

Yirramboi Murrup
Coroners Aboriginal
Engagement Unit

Information on the Coroners Process

**For Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander mob**

This brochure outlines what you need to know immediately after a loved one's passing is reported to the coroner, including the support available and the steps the coroner will take in the initial stages of the coronial process.



Acknowledgment

The Coroners Court of Victoria acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and continuing custodians of the land in which the Court resides. The Coroners Court pays respect to all Elders both past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this content contains information about Sorry Business. Readers are warned that there are words and descriptions that may be culturally distressing.

Yirramboi Murrup Unit - Coroners Aboriginal Engagement Unit

The Yirramboi Murrup Unit consists of Aboriginal team members who provide cultural support and directly communicate with Aboriginal families during the coronial process.

The unit ensures that cultural concepts and protocols are respected throughout the process.

You can call the unit at any time on **0460 659 905** or **(03) 8685 1141** or via email at **caeu@courts.vic.gov.au**

First contacts

Police attend the place of all passings reported to the coroner, except some passings that have occurred in a hospital. This is because the police need to complete a Report of Death for the coroner. The presence of the police at the scene does not always mean they believe someone was involved with the passing. They may also speak to the family shortly afterwards to get more information. It is part of the normal coronial process for all passings reported to the coroner.

The Yirramboi Murrup Unit works closely with staff to ensure cultural care is provided.



Coronial Admissions and Enquires (CA&E)

CA&E staff will get in touch with you about the first steps of the coronial process. CA&E is a state-wide, 24-hour service provided by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine. The role of CA&E is to:

- receive reports of a passing.
- take a person's body into the care of CA&E.
- coordinate identifying the person who has passed.
- coordinate the medical investigation into a death for the coroner.
- release a person's body for the funeral.

CA&E will seek to establish a 'senior next of kin' (SNOK). The SNOK is our main point of contact throughout the coroner's investigation.

Admission into care

In most cases, if your loved one passed in Melbourne, they will be taken into the care of CA&E at the Coronial Services Centre, 65 Kavanagh Street, Southbank.

CA&E staff and the Yirramboi Murrup Unit will help you if you want to see or spend time with your loved one.

The Senior Next of Kin (SNOK)

The senior next of kin is usually the person's partner. If the person does not have a partner, then the SNOK will be (in this order):

- an adult son or daughter (18 years or over)
- a parent
- an adult sibling (18 years or over).

If all of these are not available, please speak to the CA&E team for further information.





Identification

The coroner needs to confirm the identity of the person who has passed. This can include visual or medical and scientific identification methods.

Medical or scientific methods of identification include using dental records, fingerprinting or DNA comparisons.

If visual identification is needed, you may be asked to come to identify your loved one. To identify a loved one, you must be a family member or someone who knew the person well at the time of their passing.

CA&E staff with the Yirramboi Murrup Unit will schedule a viewing appointment for you during office hours. The Yirramboi Murrup Unit will be present for the entire viewing to ensure Sorry Business concepts and protocols are respected.

The coroner will determine the most appropriate method of identification and CA&E staff will inform you of the identification process that will be required for your loved one.

Medical examinations

Medical examinations are carried out to help the coroner determine the cause of a person's passing. Even if it seems obvious, it is very important that the coroner is able to find out exactly what happened.

Preliminary examination

Once your loved one is in the care of CA&E, a forensic pathologist will examine them. This preliminary examination is minimally invasive. CA&E staff work closely with the forensic pathologist and can answer any questions you have.

CA&E staff may ask you for help to get your loved one's medical records or other information. They may also need to talk to you about the circumstances surrounding the passing.





The police may also contact you to discuss the passing. This helps the coroner to gather as many facts as possible surrounding the passing.

Autopsy

In some cases, the forensic pathologist will need to perform an autopsy. This is a medical procedure that aims to work out the medical cause of passing. If a coroner believes that an autopsy is needed, CA&E staff will first contact the senior next of kin to explain the process and answer any questions.

If you want to object to an autopsy being performed, please let CA&E staff know so they can inform the coroner. The coroner will take your concerns into account and we will contact you to let you know the coroner's decision.

The Yirramboi Murrup Unit can assist with cultural concerns regarding an autopsy.

Personal possessions

Any personal possessions, such as jewellery, clothing, and other valuables found at the place of passing will be transported with the deceased to CA&E. These items will then be released to the funeral director. Occasionally, the police may keep some items, like mobile phones, for forensic examination.

Otherwise, all personal items are given to the funeral director to be returned to the family. If you have questions about personal possessions, please let the Yirramboi Murrup Unit know.

Planning the funeral

You can contact a funeral director of your choice immediately – you do not need to wait for the coroner's investigation to finish. The funeral director will help you plan the funeral and will liaise with you and CA&E staff. The funeral director can arrange to have your loved one transferred to regional Victoria if needed.



Getting a death certificate

The coroner and funeral director provide the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDM) with important information following a passing. The coroner must provide details about the cause of passing before BDM can issue a standard death certificate.

A person, or their chosen funeral director, can order a standard death certificate. Many funeral directors order the death certificate as part of their service. You can ask the funeral director if they are going to make the order as part of their service. The Registry of BDM will post the certificate to either the person making the order, or to someone they have listed, after all the details of the passing have been registered.

Death Certificate – without cause of passing

This legal certificate does not include sensitive information about your loved one, such as the cause of passing, burial information, or the registration date. This certificate can be issued if the coroner has not yet established the cause of passing and it can be used with organisations which do not require you to provide the cause.

Death Certificate – with cause of passing

This legal certificate includes all details about your loved one, including sensitive information such as the cause of passing, burial information, and the registration date. This certificate can be provided to any organisation that asks you to prove the passing of your loved one.

Staff from the Court can also give you a “confirmation of death” letter confirming that there has been a passing. This letter is not accepted by all financial or legal institutions for official purposes. It is always best to check with the organisation you are dealing with to see what documentation they will accept.

For all other BDM enquiries, you can email the Aboriginal Outreach Team at bdm.koori@dgs.vic.gov.au

Help in a difficult time

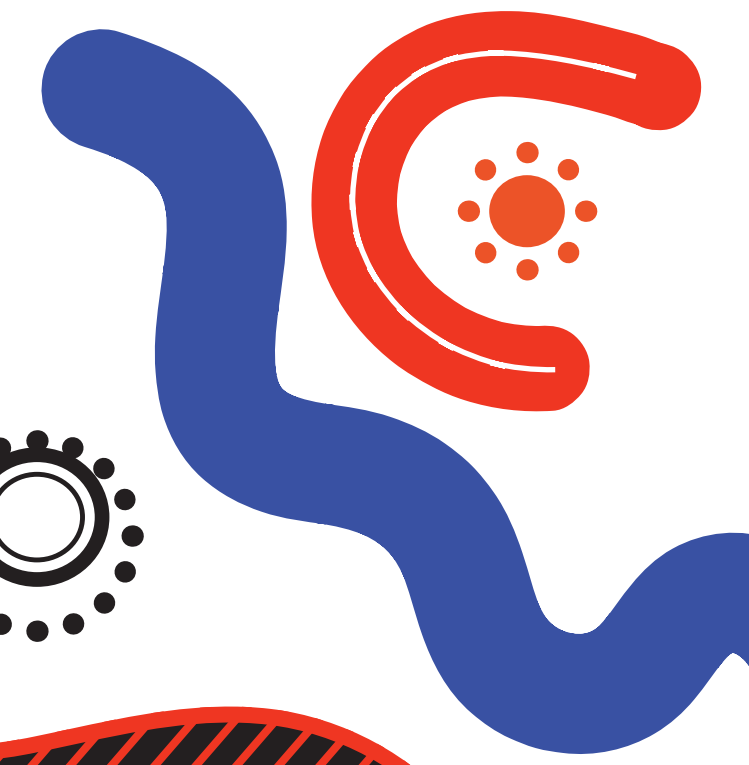
The Yirramboi Murrup Unit and CA&E can assist families by providing referral information for agencies who may assist with your grief and loss.

