



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Leigh Mackey, Coroner, having investigated the death of Hilton Lindsay Chilcott

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Hilton Lindsay Chilcott (date of birth 23 September 1968).
- b) Mr Chilcott was 55 years old when he died. He had been married to Karen for 33 years and together they have three children, Elizabeth, Amanda and Brandon. He and Karen lived in Cluan, a rural area located in the Meander Valley in Northern Tasmania having moved to Tasmania in 2021. Mr Chilcott suffered no medical conditions which were relevant to his death.

Mr Chilcott completed his Certificate 3 in Commercial Refrigeration and was employed within the refrigeration industry. He was an experienced motorcyclist and had been riding motorcycles since a teenager. He had been involved in a motorcycle accident approximately 10 years prior to his death resulting in significant orthopaedic injury to his right leg. He is described by Karen as a safe and cautious rider who did not take unnecessary risks and utilised appropriate protective riding equipment and clothing.

Mr Chilcott and Karen travelled to Southern Tasmania on holiday between 24 December 2023 and 28 December 2023. They planned a road trip and travelled together on Mr Chilcott's motorcycle, a black 2009 Victory Kingpin motorcycle. The motorcycle was unregistered from 25 February 2023.

On the morning of 28 December 2023, Mr Chilcott and Karen departed their accommodation at Eagle Hawk Neck at approximately 8.30am and commenced their drive home to Cluan. Mr Chilcott was driving, and

Karen was travelling as a pillion passenger on the rear of the motorcycle. They drove along the Arthur Highway in a generally easterly direction.

At the same time Ms Tracey Prestage was driving her 2018 Mitsubishi ASX in a westerly direction on the Arthur Highway heading from her home at Dodges Ferry to her place of employment at Port Arthur. She was familiar with the route driving it daily over many years to access her employment.

As Tracey drove along that part of the highway between Blowhole Road and Taranna, proximate to 5397 Arthur Highway, she drove around a sweeping bend in the roadway and was confronted by Mr Chilcott's motorcycle in her lane of travel. There was insufficient opportunity for her to manoeuvre her vehicle to avoid the motorcycle and the vehicles collided.

Mr Chilcott suffered multiple pelvic and limb injuries in the collision including a displaced compound open fracture-dislocation of the distal right lower femur, knee and proximal right upper tibia and pelvic fractures.¹ Mr Chilcott was subject to life saving measures performed by members of the public on scene, including cardiopulmonary massage, and treated by paramedics from Ambulance Tasmania upon their arrival. These measures were unsuccessful, and he died at the scene. Injuries were also suffered by Karen and Tracey because of the collision.

Mechanical inspection of both vehicles undertaken after the accident, did not detect any defects or faults that contributed to the collision. The weather conditions were warm, bright, clear and dry and also did not contribute to the collision.

Neither Mr Chilcott or Tracey were affected by alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the accident.² Toxicological analysis of Mr Chilcott's post-mortem blood detected a therapeutic level of promethazine.³ He regularly used this medication for allergies. Promethazine may cause sedation, dizziness, confusion, disorientation and blurred vision.⁴ Promethazine is supplied with a manufacturer's warning that it may affect the ability to

¹ Extended Short Final Report to the Coroner of Dr Andrew Reid, State Forensic Pathologist, dated 28 March 2024.

² Affidavit of Mr N McLachlan-Troup, forensic scientist, sworn 14 February 2024.

³ Promethazine is a long-acting antihistamine.

⁴ Affidavit of Mr N McLachlan-Troup, forensic scientist, sworn 14 February 2024 p4.

drive and those affected should not drive or operate machinery.⁵ Mr Chilcott regularly used the medication and when he did so did not suffer these effects. On that basis, it is unlikely that the use of promethazine contributed to the accident.⁶

The evidence of witnesses is that the way Tracey drove her vehicle did not contribute to the collision.⁷ I accept this evidence. There is further no evidence that Mr Chilcott was driving his motorcycle at an excessive speed immediately prior to the collision. Karen describes him as a cautious rider particularly whilst he had a passenger on board.

The point of the collision between Tracey's vehicle and Mr Chilcott's motorcycle was in the middle of the westbound lane as demonstrated by the post-accident positioning of the vehicles, the debris and gouges on the roadway.⁸ Mr Chilcott's entry into the westbound lane of the highway was contrary to double white lines and occurred as he negotiated a sweeping bend (the bend). As he travelled onto the westbound lane he came into collision with Tracey's vehicle which was travelling lawfully and appropriately in that lane.

- c) Mr Chilcott's cause of death was multiple (pelvic and limb) injuries; and
- d) Mr Chilcott died on 28 December 2023 at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania.

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

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits confirming identity;
- Opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Affidavit of Mr N McLachlan-Troup, forensic scientist, sworn 14 February 2024;
- Affidavit of Karen Chilcott, sworn on 13 March 2024;
- Affidavit of Tracy Prestedge, sworn on 4 January 2024;
- Statutory Declaration of Tomas Nilsson, declared on 28 December 2023 and Affidavit of Tomas Nilsson sworn 4 January 2024;
- Police investigation reports, corresponding affidavits and scene photos;

⁵ Affidavit of Mr N McLachlan-Troup, forensic scientist, sworn 14 February 2024 p4.

⁶ Crash Analysis Report p8.

⁷ Statutory Declaration of Tomas Nilsson declared 28 December 2023 p1.

⁸ Crash Analysis Report.

- Bureau of Meteorology Data;
- General practitioner and Ambulance Tasmania Records;
- Crash Analysis Report and Affidavit of Constable Mandy Ladson, sworn on 3 April 2024; and
- Letter of Deputy Secretary, Transport – Department of State Growth dated 1 June 2026.

Comments and Recommendations

Arthur Highway is the main throughfare that connects Sorrell to Port Arthur. The highway has two lanes of travel one travelling in a south easterly direction toward Port Arthur and the other north westerly, toward Sorell. The speed limit covering the area of the bend was 100 km/h. No signs warning of the bend or suggesting the speed at which the bend ought to be negotiated were at the entrance or exit of the bend. Mr Chilcott was visiting the area and was likely unfamiliar with that portion of the highway generally and specifically the bend. The highway is in good condition and marked with double white lines at the bend.

Evidence obtained from witnesses indicated that the section of roadway where the collision occurred may be difficult to navigate for drivers unfamiliar with the area, and the nature of the bend potentially underestimated. The collision was subject to a thorough investigation by Constable Ladson of Southern District Crash Investigation Services who concluded that Mr Chilcott had underestimated the bend and crossed the double white lines entering the east bound lane occupied by Tracey.

I am informed by the Department of State Growth that the Traffic and Engineering section of the Department undertook an assessment of the area of the collision after it occurred. It was identified that the section of the Arthur Highway between Eaglehawk Neck and Taranna has several sweeping bends including the bend. Whilst the bend was not considered to be “*unexpected or out of context*”⁹ it was assessed as slightly sharper and curve warning signs were installed by the Department advising a 65 km/h speed either side of the bend in February 2024.

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer Mandy Ladson for her investigation and report and to those passersby who came to the aid of Mr Chilcott in what were confronting and distressing circumstances. I note the actions taken by the Department of State Growth in response to the accident.

⁹ Letter of Deputy Secretary, Transport – Department of State Growth dated 1 June 2026.

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

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

Dated: 27 July 2026 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Leigh Mackey
Coroner