



CORONIAL SERVICES
OF NEW ZEALAND
Purongo O te Ao Kakarauri

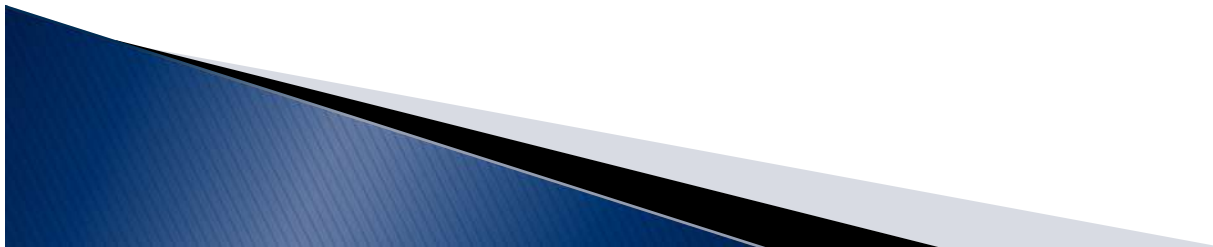
The Coroner in Aotearoa: Speaking for the dead to help the living

A Cunninghame
Dunedin
28 April 2023

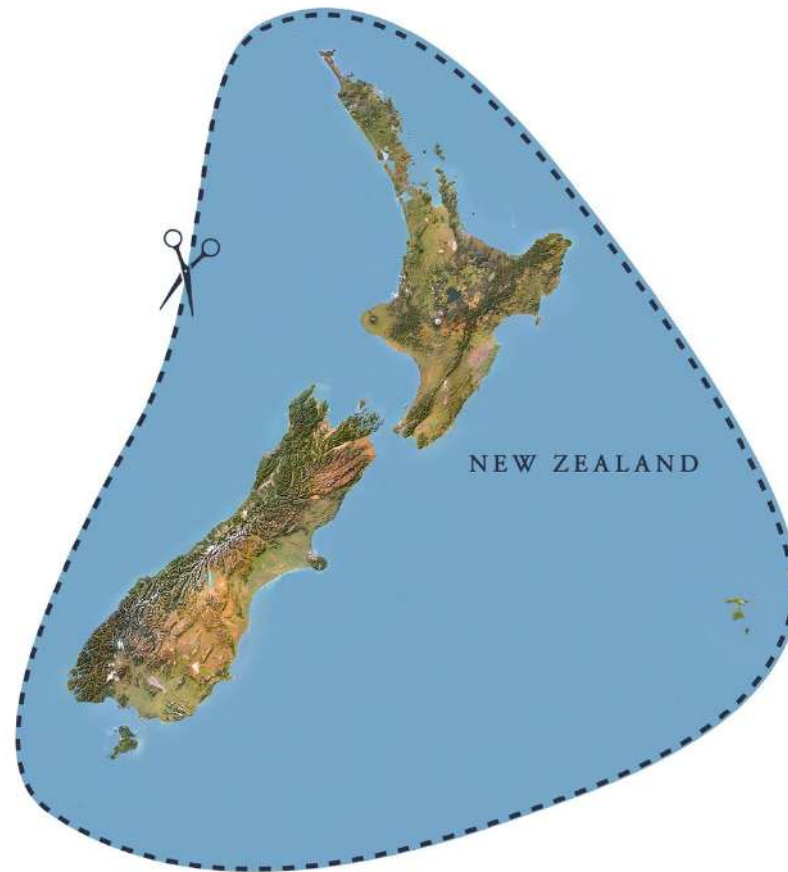
Getting up in the morning



The Coroner's role



Aotearoa's Coroners



The Coroner's duties

- ▶ Determine:
 - That a person has died;
 - Who, when, and where;
 - Cause of death;
 - Circumstances of death.
- ▶ Make:
 - Recommendations or comments to prevent further deaths in similar circumstances



Coroner Hoffman examines a hammer used in 1913 murder of George Dietz

When is the Coroner involved?

- ▶ 33000 deaths in NZ each year
- ▶ 3600 of these come into Coroners Jurisdiction
 - Inquiries are opened for approx. half of these
- ▶ Currently approx. 5500 active cases.



Reportable deaths

- ▶ Suicide
- ▶ Cause unknown – no Medical Certificate
- ▶ Unnatural or violent
- ▶ Medical, surgical, dental procedure AND medically unexpected
- ▶ During birth, as a result of pregnancy or giving birth
- ▶ Institutional deaths; prison, police custody etc
- ▶ Enactment; eg Mental Health/Oranga Tamariki

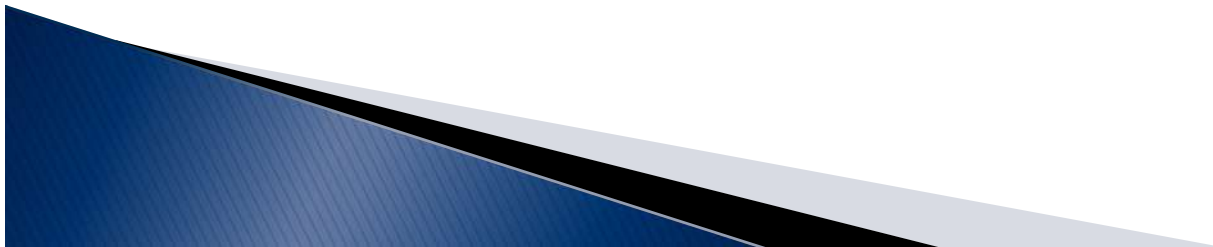


A month in the life



Initial process

- ▶ The Duty Coroner
 - 24/7
 - Supported by National Initial Investigation Office
 - Accept jurisdiction
 - Take custody of the body
 - Accept ID
 - Accept verification of death
 - Direct post-mortem
 - Release body



Inquiry

- ▶ The receiving Coroner
 - Review file and make directions
 - Open inquiry
 - Direct police to investigate
 - Request information
 - Determine whether to hold inquest or issue findings on the papers



Inquest



Lessons learned



Questions?

