



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION



Record of Investigation into Death (With Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of Jason Simon Morris with an inquest held in Hobart on 22 March 2019

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Jason Simon Morris;
- b) Mr Morris died of natural causes in the circumstances described below;
- c) The cause of death was metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of lung; and
- d) Mr Morris died on 4 December 2018 at Hobart, Tasmania.

In this finding I have had regard to the exhibits tendered at inquest, being the police report of death; opinion of the forensic pathologist who conducted the autopsy; opinion of the coronial medical consultant regarding the care and treatment of Mr Morris; Royal Hobart Hospital report of death; Comments on Passing Sentence; affidavits of identification and life extinct; and medical records.

Mr Jason Simon Morris was born in Adelaide, South Australia on 26 March 1970. He was aged 48 years at the time of his death. Mr Morris and his partner, Margot Acton, had two sons, Jake and Isaac. The relationship ended when Isaac was six years old.

Mr Morris lived a turbulent life with a lengthy criminal history in a number of states in Australia. He held employment involving manual labour in between periods of incarceration. The evidence indicates that Mr Morris had a history of alcohol abuse and that he was a heavy smoker.

In the two years preceding his death Mr Morris was charged with arson, pleaded guilty and was sentenced in the Supreme Court on 11 April 2018. Justice Brett ordered that Mr Morris serve a sentence of two years and six months imprisonment back-dated to 10 August 2017 when he was first taken into custody.

In June 2018, whilst in prison, Mr Morris was diagnosed with stage four metastatic small cell lung cancer. His prognosis was very poor. He was treated with palliative radiation therapy in July 2018 and further chemotherapy was planned to commence in August 2018. Mr Morris declined the treatment as he felt too unwell to proceed.

On 2 October 2018 Mr Morris was transferred from the inpatient section of Risdon Prison to the Royal Hobart Hospital. He was assessed in the emergency department and was then transferred to the oncology ward. On 8 October 2018 Mr Morris was

admitted to the Whittle Ward for end of life care where he received palliative radiation therapy to assist with pain management. He died on 4 December 2018.

On 5 December 2018 an autopsy was performed by forensic pathologist, Dr Donald Ritchey. In Dr Ritchey's opinion the cause of Mr Morris' death was metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of the lung. I accept Dr Ritchey's opinion as to the cause of death.

Comments and Recommendations:

A review of the care and treatment provided to Mr Morris was undertaken by Dr Anthony Bell, coronial medical consultant. I accept the opinion of Dr Bell, who concluded that there were no deficits or criticism of the care Mr Morris received while in custody. Further, the evidence indicates that his final days at the Whittle Ward were peaceful and comfortable. In these circumstances there is no need for me to make any further comment or recommendations.

I extend my appreciation to Senior Constable Jessica Haight, Coroner's Associate, for her preparation and conduct of this inquest.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr Morris.

Dated: 22 March 2019 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner