When does a COVID-19 death need to be reported to the coroner?

The death of a person who has tested positive for or was suspected to have had COVID-19 will generally NOT need to be reported to the coroner. This is because the death is from a natural cause and the probable cause of death is known.

The fact that COVID-19 is a *notifiable condition* under the *Public Health Act 2005* does not of itself make the death reportable to the coroner.

Doctors are encouraged to issue a cause of death certificate in these cases.

A COVID-19 death will only be reportable to the coroner if:

- the death is a death in custody or a death in care; or
- the person died as a result of the care they received or did not receive, for example, a missed diagnosis or failure to treat COVID-19.

However, a COVID-19 death will NOT be reportable for failure to provide health care because of inadequate resourcing in the event of an overwhelming demand for critical care services, provided the clinical decision-making for the person was consistent with the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS) COVID-19 Guidelines of 16 March 2020.¹

Similarly, the death of a person from another natural cause will not be reportable for failure to provide health care where the person was triaged as not suitable for intensive care management in accordance with the ANZICS Guidelines.

General enquiries about reportable deaths should be directed to the Coroners Court of Queensland during business hours on (07) 3738 7050.