The Coroners Court in SA

FACT SHEET 7

The role of the Police in the coronial process

THIRRILI

This fact sheet explains the role of the police force 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?

- The South Australian 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 (a brief of evidence) which the coroner will use to help find out the cause and circumstances of the death of a loved one.

Communicating with the police

- 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.
- A coroner might ask someone to give evidence to the Court when they can provide relevant information to the coronial proceedings. 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 Court, the coroner may ask the police to arrest them.
- Families do not need a lawyer when they give a statement to the police, but they are entitled to one if they want. To cover the cost of the lawyer, families can make an application for legal assistance to the Legal Services Commission SA.

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