

Abstract - Fair Hearings in the Coroner's Court

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Coronial Inquests are becoming increasingly important for businesses and industries with the potential to directly and indirectly impact on business operations. In addition to the heavy emotional burden created by the loss of a co-worker, the findings of a Coroner can have a significant impact on whether the business and its employees will be prosecuted, how the business will be run in the future, the businesses ability to tender for work and the ability of the business to resolve compensation claims.

This presentation will provide an overview of the modern role of the Coroner's Court, how it operates and what is to be expected in the Coroner's Court. It will focus on two unique aspects of a coronial inquest, the inapplicability of the rules of evidence and the role of Counsel Assisting. In considering these aspects the presenter will question what is fair and how a fair hearing can be achieved. It will equip persons who can expect to be involved in an inquest, in some form, with a working understanding of inquisitorial process, incident management strategies and minimising potential negative consequences from a Coronial Inquest.