



MAGISTRATES COURT of TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION



Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Duncan Fairley, Coroner, having investigated the death of Magella Luisa Faye Tate

Find that:

- a) The identity of the deceased is Magella Luisa Faye Tate;
- b) Ms Tate died in the circumstances set out below;
- c) Ms Tate died as a result of severe trauma sustained during a motor vehicle accident;
- d) Ms Tate died on 23 September 2015 at West Mooreville;
- e) Ms Tate was born in Hobart on 31 July 1992 and was aged 23 years; and
- f) Ms Tate was single and was studying medicine at the University of Tasmania at the date of her death.

Background:

Magella Luisa Faye Tate was the only daughter of Jane Northrop and David Tate. She was born on 31 July 1992. Ms Tate was in her 4th year at the University of Tasmania and was studying medicine at the Rural Clinical School. Ms Tate was not married and did not have any children. She was the holder of a novice P1 licence at the date of her death.

Circumstances Surrounding the Death:

In making these findings I have had regard to the evidence obtained during the comprehensive investigation into the crash. Such evidence comprises a detailed opinion from the Tasmania Police crash investigator, relevant witness affidavits, medical records and toxicology reports. I have also had the benefit of an opinion from Dr Ruchira Fernando (Pathologist) who conducted the autopsy.

At approximately 8.00 pm on Wednesday 23 September 2015, Ms Tate departed from the Ridgley Hall in her 1993 Toyota Corolla Hatch, subsequent to completing roller derby training. In the front passenger seat of the vehicle was Ms Tate's friend and roller derby team mate Jessica Kathleen Beamish.

Ms Tate was driving in a northerly direction along West Mooreville Road in a 100 km/h zone when she failed to negotiate a series of bends. A witness described watching the passenger side tyres of Ms Tate's vehicle move onto the left hand gravel shoulder before the car returned to the road surface and crossed over the south bound lane. It is apparent from the witness description that Ms Tate lost control of the vehicle in the gravel and that she then over corrected before colliding with a large tree. Impact with the tree occurred at the driver's side door, causing severe damage to the vehicle.

Both women were trapped in the vehicle until freed by Tasmania Fire Service personnel. Ms Beamish was transported to the North West Regional Hospital with suspected serious head injuries and later conveyed to the Royal Hobart Hospital. Paramedics from the Tasmania Ambulance Service pronounced Ms Tate deceased at the scene of the crash. Dr Fernando later confirmed that Ms Tate died as a result of the multiple severe traumatic injuries sustained in the collision. Analysis of samples taken during the post mortem examination confirmed that neither alcohol nor other illicit substances were present.

Due to the significant injuries suffered by Ms Beamish she has been unable to provide an account of the events leading up to the collision. The evidence does not permit me to determine the reason why the Toyota Corolla Hatch moved into the gravel on the western side of the carriageway, however excessive speed does not appear to have been a factor. Ms Tate was a fit young woman with no history of significant medical conditions. A review of the vehicle by Transport Inspectors confirmed that the Toyota was in sound mechanical condition.

It is likely that once the passenger side tyres lost traction in the gravel on the shoulder of West Mooreville Road Ms Tate's inexperience contributed to her inability to regain control of the vehicle.

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 and friends of Ms Tate.

Dated: 26 June 2017 at Launceston in the State of Tasmania.

Duncan Fairley
Coroner