
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A **CORONER'S** **SOLICITOR**

Walking into the office at 8am I head straight for my Coroner's office to say good morning, and very soon into the conversation we start talking about a particular file that the Coroner is finding quite challenging. The case has posed a number of complex legal questions and so we discuss these at length and agree that I need to undertake some further legal research to help the Coroner come to a finding in this case. We agree that we will meet again early afternoon to discuss.

I proceed to my desk and take a few minutes to look at my caseload to determine what I will do next. I am constantly having to prioritise and re-prioritise tasks to ensure I am progressing cases to the satisfaction of the court and my Coroner. I make the decision to complete a written finding on a file - a short 3 pager that I was working on yesterday that only takes another thirty minutes to complete. I then make a start on the legal research I need to conduct in preparation for the 2pm meeting with my Coroner.

I am about an hour into the legal research when it hits 11am and I decide to take some time out from the research to write to a family to advise them of the Coroners Prevention Unit's (CPU) advice in relation to the relevant case, and to indicate that the Coroner has accepted the CPU's advice and will soon deliver a more detailed finding. I follow this with a letter to a doctor at one of the major hospitals asking her a series of questions in the hope of gaining facts pertaining to the diagnosis and treatment of a deceased person. I need to be smart about how I word the letter to ensure the doctor feels comfortable in sharing important information.

A quick thirty minute lunch break to catch up with a friend and I return to my desk, this time working on a complex case - a written finding that will stretch to 25 pages. I have been working on and off on this finding for a couple of weeks now. It's great that I have variety in the role but sometimes it can be challenging to find the time to sit and concentrate on these long findings. I spend about an hour on this finding and with thirty minutes before my 2pm meeting with my Coroner I get my head around the legal research I conducted prior to lunch to ensure I have clarity on how it relates to the relevant legal questions.

At 2pm I provide the findings of my legal research to the Coroner and a further conversation ensues about the complexities of the case.



Following this I start preparing for my appearance as Counsel Assisting at a Directions Hearing next week. This hearing will involve helping the Coroner decide how the investigation should proceed and to hear what the parties have to say about the investigation and prospect of an Inquest. I then return to my desk to prepare a brief to counsel regarding a 5-day inquest coming up later this year. I will be the liaison between counsel and the Coroner and will help prepare the case for Inquest. Next I decide to reach out to one of my colleagues. One of the cases I have worked on today has been particularly confronting and we talk about self-care strategies that have worked for us.

At 4pm I turn my mind to the complex written finding I was writing earlier. However, my Coroner calls me and wants to discuss another file. It looks like the complex finding will have to wait another day. The Coroner wants to discuss a file where a man in his 50s died during surgery. This requires an understanding of the relevant medical procedural guidelines, and the medical history of the deceased. We discuss the details of the case and I answer the Coroner's questions to the best of my ability. I also note who I will need to follow up for more information.

It's been another stimulating day, one that is challenging, at times exhausting, but also highly rewarding.

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