



Media Release

Date: 14 February 2013

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For immediate release

Death in custody prompts recommendations to police and Corrective Services

The State Coroner has released her recommendations following the conclusion of the Le Marseny inquest today. Adam Le Marseny died in May 2011 while being held in Corrective Services cells housed within the Sydney Police Centre in Surry Hills. Under the influence of prescription drugs when arrested, Le Marseny received no medical attention up to his death. No cause of death could be determined.

Redfern Legal Centre solicitor David Porter represented the family of Le Marseny at the inquest. Porter specialises in administrative law and complaints against police. The Redfern Legal Centre police powers and administrative law service receives a steady stream of complaints and inquiries about the conduct of police, amounting to hundreds of complaints a year.

The Le Marseny family, who live outside New South Wales and would otherwise have been unable to attain pro bono representation, contacted Porter for assistance with their case.

The Inquest heard evidence concerning whether Le Marseny's custody was properly handled and whether he was given appropriate assistance and care. It heard that Le Marseny was observed by police to be intoxicated as early as 1:30pm the afternoon before he died.

The State Coroner made a recommendation that the Commissioner of Police give consideration to ensuring all police officers acting as custody managers and assistants be trained in identifying health risks for persons held in custody who have consumed alcohol, prescription drugs or prohibited drugs. In response to a recommendation requested on behalf of the family, the State Coroner recommended that Corrective Services consider requesting Justice Health to conduct a 6-month trial of a 24-hour nursing presence at the Surry Hills Court Cells Complex, at least on Friday and Saturday nights.

Solicitor David Porter said “ It is widely recognised that intoxication is a serious health risk. It is also common for police suspects to be intoxicated. These are tragic consequences attached to a daily scenario for police, and we must do everything we can to equip police to avoid these consequences in future”.