



Frequently asked questions about deaths in Corrective Services NSW custody

Below are some of the frequently asked questions about deaths in custody. You will also find information about Coronial Inquests and the support services available for family members of the deceased.

What is a death in custody?

A death in custody is defined as a death which occurs in the custody of Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) either within a correctional centre (including CSNSW managed police or court cells) or in custody outside a correctional centre for example during transit from one centre to another, in medical facilities following transfer from a correctional centre or while serving a home detention order.

Who investigates a death in custody?

When someone dies in CSNSW custody a series of investigations take place. CSNSW's Investigations Branch and NSW Police Force both conduct investigations into the death in custody. Further, every death in custody is subject to a Coronial Inquest by the NSW Coroner.

What is a Coronial Inquest?

A Coronial Inquest is a court hearing where the Coroner considers evidence to determine the identity of the deceased and the date, place, manner and cause of death. At the hearing, the Coroner may call witnesses to give evidence of the circumstances surrounding the death.

Inquests are generally open to the public so interested parties may attend and listen to the proceedings.

More information about Coronial proceedings and [support for families](#) are available on the [NSW Coroner's Court website](#).

What support is available to the family members of the deceased?

When someone dies in our custody, the NSW Police Force contact the next of kin. After this CSNSW will contact the family of the deceased to ensure they are aware of available support services. Contact might be made by a CSNSW Chaplain or other suitable staff member.

In the event of an Aboriginal Death in Custody, CSNSW's Aboriginal Strategy and Policy Unit have a policy in place ensure appropriate supports are in place. You can view the policy: [Policy and procedures - Aboriginal inmate deaths in CSNSW custody \(2020\) \(PDF , 175.8 KB\)](#)

What research and statistics are available on deaths in custody in NSW or other Australian states and territories?

Information on deaths in custody in Australia are published every year in the [Report on Government Services](#).