



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the death of Pamela Edith Larkins

Find, pursuant to Section 28(1) of the Coroners Act 1995, that

- a) The identity of the deceased is Pamela Edith Larkins;
- b) Mrs Larkins died as a result of injuries sustained as driver in a two vehicle motor vehicle crash;
- c) The cause of Mrs Larkins's death was multiple injuries; and
- d) Mrs Larkins died on 28 October 2020 at South Arm Road, Lauderdale, Tasmania.

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained in the comprehensive investigation into Mrs Larkins's death. The evidence includes:

- Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits establishing identity and life extinct;
- Report – Dr Donald Ritchey, Forensic Pathologist;
- Report – Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Records – Ambulance Tasmania;
- Affidavit – Mr Paul Wells, Transport Inspector;
- Affidavit – Ms Trudy White, sworn 28 January 2021;
- Affidavit – Mr Herman Westerhof, sworn 30 October 2020;
- Affidavit – Ms Christine Dollivor, sworn 8 November 2020;
- Driver Admission Statement – Thomas Sparks, dated 9 November 2020;
- Affidavit – Constable Jared Gowen, Crash Investigator, sworn 8 January 2021;
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Lauren McMahon, Forensic Services, sworn 10 December 2020 (and photographs);
- Affidavit – Sergeant Scott Kregor, sworn 16 November 2020 (and photographs);
- Results – Blood Analysis – Thomas Sparks;

- Vehicle Licensing and Registration Information;
- Bureau of Meteorology records;
- Department of State Growth, Vehicle Crash Data;
- Scene Survey;
- Mobile Phone downloads; and
- Medical records.

Circumstances of death

Mrs Larkins died as the result of massive injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident on South Arm Road, near Lauderdale. She was alone in her vehicle when it travelled onto the wrong side of the road and collided with a vehicle driven in the opposite direction by Mr Thomas Sparks.

I am satisfied as a consequence of the investigation carried out into the circumstances of the crash that neither drugs nor speed were factors in the happening of the crash.

Toxicological analysis of samples taken at autopsy from Mrs Larkins body indicate that she had a blood alcohol reading of approximately 0.05 g per 100 mL of blood of the time the crash occurred.

Analysis of the blood sample provided by Mr Sparks indicated that he had a blood alcohol level of 0.016 g per 100 mL of blood at the time of the crash.

The weather conditions at the time the crash happened were fine and clear.

The road surface where the accident occurred was in good repair.

The vehicle driven by Mrs Larkins at the time of the crash had two non-compliant rear tyres. However, it seems unlikely that this deficiency caused Mrs Larkins to lose control of her vehicle.

Mr Sparks' vehicle was roadworthy immediately prior to the crash.

Conclusion

The evidence obtained and provided to me satisfies me to the requisite legal standard that Mr Sparks bears no responsibility for the happening of the crash.

I am satisfied that the crash occurred when Mrs Larkins, who was returning to her home in Lauderdale after an evening meal at the South Arm RSL club (where she had consumed some alcohol), failed to negotiate a gentle left-hand curve in the road and veered into the opposite lane, colliding with the vehicle driven by Mr Sparks.

Comments and Recommendations

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer Constable Jared Gowen for his investigation and report.

The circumstances of Mrs Larkins's death are not such as to require me to make any comments or recommendations pursuant to Section 28 of the *Coroners Act 1995*.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mrs Larkins.

Dated: 22 November 2021 at Hobart the State of Tasmania.

Simon Cooper
Coroner