



Coroner's Court of Western Australia

NEW GUIDELINE - ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

The State Coroner has issued a new Guideline in relation to the principles, practices and procedures for coronial investigations into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, including inquests held in the Coroner's Court of Western Australia.

The Guideline is intended for Coroners, Court staff, Coronial Investigators, Counsel Assisting, and investigative agencies involved in coronial investigations. It also provides legal practitioners appearing in the Court, and the public, with information about the coronial process, and the support services for Aboriginal families. It reflects and reinforces the Court's commitment to cultural sensitivity and transparency, taking account of the Western Australian Courts and Tribunals Reconciliation Statement.

Recognising the challenges Aboriginal families face in their interactions with the justice system, the Guideline outlines the tailored support the Court provides before, during, and after inquests with an emphasis on respect for cultural practices during interactions with the Court, including during inquests. Additionally, the Court has a dedicated Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer role, which, alongside the Coronial Counselling and Information Service and Counsel Assisting, aims to provide culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal families throughout the coronial process.

Emphasising trauma-informed practices and the Court's commitment to reconciliation, the Guideline details measures to foster trust, respect, and improved outcomes for Aboriginal people.