



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

30 January 2024

Media Guidelines for the Coronial Division

The Coronial Division has developed these guidelines to assist the media around what information the coronial division can and can't provide, attending court, requesting documents and non-publication orders.

We are limited in how much information we release on active, ongoing matters. This is due to the legislation and policies we must comply with, but also because, unlike other courts, the Coroners Court actively investigates the matters before it. We also have regard to friends and families and will not release sensitive information unless it is in the public interest.

What we can provide

You can ask us:

- If the court is investigating a matter;
- If an inquest has been scheduled and all parties notified; and
- When an investigation has been finalised

If you are enquiring about the status of a case, please provide as much information as possible ie place of death or a date range for date of death.

What we can't provide

Please understand the court does not:

- Confirm the identity of a person before their family is notified and approves the release;
- Comments on aspects of active investigations – including potential timeframes;
- Confirm inquests until they are scheduled and all parties have been notified; or
- Approach the family or provide details for family members on your behalf

Coroners do not generally speak to media, and will not comment about individual cases and findings.

Journalists attending court

Accredited journalists and others working in the media can attend courts that are open to the public. There is designated seating for the media inside the courtroom. The Magistrates Court requires any journalist attending court to apply to the Court for an accreditation badge and wear it at all times while at court.

Subject to any restrictions imposed by the presiding Coroner, a journalist may use an electronic device in the courtroom for electronic note taking, messaging by text and filing stories. Devices used in a courtroom must not generate sound, involve speech or interfere with the proceedings, with the court recording system or other technology. The use of devices must not impede the administration of justice and must comply with all laws relating to the reporting of court proceedings. All electronic recording (audio and video) of Court proceedings is prohibited. Blogging from the courtroom on a platform which allows public comment and responses is not permitted.

Non-publication orders

Journalists reporting from court must ensure that any publication does not contravene any suppression order or any applicable legislation, and does not otherwise prejudice the inquest.

Access to Coronial Records

Members of the media can request access to coronial records by completing a Form 3 request and submitting to the Coronial Division for approval by the Coroner. The types of information which are requested are the Coroner's findings, an audio recording, a medical or expert report or statements. There are some documents which are not disclosed as a matter of course. This may be due to the nature of the document (such as graphic photographs), or the current stage of the investigation.