



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Jackie Hartnett, Coroner, having investigated the death of Samuel Patrick Burke Drummond

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Samuel Patrick Burke Drummond;
- b) Mr Drummond died as a result of acute alcohol intoxication;
- c) Mr Drummond's cause of death was acute alcohol intoxication; and
- d) Mr Drummond died on 29 May 2022 at West Moonah, Tasmania.

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

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- The opinion and affidavit of forensic pathologist of Dr Christopher Lawrence;
- Affidavit of toxicologist Neil McLachlan –Troup;
- Various medical records including from the Snug Medical Centre and St Helens Private Hospital;
- Affidavit of Jacob Drummond;
- Affidavit of Angela Maree King;
- Affidavit of Nicolette Munro; and
- A list of pending and past criminal matters for Samuel Patrick Burke Drummond and comments on passing sentence for Samuel Patrick Burke Drummond (2014).

I make the following further comments as to the circumstances leading to the death of Mr Drummond:

Samuel Patrick Burke Drummond was born on the 24 April 1978. He was 44 years of age, unemployed and had two adult children at the time of his death. He had a long-standing alcohol abuse problem.

Until about 2014 or thereabouts, Mr Drummond worked in various vocations including as a fisherman and carpenter. It is apparent from his record of prior matters that despite maintaining employment alcohol misuse was present with prior convictions under the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970* in 1995, 1998 and 2011.

Mr Drummond's drinking escalated over the years, often to destructive levels, particularly in times of stress and/or grief. Mr Drummond lost his father in 2010 and a partner in 2016. He felt both losses acutely.

Mr Drummond was referred to a psychiatrist for assessment and management of his alcohol dependency. In 2016 and 2018, Mr Drummond attended the St Helens Private Hospital as an inpatient in the detoxification unit, the Hampden Ward. Both admissions ended prematurely, with Mr Drummond breaching the inpatient agreement or leaving the unit early. The evidence suggests Mr Drummond acknowledged his alcohol addiction and tried over the years to address it including by voluntary inpatient admissions for detoxification and attendances at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Sadly, he was not able to sustain abstinence and then recover from his alcohol addiction. He also misused other drugs including methylamphetamine. Mr Drummond had various mental health diagnoses over the years including a personality disorder, anxiety, and alcohol use disorder.

Mr Drummond's alcohol addiction impacted on all aspects of his life including his relationship with his two children, his health, his housing stability and often saw him before the courts facing charges.

Mr Drummond was estranged from his children. His alcohol and substance issues impaired his ability to maintain the relationship he had wanted with them.

In 2014 Mr Drummond was sentenced for a crime involving alcohol fuelled violence. He spent time in custody for the crimes. He offended after this time, with many of the offences obviously related to his alcohol addiction including matters against the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970* and stealing of alcohol.

At the time of his death, he had several criminal matters pending including serious allegations in the Supreme Court. He had pled not guilty.

Prior to his death, Mr Drummond was staying at a friend's unit in West Moonah whilst he was in hospital. Mr Drummond was staying at the unit with Angela King. Ms King and Mr Drummond had known each other for about 5 years. Ms King said she and Mr Drummond had been "*seeing each other for around a year*".

During the 28 May and into the 29 May 2022, Mr Drummond was drinking heavily with Ms King at the West Moonah unit. He was drinking cask wine and vanilla essence.

At about midday on 29 May 2022, Mr Drummond consumed several large glasses of wine before lying down on a mattress in the living room. Some time prior to lying down, Mr Drummond had used a quantity of methylamphetamine, most likely intravenously. Mr Drummond was on his side on the mattress, Ms King said within a short time she heard Mr Drummond snoring heavily. Ms King was lying on a couch nearby and fell to sleep.

About 2 hours later, Ms King woke to find Mr Drummond face down on the mattress and unresponsive. Ms King called emergency services. Police and ambulance attended. Mr Drummond was deceased.

Police located an empty 4 litre cask of wine, another half empty cask of wine and numerous empty vanilla essence bottles (42 – both 50ml and 100ml bottles) together with other empty alcohol containers. Vanilla essence is often misused by those with alcohol addictions due to its alcohol content, price and in some instances the comparative ease it can be stolen.

A post-mortem was performed. Blood and urine samples were taken and sent to Forensic Services Tasmania for toxicological analysis. The results of the analysis of those samples included a blood alcohol level of 0.572g in 100ml of blood. The expert toxicology evidence was that blood alcohol concentrations above 0.4g of alcohol in 100 ml can lead to a loss of consciousness, respiratory failure, and death. Depression of respiration is the most serious toxic effect of alcohol at these concentrations. The drug screening also revealed the presence of methylamphetamine. A used syringe was located at the unit by police in the kitchen bin.

Dr Christopher Lawrence conducted a post-mortem examination on 30 May 2022. Dr Lawrence examination revealed track marks consistent with a history of drug use and possible recent needle marks, fatty liver, and cardiomegaly with left ventricular hypertrophy. After considering the results of his examination Dr Lawrence concluded that Mr Drummond died of acute alcohol intoxication with the presence of methylamphetamine may also have contributed.

I find there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding Mr Drummonds death and the cause of death was a result of self-ingested alcohol and methylamphetamine.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of Mr Drummond'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 Mr Drummond.

Dated: 14 December 2023 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Jackie Hartnett

Coroner