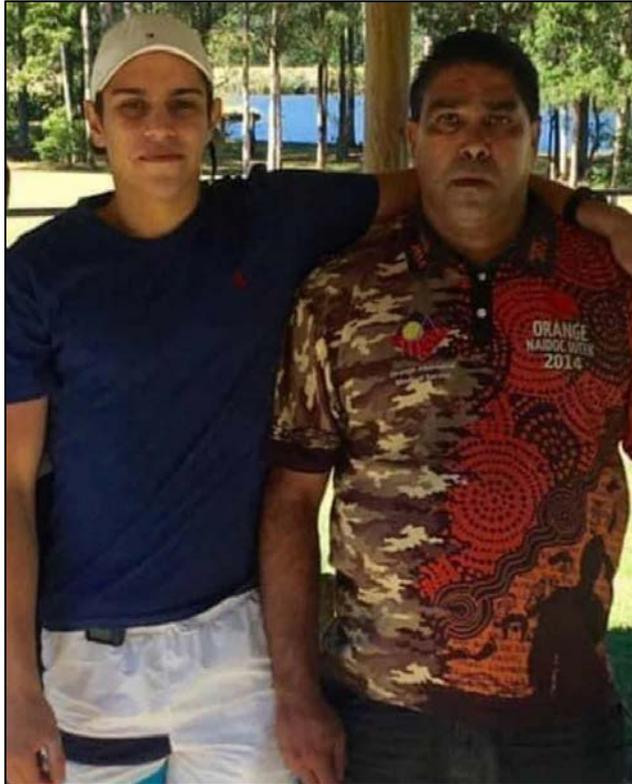


Family of Aboriginal man who died in custody say Covid restrictions prevented them visiting him

Frank 'Gud' Coleman's family and the Aboriginal Legal Service are demanding answers after his death in Sydney's Long Bay jail



Ngemba man Frank 'Gud' Coleman, right, was found unresponsive in his cell at Long Bay jail on Thursday. He is pictured here with son Ricardo, also deceased. Photograph: Aboriginal Legal Service

Lorena Allam
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The family of an Aboriginal man who died in a New South Wales jail say their “complete shock” has been compounded by Covid restrictions that prevented them from visiting him in person for 18 months before his sudden death.

Frank “Gud” Coleman, a 43-year-old Ngemba man, was found unresponsive in his cell on the morning of Thursday 8 July at Long Bay jail.

Coleman’s family and the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT said they were demanding answers.

“Frank was healthy. His death came as a complete shock to us,” Skye Hipwell, Coleman’s ex-partner and the mother of three of his children, said.

“Covid restrictions impacted our ability to visit and Frank was moved around a lot between prisons. There were quarantine periods whenever he was moved. At times he was several hours’ drive from Sydney,” Hipwell said.

“We understand he didn’t have any visitors for several months and that’s an agonising period of time to go without any physical contact with your siblings, your parents, your children.”

Corrective Services NSW confirmed a 43-year-old man died at Long Bay early on Thursday morning but disputed claims that the family were prevented from visiting for 18 months.

“We recognise that contact visits are extremely important to inmates and their loved ones,” a Corrective Services NSW spokeswoman said.