



# MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

## CORONIAL DIVISION

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### **Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)**

*Coroners Act 1995  
Coroners Rules 2006  
Rule 11*

I, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the death of Scott Paul Murphy,

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Scott Paul Murphy;
- b) While satisfied that Mr Murphy is dead I am unable to determine the particular circumstances of his death;
- c) The probable cause of Mr Murphy's death was hanging; and
- d) Mr Murphy died, aged 43 years, on or about 13 June 2020 in bushland near South Nietta, Tasmania.

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

- Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Forensic Science Service Tasmania DNA Coronial Identification Report;
- Forensic Odontology Report – Dr Tom Pacza, Consultant Forensic Odontologist;
- Report – Dr Christopher Lawrence, Forensic Pathologist;
- Report – Associate Professor Anne-Marie Williams, Forensic Anthropologist;
- Affidavits – Mrs Louise Murphy, sworn 24 May 2022 and 23 October 2021;
- Affidavit – Mr James Murphy, sworn 10 October 2020;
- Affidavit – Mrs Shirley Moore, sworn 24 February 2021;
- Affidavit – Ms Belinda Snooks, sworn 13 May 2021;
- Affidavit – Ms Sammy Van der Meulen, sworn 9 May 2021;
- Affidavits – Constable Evan Bartush, sworn 20 October 2021 and 28 June 2022;
- Affidavit – Mr Melle Zwerver, sworn 24 October 2021;
- Affidavit – First Class Constable Dean Wotherspoon, sworn 8 September 2021 and associated search planning material;

- Affidavit – Senior Constable Michelle Rybarczyk sworn September 2021 (and photographs);
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Amanda Phair, sworn 31 May 2022;
- Affidavits – Mr Paul Stone, sworn 23 and 24 May 2022;
- Affidavit – Mr Samuel Robertson, sworn 5 July 2022;
- Affidavit – Mr Wray Watts, sworn 20 July 2022;
- Affidavit – Sergeant Adam Sirkel, sworn 9 July 2022;
- Affidavit – Constable Emily Beswick, sworn 10 July 2022;
- Affidavit – Detective Sergeant Melissa Keygan, sworn 8 July 2022;
- Affidavit – Constable Justin Harvey, Tasmania Police, sworn 27 May 2022;
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Joshua Partridge, sworn 27 May 2022;
- Affidavit – Constable Oliver Smith, sworn 27 May 2022; and
- Affidavit – Sergeant Katrina Chivers, sworn 8 June 2022 (and site photographs).

Mr Murphy had a lengthy and well-documented history of mental illness with at least one recorded incident of attempting suicide.

He went missing from the family farm some time during the night of 12 – 13 June 2020, leaving a note for his wife.

The fact of his disappearance was reported to police and an extensive search conducted, without result (although Mr Murphy's car was located).

Other inquiries made it clear that Mr Murphy was dead but his body was not located until 23 May 2022 when remains, subsequently confirmed as being those of Mr Murphy, were located by logging contractors in a forestry plantation off Smith Plains Road, South Nietta, less than 4 km from where he had disappeared. The scene was forensically examined. The remains were securely transported to Hobart for forensic biological, odontological, anthropological and pathological examination.

The outcome of those investigations satisfy me to the requisite legal standard that the remains located are those of Scott Paul Murphy.

The circumstances in which Mr Murphy disappeared, his history of mental illness and the absence of evidence to suggest the involvement of any other person in his death lead me to conclude, on the balance of probabilities, that he died as a result of actions undertaken by him voluntarily, alone and with the express intention of ending his own life.

**Comments and Recommendations**

As I have said, I am satisfied that Mr Murphy died on or about 13 June 2020. I am unable to make any further findings. In particular, I am unable to reach a concluded view as to the cause or more specific circumstances of his death. I do note though, that there is no evidence to suggest his disappearance, and subsequent death, was suspicious.

The circumstances of Mr Murphy'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 Murphy.

**Dated:** 29 May 2023 at Hobart in the State of Tasmania.

**Simon Cooper**

**Coroner**