

ARCHIE MOORE

Kamilaroi/Bigambul peoples


Born 1970, Toowoomba, Queensland

Lives and works on Ngudooroo (Lamb Island), Queensland

Archie Moore is known for his research-driven practice that combines historical anomalies and hypocrisies with reflections on how they impact Indigenous peoples of Australia, including himself. His artworks utilise government records to share the human face of tragedy, and have an ability to draw raw emotive responses from viewers.

Inert State 2022, commissioned for 'Embodied Knowledge: Queensland Contemporary Art', presents 200 coroners' reports into Indigenous deaths in custody, floating silently in the Queensland Art Gallery's Watermill. Developed in 2021, around the 30th anniversary of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, this deeply considered installation evokes the tension between recorded and unrecorded facts. The 200 reports from across the country date from the year 2008 onwards: the year of then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Apology to Stolen Generations. At the time of development, there had been 200 Indigenous deaths in custody since this historic acknowledgment. However, the number of continued cases doesn't align with the rhetoric — 'Sorry means you don't do it again'.

Despite 339 recommendations made in the Royal Commission to prevent further deaths in custody, few have been implemented, and subsequent



OFFICE OF THE STATE CORONER
FINDINGS OF INQUEST

CITATION: Inquest into the death of [REDACTED]

TITLE OF COURT: Coroner's Court

JURISDICTION: Townsville

FILE NO(s): [REDACTED]

DELIVERED ON: [REDACTED]

DELIVERED AT: Townsville

HEARING DATE(s): [REDACTED]

FINDINGS OF: [REDACTED] State Coroner

CATCHWORDS: CORONERS: Death in custody, Necrotising Fascitis

REPRESENTATION:

Counsel Assisting:	Ms [REDACTED] (instructed by [REDACTED] Lawyers)
Nest of Kin:	Ms [REDACTED] (instructed by [REDACTED] Lawyers)
Queensland Health:	[REDACTED]

CITATION: Inquest into the death of [REDACTED] [2015]

TITLE OF COURT: Coroner's Court

JURISDICTION: Darwin

FILE NO(s): [REDACTED]

DELIVERED ON: [REDACTED]

DELIVERED AT: Darwin

HEARING DATE(s): [REDACTED]

FINDING OF: Mr [REDACTED] SM

CATCHWORDS: Death in custody, "paperless arrest scheme"; care and treatment whilst in Darwin Watch House, overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody

REPRESENTATION:


Counsel Assisting:	[REDACTED]
Northern Territory Police & Northern Territory Department of Health:	[REDACTED] QC
Family of the Deceased:	[REDACTED]

Judgment category classification: A

Judgement ID number: [REDACTED]

Number of paragraphs: 93


Number of pages: 34



CORONERS COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Inquest:	Inquest into the death of [REDACTED]
Hearing dates:	[REDACTED]
Date of findings:	[REDACTED]
Place of findings:	NSW Coroners Court - Milton
Findings of:	Magistrate [REDACTED] Deputy State Coroner
Catchwords:	CORONIAL LAW – death in the course of a police operation – police communications with family – question of recommendations.
File number:	[REDACTED]
Representation:	Counsel Assisting the inquest: [REDACTED] of Counsel v/b [REDACTED] Solicitors Office The NSW Commissioner of Police, and officers of the NSW Police Force: [REDACTED] of Counsel v/b Office of the General Counsel, NSW Police Force. Ms [REDACTED] Aboriginal Legal Service.

Findings in the Inquest into the death of [REDACTED]



IN THE CORONERS COURT OF VICTORIA AT MELBOURNE

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST
Form 37 Rule 60(2) of the Coroners Act 2008

Deceased: [REDACTED]

Delivered on: [REDACTED]

Delivered at: Coroner's Court of Victoria, 65 Kewenough Street, Southbank

Hearing dates: Directions Hearing [REDACTED]
Inquest: [REDACTED]
Written Submissions: [REDACTED]

Findings of: Coroner [REDACTED]

Counsel assisting the Coroner: Leading Senior Counsel v/b [REDACTED] from the Police Coroner Support Unit

Representation: Ms [REDACTED] instructed by [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Solicitors, appeared on behalf of [REDACTED]
Ms [REDACTED] instructed by [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Legal, appeared on behalf of [REDACTED] Aboriginal Co-operative Limited
Ms [REDACTED] instructed by [REDACTED] of Victorian Government Solicitors Office, appeared on behalf of Coroner's Victoria and Justice Health

Catchwords: Death in custody, [REDACTED] hanging, surgically repaired jaw fracture, failed money return, pain, and medical management in custody



tragedies have continued to occur at 'unprecedented levels'.¹ Since 1991, more than 500 Indigenous people have died in police custody in Australia.² In the wake of US man George Floyd's death in custody in 2020, the #BlackLivesMatter protest movement and renewed global urgency to tackle this inequality in policing, Moore's work resonates with an even larger audience.

When viewed from a distance, the floating white reams of paper seem foreboding, threatened by the surrounding water; however, on close inspection and upon learning that each stack represents a person whose life was lost in state custody, the documents assume thought-provoking weight. The reports, which are freely available to the public and sourced from locations across the country, detail the State's account of the final moments of adults and children. The names of the deceased and the case file numbers have been redacted in respect to the families.

Perched among the sea of papers are domineering stacks of heavily bound Hansards (records of debates within parliament). In these volumes, politicians use statistics to debate the lives of people far removed from themselves. Moore's work brings the two worlds together in an ominous display of cause and effect. While each report represents a single life, the combined mass of floating data also allows us to visualise the vast scale of Indigenous Australians' over-criminalisation.

Inert State is a temporary memorial to hundreds of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples that creates a solemn place for reflection and contemplation. It acknowledges the fact that there is no permanent public memorial to those who have died, because these tragic deaths in custody are not history — they are ongoing. Moore's installation is a testament to the strength and resistance of the families and communities that time and time again come together to mourn and collectively rally for institutional change.

KD

Endnotes

- 1 Thalia Anthony, et al., *30 Years On: Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Recommendations Remain Unimplemented* (Working Paper no. 140/2021), Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, <https://caepr.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2021/4/WP_140_Anthony_et_al_2021_0.pdf>, viewed 8 March 2022.
- 2 Lorena Allam, "'Beyond heartbreaking": 500 Indigenous deaths in custody since 1991 Royal Commission', *The Guardian*, 6 December 2021, <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/dec/06/beyond-heartbreaking-500-indigenous-deaths-in-custody-since-1991-royal-commission>>, viewed 8 March 2022.

Inert State (detail) 2022 / Commissioned for
'Embodied Knowledge' by QAGOMA / Courtesy:
Archie Moore and The Commercial, Sydney

(pp.84–5) Archie Moore in his studio, Ngudooroo
(Lamb Island), Queensland 2022

