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## Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995  
Coroners Rules 2006  
Rule 11*

I, Duncan Fairley, Coroner, having investigated the death of Christine Sylvia Bone

### **Find That:**

- a) The identity of the deceased is Christine Sylvia Bone;
- b) Ms Bone died in the circumstances set out below;
- c) Ms Bone died as a result of chest and abdominal injuries sustained during a motor vehicle collision;
- d) Ms Bone died on or about the 2 October 2014 at Bass Highway, Latrobe;
- e) Ms Bone was born in Hobart, Tasmania on the 11/12/1949 and was aged 64 years; and
- f) Ms Bone never married and was engaged in home duties at the date of death.

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained during the comprehensive investigation into Ms Bone's death. Such evidence includes a report authored by Senior Constable Mason of Western Crash Investigation Services, an opinion from Dr Christopher Lawrence (State Forensic Pathologist), police and civilian witness affidavits and the relevant Court findings arising from charges brought against Stephen Errol O'Connor.

I make the following further findings as to how Ms Bone's death occurred.

### **Circumstances Surrounding the Death:**

On the 2 of October 2014 Stephen O'Connor purchased four dining chairs at a church jumble sale in Devonport. All four chairs were constructed of timbre and had a red fabric seat and back. Mr O'Connor tied two of the chairs side by side at the rear of his Ford utility. The remaining two chairs were wedged behind those which were secured in place. Mr O'Connor did not tie down the second pair of chairs

despite having extra rope in his utility and available tying points. At approximately 10:45am Mr O'Connor drove his vehicle onto the Bass Highway and travelled east towards his residence at Latrobe.

At 10:53am Christine Sylvia Bone was driving a white Hyundai sedan in an easterly direction on the Bass Highway about 100 meters east from the junction with Winspears Road. Ms Bone's vehicle was travelling behind the Ford utility of Mr O'Connor. At this time one of the unsecured dining chairs in the tray of Mr O'Connor's utility fell out and into the east bound lane. In an attempt to avoid colliding with the chair Ms Bone appears to have swerved to the left and onto the sealed shoulder of the carriageway. She has then lost control of her vehicle which rotated clockwise before travelling back across the east bound lane and into the west bound overtaking lane.

At the same time two vehicles were travelling in the west bound overtaking lane. A blue Ford Falcon sedan was being driven in a westerly direction by Carol Louise Cook with Stephen Ronald Davis as a front seat passenger. Ms Cook's Ford sedan was being followed by a dark blue Holden Commodore sedan being driven by Gina Louise Holland. There were two teenage males and a 6 year old boy as passengers in Ms Holland's vehicle.

The blue Ford collided with the Hyundai as it crossed the overtaking lane. Ms Holland saw what was about to occur and steered back into the left west bound lane in an effort to avoid a collision with the other vehicles. The Hyundai continued across the highway and despite Ms Holland's actions the Commodore also impacted Ms Bone's vehicle.

The Hyundai incurred massive damage from the two impacts which also resulted in Ms Bone suffering multiple severe traumas. She was conveyed the short distance to the Mersey Community Hospital by Tasmania Ambulance Service personnel. Due to the severity of her injuries Ms Bone did not survive. I have considered the report of Dr Lawrence and find that Ms Bone died as a result of multiple severe trauma sustained to the chest and abdomen during the collision.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, 2015 Magistrate Simon Brown, sitting in the Devonport Court of Petty Sessions, found that the sole cause of Ms Bone's death was Mr O'Connor's failure to secure the chair to his utility tray. Magistrate Brown determined that had the chair not come loose none of the subsequent actions would have occurred. Further, that a prudent driver in the circumstances would not have left the

chairs unsecured in the utility tray as Mr O'Connor did. I accept and adopt Magistrate Brown's findings.

**Comments and Recommendations:**

In the circumstances there is no need for me to make any further comment or recommendations.

In concluding, I convey my sincere condolences to the family of Miss Bone.

**Dated:** 12 September 2016 at Launceston Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

**Duncan Fairley**  
**CORONER**