



Media Release – Tuesday 24 March 2020

CHIEF CORONER'S STATEMENT REGARDING COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 3-4

“While I hope New Zealand doesn't record a single death from Covid-19, should the worst happen, the Coroners Court is prepared.

“A death that is known to be, or suspected most likely to be, from Covid-19 will generally not need to be reported to a coroner. This is because the death is from a natural cause and the probable cause of death is known.

“Doctors and nurse practitioners are encouraged to issue a cause of death certificate in these cases. If a cause of death is not known the case will be reportable to a coroner.

“A Covid-19 death will be reportable to a coroner if the death is of someone in official custody or care.

“Coronial work will largely continue as normal in the coming weeks. Over 90 percent of the work in the Coroners Court is done in chambers. That is, there is no public court hearing. This includes written findings. This work will continue as normal.

“If you are involved in an upcoming inquest, please get in touch with your case manager to discuss any concerns you may have.”

Ends

Media Contact: media@justice.govt.nz

Note to media:

Not all deaths in New Zealand need to be reported to the coroner. Where someone dies from known causes (i.e. a medical professional can sign off on the cause of death) the coroner doesn't need to be involved. More detailed information on the kinds of cases that are referred to the coroner can be found online here: <https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/>