

## Endings - OPEN LAB (Room overview)

Continuing down the Level 1 corridor, and opposite the white curtained entrance to Gould Gallery, Endings can be accessed through a single open doorway.

### **Digital Signage** reads:

*How do we mark endings?*

### **Content warning:**

This gallery explores concepts of endings, dying, death and memorialisation. You may feel uncomfortable or distressed considering these topics. If you experience distress, you can contact support services like LifeLine at 131 144 or Kids Help Line on 1800 551 800.

### **Access seating:**

In the centre of this gallery is a grey U-shaped ottoman seat. Another ottoman can be found in the right-hand corner of the gallery, facing in towards the centre of the space.

### **Credits:**

Shroud: Junior Major

Research: Stuart Moodie, Kansas Bird (intern)

Soundscape: John Craig

Lighting: Lachlan Turner

Decals and graphic design: WTT

Terrarium: Helen's Mini World.

Cosmic ray detector: Robert Hart

Interviews: Uncle Moogy, Shannon Beresford, Bec Lyons, Rosemary Wanganeen, Venerable Thich Phu'oc Tan OAM, and Annamarie Fratini.

### **Audio description:**

A 5m x 5m room with black painted walls, dark grey speckled floor and floor-to-ceiling windows on the side of entrance. The glass door and windows are framed in black, and allow the gallery to be visible from the outside. In the centre of the space, a grey U-shaped ottoman, with another in the right-hand corner, facing in towards the gallery.

The left wall features four vertical displays in black, white and grey tones. They each detail statistics and facts about different death practices. Each display has a wall decal, a black and white moving image playing on a wall-mounted screen, details about the availability of this death practice in Australia, and a measurement of CO2 emissions resulting from each process, printed on the floor below.

### Artwork highlight (Complex artwork)

The first station: **CREMATION**

A diagram outlines the steps of cremation:

1. Preparation – The deceased is identified and authorised, and any items that can't be cremated, like pacemakers, are removed.
2. Cremation – Bodily remains are reduced using fire or heat.
3. Remains – the ashes may be disposed of or kept as a memento.

Moving image: white smoke curls upwards slowly against a black background.

[Duration]: 90 minutes

[Cremations are] Currently 70% of memorials in Australia

CO2 emissions - 400kg of greenhouse gas emissions created from each cremation.

The second station: **NATURAL BURIAL**

A diagram outlines the steps of Natural burial:

1. Preparation: The body is placed in a biodegradable or compostable shroud or coffin.
2. Decomposing: This is placed in the ground in the active soil zone, where remains decompose.
3. Remains: Decomposed remains provide nutrients in the soil.

Moving image: White sunlight filters through forest trees, with their long shadows stretched out across the forest floor.

[The natural burial process is complete in] up to 2 years

Laws vary between states and territories but [natural burial is] widely available in Australia.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – 0kg. Carbon neutral. Carbon is captured in the soil.

### Third station: **WATER CREMATION**

A diagram outlines the steps of water cremation:

1. Preparation: Pacemakers or other battery-operated devices are removed to prevent reactions during the process.
2. Alkaline Hydrolysis: The body's organic materials is dissolved by a highly alkaline solution.
3. Remains: The remains may be disposed of or kept as a memento.

Moving image: Close-up image of water bubbling and rushing over river stones.

[Water cremation process is complete in] up to 12 hours

[Water cremation is] only available in Tasmania.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions - 40kg of greenhouse gas emissions created from each aquamation.

### Fourth station: **HUMAN COMPOSTING**

A diagram outlines the steps of human composting:

Preparation: The body is placed in a container with organic materials.

Composting: Natural microbial processes break down in the body.

Remains: The body turns into nutrient-rich soil

Moving image: Beetles crawl through a mound of black compost.

[The human composting process is complete in] up to 12 weeks

[Human composting is] not currently available in Australia.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – 0kg – Carbon neutral. Carbon is captured in the compost created.

On the rear wall, a series of seven interviews with practitioners working in the death industry can be listened to using single-ear headphones attached by metal cords to a

black standing plinth. Please speak to a moderator if you require assistance accessing these interviews.

The interviews, from left to right, are:

1. How do we acknowledge ancestors?

Uncle Moogy Major Sumner is senior elder of the Ngarrindjeri people who has worked

tirelessly for communities for over 40 years. Among his many achievements he sits on

the International Indigenous Repatriation Committee.

Listen to him discuss the importance of keeping ancestors safe, and the development of Wangayarta, a home dedicated to ancestral remains reburials, which opened in 2021.

2. How do we think about, handle and manage our dead in Adelaide?

Annamaria Fratini is a PhD student from the University of Adelaide. Her research project crossing anthropology and psychology is trying to answer this very question.

Listen to her discuss her research findings about what we expect around the appearance of the dead body and why this matters to how we might remember them.

3. What role does grief play in helping us cope with endings?

Rosemary Wanganeen is a proud South Australian Aboriginal woman with ancestry and

ancestral links to Kurna of the Adelaide Plains and Wirringu from the West Coast. She

is Director and Founder of the Healing Centre for Griefology. Rosemary's work centres

on the belief that addressing loss and inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief is

essential for healing contemporary Aboriginal individuals, families, and communities. Listen to her discuss why we should shift our modern perspectives on grief.

#### 4. How are endings viewed across cultures?

The Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan OAM has been the Abbot of Quang Minh Buddhist Temple in Braybrook, Melbourne, Australia since 1997. He is also the president of the United Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation of Victoria.

Listen as he discusses a Buddhist perspective on endings as part of larger cycles, and the various influences on Buddhist cultural traditions around death.

#### 5. How can endings be a legacy for others?

Stewart Moodie is the Medical Director of DonateLife SA and an Intensive Care Specialist at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Listen to him talk about how organ donation works in South Australia and why you should have a conversation with your loved ones if it's something you've thought about.

#### 6. What is it like to work around death?

Bec Lyons has worked across many roles in the contemporary funeral industry, as well as training as an End Of Life Doula and independent funeral director. In 2018 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore alternatives to contemporary services and body disposal.

Listen as Bec discusses why we need to redefine what we consider a funeral to be.

Shannon Beresford is proud to be involved in shaping Australia's holistic end-of-life care's future. He currently serves as Vice Chair and a Director of HELD (Holistic End of Life and Death Care Australia Inc.) Additionally, as a founding member of the COTA SA Rainbow Horizons Project group, Shannon is committed to supporting end-of-life planning and care within LGBTQ+ communities.

Listen to Shannon explain the role of a death doula and why it's such a rewarding career.

On the right wall, a black magnetic panel stretches four metres across the centre of the wall, with small magnets featuring letters and words in white text. These can be arranged by visitors to create poems. Please speak to a moderator if you would like to hear the current word combinations, or to add your own.

Against the glass window, a terrarium, inside a 1m x 30 cm glass tank, sits on a tall black plinth. It is lit internally from the tank lid with a bright blue fluoro light. Above a thick layer of soil sits mossy undergrowth with tiny green and red ferns, bark chips, and textured grey rocks. One central plant takes up most of the tank with smooth twisting limbs that snake up towards the central light. It is surrounded by ferns, vines and other foliage. The glass windows of the tank are slightly foggy with condensation.

This is the end of the audio description.