



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of Aron Paul Thogersen

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Aron Paul Thogersen, date of birth 7 October 1978.
- b) Mr Thogersen was aged 43 years at his death. He had been in a long-term significant relationship with Ms Anita Harrison and they resided together in Ranelagh. He has two children from a previous relationship. At the time of his death, Mr Thogersen worked for Huon Valley Seafood.

On the evening of Saturday 9 July 2022, Mr Thogersen and Ms Harrison went to the birthday party of an acquaintance at the Longley International Hotel. They were not invited to the party but attended nevertheless. Mr Thogersen travelled to the party in his Nissan Micra hatchback, whilst Ms Harrison travelled with a friend. At about 9.30pm, Ms Harrison was denied further service of alcohol due to her state of intoxication, however Mr Thogersen continued to consume alcohol until late into the evening.

At 11.45pm bar staff called for last drinks. At 11.57pm Ms Harrison and Mr Thogersen were seen on CCTV footage in the rear courtyard of the hotel. Mr Thogersen was consuming liquid from a dark bottle and appeared unsteady on his feet. Between 12.08am and 12.21am Mr Thogersen and Ms Harrison left the courtyard and returned to Mr Thogersen's car. Mr Thogersen entered the driver's side and Ms Harrison the passenger side. Mr Thogersen then accelerated rapidly using excessive power, driving onto Huon Road towards Sandfly Road. Mr Thogersen travelled approximately 200 metres, likely at high speed, before the front right side of his vehicle collided with the concrete support post of the bridge crossing the Combes Rivulet. The vehicle came to an abrupt stop and was extensively damaged on the right (driver's) side. Police officers and ambulance paramedics attended the scene and both

Mr Thogersen and Ms Harrison were found trapped in the car due to impact causing significant cabin intrusion. Their seat belts were fastened. Mr Thogersen was unresponsive and was determined to be deceased. Ms Harrison suffered serious injuries but survived.

At the time of the crash, the road was damp but it was not raining. The roadway was in good repair and the bridge was painted white and clearly identifiable. A red reflector was attached to the edge of the bridge and a streetlight was illuminating the area. Although the vehicle had some defects, these did not contribute to the crash. Post-mortem blood analysis revealed that Mr Thogersen's blood alcohol level was 0.216g/100ml. The presence of THC was also detected in his blood.

I am satisfied upon the evidence that Mr Thogersen's aggressive manner of driving combined with alcohol and drug intoxication were primary factors in the occurrence of the crash. It further appears that he may not have taken steps to clear the vehicle's windows of fog before commencing driving. Mr Thogersen was solely responsible for the crash. It was fortunate that Ms Harrison survived.

- c) Mr Thogersen's cause of death was massive head injuries, including fractures to the base of the skull and face.
- d) Mr Thogersen died on 10 July 2022 at Longley, Tasmania.

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

- Tasmanian Police Report of Death;
- Affidavits confirming identification and life extinct;
- Opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Toxicology Report of Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Tasmanian Police Collision Analysis Report;
- Affidavits of attending and investigating police officers, with scene photographs;
- Affidavit of Anita Harrison, sworn 18 January 2023;
- Affidavit of Belinda Hawkins, sworn 8 September 2022;
- Affidavit of Tomas Button, sworn 18 July 2022;
- Affidavit of Jemma O'Neill, sworn 29 September 2022;

- Affidavit of Emma Cook, sworn 16 July 2022;
- Affidavit of Hannah Brereton, providing CCTV footage of the hotel and surrounding areas; and
- Ochre Medical Centre Huonville Medical Records for Mr Thogersen.

Comments and Recommendations

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer, Senior Constable Kelly Cordwell, experienced crash investigator, for her very helpful investigation and report.

The circumstances of Mr Thogersen'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 Thogersen.

Dated: 24 October 2023 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner