

# Inquest records

4. 10. 94  
MRO

## CERTIFICATE OF PARTICULARS.



I HEREBY certify, that on the *Fifth*  
day of *September* 18*94*, I held an Inquest of Death  
at *Kynuna* in the Police District of  
*Winton* and that the following particulars  
were then disclosed:—

Name of deceased: *Samuel Hoffmeister*

Profession or calling: *Shearer*

Height, colour of hair, peculiar clothing, }  
and any other means of identity: }

Where found and when: *Near Kynuna, Sept. 2. 1894*

Date of death: *September 2. 1894*

Supposed cause of death: *Suicide by shooting*

Persons last seen in company of deceased, }  
and names of suspected persons: } *Red Highland, W. Moody, L. Murray, J. Spelling*

DR2812 - Certificate of Particulars form, inquest into the death of Samuel Hoffmeister, 2 September 1894

Research Guide to inquest records  
at Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives (QSA) is the official repository for Queensland Government records selected for permanent retention because of their continuing value. The archived public records are from state government departments, state courts, local government authorities and statutory authorities. The records are in our facility at [Runcorn, Brisbane](#), and open records are available for viewing in the Reading Room, free-of-charge.

The main finding aid for records held at QSA is the [Queensland State Archives' online catalogue](#) (known as ArchivesSearch).

The following citation abbreviations are used throughout our catalogue:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| ITM | QSA Item (describes the item)                                      |
| PR  | Physical Representation (generally the original or microfilm copy) |
| DR  | Digital Representation (for a digital image)                       |
| S   | Series ID (for a series of records)                                |
| A   | Agency ID (for the creating or responsible agency).                |

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that our catalogue contains images, names and voices of people who have died.**

## Background

Inquests are magisterial inquiries held before a Coroner to establish the cause of death; the identity of the deceased; when, where and how death occurred and whether any person is to be charged with a criminal offence. In certain circumstances, inquests into fires may also be held, as well as enquiries with respect to missing persons. Copies of depositions of witnesses, the Coroner's inquisition (a prescribed form setting out the details of the case and the Coroner's finding) and other relevant documents for all inquests held in Queensland are forwarded to the Justice Department, and then to Queensland State Archives to be kept in-perpetuity.

Under Queensland legislation, a coroner is required to conduct preliminary enquiries into all deaths that occur under a certain set of circumstances. Under the *Coroners Act 2003*, deaths subject to a Coroner's inquiry include: unnatural deaths such as accidents, suicides and homicides; deaths where the cause is unknown or where the deceased did not see a doctor in the preceding 3 months; or certain special deaths, such as those occurring in a prison or under anaesthetic. These set of circumstances have varied only slightly since the *Inquests of Death Act 1866*. Upon completion of this preliminary enquiry, the Coroner decides if the death warranted a full inquest.

Inquest files are held at QSA from 1859 onwards. Inquest files include the date and place of the inquest, the name and occupation of the deceased, the date and supposed cause of death, depositions of witnesses describing the circumstances of the death, the names of any suspected persons, and a statement as to the action to be taken by the Justice and Attorney General's Department. In the case of an inquest into fire, details include the place, date and supposed cause of the fire; the damage, deaths or injuries caused; depositions of witnesses describing the circumstances of the fire; the names of any suspected persons; and a statement of action to be taken.

QSA's online index covers [Inquests from 1859–1902](#). If an online QSA index is available, we recommend researchers search this. The content of online indexes has been sourced directly from original records. Digitised copies of many original registers and indexes are also available in the QSA catalogue, and digitised copies of some microfilmed original records are available on the Reading Room computers.

## Research Guide to inquest records

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Indexes to inquests after 1902 are available for searching in the Reading Room. Our step-by-step search procedure is also available in the Reading Room.

QSA also holds records on preliminary enquiries into deaths. In most cases, no inquests were ordered for these preliminary enquiries. Preliminary enquiries, Series ID S13415 are for the Brisbane area from 1931 – 1962. Early files include some police reports that became inquests and may include information not found on the inquest file. For later years, the files are police investigations into deaths where no inquest was held and may include a post-mortem examination report.

## Justice Department

### Register of coroners' inquests

9/5/1876–31/12/1979

Series ID [S236](#)

These registers are used to find files in [S36](#) and [S165](#).

### Inquest files

Circa 1/1/1859–31/12/1978

[S36](#)

*These files may contain information or photographs which some people may find distressing or offensive.*

All files with the end date up to and including 31/12/1978 have a 30 year Restricted Access Period (RAP). Files transferred to QSA in or after 2015 have a 75 year RAP, and many are item-listed by the name of the deceased in [ArchivesSearch](#). Files may include post-mortem examination reports, date and place of death, cause/s of death, date of post-mortem and name of the doctor who conducted the post-mortem, Coroner's decisions on whether an inquest should be held, Coroners' Inquisitions (Death Inquests), which provide the name and personal details of the deceased, names of witnesses examined.

### No Inquest files

Circa 1/1/1973–1/1/1976

[S165](#)

Under the *Coroner's Act 1958* a coroner could decide that an inquest into a death was unnecessary where he was sufficiently satisfied that: the death was due to natural causes or that no good purpose would have been served by the holding of an inquest. These files may include name of the deceased, age, occupation, last known place of address, place and date of death, coroner presiding, cause of death, date and place where the Coroner's inquest was held and the signature of both the Coroner and Under Secretary.

### Preliminary enquiries – Reports on deaths for which no inquests were ordered, Brisbane

Circa 1/1/1931–31/12/1962

[S13415](#)

## Other Queensland State Archives' records

QSA does hold other records pertaining to inquests and preliminary enquiries. Additional series including railway and mining accidents and fire inquests are listed under [Department of Justice](#) in [ArchivesSearch](#). Also,

information about deaths can also be found in the records of the police and local court authorities including Coroner's Courts in Courts of Petty Sessions districts.

When searching for information about a death it is important to consider all possibilities and think creatively. Keep in mind the circumstances surrounding the death and other places information could possibly be found. For example, information concerning the death of a child at school may also be found in school correspondence for state schools, [S12607](#) files; if the death occurred 'on the job', it may be worth searching departmental files. If the coronial inquest delivers a manslaughter or murder verdict look at [Police Department](#) murder records. Further information in the [Research Guide to Murder files](#).

## Alternative sources not held at Queensland State Archives

### Death certificates

If no inquest is found, it is often a good idea to get check the death certificate. Recent death certificates state details of inquests. A death certificate allows researchers to pinpoint the date of the inquest. Occasionally the time between the death and the inquest is considerable. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, index to deaths in Queensland is searchable online at <http://www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/>.

### Post-mortems

QSA does not hold post-mortem reports as a discrete collection or series of records. Copies of post-mortem reports sometimes appear on later inquest files, and police reports into deaths not requiring an inquest. Researchers interested in recent post-mortem reports may write to:

The Office of the State Coroner  
GPO Box 1649  
Brisbane Qld 4001  
Email: [state.coroner@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:state.coroner@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Mining accidents

The State Library of Queensland's [Queensland Mining Accidents](#) 1882 to 1945 was compiled from the *Queensland Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings* (later know as Queensland Parliamentary papers). Entries record the date of the accident, the name of the miner, the mine where the accident took place and other brief details.

### Newspapers

Historical newspapers are another valuable source of information. They contain death and funeral notices, and often details of an unusual death, an incident resulting in a death, and sometimes state if an inquest was held. Digitised Australian newspapers are searchable online at the National Library of Australia's Trove website at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>.

Copies of most historical Queensland newspapers are available at the [State Library of Queensland](#). The contact details for the State Library of Queensland are [available here](#).

### Need more information?

Check our online catalogue [ArchivesSearch](#).  
Phone us on (07) 3037 6777 or you can [email](#) an archivist.