Please refer to the back page of this brochure for a list of helpful contact numbers for organisations who offer a range of support services for people during this difficult time or contact the Yirramboi Murrup Unit.

Support services for mob

In Victoria there are many Aboriginal corporations who provide health and social services, often with dedicated social and emotional wellbeing teams.

The Yirramboi Murrup Unit can assist you to find a suitable support service or help you get in touch with your local co-op.





Helpful contacts

Metro

- **Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation**
26 Exford Rd, Melton South VIC 3338
(03) 8088 0764
- **Aborigines Advancement League Inc**
2 Watt St, Thornbury VIC 3071
(03) 9480 7777
- **Victorian Aboriginal Health Service**
186 Nicholson St, Fitzroy VIC 3065
(03) 9419 3000

Hume

- **Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation**
21 Hovell St, Wodonga VIC 3690
(02) 6024 7599
- **Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service**
644 Daniel St, Glenroy NSW 2640
(02) 6040 1200
- **Rumbalara Aboriginal Co Op Ltd**
20 Rumbalara Rd, Mooroopna VIC 3629
(03) 5822 0000

Barwon South West

- **Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation**
21 Scott St, Heywood VIC 3304
(03) 5527 0000
- **Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-op**
62 Morgan St, North Geelong VIC 3215
(03) 5277 0044
- **Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-Op Ltd**
24 Hopkins Road, Warrnambool VIC 3280
(03) 5559 1234





Grampians

- **Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Corporation**
43 Hamilton St, Horsham VIC 3400
(03) 5381 6333
- **Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative**
108 Armstrong Street, Nth Ballarat VIC 3350
(03) 5331 5344
- **Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-operative**
20-22 Grampians Rd, Halls Gap VIC 3381
(03) 5356 4751

Gippsland

- **Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative**
37-53 Dalmahoy St, Bairnsdale VIC 3875
(03) 5150 0700
- **Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation**
117 Foster Street, Sale VIC 3850
(03) 5143 1644
- **Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland**
52 Stanley St, Orbost VIC 3888
(03) 5154 2133

Loddon Mallee

- **Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd**
87 Latje Road, Robinvale VIC 3549
(03) 5026 4501
 - **Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative**
119 Prouses Road, North Bendigo VIC 3550
(03) 5442 4947
 - **Mallee District Aboriginal Services**
120 Madden Ave, Mildura VIC 3500
(03) 5018 4100
 - **Njernda Medical Centre**
84 Hare St, Echuca VIC 3564
(03) 5480 6252
- 
- 

Other helpful contact numbers*

Victorian Aboriginal Family Counselling Service
(03) 9403 3300

Djirra **(03) 9244 3333** or **1800 105 303**

Dardi Munwurro **(03) 8456 3044** or
Dardi Munwurro **BROTHER 2 BROTHER**
1800 435 799 (24/7 CRISIS LINE)

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services
1800 064 865

Mullum Mullum Women's Yarning Circle
(03) 9725 2166

Victoria Legal Aid **1300 792 387**

13 YARN **13 92 76**

Thirrilli – support after suicide **1800 805 801**

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
(03) 9265 2100

Compassionate Friends 24 Hour National
Helpline: **03 9888 4944** or **1300 064 068**

Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria **(03) 9684 4444**

GriefLine **1300 845 745** (12pm–3am)

Lifeline **13 11 14** (24 hours)

Registry of Births, Deaths and
Marriages Victoria **1300 369 367**

Road Trauma Support Services **1300 367 797**

Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids)
1300 308 307 (24 hours)

State Trustees **(03) 9667 6444**

SuicideLine Victoria **1300 651 251** (24 hours)

Victims of Crime Helpline **1800 819 817**

** Business hours unless otherwise stated.*