

**Submission  
No 44**

**INQUIRY INTO CORONIAL JURISDICTION IN NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Susan Slatcher  
**Date Received:** 14 September 2021

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# Submissions to the Select Committee on the Colonial jurisdiction in New South Wales

10/09/2021

## Introduction

My name is Susan Slatcher of .  
These submissions follow the death of my son in 2017 and the subsequent Coronial Inquest into his death. I would like to address the positives and negatives experienced at the inquest. The Inquest was held at Bathurst Local Court.

## Negative aspects.

1. Investigating police indicated that the Inquest would be held eighteen months to two years after my sons death. We had several delays prior to the COVID pandemic and the Inquest wasn't held until February of this year. This was not only due to the onset of COVID, but also delays by various legal teams in presenting their evidence on time and other factors. The Inquest has been held, but over four years later we are waiting for the Coroner to make her findings. These delays have been very stressful for all the family and we feel that we can't reach closure while we don't know these findings.
2. During the Inquest there was a lack of emotional support for the family by court based counsellors. The family were sometimes shocked and distressed by some of the unexpected evidence, and having support during those times would have made things easier.
3. I would have appreciated some written information from the court before the Inquest. A detailed explanation of what happens at an Inquest, the possibility of unexpected and distressing evidence, the roles of the various legal teams, the sometimes hostile manner and language that the legal teams use could be included in an easy to read leaflet or online.
4. Being an old court house, the wooden seating was very uncomfortable especially over a period of two weeks. Upgrading the seating would make things a lot easier for family members and witnesses.

## Positive Aspects.

1. The Forensic Medicine Services Team provided by the Coroners Court provide a good service for newly bereaved families where a family member will be the subject of an Inquest.

Having legal representation at my son's Inquest proved to be extremely important. The Legal Aid team thoroughly investigated all the evidence and kept us up to date. The decisions and submissions were made after a lot of consultation with the family and we feel very lucky to have been represented by

such a caring and empathetic team.

3. The family appreciated that Her Honour travelled to Bathurst for the Inquest. It was important to us that it was held where Ian lived and died.
4. Counsel Assisting and the Coroner always treated us with kindness and respect and we felt that during the Inquest our feelings were always being considered, and this was appreciated by the whole family.
5. Counsel Assisting's Submissions seemed to be fair and unbiased, and the family appreciates the amount of work done by this team, the representation of the family's feelings and expectations, and the kindness they showed to our family during the Inquest.