FACT SHEET 7

The role of the police in the coronial process

THIRRILI

The Coroners Court in NT

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

What is the role of the police?

- The Northern Territory police are required to report sudden or unexplained deaths to the coroner.
- The police will start gathering information immediately after a death to provide an initial report to the coroner.
- If the coroner decides the death was not due to natural circumstances, the police are directed to carry out a full investigation.
- The police may ask for reports from experts and statements from witnesses, including family and friends as a part of their investigation.
- The police provide a report to the coroner about their investigation which the coroner will use to help find out the cause and circumstances of the death.

Communicating with the police

- 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.
- Traditions and customs around Sorry Business are important time for family and community. You can ask the police to respect your traditions and there are no unnecessary phone calls, visits, and questions at this important time.
- Sometimes a coroner might ask someone to give evidence to the Court. A coroner's clerk or the police will send a formal request (summons) to the people the coroner wants to give evidence. If someone refuses to attend the Coroner's Office, the coroner may ask the police to arrest them.
- Families do not need a lawyer when they give a statement to the police, but you are allowed to have one if you want.