

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone 03 6165 7678
Email Barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



5 January 2026

Ms Jen Butler MP
Labor Member for Lyons

C/o: Laura Ross, Clerk of the House
Laura.ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Butler *Jen*

Thank you for your question on 12 November 2025 on behalf of your constituent from Deloraine in relation to the Coronial Division. Firstly, I wish to extend my condolences to her for the loss of her husband of 40 years.

Investigation and review timeline

Coronial investigations can be complex, and the time taken to complete an investigation can regularly take several months or longer before the Coroner reaches a formal finding as to the cause of death.

The investigation process involves gathering information from many sources. In most cases, the Coroner will request the deceased's medical records to be included on the investigation file. It may take several months for this process to occur and can take longer if the Coroner requests a full post mortem report and toxicological testing.

Once the initial investigative steps are completed, the file is provided to the Coroner who may ask for additional expert reports or information before being in a position to make a finding.

A review of an investigation is a thorough process involving the review of all documentation provided by relevant bodies and any medical reports. When the review is completed, the matter will then be provided to the Coroner for consideration of findings in the following weeks.

The significant work that goes into the stages of investigation and review can make it difficult to provide a date of completion in advance. The Coronial Division is committed to progressing matters as promptly as possible, while ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to support a thorough and accurate investigation.

The Coronial Division will contact your constituent as soon as an update becomes available. In the meantime, she is welcome to contact the Coronial Division on 6165 4975 or via email at Coroners.Hobart@police.tas.gov.au at any stage.

Backlog of claims

The Coronial Division of the Magistrates Court handles a significant year-on-year caseload. During the year 2024-25, there were 960 reportable deaths, fires and explosions lodged with the Coronial Division. The Coronial response to the matter of the R.A Rodda Museum of Pathology and the unauthorised retention of autopsy specimens has also required significant staffing resources.

As at 30 June 2025, the pending caseload of the Coronial Division was 1,002 matters.

Opportunities for improvement

I acknowledge that the considerable pending caseload of the Coronial Division represents a significant challenge. As Attorney-General, I continue to explore measures that would assist the Courts with their work and reduce case backlogs.

In May 2025, I announced a review of the *Coroners Act 1995*, to be conducted by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute. This review is now underway.

The Coroners Act was developed in 1995, and there have been considerable changes in the community's expectation of the coronial process since that time, as well as a significant increase in both the number and complexity of reportable deaths referred to the Coronial Division.

While some amendments have addressed specific issues over the three decades since, a comprehensive review of the Act and its operation has never been undertaken. This review provides an opportunity to identify areas for improvement to ensure that the Act remains fit for purpose and supports efficient, effective and trauma-informed responses by the Coronial Division. I thank the TLRI for taking on this important project and look forward to receiving the report once the review is complete.

I hope this information provides some clarity for your constituent.

Yours sincerely



Hon Guy Barnett MP
Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs