The Coroners Court in ACT

FACT SHEET 7

The role of the police in the coronial process

THIRRILI

This fact sheet explains the role of the police in a coronial inquest when a family member dies suddenly. The fact sheet explains what to expect when talking to the police throughout the coronial process.

What is the role of the police?

- Following a 'reportable death', the Coroner's Court arranges for members of the Australian Federal Police to investigate the circumstances of the death.
- The police conduct a thorough investigation including gathering of evidence, consulting with witnesses and providing a report to the coroner.
- A coroner may use the help of the police to subpoena an individual to give evidence or produce documents.

Communicating with the police

- The police are expected to provide updates on the status of the investigation and the coronial process to the families of the deceased including when and why there are delays. The police will update families after the coroner has made their findings.
- Families of the deceased can raise any issues and concerns surrounding the conduct of the police investigation including concerns in relation to the circumstances of the death.
- The police may request a statement from family members about the deceased and the circumstances of the death. You only need to provide a statement to police if you want to.
- Families do not need a lawyer when they give a statement to the police, but they are entitled to one if they want. All families of First Nation Peoples are entitled to have legal representation and legal advice relating to the coronial process.
- Traditions and customs around Sorry Business are an important time for family and community. You can ask the police to respect your traditions and that there are no unnecessary phone calls, visits, and questions at this important time.

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

More help

- Legal Aid ACT can be contacted via phone or email: (02) 6243 3411 or 1300 654 314 or legalaid@legalaidact.org.au
- Aboriginal Legal Service can be contacted via phone or email: (02) 6120 8810 or at canberra@alsnswact.org.au