



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION



Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the death of Bryan Thomas Simpson

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Bryan Thomas Simpson;
- b) Mr Simpson died as a result of injuries sustained in a motorcycle crash;
- c) The cause of Mr Simpson's death was cerebral trauma; and
- d) Mr Simpson died on 10 June 2017 on the Bass Highway, Prospect, Tasmania.

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained in the comprehensive investigation into Mr Simpson's death. The evidence comprises an opinion of the pathologist who conducted the autopsy; the results of toxicological analysis of samples taken at autopsy; relevant police and witness affidavits; the contents of the report of a Crash Investigation Service officer; and forensic and photographic evidence.

Mr Simpson was killed instantly when he crashed his motorcycle on the Bass Highway "off ramp" near the intersection of that road with the Midland Highway at Prospect in northern Tasmania.

An experienced motorcycle rider, Mr Simpson had arrived that morning in Devonport with his brother on the Spirit of Tasmania. The brothers were riding to Mr Simpson's new home in George Town. Mr Simpson had consumed no alcohol the night before and had reportedly slept well.

The circumstances of the crash were comprehensively investigated by experienced crash investigator, First Class Constable Nigel Housego. Constable Housego determined that in the immediate lead up to the crash Mr Simpson's Benelli motorcycle was travelling at between 71 and 91 km/h, below the posted speed limit of 110 km an hour. I do note however that there is an advisory sign of 65 km/h for the ramp.

I am satisfied from the investigation that the motorcycle Mr Simpson was riding was mechanically sound and had no defects which caused or contributed to the crash. I am satisfied at the time of the crash that Mr Simpson was wearing a motorcycle helmet which complied with the applicable Australian Standard.

Although the road was damp I am satisfied that the weather conditions and the surface of the road did not cause or contribute to the happening of the crash. Similarly I am satisfied that neither alcohol nor drugs played any role in the happening of the crash.

As has already been mentioned, Mr Simpson was an experienced motorcycle rider. Reportedly he had held a motorcycle license since he was 18 (he was 55 years of age when he died) and rode motorcycles on most days.

The crash was witnessed by several people, including Mr Simpson's brother. It is quite clear that no other vehicle was involved in the happening of the crash. The evidence satisfies me that the crash happened because Mr Simpson failed to see the off ramp speed warning sign or, if he saw it, ignored the recommended 65 km/h speed. He entered the off ramp at a speed which required him to apply the rear brake to slow down. He did so and the rear brake locked up. This in turn caused the motorcycle to slide, 'high side', rapidly fall over to the right and throw Mr Simpson onto the roadway.

Police and emergency services were quickly on the scene but nothing could be done for Mr Simpson. After formal identification, and the photographing of his body *in situ*, Mr Simpson's body was removed from the scene and transported to the mortuary at the Launceston General Hospital.

An autopsy performed upon his body by a pathologist found that Mr Simpson had suffered significant cerebral trauma associated with a substantial skull base fracture. I am satisfied this was the cause of Mr Simpson's death and that he died instantly as a result of the injury sustained in the crash.

I am satisfied that Mr Simpson was riding both carefully and appropriately to the conditions in the lead up to the crash. Unfortunately, he entered the off ramp at a higher speed than recommended by the ramp warning sign, braked on a damp road and lost control thereby crashing and suffering fatal injuries as a result.

I am satisfied that there was sufficient warning of the appropriate speed for the off ramp. The crash occurred as the result of momentary inattention on the part of an experienced motorcycle rider.

Comments and Recommendations

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer First Class Constable Housego for his investigation and report.

The circumstances of Mr Simpson'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 Simpson.

Dated 17 July 2018 at Hobart in Tasmania.

Simon Cooper

Coroner