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 to get the coroner to understand your traditions.

Making the coroner understand our sorry business and culture

- Contact the Coroners Court as soon as you can to tell them about your communities' sorry business. They may take this into account when arranging the investigation. The sooner they know about your cultural needs, the more likely they will be able to incorporate them into the investigation.

Visiting a deceased person

- At first, your family members body will be taken to the mortuary at the Royal Hobart Hospital or the Launceston General Hospital. Once they are moved to the funeral home you can visit them. They will not go to the funeral home right away because the coroner will have to get all the evidence from the body they need first. Usually, it will take 2-4 days for your family member's body to be released from the mortuary to the funeral home.

- In special cases, the coroners' office may authorise a viewing of the deceased person at the mortuary before they are released from the Royal Hobart Hospital or the Launceston General Hospital. You will need ask the coroner if they will allow this.

Next of kin

- You, or your legal representative, can apply to the Coroners Court to be the senior next of kin. This the person who has special rights during the investigation. The senior next of kin can also be an 'appropriate person' according to the customs and tradition of the community or group to which the person belonged (for more information, see Fact Sheet 5: Next of Kin and the Coroner's Court).

Language

- The Coroners Court can try to organise an interpreter who speaks your language at the hearing. You or your lawyers can ask court staff to arrange this.

More help

Coroners Court of Tasmania can be contacted via phone: (03) 616 57134

Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service can be contacted via phone:1800 595 162