The Coroners Court in Tasmania

FACT SHEET 3

How a Coroner investigates a death

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Initial stage

- Once a report of a death is received by the Coroners Court of Tasmania, usually from the police or health and emergency professionals, the deceased person is taken into the care of the Coroners Court and a coroner will be begin their investigation.
- The senior next of kin is often contacted by the Coroners Court to provide information about the deceased's life or circumstances to assist the investigation (for more information, see Fact Sheet 5: Next of kin and the Coroners Court).

The gathering of information stage

- An investigation may vary with the circumstances of the death but usually includes:
  - gathering a range of information from police, family, friends, medical practitioners, witnesses, technical experts, and any other relevant persons to assist the coroner to form a picture about what happened and why. More often than not, a coroner is able to make a written finding into a death based on this information, without having to hold an inquest;
  - attending the scene of the death (if safe and appropriate to do so);
  - directing that an autopsy be performed on the deceased (for more information, see Fact Sheet 9: My loved one's body and things , including if you wish to object to an autopsy being performed);
  - requesting Tasmania Police provide statements, reports, and information about the death; and
  - conducting research and considering potential recommendations.
- The Coroners Court will communicate with the senior next of kin throughout the investigation process.

Making a finding

- A coronial finding is the formal document that a coroner writes after an investigation of a death and it is usually the last step in the investigation.
- A finding usually includes:
  - the identity of the deceased;
  - the cause of the death;
  - the circumstances of the death; and
  - comments or recommendations made by the coroner aimed at preventing similar deaths.
- There are two kinds of findings:
  - a 'finding without an inquest', which is where a coroner makes a finding on the available information without a public hearing. Most coronial investigations end with a finding without an inquest; and
  - an 'inquest finding', which is where a coroner delivers a finding after a public hearing is held. A copy of the inquest finding is published on the Magistrates Court website in the Coroners Court section under 'Coronial Findings'.
- A coroner **may** comment on any matter connected with a death, including matters relating to public health and safety or the administration of justice.
- A coroner **must not** include in a finding or comment any statement that a person is, or may be, guilty of an offence. t there is no public interest in making a finding.