life that reflected our father. "
Jennifer B

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Cremation and the farewell can be separate

Choosing cremation does not mean you need a service at a crematorium. You might have a ceremony somewhere meaningful first, or a private cremation and a memorial later.

This can give family time to travel and everyone a little breathing space. We will confirm care, paperwork and timing before booking.

What is direct cremation?
A cremation without an attended funeral service. You can still hold a memorial, share a meal or gather privately afterwards.

Ask about a private viewing or goodbye beforehand, including arrangements and cost.



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Burial and Aquamation

Burial
Burial is important to many families for personal, cultural or religious reasons.

You might have a service followed by burial, a ceremony at the graveside, or a farewell at a suitable venue first. Let me know if your family already has a burial place. We can discuss cemetery options and costs.

Aquamation
Also called water cremation or alkaline hydrolysis, this uses water, warmth and an alkaline solution instead of flame. The remaining bone minerals are processed and returned as ashes.

You can still have a funeral or memorial. I can explain care, transport, timing and the full cost before you decide.



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Sometimes the wake can be the farewell

For some families, the gathering is the part that feels most like their person.

Their favourite food. Music playing. Friends telling stories. People laughing one moment and crying the next.

After a private cremation or burial, this can be the main celebration of their life.

You can include tributes, readings, music and a moment of reflection. Or keep it simple and informal.
There is room to make it your own.



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What would feel most like them?

When decisions begin to feel difficult, this is the question I often come back to.

Where were they happiest? Who were their people? What did they love doing? What traditions mattered to them?

The little details can make a farewell personal:
- music they loved
- a favourite meal or cake
- flowers from their garden
- artwork, books or a favourite hat
- drawings from the grandchildren
- funny stories as well as quiet ones.

A farewell can be formal or relaxed. What matters is that it feels right for you.



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What about the ashes?

You do not have to decide everything straight away.

Ashes can be kept at home, placed in a cemetery or memorial garden, or scattered somewhere meaningful.

You might want to gather on Pittwater, at sea or in another place connected with their life. Before making arrangements, we will check the permissions and practical requirements for the location you have in mind.

For a farewell on the water, we will consider boarding, weather and the comfort of everyone coming.



You can talk about money

Please tell me your budget. You should feel comfortable asking what something costs and whether it is essential or optional.

Ask for an **itemised written quote** and a clear explanation of what is included.

Costs may include:
• care, transfers and professional fees
• coffin, cremation or burial
• paperwork and death certificate
• venue, celebrant, flowers and printing
• livestreaming, catering and equipment.
Ask what is separate and what could change. A meaningful farewell does not have to be an expensive one.



We can work it out together

Before becoming a funeral director, I spent decades creating events and catering experiences through Catering by Design and Heavenly Catering.

That background helps me think about the whole day, from the first arrival to the last cup of tea.

My role is to explain your choices and help you create a farewell that feels right. Some families want to be involved in everything. Others want us to handle the practical details.

You do not need to come with a plan.

A family's words

"Karin recently took care of my mother in law who passed away recently. Our family were blessed to have her knowledge, care and support."
Penny H

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Time together with Heavenly Catering

Sharing food and stories can be an important part of saying goodbye.

Through Heavenly Catering, I can help plan a wake or memorial gathering at home or at a suitable venue.

We can discuss food, drinks, staff and equipment, and which practical details you would like us to handle.

It might be a favourite cake, their favourite drink, finger food while people mingle, or a meal around a table.

"Thanks so much for everything, the Wake was really special and went off so well because of your hard work, fabulous staff, kindness & empathy."
Chris H

Thinking ahead, at your own pace

You do not have to wait until someone dies to ask questions.

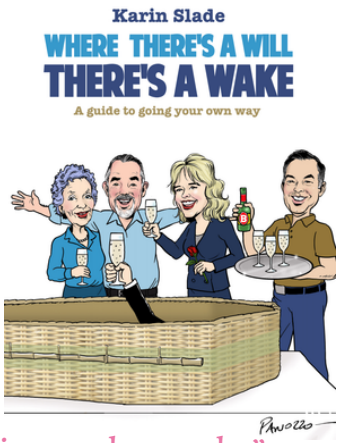
If you are living with illness, supporting someone in aged care or simply planning ahead, a gentle conversation can be a place to start.

You might know a song, a meaningful place or a tradition you want to keep. You do not need to decide everything today.

Would you like to explore further?

My book, Where There's a Will There's a Wake, offers more guidance and ideas for planning a personal funeral and wake.

Find out more at
FuneralsByDesign.com.au



"…guided me through all the choices to be made."
Karin B

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What would feel like me?

A few thoughts for the people who may one day help arrange my farewell. It is okay to write “not sure yet”.

A place I would like people to gather

Music, readings or traditions that matter to me

Favourite food, drink and personal touches

My thoughts about burial, cremation or aquamation

Someone I would like to share these wishes with

Our first conversation

You do not need to have everything ready. These questions may help you start.

- What needs to happen now, and what can wait?
- What choices would suit our family?
- What would the full cost include?
- What would you handle, and what could we do ourselves?

My questions and notes



If you need help now

If someone has died and you are unsure what happens next, you are welcome to call me directly.
You do not have to have anything organised before you call. We can start with what needs to happen next, and what can wait.

Karin Slade
Justice of the Peace | Director of Funerals
Funerals By Design

Based on the Northern Beaches, helping families in Sydney and beyond.

I support families across NSW and Gold Coast region.

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