

The Northern Coroner for Queensland, Magistrate Nerida Wilson, is investigating the deaths of three Aboriginal females aged 17,18 and 37 years from the community of Doomadgee in the Gulf of Carpentaria, all who died from Rheumatic Heart Disease (“RHD”) or the consequences and complications of Rheumatic Heart Disease or Acute Rheumatic Fever (“ARF”) and its treatment.

The Coroner recognises that RHD is 100 percent preventable and is almost exclusively a disease of poverty and social disadvantage. Indigenous Queenslanders have a prevalence of RHD 582 times higher than other people living in Queensland.

An inquest, the culmination of a two-year coronial investigation, is scheduled for July 2022 and will examine the circumstances of each of these deaths, the adequacy of the care and treatment received, and any missed opportunities generally for the prevention and awareness of RHD / ARF.

The Coroner will then determine if recommendations can be made that will prevent deaths from happening in similar circumstances in the future.

ENDS