



STATE CORONER'S COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Inquest into the deaths arising from the Lindt Café siege

State Coroner's closing remarks – 7 September 2016

I anticipate that the next time this inquest convenes in public will be for the delivery of findings. That will now inevitably be in the New Year. There is a lot of work to be done between then and now but I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the good work that has already been done by so many people – in particular the team of investigators led by Detective Chief Inspector Memmolo and the various technical and content experts who have shared their knowledge. We could not have hoped to unpack these complex events without the assistance of those groups of people.

I also wish to acknowledge the cooperation and the patience of the families of Katrina and Tori and of the surviving hostages. The inquest was obliged to start before many affected by the deaths could have been emotionally ready. That must have added to their pain – something I deeply regret.

The inquest may have seemed lengthy. Despite that the evidence has been largely completed within the time frame that many inquests are only about to start. The Court has sat in public for a total of 23 weeks. The rest of the time was required to investigate the matter and put the evidence into a form that enabled the events to be properly and thoroughly examined in public.

The task of the inquest has been to lay out the facts - what happened and why, so that those with a special interest in the events can understand how it came about and those responsible for preventing recurrences may learn how best to approach that.

We have been well aware of the dangers of hindsight bias since the outset and have guarded against it. Nor is it our role to ascribe blame. Commentary to the contrary is either mischievous or ill-informed.

I acknowledge the assistance of the court staff, the sheriffs and the department's media officers – there have been novel challenges in these proceedings that they have dealt with superbly.

Finally, I wish to thank the lawyers for their contribution which has been constructive and professional – most of the time. Obviously, I couldn't have got this far without the assistance of those at the bar table and those assisting me. I thank you all.