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K Woodward  
Chief Parliamentary Counsel  
Dated 1 December 2025



TASMANIA

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## **CORONERS ACT 1995**

**No. 73 of 1995**

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## **CORONERS ACT 1995**

**No. 73 of 1995**

**An Act to establish a coronial division of the Magistrates Court, to require the reporting of certain deaths, to set out the procedures for investigations and inquests by coroners into deaths, fires and explosions and to provide for related matters**

**[Royal Assent 14 November 1995]**

Be it enacted by His Excellency the Governor of Tasmania, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, in Parliament assembled, as follows:

### **PART 1 – PRELIMINARY**

#### **1. Short title**

This Act may be cited as the *Coroners Act 1995*.

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## **2. Commencement**

This Act commences on a day to be proclaimed.

## **3. Interpretation**

In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears

—

***Aboriginal remains*** means the remains of an Aboriginal person buried in accordance with Aboriginal custom;

***approved pathologist*** means a pathologist or medical practitioner approved under section 35;

***body*** includes a portion of a human body;

***controlling authority*** means a controlling authority within the meaning of the *Mental Health Act 2013*;

***coroner*** means a person appointed as a coroner under this Act and, except in sections 10 and 11, includes a magistrate;

***coroner's associate*** includes the Chief Clerk (Coronial Division);

***correctional officer*** means a correctional officer within the meaning of the *Corrections Act 1997*;

***death*** includes suspected death;

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***Director of Public Prosecutions*** means the person for the time being holding, or acting in, the office of Director of Public Prosecutions established by section 3(1) of the *Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1973*;

***disposal*** of human remains means –

- (a) cremation of the remains; or
- (b) burial of the remains, including burial at sea; or
- (c) placing the remains in a mausoleum or other permanent resting place; or
- (d) placing the remains in the custody of an educational or scientific institution for the purpose of medical education or research; or
- (e) removal of the remains from the State (but not if the remains have been cremated or are taken from the State by sea and buried at sea in the course of the voyage);

***detention centre*** has the same meaning as in the *Youth Justice Act 1997*;

***inquest*** means a public inquiry that is held by a coroner in respect of a death, fire or explosion;

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***Magistrates Rule Committee*** means the committee referred to in section 15AC of the *Magistrates Court Act 1987*;

***medical procedure*** means a procedure performed on a person by, or under the general supervision of, a medical practitioner and includes –

- (a) imaging; and
- (b) an examination whether internal or external; and
- (c) a surgical procedure;

***mental health officer*** means a mental health officer within the meaning of the *Mental Health Act 2013*;

***pathologist*** means a medical practitioner who has obtained a qualification in pathology recognised by the National Specialist Qualification Advisory Committee of Australia;

***person held in care*** means –

- (a) a child, within the meaning of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*, in the custody or under the guardianship of the Secretary, within the meaning of that Act;
- (b) a person detained or liable to be detained in an approved hospital



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within the meaning of the *Mental Health Act 2013* or in a secure mental health unit or another place while in the custody of the controlling authority of a secure mental health unit, within the meaning of that Act;

***person held in custody*** means –

- (a) a person in the custody or control of –
  - (i) a police officer; or
  - (ii) a correctional officer; or
  - (iii) a mental health officer; or
  - (iv) the controlling authority of a secure mental health unit; or
  - (v) a prescribed person within the meaning of section 31 of the *Criminal Justice (Mental Impairment) Act 1999*; or
  - (vi) a person who has custody under the order of a court for the purposes of taking the person to or from a court; or
- (b) a person detained –

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- (i) in a prison as defined in the *Corrections Act 1997*; or
- (ii) in a building or part of a building at a police station used for the confinement of persons under arrest or otherwise lawfully detained in custody; or
- (iii) in a detention centre;

***prescribed*** means prescribed by the rules referred to in section 69A;

***regulations*** means regulations made and in force under this Act;

***reportable death*** means –

- (a) a death where –
  - (i) the body of a deceased person is in Tasmania; or
  - (ii) the death occurred in Tasmania; or
  - (iii) the cause of the death occurred in Tasmania; or
  - (iiia) the death occurred while the person was travelling from or to Tasmania –

being a death –

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- (iv) that appears to have been unexpected, unnatural or violent or to have resulted directly or indirectly from an accident or injury; or
  - (v) that occurs during a medical procedure, or after a medical procedure where the death may be causally related to that procedure, and a medical practitioner would not, immediately before the procedure was undertaken, have reasonably expected the death; or
  - (vi) . . . . .
  - (vii) the cause of which is unknown; or
  - (viii) of a child under the age of one year which was sudden and unexpected; or
  - (ix) of a person who immediately before death was a person held in care or a person held in custody; or
  - (x) of a person whose identity is unknown; or

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- (xi) that occurs at, or as a result of an accident or injury that occurs at, the deceased person's place of work, and does not appear to be due to natural causes; or
- (b) the death of a person who ordinarily resided in Tasmania at the time of death that occurred at a place outside Tasmania where the cause of death is not certified by a person who, under a law in force in the place, is a medical practitioner; or
- (c) the death of a person that occurred whilst that person was escaping or attempting to escape from prison, a detention centre, a secure mental health unit, police custody or the custody of a person who had custody under an order of a court for the purposes of taking that person to or from a court; or
- (d) the death of a person that occurred whilst a police officer, correctional officer, mental health officer or a prescribed person within the meaning of section 31 of the *Criminal Justice (Mental Impairment) Act 1999* was attempting to detain that person;

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***secure mental health unit*** means –

- (a) a secure mental health unit within the meaning of the *Mental Health Act 2013*; or
- (b) any other place in which a person is being detained while in the custody of the controlling authority of a secure mental health unit;

***senior next of kin*** – see section 3A;

***spouse*** includes the other party to a significant relationship, within the meaning of the *Relationships Act 2003*;

***State Forensic Pathologist*** means the person appointed and holding office as State Forensic Pathologist under section 17.

**3A. Meaning of *senior next of kin***

For the purposes of this Act, the senior next of kin of a deceased person is –

- (a) if a person was, immediately before the death of the deceased person, the only spouse of that deceased person, that spouse; or
- (b) if the deceased person, at the time of his or her death, is survived by more than one person who would qualify as the deceased person's spouse, the last person to so qualify; or

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- (c) if the deceased person, at the time of his or her death, is survived by more than one person who would qualify as the deceased person's spouse and the spouse referred to in paragraph (b) is not available, another spouse of the deceased person if that spouse has the approval of the spouse referred to in paragraph (b); or
- (d) if the person referred to in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) is not available, a child of the deceased person if the child has attained the age of 18 years; or
- (e) if the person referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) is not available, the person with whom the deceased person had a caring relationship, at the time of his or her death, which was the subject of a deed of relationship registered under Part 2 of the *Relationships Act 2003*; or
- (f) if the person referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e) is not available, a parent of the deceased person; or
- (g) if the person referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) or (f) is not available, a sibling of the deceased person if the sibling has attained the age of 18 years; or
- (h) if the person referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) or (g) is not available, an executor named in the will of the deceased person or a person who,

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immediately before the death, was a personal representative of the deceased person; or

- (i) if the deceased person is an Aboriginal person, a person who, according to the customs and tradition of the community or group to which the person belongs, is an appropriate person.

**3B. Determination of senior next of kin of deceased person**

- (1) If a person is aggrieved by a decision made under this Act specifying who is the senior next of kin of a deceased person for the purposes of this Act, the person may appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.
- (2) On hearing an appeal under subsection (1), the Supreme Court may –
  - (a) affirm the decision; or
  - (b) quash the decision and make any further orders as the Supreme Court thinks fit in the circumstances.

**4. Common law rules cease to have effect**

A rule of the common law that, immediately before the commencement of this section, conferred a power or imposed a duty on a coroner or a coroner's court ceases to have effect.

## **PART 2 – CORONERS**

### **5. Establishment of coronial division**

- (1) There is established a division of the Magistrates Court to be known as the Magistrates Court (Coronial Division).
- (2) The jurisdiction conferred on a coroner under this Act is to be exercised solely within the Magistrates Court (Coronial Division).

### **6. Court to comprise a single magistrate or coroner**

For the purposes of exercising the jurisdiction conferred on a coroner under this Act, the Magistrates Court is to be constituted by a single magistrate or a single coroner.

### **7. Functions of Chief Magistrate**

The functions of the Chief Magistrate under this Act are as follows:

- (a) to ensure that a State coronial system is administered and operated efficiently;
- (b) to oversee and co-ordinate coronial services;
- (c) to ensure that all reportable deaths reported to a coroner are investigated;
- (d) to ensure that an inquest is held whenever the Chief Magistrate considers



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it is desirable to do so and whenever an inquest is required by this Act to be held;

- (e) to ensure that an autopsy is performed whenever the Chief Magistrate considers it is desirable to do so;
- (f) to ensure that all fires and explosions that occur in this State are investigated whenever the Chief Magistrate considers that it is desirable to do so and whenever it is required by this Act;
- (g) to issue guidelines to coroners to assist them to carry out their duties;
- (h) to co-ordinate and allocate work between coroners;
- (i) such other functions as are imposed on the Chief Magistrate under this Act.

**8. General directions by Chief Magistrate**

- (1) The Chief Magistrate may issue general directions to coroners requiring them to give to the Chief Magistrate or to a coroner, to whom the Chief Magistrate has delegated any of the Chief Magistrate's functions or powers, information coroners receive concerning reportable deaths, fires or explosions.
- (2) A coroner who receives information to which the directions apply must comply with the directions as soon as possible after receiving the information.

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**9. Delegation by Chief Magistrate**

The Chief Magistrate may delegate to a coroner any of the Chief Magistrate's functions or powers under this Act, other than this power of delegation.

**10. Appointment, &c., of coroners**

- (1) The Governor may appoint persons as coroners for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) A coroner appointed under subsection (1) holds office during the Governor's pleasure.
- (3) A coroner is to be paid such fees, allowances and expenditure as may be prescribed by the regulations.

**11. Oaths to be taken**

- (1) A coroner must not perform or exercise any of the functions, duties or powers of his or her office until he or she has, under section 10(1) of the *Promissory Oaths Act 2015*, taken and subscribed the judicial oath.
- (2) Subsection (1) only applies to a person appointed as a coroner after the day on which the *Promissory Oaths Act 2015* commences.

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12. . . . .

**13. Delegation by coroner**

- (1) Subject to any direction given by the Chief Magistrate, a coroner may delegate to a coroner's associate any function or power of a coroner other than this power of delegation or a power prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) A direction of the Chief Magistrate may be a general or specific direction.

**14. Chief Clerk (Coronial Division)**

- (1) The Secretary of the Department may appoint a State Service officer or State Service employee employed in the Department to be the Chief Clerk (Coronial Division) and that person holds that office in conjunction with State Service employment.
- (2) Subject to any directions given by the Chief Magistrate, the Chief Clerk (Coronial Division) is responsible for the administration of the State coronial system.
- (3) The Chief Clerk (Coronial Division) is to perform such other functions as may be determined by the Chief Magistrate.

**15. Coroner's associates**

- (1) The Secretary of the Department may appoint State Service officers and State Service

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employees employed in the Department to be coroner's associates and those persons hold office in conjunction with State Service employment.

- (2) The Chief Magistrate may, with the approval of the Secretary of the responsible Department in relation to the *Police Service Act 2003*, appoint police officers to be coroner's associates.
- (3) A clerk of petty sessions and a deputy clerk of petty sessions may perform the functions and exercise the powers of a coroner's associate.
- (4) A coroner's associate may—
  - (a) on behalf of a coroner, receive information about a death, a fire or an explosion; and
  - (b) administer an oath or affirmation or take an affidavit; and
  - (c) issue a summons requiring a witness to attend an inquest to give oral evidence or to produce documents or other materials.

**16. Coroner's officers**

- (1) A coroner's officer must —
  - (a) assist a coroner in carrying out the coroner's duties under this Act; and
  - (b) comply with any guidelines issued by the Chief Magistrate; and

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- (c) carry out all reasonable directions of a coroner.
- (2) A police officer is, by virtue of his or her office, a coroner's officer and has the same functions and powers as are conferred or imposed on a coroner's officer by this Act.
- (3) A coroner's officer may –
  - (a) administer an oath or affirmation; and
  - (b) take an affidavit.

## **PART 3 – STATE FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST**

### **17. State Forensic Pathologist**

The Minister is to appoint a State Service officer or State Service employee to be State Forensic Pathologist and that officer or employee holds that office in conjunction with State Service employment.

### **18. Functions and powers of State Forensic Pathologist**

- (1) The functions of the State Forensic Pathologist under this Act are as follows:
  - (a) to oversee and co-ordinate forensic pathology services in the State;
  - (b) to undertake coronial autopsies if requested by a coroner or arrange for the undertaking of coronial autopsies by approved pathologists;
  - (c) to issue guidelines to approved pathologists for undertaking coronial autopsies;
  - (d) to attend, when requested by a coroner, a coroner's associate or a coroner's officer, at scenes of homicides and other suspicious deaths throughout the State;
  - (e) to provide expert evidence to magistrates, coroners and the courts;

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- (f) to ensure that the provision of forensic pathology services is administered and operated efficiently;
  - (g) such other functions as are imposed on the State Forensic Pathologist under this Act or as are prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) The State Forensic Pathologist may do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with, or incidental to, the performance of the State Forensic Pathologist's functions under this Act.

**18A. Validation of certain appointments**

- (1) In this section –

*appointed under State Service legislation*, in respect of an office or position, includes –

- (a) an appointment to the office, or position, under the *State Service Act 2000* or the *Tasmanian State Service Act 1984*; and
  - (b) acting under a direction under section 21A of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1931* in respect of the office or position.
- (2) For the purposes of this Act, the Minister is taken to have validly appointed a person to the

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position of the State Forensic Pathologist under this Act if –

- (a) on or after the commencement of this Act, but before the commencement of the *Validation Act 2023*, the person was appointed under State Service legislation to one of the following offices or positions within the State Service:
  - (i) Director of Statewide Forensic Medical Health Services;
  - (ii) Director – Statewide Forensic Medical Services;
  - (iii) Director of Forensic Pathology Services;
  - (iv) Statewide Director of Forensic Pathology Services;
  - (v) Director of Forensic Pathology for Tasmania;
  - (vi) Statewide Director of Forensic Pathology;
  - (vii) Director Forensic Pathology; and
- (b) while so appointed to that office or position –
  - (i) the person believed, on reasonable grounds, that he or she had also been appointed as the State Forensic Pathologist under this Act; and



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- (ii) he or she purportedly performed the functions, and purportedly exercised the powers, of the State Forensic Pathologist.
- (3) Subsection (2) only applies in respect of a person while the person was appointed under State Service legislation to the relevant office or position for that person specified in subsection (2)(a).
- (4) A function of the State Forensic Pathologist purportedly performed, or a power of the State Forensic Pathologist purportedly exercised, by a person is taken to have been validly performed or exercised if –
  - (a) the function was performed, or the power was exercised, while the person was taken to have been appointed to the position of State Forensic Pathologist by virtue of this section; and
  - (b) the function was performed, or the power was exercised, by that person in good faith.
- (5) For the avoidance of doubt, a person approved under section 35 to undertake coronial autopsies is taken to have been validly approved under that section if the person was approved by a person taken to have been appointed to the position of State Forensic Pathologist by virtue of this section.

## **PART 4 – REPORTING OF DEATHS**

### **19. Obligation to report death**

- (1) A person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a reportable death, other than a reportable death referred to in subsection (4), has not been reported must report it as soon as possible to a coroner or a police officer.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units.

- (2) The coroner or the police officer must inform the Chief Magistrate or, if the Chief Magistrate has delegated relevant functions or powers to another coroner, that coroner, of the reported death as soon as possible.
- (3) If more than one medical practitioner is present at or after a death and one of them reports it to a coroner or police officer, the other medical practitioners need not report the death but must give to the coroner investigating the death any information which may help the investigation.
- (4) The death of a person—
- (a) who was held in custody or held in care immediately before death; or
  - (b) who was escaping or attempting to escape from prison, a detention centre, a secure mental health unit, police custody or the custody of a person who had custody under an order of a court for the

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purposes of taking that person to or from a court; or

- (c) which occurred in the process of a police officer, correctional officer, mental health officer or prescribed person, within the meaning of section 31 of the *Criminal Justice (Mental Impairment) Act 1999*, attempting to detain that person—

must be reported as soon as possible to a coroner by the person in whose custody or care the person was held or by the police officer, correctional officer, mental health officer or prescribed person attempting to detain that person.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units.

**20. Information to coroner**

- (1) A person who reports a death must give to the coroner investigating the death any information which may help the investigation.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units.

- (2) A police officer who has information relevant to an investigation must report it to the coroner investigating the death.

## **PART 5 – INVESTIGATION OF DEATHS**

### **21. Jurisdiction of coroners to investigate a death**

- (1) A coroner has jurisdiction to investigate a death if it appears to the coroner that the death is or may be a reportable death.
- (2) Unless the Attorney-General directs otherwise, a coroner need not investigate a death if an investigation or inquest is held in another State or in a Territory.

### **22. Directions by Chief Magistrate**

The Chief Magistrate may give to a coroner directions about an investigation into a death and the manner of conducting it.

### **23. Aboriginal remains**

- (1) The Attorney-General may approve an Aboriginal organisation for the purposes of this section.
- (2) If, at any stage after a death is reported under section 19(1), a coroner suspects that any human remains relating to that death may be Aboriginal remains, the coroner must refer the matter to an Aboriginal organisation approved by the Attorney-General.
- (3) If a coroner refers a matter to an Aboriginal organisation approved by the Attorney-General –

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- (a) the coroner must not carry out any investigations or perform any duties or functions under this Act in respect of the remains; and
  - (b) the Aboriginal organisation must, as soon as practicable after the matter is referred to it, investigate the remains and prepare a report for the coroner.
- (4) If the Aboriginal organisation in its report to the coroner advises that the remains are Aboriginal remains, the jurisdiction of the coroner under this Act in respect of the remains ceases and this Act does not apply to the remains.
- (5) If the Aboriginal organisation in its report to the coroner advises that the remains are not Aboriginal remains, the coroner may resume the investigation in respect of the remains.

**24. Jurisdiction of coroner to hold inquest into a death**

- (1) Subject to section 25, a coroner who has jurisdiction to investigate a death must hold an inquest if the body is in Tasmania or it appears to the coroner that the death, or the cause of death, occurred in Tasmania or that the deceased ordinarily resided in Tasmania at the time of death and –
- (a) the coroner suspects homicide; or
  - (b) the deceased was immediately before death a person held in care or a person held in custody; or

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- (c) the identity of the deceased is not known;  
or
  - (d) the deceased died whilst escaping or attempting to escape from prison, a detention centre, a secure mental health unit, police custody or the custody of a person who had custody under an order of a court for the purposes of taking that person to or from a court; or
  - (e) the death occurred in the process of a police officer, correctional officer, mental health officer or prescribed person, within the meaning of section 31 of the *Criminal Justice (Mental Impairment) Act 1999*, attempting to detain a person; or
  - (ea) the deceased died at, or as a result of an accident or injury that occurred at, his or her place of work and the coroner is not satisfied that the death was due to natural causes; or
  - (f) the death occurred in such a place or in such circumstances that require an inquest under any other Act; or
  - (g) the Attorney-General directs; or
  - (h) the Chief Magistrate directs.
- (2) A coroner may hold an inquest into a death which the coroner has jurisdiction to investigate if the coroner considers it desirable to do so.

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**24A. Jurisdiction of Chief Magistrate to hold inquest into a death**

The Chief Magistrate may hold an inquest into a death which a coroner has jurisdiction to investigate if the Chief Magistrate considers it desirable to do so.

**25. Procedure at inquest where person charged with an offence**

- (1) If on an inquest relating to a death, a fire or an explosion the coroner is informed, before making a finding, that a person has been charged before justices with any of the offences specified in subsection (2), the coroner –
  - (a) must, in the absence of reason to the contrary, adjourn the inquest until after the conclusion of the proceedings with respect to any of those offences; and
  - (b) must inform the Attorney-General in writing of the inquest and its adjournment.
- (2) The offences referred to in subsection (1) are –
  - (a) murder of the deceased; or
  - (b) manslaughter of the deceased; or
  - (c) infanticide of the deceased; or
  - (d) causing grievous bodily harm of the deceased; or

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- (e) causing the death of the deceased by dangerous driving; or
  - (ea) dangerous driving where the driving caused an accident that resulted in the death of the deceased; or
  - (f) an offence under section 32 (1) of the *Traffic Act 1925* arising out of an accident that resulted in the death of the deceased; or
  - (g) arson in relation to the fire; or
  - (h) unlawfully causing the fire; or
  - (i) unlawfully causing the explosion.
- (3) After the conclusion of the criminal proceedings the coroner may, subject to subsection (4), resume the adjourned inquest if the coroner is of the opinion that there is sufficient cause to do so.
- (4) If in the course of the criminal proceedings a person has been charged on indictment, the inquest, on its resumption, must not contain any finding which is inconsistent with the determination of the matter by the result of those proceedings.
- (5) Where a coroner resumes an inquest which has been adjourned in accordance with this section, the coroner must proceed in all respects as if the inquest had not previously begun and the provisions of this Act apply accordingly as if the resumed inquest were a fresh inquest.



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- (6) The clerk to the justices before whom a person is charged with any of the offences specified in subsection (2) must inform a coroner, who is holding an inquest relating to the death, fire or explosion, of the making of the charge and of the committal for trial or discharge of the person charged.
  - (7) For the purposes of this section, criminal proceedings are not taken to be concluded until a further appeal cannot be made in the course of those proceedings without an extension of time.
  - (8) Where a coroner decides not to resume an inquest adjourned in accordance with this section, the coroner must so inform the Attorney-General in writing.
  - (9) In this section, *criminal proceedings* means proceedings in respect of any of the offences specified in subsection (2).

**26. Decision by coroner not to hold an inquest into a death**

- (1) If a coroner who has jurisdiction to hold an inquest into a death makes a decision not to hold an inquest or the Chief Magistrate makes a decision not to direct that an inquest be held, the coroner or the Chief Magistrate must –
  - (a) record the decision in writing; and
  - (b) specify the reasons for the decision; and

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- (c) as soon as practicable after making the decision, notify the senior next of kin of the deceased person, in writing, of the decision, including the reasons for the decision.
- (2) Within 14 days after receiving notice of a decision under subsection (1), the senior next of kin of the deceased person may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that an inquest be held.
- (3) The Supreme Court may make an order that an inquest be held if it is satisfied that it is necessary or desirable in the interests of justice.

**26A. Decision by coroner to hold an inquest into a workplace death**

- (1) A coroner who decides to hold an inquest pursuant to section 24(1)(ea) must –
  - (a) record the decision in writing; and
  - (b) specify the reasons for the decision; and
  - (c) as soon as practicable after making the decision, notify the senior next of kin of the deceased person, in writing, of the decision, including the reasons for the decision.
- (2) Within 14 days after receiving notice of a decision under subsection (1), the senior next of kin of the deceased person may, in writing, request the coroner not to hold the inquest.

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- (3) If the senior next of kin makes that request, the coroner, despite section 24(1)(ea), may decline to hold the inquest if he or she is satisfied that it would not be contrary to the public interest or the interests of justice if the inquest were not held.

**27. Applications for inquests into a death**

- (1) A person who a coroner considers has a sufficient interest in a death may request the coroner to hold an inquest into the death.
- (2) If a coroner who has jurisdiction to hold an inquest into a death makes a decision not to hold an inquest after being requested to do so by a person, the coroner must –
- (a) record the decision in writing; and
  - (b) specify the reason for the decision; and
  - (c) as soon as practicable after making the decision, notify that person, in writing, of the decision, including the reasons for the decision.
- (3) Within 14 days after receiving notice of the decision not to hold an inquest, the person who requested the inquest may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that an inquest be held.
- (4) The Supreme Court may make an order that an inquest be held if it is satisfied that it is necessary or desirable in the interests of justice.

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**28. Findings, &c., of coroner investigating a death**

- (1) A coroner investigating a death must find, if possible –
  - (a) the identity of the deceased; and
  - (b) how death occurred; and
  - (c) the cause of death; and
  - (d) when and where death occurred; and
  - (e) the particulars needed to register the death under the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1999*.
  - (f) . . . . .
- (2) A coroner must, whenever appropriate, make recommendations with respect to ways of preventing further deaths and on any other matter that the coroner considers appropriate.
- (3) A coroner may comment on any matter connected with the death including public health or safety or the administration of justice.
- (4) A coroner must not include in a finding or comment any statement that a person is or may be guilty of an offence.
- (5) If a coroner holds an inquest into the death of a person who died whilst that person was a person held in custody or a person held in care or whilst that person was escaping or attempting to escape from prison, a secure mental health unit, a detention centre or police custody, the coroner

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must report on the care, supervision or treatment of that person while that person was a person held in custody or a person held in care.

**29. Record of investigation**

- (1) A coroner or the coroner's associate must keep a record of each investigation into a death.
- (2) A record is not evidence in any court of any fact asserted in it.

**30. Reports on deaths**

- (1) A coroner may report to the Attorney-General on a death which the coroner investigated.
- (2) A coroner may make recommendations to the Attorney-General on any matter connected with a death which the coroner investigated, including public health or safety or the administration of justice.
- (3) A coroner must report to the Attorney-General if the coroner believes that an indictable offence has been committed in connection with a death which the coroner investigated.

**31. Control of body**

If a reportable death occurs and the body is in Tasmania, the body is under the control of the coroner investigating the death, subject to any directions the Chief Magistrate may give, until

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the coroner has issued a certificate under section 32.

**32. Certificate of burial**

- (1) A coroner investigating a death must, as soon as reasonably possible, issue a certificate authorising the disposal of human remains.
- (2) A certificate under subsection (1) must not be issued until an application made under section 27 or 37 is disposed of or the time for making such an application has expired.
- (3) If the Supreme Court makes an order under section 27 or 37, a coroner must not issue a certificate under subsection (1).
- (4) Notwithstanding subsection (2), a coroner investigating a death may issue a certificate authorising the disposal of human remains before the time for making an application under section 27 has expired if the person who made a request to hold an inquest into the death advises the coroner that he or she does not intend to apply to the Supreme Court for an order that an inquest be held.

**33. Aid to coroners in other places**

A coroner may use any of the powers of a coroner under this Act to help a coroner of another State or of a Territory to investigate a death.

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**34. Power to restrict entry to place where death occurred**

- (1) A coroner investigating a death may take reasonable steps to restrict access to the place where the death occurred.
- (2) The coroner may cause a prescribed notice to be put up at that place.
- (3) A person must not, without good reason, enter or interfere with any area to which access is restricted under this section.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months.

- (4) A coroner must not restrict access to the place for any longer period than is necessary.
- (5) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the coroner to restrict access to any place may apply to the Chief Magistrate for a review of that decision.
- (6) The Chief Magistrate may make such order in relation to the decision of the coroner as the Chief Magistrate thinks necessary.
- (7) An application to the Chief Magistrate under this section is to be made, heard and determined as may be prescribed or, if the application procedure is not prescribed, as the Chief Magistrate determines.

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**35. Approval of pathologists or medical practitioners to undertake autopsies**

- (1) The State Forensic Pathologist may approve pathologists or medical practitioners to undertake coronial autopsies.
- (2) The approval of the State Forensic Pathologist under subsection (1) is to be in writing.

**36. Autopsies**

- (1) If a coroner reasonably believes that it is necessary for the investigation of a death, the coroner may direct the State Forensic Pathologist or an approved pathologist, or a medical practitioner under the direct supervision of the State Forensic Pathologist or an approved pathologist, to perform an autopsy on the body.
- (2) A coroner must direct the State Forensic Pathologist or an approved pathologist, or a medical practitioner under the direct supervision of the State Forensic Pathologist or an approved pathologist, to perform an autopsy on the body if directed by the Chief Magistrate to do so.
- (3) A coroner may direct the State Forensic Pathologist or a pathologist or medical practitioner performing an autopsy to cause to be preserved for such period as the coroner directs any material which appears to the State Forensic Pathologist or the pathologist or medical practitioner to relate to the cause of death or the circumstances surrounding the death.



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- (4) The State Forensic Pathologist or a pathologist or a medical practitioner performing an autopsy may remove and retain such parts of the body as he or she considers necessary in order to determine the cause of death or the circumstances surrounding the death.

**37. Application for autopsy**

- (1) If a coroner has jurisdiction to investigate a death, any person who the coroner considers has a sufficient interest in the death may request the coroner to direct that an autopsy be performed on the body.
- (2) If the coroner refuses a person's request, the coroner must as soon as practicable after the refusal give to the person reasons in writing for the refusal.
- (3) Within 48 hours after receiving notice of a refusal, the person may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that an autopsy be performed.
- (4) If the Supreme Court is satisfied that it is desirable in all the circumstances, it may make an order –
  - (a) directing the coroner to require the State Forensic Pathologist or an approved pathologist, or a medical practitioner under the direct supervision of the State Forensic Pathologist or an approved pathologist, to perform an autopsy; and

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- (b) prohibiting burial, cremation, disposal at sea or other disposal until the coroner has the results of the autopsy and has ordered burial, cremation, disposal at sea or other lawful disposal.

**38. Objections to autopsy**

- (1) Where the senior next of kin of the deceased person requests a coroner not to direct that an autopsy be performed but the coroner decides that an autopsy is necessary, the coroner must immediately give notice in writing of the decision to the senior next of kin.
- (2) Where a request has been made under subsection (1), an autopsy must not be performed until 48 hours after the senior next of kin of the deceased person has been given notice of the coroner's decision under that subsection unless the coroner believes that an autopsy needs to be performed immediately.
- (3) Within 48 hours after receiving notice of the coroner's decision under subsection (1), the senior next of kin of the deceased person may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that an autopsy not be performed and the Supreme Court, in its discretion, may make an order that an autopsy not be performed.

**39. Exhumation**

- (1) The Chief Magistrate may order that the body of a deceased person be exhumed if the Chief

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Magistrate reasonably believes that it is necessary for an investigation of a death.

- (2) The Chief Magistrate must ensure that at least 48 hours' notice in writing is given to the senior next of kin of the deceased person and to the trustees or owners of the cemetery, burial ground or place of burial where the body of the deceased person is buried before the body is exhumed unless the Chief Magistrate is satisfied it is not possible to give the notice.
- (3) If the senior next of kin of the deceased person asks the Chief Magistrate not to exhume the body of the deceased person, the body must not be exhumed until 48 hours after the request has been made.
- (4) Within 48 hours after receiving notice of the order under subsection (2), the senior next of kin of the deceased person may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that the body of the deceased person not be exhumed and the Supreme Court, in its discretion, may make an order that the body not be exhumed.

## **PART 6 – INVESTIGATION OF FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS**

### **40. Jurisdiction of coroner to investigate a fire or an explosion**

- (1) A coroner has jurisdiction to investigate a fire or an explosion if the fire or explosion occurs in the State and the coroner believes it is desirable to conduct an investigation.
- (2) A coroner must investigate a fire or an explosion if the Attorney-General or the Chief Magistrate directs that an investigation be held.

### **41. Directions by Chief Magistrate**

The Chief Magistrate may give to a coroner directions about an investigation into a fire or an explosion and the manner of conducting it.

### **42. Application for investigation into a fire or an explosion**

- (1) A person who the coroner considers has a sufficient interest in a fire or an explosion may request a coroner to investigate the fire or explosion.
- (2) If a coroner refuses a person's request to investigate a fire or an explosion, the coroner must give reasons in writing for the refusal to the person, the Attorney-General and the Chief Magistrate.

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- (3) A person who asks a coroner to investigate a fire or an explosion must give to the coroner any information which may help the investigation.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units.

**43. Jurisdiction of coroner to hold inquest into a fire or an explosion**

- (1) A coroner must hold an inquest into a fire or an explosion if the Attorney-General or the Chief Magistrate directs that an inquest be held.
- (2) A coroner who has jurisdiction to investigate a fire or an explosion may hold an inquest if the coroner believes it is desirable.

**44. Decision by coroner not to hold an inquest into a fire or an explosion**

- (1) If a coroner who has jurisdiction to hold an inquest into a fire or an explosion makes a decision not to hold an inquest after being requested to do so by a person, the coroner must –
- (a) record the decision in writing; and
  - (b) specify the reasons for the decision; and
  - (c) as soon as practicable after making the decision, notify the person who made the request of the decision, in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

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- (2) Within 14 days after a person receives notice of the decision not to hold an inquest, the person may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that an inquest be held.
- (3) The Supreme Court may make an order that an inquest be held if it is satisfied that it is necessary or desirable in the interests of justice.

**45. Findings, &c., of coroner investigating a fire or an explosion**

- (1) A coroner investigating a fire or an explosion must find if possible –
  - (a) the cause and origin of the fire or explosion; and
  - (b) the circumstances in which the fire or explosion occurred; and
  - (c) the identity of any person who contributed to the cause of the fire or explosion.
- (2) A coroner may comment on any matter connected with the fire or explosion including public health or safety or the administration of justice.
- (3) A coroner must not include in a finding or comment any statement that a person is or may be guilty of an offence.

**46. Record of findings and comments**

- (1) A coroner or a coroner's associate must keep a record of each investigation into a fire or an explosion.
- (2) A record is not evidence in any court of any fact asserted in it.

**47. Reports on fires or explosions**

- (1) A coroner may report to the Attorney-General on a fire or an explosion which the coroner investigated.
- (2) A coroner must report to the Attorney-General on a fire or an explosion which the coroner investigated at the direction of the Attorney-General.
- (3) A coroner may make recommendations to the Attorney-General on any matter connected with a fire or an explosion which the coroner investigated, including public health or safety or the administration of justice.
- (4) A coroner must report to the Attorney-General if the coroner believes that an indictable offence has been committed in connection with a fire or an explosion which the coroner investigated.

**48. Police to report further information to coroner**

A police officer who has information relevant to an investigation must report it to the coroner investigating the fire or explosion.

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**49. Restriction of access to fire or explosion area**

- (1) A coroner investigating a fire or an explosion may take reasonable steps to restrict access to the place where the fire or explosion occurred.
- (2) The coroner may cause a prescribed notice to be put up at that place.
- (3) A person must not, without good reason, enter or interfere with any area to which access is restricted under this section.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months.

- (4) A coroner must not restrict access to the place for any longer period than is necessary.
- (5) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the coroner to restrict access to any place may apply to the Chief Magistrate for a review of that decision.
- (6) The Chief Magistrate may make such order in relation to the decision of the coroner as the Chief Magistrate thinks necessary.
- (7) An application to the Chief Magistrate under this section is to be made, heard and determined as may be prescribed or, if the application procedure is not prescribed, as the Chief Magistrate determines.



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## **PART 7 – CONDUCT OF INQUESTS**

### **50. Two or more deaths or fires and explosions**

The Chief Magistrate may direct that the following be investigated at the one inquest:

- (a) more than one death;
- (b) more than one fire;
- (c) more than one explosion;
- (d) both a fire and explosion or both more than one fire and more than one explosion;
- (e) both a death and a fire or explosion or both more than one death and more than one fire or more than one explosion;
- (f) both a death and a fire and an explosion or both more than one death and more than one fire and more than one explosion.

### **51. Rules of evidence not applicable**

A coroner holding an inquest is not bound by the rules of evidence and may be informed and conduct an inquest in any manner the coroner reasonably thinks fit.

**52. Rights of interested persons**

- (1) A coroner may make available any statements or affidavits that the coroner intends to consider to any person who the coroner considers has a sufficient interest.
- (2) The Attorney-General or a person who the coroner considers has a sufficient interest may make submissions to a coroner at any stage of an investigation.
- (3) The Attorney-General may appear or be represented, call and examine or cross-examine witnesses, and make submissions, at an inquest.
- (4) A person who the coroner considers has a sufficient interest may appear or be represented by an Australian legal practitioner or, with permission of the coroner, by any other person at an inquest, call and examine or cross-examine witnesses, and make submissions, at an inquest.

**53. Powers of coroners at an inquest**

- (1) If a coroner reasonably believes it is necessary for the purposes of an inquest, the coroner may –
  - (a) summon a person to attend as a witness or to produce any document or other materials; and
  - (b) inspect, copy and keep for a reasonable period any thing produced at the inquest; and
  - (c) order a witness to answer questions; and

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- (d) order a witness to take an oath or affirmation to answer questions; and
    - (e) give any other directions and do anything else the coroner believes necessary.
  - (2) A coroner may be assisted by counsel or by such other persons as the coroner determines.
  - (3) If a coroner determines that the assistance of counsel is required, the coroner must request the Director of Public Prosecutions to provide counsel to assist the coroner and the Director of Public Prosecutions may provide counsel to assist the coroner.
  - (4) A person must not, without reasonable excuse, disobey a summons, order or direction under subsection (1).

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months.
  - (5) If a person to whom a summons is issued does not appear, the coroner may issue a warrant to apprehend the person.
  - (6) If a person is apprehended under a warrant issued under subsection (5), the coroner may –
    - (a) commit the person to prison until the inquest or the further hearing of the inquest; or
    - (b) admit the person to bail; or

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- (c) orally order the person to appear before the coroner at the time and place to which the inquest in which that person is required as a witness has been adjourned.

**53A. Power of coroner to defer provision of information**

- (1) If the coroner reasonably believes it necessary for the purpose of an investigation, he or she may direct that the provision of specified information contained in records that are in the possession of a State Service Agency or a Minister and to which any person may otherwise be entitled under the *Right to Information Act 2009* be deferred for a specified period.
- (2) An agency or Minister directed by the coroner under subsection (1) is to comply with that direction.

**54. Statements or disclosures made by witnesses at inquest**

A statement or disclosure made by any witness in the course of giving evidence before a coroner at an inquest is not admissible in evidence against that witness in any civil or criminal proceeding in any court other than a prosecution for perjury in the giving of that evidence.

**55. Coroner to hold inquest without a jury**

A coroner must hold an inquest without a jury.

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**56. Exclusion of persons from inquest**

- (1) Subject to this section, a coroner is to conduct an inquest in open court.
- (2) A coroner may order the exclusion from an inquest of any person or all persons if the coroner considers that it is in the interests of the administration of justice, national security or personal security.
- (3) A coroner may order –
  - (a) the removal from an inquest of a person who disobeys an exclusion order; and
  - (b) the imprisonment of the person for not more than 24 hours if the coroner reasonably believes that the person will continue to disobey the order.

**57. Restriction on publication of reports**

- (1) A coroner may order that a report of an inquest or a report of any part of the proceedings of, or any evidence given at, an inquest not be published if the coroner reasonably believes that –
  - (a) it would be likely to prejudice the fair trial of a person; or
  - (b) it would be contrary to the administration of justice, national security or personal security; or

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- (c) it would involve the disclosure of details of sensitive personal matters including, if the senior next of kin of the deceased has so requested, the name of the deceased.
- (2) A person must not publish a report contrary to an order under subsection (1).  
  
Penalty: Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.
- (3) A coroner may, in an order under subsection (1), specify the time for which the order is to be in force.

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**PART 7A – REVIEW**

**58. Chief Magistrate may reopen investigation**

- (1) The Chief Magistrate may reopen an investigation and re-examine some or all of its findings, or direct another coroner to do so, if the Chief Magistrate is satisfied that –
  - (a) the investigation was or may have been tainted by fraud; or
  - (b) the investigation was not sufficiently thorough or was compromised by evidentiary or procedural irregularity; or
  - (c) there are mistakes in the record of the findings; or
  - (d) new facts or evidence affecting the findings have come to light; or
  - (e) the findings were not supported by the evidence; or
  - (f) there is another compelling reason to reopen the investigation.
- (2) The Chief Magistrate’s power under subsection (1) may be exercised on –
  - (a) the Chief Magistrate’s own initiative; or
  - (b) the application of a person who the Chief Magistrate considers has a sufficient interest in the findings of the investigation.

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- (3) However, the Chief Magistrate is not to exercise power under subsection (1) if an application under section 58A in respect of the investigation –
- (a) is before the Supreme Court; or
  - (b) has been rejected by the Supreme Court and the Chief Magistrate's reasons for exercising the power would be the same or substantially the same as the grounds of that application.
- (4) A coroner who is directed to reopen an investigation under this section may, but need not be, the same coroner who conducted the investigation.
- (5) A coroner who is re-examining some or all of the findings of an investigation that has been reopened under this section may do any of the following:
- (a) affirm the findings;
  - (b) quash the findings;
  - (c) vary the findings.
- (6) Subsection (5) does not prevent the coroner from exercising any other power or performing any other function under this Act in respect of the reopened investigation.
- (7) A person may appeal to the Supreme Court if the Chief Magistrate refuses an application made by



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the person under subsection (2)(b) seeking the reopening of an investigation.

- (8) On hearing the appeal, the Supreme Court may –
  - (a) affirm the Chief Magistrate’s decision; or
  - (b) quash the Chief Magistrate’s decision.
- (9) If subsection (8)(b) applies, the Supreme Court –
  - (a) is to order the Chief Magistrate to exercise power under subsection (1) in accordance with such directions as the court may specify in the order; and
  - (b) may make such further orders as the court thinks fit in the circumstances.

**58A. Supreme Court may order inquest findings void, &c.**

- (1) Any person may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that all or any of the findings of an inquest are void.
- (2) Subsection (1) has effect even if the Chief Magistrate has refused an application by any person to reopen the inquest under section 58.
- (3) On an application under subsection (1), the Supreme Court may make the order applied for if the court is satisfied that –
  - (a) the inquest was or may have been tainted by fraud; or

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- (b) the inquest was not sufficiently thorough or was compromised by evidentiary or procedural irregularity; or
  - (c) there are mistakes in the record of the findings; or
  - (d) new facts or evidence affecting the findings have come to light; or
  - (e) the findings were not supported by the evidence; or
  - (f) there is another compelling reason to reopen the inquest.
- (4) If the Supreme Court orders that all or any of the findings of the inquest are void, it is to further order the Chief Magistrate to –
  - (a) reopen the inquest and re-examine any of its findings or hold a new inquest; or
  - (b) direct another coroner to reopen the inquest and re-examine any of its findings or hold a new inquest.
- (5) If subsection (4)(b) applies, the Supreme Court may require that the other coroner not be the same coroner who held the first inquest.
- (6) An applicant under subsection (1) may adduce any evidence, or raise any grounds, whether or not the evidence or grounds have been adduced or raised before the Chief Magistrate on an application under section 58.

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**PART 8 – MISCELLANEOUS**

**58B. Information on operation of Act provided to senior next of kin and other persons with sufficient interest**

As soon as practicable after a coroner commences an investigation into a death under section 21, a person appointed to be the Chief Clerk (Coronial Division) under section 14 is to ensure that any general, or specific, information that is specified in the regulations in relation to the operation of the Act is provided, in the manner specified in the regulations (whether an electronic manner, paper manner, or both), to –

- (a) the senior next of kin of the deceased person; and
- (b) any other person whom the coroner considers to have a sufficient interest in the death.

**58C. Certain records to be provided to senior next of kin in certain circumstances**

- (1) In this section –

*coronial authority*, in respect of a deceased person, means –

- (a) the Chief Magistrate; or
- (b) the coroner who has jurisdiction to investigate the death of the deceased person;

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***coronial record*** means any of the following records in relation to an investigation of a death under this Act:

- (a) the following records, if held by the Magistrates Court (Coronial Division):
  - (i) a report, in respect of the investigation or death, that is prepared by, or on behalf of, the State Forensic Pathologist or by a pathologist, or medical practitioner, approved under section 35;
  - (ii) any other record or document, including any photograph, that –
    - (A) contains evidentiary material from the investigation; or
    - (B) is made under this Act in relation to the investigation or death; or
    - (C) is made as part of an autopsy performed under section 36 in relation to the death;

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- (iii) a transcript, or recording, of oral evidence given to the court in respect of the investigation;
  - (b) a record referred to in paragraph (a) if the record is able to be provided lawfully to the Magistrates Court (Coronial Division) under this Act or any other Act.
- (2) The senior next of kin of a deceased person may request to be provided with a copy of one or more coronial records prepared in respect of the deceased person.
- (3) A request under subsection (2) –
  - (a) is to be made in writing to a coronial authority; and
  - (b) may relate to a specific coronial record, or all coronial records, prepared in respect of the deceased person to whom the request relates.
- (4) Subject to subsection (5), if a request is made to a coronial authority under subsection (2) in respect of a coronial record, the coronial authority must provide a copy of the record to the person who made the request within 28 days after the request is made or such later period as agreed between the person and the coronial authority.

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- (5) A coronial authority may only refuse a request under subsection (2) in respect of a coronial record if the coronial authority is satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that –
- (a) the coronial record is unable to be released by virtue of section 57, or another provision of this Act or any other Act; or
  - (b) the release of the coronial record to the senior next of kin would be –
    - (i) an unreasonable intrusion on the privacy of a person referred to in the record, other than the deceased person to whom the request relates; and
    - (ii) contrary to the public interest due to that intrusion on the privacy of the person; or
  - (c) the release of the coronial record would be likely to prejudice –
    - (i) the investigation of a breach, or possible breach, of the law; or
    - (ii) the enforcement or proper administration of the law; or
    - (iii) the fair trial of a person; or
  - (d) the release of the coronial record would be contrary to national security or personal security.

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- (6) If a coronial authority is satisfied that subsection (5) applies in respect of a coronial record, the coronial authority may redact or modify a copy of the record to the extent necessary, in the opinion of the coronial authority, to enable the record to be released under this section.
  - (7) A coronial authority may order that a coronial record, released to a senior next of kin under this section, not be published.
  - (8) A coronial authority may only make an order under subsection (7) if the coronial authority is satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that the publication of the coronial record is contrary to the public interest.
  - (9) A person must not publish a coronial record contrary to an order under subsection (7).

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

- (10) If a senior next of kin who has made a request under this section is aggrieved by one or more of the following matters in respect of the request, the senior next of kin may appeal the matter:
  - (a) a decision that a record is not a coronial record for the purposes of the request;
  - (b) a failure to provide a copy of the coronial record as required under subsection (4);
  - (c) a decision that subsection (5) applies in respect of a coronial record to which the request relates including, but not limited

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- to, whether an intrusion on the privacy of a person is unreasonable;
- (d) the making of an order under subsection (7) in respect of a coronial record released under the request.
- (11) An appeal under subsection (10) is to be determined by –
- (a) if the appeal relates to a request, under this section, determined by the Chief Magistrate as a coronial authority – the Supreme Court; and
- (b) in any other case – the Chief Magistrate.
- (12) A person aggrieved by a decision of the Chief Magistrate in respect of an appeal under subsection (11)(b) may appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.
- (13) On the hearing of an appeal under subsection (10) or (12), the person determining the appeal may do one or more of the following:
- (a) affirm, or quash, the decision specified in subsection (10) to which the appeal relates;
- (b) affirm, amend, revoke or substitute the order under subsection (7) to which the appeal relates;
- (c) make any further orders as the person thinks fit in the circumstances.



**59. Powers of entry, inspection and possession**

- (1) A coroner who has jurisdiction to investigate a death, a fire or an explosion may, with any assistance the coroner considers necessary –
  - (a) enter, with such force as is reasonable, and inspect any place and anything in it; and
  - (b) take a copy of any document relevant to the investigation; and
  - (c) take possession of any article, substance or thing which the coroner reasonably believes is relevant to the investigation and keep it until the investigation is finished.
- (2) A coroner may only exercise the powers under subsection (1) if the coroner reasonably believes it is necessary for the investigation.
- (3) If a coroner reasonably believes it is necessary for the investigation, the coroner may, in writing, authorise a police officer or a person authorised by the coroner for the purposes of this section to exercise any one or more of the following powers:
  - (a) enter, with such force as is reasonable, a specified place;
  - (b) inspect a specified place and any article, substance or thing in it;

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- (c) take a copy of specified documents or classes of documents;
  - (d) take possession of specified articles, substances or things or classes of articles, substances or things.
- (4) The powers specified in subsection (3) may be exercised at or between times specified in the authority during a period so specified (being a period not exceeding one month after the authority is given).
- (5) Subject to subsection (6), a police officer or a person authorised by a coroner for the purposes of this section may not exercise any of the powers specified in subsection (3) unless the police officer or person, before exercising any of those powers, gives a copy of the police officer's or person's authority to exercise those powers to the owner or occupier of the place to be entered or inspected, or the person in possession of the document or thing, to be inspected, copied or taken.
- (6) A police officer or a person authorised by a coroner for the purposes of this section may exercise any of the powers specified in subsection (3) without giving a copy of the police officer's or person's authority to exercise those powers to the owner or occupier of the place to be entered or inspected, or the person in possession of the document or thing, to be inspected, copied or taken, if it is not practicable in the circumstances to do so.

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- (7) Any article, substance or thing that is taken possession of under this section, other than evidentiary material, within the meaning of section 59B, that is dealt with in accordance with subsection (4) of that section, is in the legal custody, care and control of the coroner conducting the investigation except as may otherwise be provided by an order in force under section 60(2).

**59A. Power of police to secure evidence for coroner in an emergency**

- (1) If a police officer reasonably believes that –
- (a) an article, substance or thing at a place where a death, fire or explosion has occurred is likely to have evidentiary value in a coroner's investigation into that death, fire or explosion; and
  - (b) there is a danger that the article, substance or thing could be lost, concealed or destroyed, or its evidentiary value could be ruined or compromised, if it is not immediately secured –

the police officer, with assistance and using reasonable force if necessary, may enter and inspect the place and take possession of the article, substance or thing.

- (2) Subject to subsection (3)(a), a police officer may exercise power under subsection (1) whether or not a coroner is investigating the death, fire or explosion at the relevant time.

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- (3) The following provisions apply to the exercise of the power specified in subsection (1) if at the relevant time a coroner is investigating the death, fire or explosion:
- (a) the power is to be exercised only if the police officer reasonably believes that in the circumstances it is impracticable to obtain, or unsafe to wait for, authorisation under section 59(3);
  - (b) as soon as practicable after exercising the power, the police officer is to give the coroner and the Chief Magistrate notice and full particulars of the police officer's action;
  - (c) except as may otherwise be provided by an order in force under section 60(2), on the giving of the notice referred to in paragraph (b) the article, substance or thing is in the legal custody, care and control of the coroner.
- (4) The following provisions apply to the exercise of the power specified in subsection (1) if at the relevant time a coroner is not investigating the death, fire or explosion:
- (a) the police officer may retain the article, substance or thing pending the commencement of an investigation;
  - (b) if an investigation is commenced within 12 months of the power being exercised

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- (i) the police officer must immediately give the coroner and the Chief Magistrate notice and full particulars of the police officer's action; and
  - (ii) except as may otherwise be provided by an order under section 60(2), on the giving of the notice the article, substance or thing is in the legal custody, care and control of the coroner;
- (c) if an investigation is not commenced within 12 months of the power being exercised, the article, substance or thing is to be –
- (i) returned to the person from whom it was taken or, if that person is not legally entitled to take possession of it, to the person who is so entitled; or
  - (ii) disposed of as the Commissioner of Police directs if it is illicit.

**59B. Disposal, &c., of evidence that cannot be practicably or safely held**

- (1) In this section –

*evidentiary material* means any article, substance or thing that –

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- (a) has been seized or has otherwise come into the possession of a police officer; and
  - (b) is or could be relevant to proceedings or prospective proceedings under this Act.
- (2) . . . . .
- (3) The Coroner, on application by the Commissioner of Police, may order the Commissioner to cause the evidentiary material to be –
  - (a) rendered safe or inert (if necessary by treating, repackaging or breaking up the evidentiary material); or
  - (b) destroyed or otherwise disposed of.
- (4) However, before any action is taken under subsection (3), the Commissioner of Police must ensure –
  - (a) that a photographic or audio-visual record of the evidentiary material is taken; and
  - (b) where practicable, that –
    - (i) 2 or more samples are taken of the evidentiary material; and
    - (ii) each of those samples is a true representation of the nature of the evidentiary material.

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- (5) The Commissioner must ensure that the samples so taken are kept securely for as long as they are reasonably likely to be required for evidentiary purposes.

**60. Orders for care and control of articles, &c.**

- (1) This section applies to a person claiming ownership of, a lien over, or some other present or future right to possession of, an article, substance or thing that is in the legal custody of a coroner for the purposes of an investigation.
- (2) At any time after an article, substance or thing is taken possession of under section 59 or 59A or during an investigation, the coroner may, on application by the Director of Public Prosecutions or a person to whom this section applies, make such orders as the coroner thinks fit as to the care and control of the article, substance or thing pending the conclusion of the investigation.
- (3) The Director of Public Prosecutions and a person to whom this section applies are each entitled to be heard on any such application.
- (4) An article, substance or thing remains in the legal custody of the coroner notwithstanding any order made under subsection (2).

**61. Orders as to custody, &c., of articles, &c.**

- (1) On the conclusion of an investigation or on the adjournment or conclusion of an inquest, a

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coroner must make such orders as the coroner thinks fit for the custody, care and control, or the disposition, of each article, substance or thing that was tendered in evidence at the inquest or taken possession of under section 59 or 59A unless the coroner is satisfied that the article, substance or thing will be, or is likely to be, required for the purpose of other legal proceedings.

- (2) The Director of Public Prosecutions and a person to whom section 60 applies are each entitled to be heard with respect to any order under subsection (1).

**62. Variation or revocation of orders as to custody, &c., of articles, &c.**

- (1) Where there is a substantial change in the circumstances to which an order under section 60 or 61 applies, the coroner who made the order may, on the application of the Director of Public Prosecutions or a person to whom section 60 applies, vary or revoke that order by a subsequent order under the appropriate section.
- (2) If it is not practicable for the coroner who made the original order to hear an application under subsection (1), the application may be heard and determined by any other coroner.



**63. Appeal to Supreme Court from orders as to custody, &c., of articles, &c.**

The Director of Public Prosecutions or a person to whom section 60 applies may apply to the Supreme Court for a review of an order made by a coroner under section 60, 61 or 62.

**64. Coroner not required to give evidence in certain cases**

A coroner is not a compellable witness before a court or tribunal, or in any judicial or other proceedings, in respect of anything that came to the coroner's knowledge in exercising and performing his or her powers and functions under this Act.

**65. Obstruction**

A person must not hinder or obstruct a coroner or a person acting under a coroner's authority in exercising powers under this Act.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 20 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months.

**66. Contempt**

A person must not –

- (a) insult a coroner in relation to the exercise of the coroner's functions or powers; or

- (b) interrupt an inquest; or
- (c) create a disturbance, or take part in creating or continuing a disturbance, in or near a place at which an inquest is being held.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months.

#### **67. Protection from legal proceedings**

Neither the coroner nor a person acting under an authority given under this Act is liable to any legal proceedings in relation to anything done under this Act, unless it was done in bad faith.

#### **68. Manner of making applications**

An application under sections 26(2), 37(3), 38(3), 39(4), 44(2), 58A(1) and 63 or an appeal under section 58(7) is to be made in accordance with Rules of Court in force under the *Supreme Court Civil Procedure Act 1932*.

#### **69. Annual report**

- (1) The Chief Magistrate must, on or before 30 November in each year, prepare and submit to the Minister a report in relation to the operation of this Act during the financial year ending on the preceding 30 June.
- (2) The report –

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- (a) must include details of deaths of persons held in custody and findings and recommendations made by coroners; and
  - (b) may include any other matter that the Chief Magistrate considers appropriate.
- (3) The Minister must cause a copy of the report to be laid on the table of each House of Parliament within 10 sitting days after receiving the report.

**69A. Rules of court**

Rules of court made for this Act by the Magistrates Rule Committee may, without limiting the generality of the committee's powers, make provision for or with respect to all or any of the following:

- (a) the practice and procedure at, or preliminary or incidental to, inquests and the recording of proceedings at inquests;
- (b) the form of oath to be taken by persons appointed to record or transcribe proceedings at inquests;
- (c) the summoning and attendance of witnesses at inquests;
- (d) the conditions relating to the conduct of an autopsy;
- (e) the issue of certificates authorising the disposal of human remains;
- (f) the manner of dealing with exhibits.

## **70. Regulations**

- (1) The Governor may make regulations for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), regulations under this section may prescribe –
  - (a) fees and charges payable in respect of any matter under this Act; and
  - (b) expenses and allowances payable to witnesses or other persons under this Act.
- (3) Regulations under this section may –
  - (a) authorise any act, matter or thing in relation to which the regulations may be made to be from time to time determined, applied or regulated by the Chief Magistrate; and
  - (b) be made subject to such conditions or be made so as to apply differently according to such factors as may be specified in the regulations or according to such limitations or restrictions, whether as to time or circumstance or otherwise, as may be so specified; and
  - (c) provide that a contravention of any of the regulations is an offence; and
  - (d) in respect of such an offence, provide for the imposition of a fine not exceeding 10 penalty units and, in the case of a

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continuing offence, a further fine not exceeding one penalty unit for each day during which the offence continues.

- (4) Regulations under this section may contain provisions of a savings or transitional nature consequent on the enactment of this Act.
- (5) A provision referred to in subsection (4) may, if the regulations so provide, take effect from the commencement of this Act or a later date.

**71. Repeal**

The *Coroners Act 1957* is repealed.

**72. Savings and transitional provisions**

- (1) On and after the commencement day –
  - (a) a reference in any Act to any section, Division, Part or Schedule of the *Coroners Act 1957* is taken to be a reference to the equivalent provision, if any, in the *Coroners Act 1995*; and
  - (b) a reference in any law, instrument or document to the *Coroners Act 1957* is taken to be a reference to the *Coroners Act 1995*.
- (2) A person holding office as a coroner under the *Coroners Act 1957* immediately before the commencement of this Act is taken to have been appointed as a coroner under this Act.

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- (3) The *Coroners Act 1957*, as in force immediately before the commencement of this section, continues to apply in relation to –
- (a) any death in respect of which a coroner has been informed before the commencement of this Act; and
  - (b) any direction given to a coroner before the commencement of this section by the Attorney-General to inquire into a fire; and
  - (c) any request –
    - (i) made to a coroner by the owner of property or an insurer of property destroyed or damaged by fire to inquire into the fire; and
    - (ii) approved by the Attorney-General –before the commencement of this section; and
  - (d) any request given to a coroner before the commencement of this section by the State Fire Commission to inquire into a fire.
- (4) A person who, immediately before the commencement of the *Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1999* held an office of coroner's clerk, holds the office of coroner's associate on the same terms and conditions and the appointment to the office of

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coroner's clerk is taken to be an appointment to the office of coroner's associate made by the Chief Magistrate.

- (5) A reference in any Act or other document to a coroner's clerk is taken to be a reference to a coroner's associate.

**72A. Transition from regulations to rules**

- (1) In this section –

*remade*, for regulations, means the rescission of all of those regulations and the making of new regulations in substitution for those regulations;

*rules* means rules of court made for this Act by the Magistrates Rule Committee on or after the transition day;

*Transition Act* means the *Justice (Delegated Legislation) Act 2003*;

*transition day* means the day on which Part 3 of the Transition Act commences.

- (2) Notwithstanding the amendments made to this Act by Part 3 of the Transition Act, the regulations that were in force under this Act immediately before the transition day (the “*Coroners Regulations 1996*”) –
- (a) continue in force on and after that day as if the Transition Act had not been enacted; and

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- (b) may, until rules take effect, be amended or remade as if the Transition Act had not been enacted.
- (3) After rules take effect, the *Coroners Regulations 1996*, unless sooner amended or remade consequent on the making of those rules or rescinded, continue in force only to the extent that they are not inconsistent with those rules.

**73. Administration of Act**

Until provision is made in relation to this Act by order under section 4 of the *Administrative Arrangements Act 1990* –

- (a) the administration of this Act is assigned to the Minister for Justice; and
- (b) the Department responsible to the Minister for Justice in relation to the administration of this Act is the Department of Justice.



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**NOTES**

The foregoing text of the *Coroners Act 1995* comprises those instruments as indicated in the following table. Any reprint changes made under any Act, in force before the commencement of the *Legislation Publication Act 1996*, authorising the reprint of Acts and statutory rules or permitted under the *Legislation Publication Act 1996* and made before 1 December 2025 are not specifically referred to in the following table of amendments.

Act	Number and year	Date of commencement
<i>Medical Practitioners Registration Act 1996</i>	No. 2 of 1996	21.8.1996
<i>Coroners Act 1995</i>	No. 73 of 1995	31.12.1996
<i>Mental Health (Consequential Amendments) Act 1996</i>	No. 32 of 1996	1.11.1999
<i>Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1999</i>	No. 61 of 1999	24.11.1999
<i>Youth Justice (Consequential Amendments) Act 1999</i>	No. 49 of 1999	1.2.2000
<i>Children, Young Persons and Their Families and Youth Justice (Consequential Repeals and Amendments) Act 1998</i>	No. 2 of 1998	1.7.2000
<i>Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1999</i>	No. 58 of 1999	1.11.2000
<i>Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2000</i>	No. 62 of 2000	14.11.2000
<i>State Service (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2000</i>	No. 86 of 2000	1.5.2001
<i>Promissory Oaths Amendment Act 2001</i>	No. 92 of 2001	5.12.2001
<i>Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2001</i>	No. 91 of 2001	5.12.2001
<i>Statute Law Revision Act 2003</i>	No. 9 of 2003	16.4.2003
<i>Justice (Delegated Legislation) Act 2003</i>	No. 6 of 2003	1.7.2003
<i>Justice (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2003</i>	No. 69 of 2003	15.12.2003
<i>Relationships (Consequential Amendments) Act 2003</i>	No. 45 of 2003	1.1.2004
<i>Police Service (Consequential Amendments) Act 2003</i>	No. 76 of 2003	1.1.2004

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Act	Number and year	Date of commencement
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2004</i>	No. 44 of 2004	16.12.2004
<i>Statutory Officers (Age for Retirement) Act 2005</i>	No. 17 of 2005	10.6.2005
<i>Coroners Amendment Act 2005</i>	No. 66 of 2005	15.12.2005
<i>Mental Health Amendment (Secure Mental Health Unit) Act 2005</i>	No. 72 of 2005	20.2.2006
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Further Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2006</i>	No. 43 of 2006	18.12.2006
<i>Legal Profession (Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments) Act 2007</i>	No. 66 of 2007	31.12.2008
<i>Right to Information (Consequential and Transitional) Act 2009</i>	No. 54 of 2009	1.7.2010
<i>Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) (Consequential Amendments) Act 2010</i>	No. 3 of 2010	1.7.2010
<i>Mental Health (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2013</i>	No. 69 of 2013	17.2.2014
<i>Coroners Amendment Act 2015</i>	No. 1 of 2015	21.4.2015
<i>Promissory Oaths (Consequential Amendments) Act 2015</i>	No. 8 of 2015	15.5.2015
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2017</i>	No. 29 of 2017	5.9.2017
<i>Criminal Code Amendment (Dangerous Driving) Act 2017</i>	No. 35 of 2017	19.9.2017
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2018</i>	No. 29 of 2018	10.12.2018
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2022</i>	No. 2 of 2022	18.3.2022
<i>Justice and Related Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Act 2023</i>	No. 5 of 2023	13.6.2023
<i>Validation Act 2023</i>	No. 8 of 2023	23.6.2023
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2025</i>	No. 17 of 2025	1.12.2025
<i>Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2024</i>	No. 27 of 2024	not commenced
<i>Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) (Consequential Amendments) Act 2019</i>	No. 44 of 2019	not commenced

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**TABLE OF AMENDMENTS**

Provision affected	How affected
Section 3	Amended by No. 2 of 1996, s. 87 and Sched. 7, No. 32 of 1996, Sched. 1, No. 2 of 1998, Sched. 2, No. 49 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 58 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 6 of 2003, s. 8, No. 9 of 2003, Sched. 1, No. 45 of 2003, Sched. 1, No. 76 of 2003, Sched. 1, No. 66 of 2005, s. 4, No. 72 of 2005, s. 75, No. 3 of 2010, Sched. 1, No. 69 of 2013, Sched. 1 and No. 1 of 2015, s. 4
Section 3A	Inserted by No. 1 of 2015, s. 5
Section 3B	Amended by No. 29 of 2017, Sched. 1
Section 10	Inserted by No. 5 of 2023, s. 9
Section 11	Amended by No. 6 of 2003, s. 9
Section 12	Amended by No. 92 of 2001, s. 10
Section 13	Substituted by No. 8 of 2015, s. 6
Section 14	Repealed by No. 17 of 2005, Sched. 1
Section 15	Amended by No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1 and No. 6 of 2003, s. 10
Section 16	Amended by No. 86 of 2000, Sched. 1
Section 17	Amended by No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 62 of 2000, Sched. 1, No. 86 of 2000, Sched. 1, No. 91 of 2001, s. 4 and No. 76 of 2003, Sched. 1
Section 18	Amended by No. 62 of 2000, Sched. 1
Section 18A	Amended by No. 86 of 2000, Sched. 1
Section 19	Amended by No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1 and No. 6 of 2003, s. 11
Section 22	Inserted by No. 8 of 2023, s. 5
Section 24	Amended by No. 2 of 1998, Sched. 2, No. 49 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 9 of 2003, Sched. 1, No. 72 of 2005, s. 76 and No. 69 of 2013, Sched. 1
Section 24A	Amended by No. 1 of 2015, s. 6
Section 25	Amended by No. 2 of 1998, Sched. 2, No. 49 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 9 of 2003, Sched. 1, No. 66 of 2005, s. 5, No. 72 of 2005, s. 77, No. 69 of 2013, Sched. 1 and No. 1 of 2015, s. 7
Section 26A	Inserted by No. 1 of 2015, s. 8
Section 28	Amended by No. 35 of 2017, s. 8
Section 29	Inserted by No. 66 of 2005, s. 6
Section 32	Amended by No. 2 of 1998, Sched. 2, No. 49 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 58 of 1999, Sched. 1, No. 72 of 2005, s. 78 and No. 1 of 2015, s. 9
	Amended by No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1 and No. 44 of 2004, s. 17
	Amended by No. 58 of 1999, Sched. 1 and No. 44 of 2004,

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Provision affected	How affected
	s. 18
Section 34	Amended by No. 6 of 2003, s. 12
Section 41	Amended by No. 1 of 2015, s. 10
Section 46	Amended by No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1 and No. 44 of 2004, s. 19
Section 49	Amended by No. 6 of 2003, s. 13
Section 52	Amended by No. 66 of 2007, Sched. 1
Section 53	Amended by No. 29 of 2017, Sched. 1
Section 53A	Inserted by No. 43 of 2006, s. 14
	Amended by No. 54 of 2009, Sched. 1
Part 7A	Inserted by No. 44 of 2004, s. 20
Section 58	Substituted by No. 44 of 2004, s. 20
	Amended by No. 1 of 2015, s. 11
Section 58A	Inserted by No. 44 of 2004, s. 20
Section 58B	Inserted by No. 5 of 2023, s. 10
Section 58C	Inserted by No. 17 of 2025, s. 5
Section 59	Amended by No. 29 of 2017, Sched. 1
Section 59A	Inserted by No. 69 of 2003, Sched. 1
Section 59B	Inserted by No. 29 of 2017, Sched. 1
	Amended by No. 2 of 2022, Sched. 1
Section 60	Amended by No. 69 of 2003, Sched. 1 and No. 1 of 2015, s. 12
Section 61	Amended by No. 69 of 2003, Sched. 1 and No. 1 of 2015, s. 13
Section 62	Amended by No. 1 of 2015, s. 14
Section 63	Amended by No. 1 of 2015, s. 15
Section 64	Substituted by No. 44 of 2004, s. 21
Section 68	Amended by No. 44 of 2004, s. 22
Section 69	Amended by No. 29 of 2018, s. 17
Section 69A	Inserted by No. 6 of 2003, s. 14
Section 70	Amended by No. 58 of 1999, Sched. 1 and No. 6 of 2003, s. 15
Section 72	Amended by No. 61 of 1999, Sched. 1
Section 72A	Inserted by No. 6 of 2003, s. 16