The Coroners Court in ACT

FACT SHEET 6

Cultural Protocols in Coronial Investigations

THIRRILI

This fact sheet explains the role of culture in a coronial inquest when a family member dies and who you can speak to for help getting the coroner to understand your traditions.

Making the coroner understand our sorry business and culture

- Immediate family members can appear at an inquest – this can be used as an opportunity to tell the coroner about what customs you would like to be observed during the process.
- You may be able to make submissions to the coroner regarding these obligations, but the coroner is not bound to observe them.

Visiting a deceased person

- The deceased person can be visited by immediate family. The immediate family can also send a representative (e.g. a doctor) to view on their behalf.

Smoking ceremony at an inquest

- You or your lawyers can contact the court staff (see below for contact details) in advance of the hearing and may be able to request this.

Culturally significant items and Acknowledgment of Country

- You or your lawyers can contact the court staff (see below for contact details) in advance of the hearing and may be able to request the display of culturally significant items and a specific Acknowledgement of Country.

Using use the name and images/videos of the deceased

- You can inform the coroner at the start of the hearing that you would like to be informed in advance about this. You can leave the hearing at any time you like.

Next of Kin

- Court staff will determine the next of kin. For an Indigenous deceased, the staff will look to any person who had a responsibility, or an interest in the welfare, of the deceased according to their traditions and customs (for more information, see Fact Sheet 5: Next of Kin and the Coroner's Court).

Language

- You or your lawyers can contact the court staff (see below for contact details) in advance of the hearing to attempt to organise an interpreter who speaks your language to be at the hearing.

Men's or Women's business

- You may be able to make submissions to the coroner regarding men's and women's business. However, the coroner is not required to observe men's and women's business.

More help

- ACT Coroner's Court can be contacted via phone or email: (02) 6207 1754 or at coroners@courts.act.gov.au
- Aboriginal Legal Service can be contacted by phone or email: (02) 6120 8810 or at canberra@alsnswact.org.au
- If you are struggling with the death of a loved one, you can call 13YARN (13 92 76) for free support