



Brad Hazzard

Minister for Health and Medical Research

Mark Speakman

Attorney General

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 21 August 2019

LAW CHANGE SET TO EASE WAIT FOR GRIEVING FAMILIES

Families who lose loved ones in unexpected or unexplained circumstances will get the answers they need sooner under planned changes to the *Coroners Act 2009*.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard and Attorney General Mark Speakman will put forward the proposals to NSW Parliament today, which aim to avoid unnecessary post mortem examinations.

“Around 60 per cent of all cases reported to the NSW Coroner each year are the result of a natural death,” Mr Hazzard said.

“This amendment to the Act will remove the requirement to report a death to the Coroner where the deceased had not seen a doctor in the six months prior to death.”

Mr Speakman said the proposed changes would reduce the number of unnecessary referrals to the Coroner and improve timeframes of other coronial investigations.

“These amendments will remove unnecessary red tape enabling families to have their deceased loved ones returned to them sooner, so they can grieve and lay them to rest,” Mr Speakman said.

“Additionally, and importantly, the change will also bring NSW in line with other states.”

A second amendment will allow a forensic pathologist to undertake preliminary examinations of deceased people without the need for a direction from the Coroner.

This change will similarly improve timeframes for families in circumstances where a full medical post-mortem examination on the deceased person is not needed.

The obligation under the *Coroners Act 2009* to report unnatural, violent or suspicious deaths and sudden deaths from unknown causes will remain untouched.

Further opportunities for appropriate ways to improve the coronial process are currently being explored by a special Government taskforce.