The Coroners Court in SA

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

- Family members (or lawyers on your behalf, if you so choose) can appear at an inquest as an opportunity to tell the coroner about what customs you would like to be observed during the process.

Visiting a deceased person

- The deceased person can be visited if the coroner allows. Contact the Coroner's Court on (08) 8204 0600 to make this request.

For more information, see Fact Sheet 9: My loved one's body and things.

Smoking ceremony at an inquest

- You or your lawyers can contact the court staff in advance of the hearing to request a smoking ceremony (see below for contact details).

Culturally significant items and Acknowledgment of Country

- You or your lawyers can contact the court staff in advance of the hearing to display cultural symbols at a hearing (see below for contact details).

Using use the name and images/videos of the deceased

- The coroner will use the name of the deceased in a hearing, but you can ask for a different name to be used instead. Tell the AEU what you would like your loved one called.
- Videos or photos may be used of the deceased. Speak to the Coroner's Court about how this can be managed.

Next of kin

- The process for determining the next of kin does not involve a consideration of Indigenous kinship relationships, but the broader definition of family under the relevant legislation includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship rules (for more information, see Fact Sheet 5: Next of Kin and the Coroner's Court).

Language

- The Coroner's Court can try to organise an interpreter who speaks your language at the hearing. You or your lawyers can contact the court staff in advance of the hearing to attempt to request this.

Men's or women's business

- You can make submissions to the coroner regarding the rules of men's or women's business, but the coroner is not bound to observe them.

This information was last updated in December 2024 and does not constitute legal advice.

More help

The Coroner's Court of South Australia can be contacted via phone or email: (08) 8204 0600 or at coroner@courts.sa.gov.au

Legal Services Commission South Australia can be contacted via phone or email: 1300 366 424 or at LSC.Correspondence@lsc.sa.gov.au

The Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement can be contacted via phone or email: 1800 643 222 or at info@alrm.org.au

If you are struggling with the death of a loved one, you can call 13YARN (13 92 76) for free support