An initial project with the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) looked at the funeral rites needs of the Chinese community. This enabled the SMCT to make informed planning decisions on how best to provide services and resources appropriate for the Chinese community.

After undertaking this collaborative project between Chinese migrants and SMCT, the researchers have extended the collaboration to the Victorian Government’s Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation Unit as an industry partner. The extended project involves a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews with specific groups including ‘baby-boomers’, Christians and diverse migrant groups.

Research findings will directly contribute to the planning of cemeteries within the cemetery sector and the relevant government department. The project has a national reach as the findings will be shared with other relevant government departments and cemetery trusts across Australia. This has the potential to change cemetery and government planning across Australia to ensure funeral rites and memorialisation are more inclusive.

Victoria’s cemeteries are based on planning that is 150 years old. There is a need for new information on current practices and choices of funeral rites and memorialisation of diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the greater metropolitan Melbourne.