

**Sponsor: Education First Youth Foyers**  
**Refuter: City of Greater Bendigo**

## **Human Composting Bill 2022**

A Bill for an Act to introduce human composting. This method will be a part of the Cemeteries Trusts of Victoria, implemented as an option for people in society to compost their loved ones in a more environmentally sustainable way. Soil is an important part of environmental conservation. Human composting supports the land and its fertility for generations to come.

The current options for death care in Victoria lack environmental sustainability. With concerns for climate change growing and the price of land rising, many people are looking for environmentally friendly and cost-effective death care options for themselves. This Bill was written to provide an option for individuals who wish to leave a positive impact on the environment when they pass away, in the form of human composting. This Bill also puts the power back into the hands of the public regarding access to facilities related to death care.

**A Bill for an Act relating to Human Composting to be enacted by the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament;**

**PART I—Preliminary**

**Clause 1 Purpose**

The main purposes of this Act are—

- (a) To provide an environmentally friendly and sustainable addition to the current death care options outlined in The Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003;
- (b) To support environmental restoration projects through the use of human composting;
- (c) To improve public access and involvement regarding death care.

**Clause 2 Commencement**

This Bill shall commence 2 years upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

**Clause 3 Definitions**

In this Bill—

- (a) **Human composting** means the transformation of a human body into soil;
- (b) **Non-organic material** means material that is not derived from living things and cannot be broken down during the composting process;
- (c) **Family** means anyone that is close or related to the deceased that would be assumed to be included in a Will of the deceased;
- (d) **Death care** is defined as the burial, cremation or human composting of the deceased and related services;
- (e) **Embalmed** means to treat/inject a body with preservatives for conservation of the deceased.

**PART II—Establishment**

**Clause 4 Cemetery Trusts Class A**

- 4.1 Human composting is to be included as a service provided by Class A Cemetery Trusts of Victoria.
- 4.2 The Department of Health shall be responsible for ensuring that Class A Cemetery Trusts follow through with the requirements of human composting.

**Clause 5 Requirements of Human Composting**

- 5.1 The deceased must have elected to be composted in their Will or other signed and witnessed documents.
- 5.2 The deceased must not be;
  - (a) Embalmed;
  - (b) Composted with non-organic material on or around their body.
- 5.3 The compost will be screened for;
  - (a) Harmful pathogens;
  - (b) Radiation;
  - (c) Quality;

- (d) Bones;
  - (e) Non-organic material.
- 5.4 All non-organic material found in the human compost during screening shall be recycled or returned to the family on their request.

**Clause 6 Accessibility, Resources and Transportation**

- 6.1 Public fridges shall be available to families to store their deceased until the burial, cremation or human composting takes place.
- 6.2 Public areas shall be available for families to prepare their deceased for burial, cremation or human composting. These areas must;
- (a) Have correct and up to date resources;
  - (b) Be supported by trained staff;
  - (c) Allow adequate privacy.
- 6.3 Public transportation options, such as hearses, for the deceased shall be made available.

**Clause 7 Distribution of Human Compost**

- 7.1 The family of the deceased are entitled to all the compost of the deceased for no extra charge, should they want it, except where the deceased, directed by Will or other signed and witnessed documents, state they do not wish for family or friends to possess their compost. All human compost that is not claimed by the family of the deceased shall be donated to;
- (a) The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for use on the land they manage;
  - (b) Charities and not-for-profits partnered with the BushBank program or approved by Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning;
  - (c) Donation to charities and not-for-profits shall be approved by family or outlined in the Will or other signed and witnessed documents.
- 7.2 If the compost is not collected within 6 months, the compost shall be considered abandoned and shall be donated to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for use on the land they manage.
- 7.3 Locations eligible for human compost to be scattered shall be;
- (a) Privately owned, partially owned or currently rented land by the family and individuals directed by the Will or other signed and witnessed documents in possession of the compost;
  - (b) In the case of rented land, renters shall seek written permission from the rental provider if the human compost is to be used on the property's grounds (i.e., not suspended in containers such as pots or planter boxes);
  - (c) Land that is managed and has been approved as a location for human compost to be scattered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
- 7.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are permitted to have their human compost scattered on the lands of their Country, with the appropriate permissions of the traditional owners or any other relevant

parties who manage the proposed area in addition to the approved locations listed in Clause 7.3.

- 7.5 A record of where the deceased's human compost is scattered shall be kept by the Department of Health on request from the family, where directed by the Will or other signed and witnessed documents.

**Clause 8 Human Composting Awareness**

- 8.1 The Department of Health shall be responsible for the creation of informational resources and awareness material. The hard copies shall be offered to funeral homes and be made available on request to the public. The Department of Health website will be updated to include human composting as a death care option;
- (a) These information kits shall contain awareness materials about human composting in the form of;
- (i) Pamphlets;
  - (ii) Written information online.

**Clause 9 Penalties**

- 9.1 The human compost shall not be used commercially. Breach of this shall result in a penalty of 9 units.
- 9.2 The human compost shall not be sold. Breach of this shall result in a penalty of 15 units.
- 9.3 The human compost shall not be used to grow illegal substances. Breach of this shall result in a penalty of 10 units;
- (a) This shall be in addition to any restrictions relating to the illegal substance itself.
- 9.4 Breaching the requirements of human composting shall result in 10 penalty units.
- 9.5 The human compost cannot be used outside of the locations outlined in clauses 7.3 and 7.4. Breach of this shall result in a penalty of 10 units.