



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION



Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

(These findings have been de-identified in relation to the names of the parties by direction of the Coroner)

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of NN

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is NN;
- b) NN died in the circumstances described below;
- c) NN's cause of death was the combined effects of alcohol-induced central nervous system depression, hypothermia (environmental cold exposure) and alcohol-related heart disease; and
- d) NN died in March 2018 in Southern Tasmania.

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained in the investigation into NN's death. The evidence comprises the police report of death; an opinion of the forensic pathologist who conducted the autopsy; identification and life extinct affidavits; and results of toxicological testing.

NN was 47 years of age at his death. He was separated from his third wife and unemployed. He has four children. Before his death NN's health was poor. He suffered hypertension, liver deterioration, gastrointestinal problems and depression. He also suffered longstanding alcoholism and smoked heavily.

NN was found deceased in March 2018 in a shed on his property where he had stayed overnight. The shed was without running water or electricity. Police officers who attended after his death located an empty bottle of vodka next to his body and noted no suspicious circumstances at the scene. There was also no evidence that NN intended to end his own life.

Dr Donald Ritchey, forensic pathologist, who conducted the autopsy upon NN noted in his report:

"The autopsy revealed a normally developed and nourished adult Caucasian man with advanced natural disease of the heart in a pattern suggestive of long-standing

high blood pressure and excessive alcohol consumption. The liver had florid fat accumulation characteristic of acute intoxication. There was early aspiration and pneumonia. Haemorrhagic ulcers of the lining of the stomach displayed a pattern characteristic of hypothermia. Gastrointestinal haemorrhage was not identified.

“Toxicology testing of samples obtained at autopsy revealed a highly elevated blood alcohol concentration that would not be expected to cause death by acute intoxication alone.

“These facts are interpreted by me to suggest that NN fell asleep whilst intoxicated within his unheated shed where he subsequently succumbed to the combined effects of alcohol-induced central nervous system depression, hypothermia (environmental cold exposure) and alcohol-related heart disease.”

I accept Dr Ritchey’s observations and opinion as to NN’s cause of death.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of NN’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 NN.

Dated: 20 September 2018 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner

Notation: This finding has been amended pursuant to an order under section 58(1) of the *Coroners Act 1995*.