



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 Trevor Scott Besgrove

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Trevor Scott Besgrove;
- b) Mr Besgrove's death occurred in the circumstances described in this finding;
- c) The cause of death cannot be determined; and
- d) Mr Besgrove died between 9 January 2019 and 17 March 2019 at Bicheno in Tasmania.

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

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavit confirming identification and life extinct;
- An opinion of the Forensic Pathologist who conducted the autopsy;
- Medical records and reports for Mr Besgrove;
- Affidavit of Jennifer Coasby, mother of Mr Besgrove;
- Affidavits of Susan Bean and Christopher Hayter, local community members who knew and assisted Mr Besgrove;
- Affidavits of attending and investigating police officers, including officers who knew and assisted Mr Besgrove; and
- Forensic and photographic evidence.

Trevor Scott Besgrove was born in Queensland on 26 January 1972 and was aged 46 years. He lived in Queensland and Sydney for a period of time before arriving in Tasmania when he was 39 years of age. Mr Besgrove was single and in receipt of a disability pension at the time of his death.

Sadly, Mr Besgrove had experienced a long and complex history of trauma in his childhood, including witnessing extreme violence on many occasions. As a youth, he spent time on the streets and used illicit drugs. He was self-conscious about his appearance, primarily because he

had lost his left eye from childhood cancer. Mr Besgrove was also diagnosed with borderline schizophrenia, had a history of alcoholism, depression and was a heavy smoker of cannabis. Due to his lack of education as a child, he had limited literacy and numeracy skills.

During much of his life, his living and social situation was unstable. In 2011, Mr Besgrove reunited with his mother at Fingal before he again became estranged from her. He moved to Bicheno in 2013. He suffered debilitating mental health issues and police officers in the Bicheno area assisted him considerably, including arranging for him to live in suitable accommodation. He became well-integrated into the local community. He was a member of the bowls club and the RSL club. He was described as a friendly person and had become a well-liked member of the community.

In 2017, he was referred to a psychologist after he had a relapse in his mental health conditions: experiencing social phobia, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and intermittent suicidal thoughts. Subsequently, he was prescribed medications. He had received regular medical care and psychological assistance in respect of his conditions, but he stopped visiting his doctor in October 2017 and did not accept a referral to his psychologist at that time. His doctor noted at that time that he was “not coping”.

Despite his issues, he was able to obtain his driver’s licence in November 2018 with the help of the local police officers and community members, who supervised his driving for the required 50 hours. Although Mr Besgrove was very happy to have his licence, he became isolated and socially withdrawn for reasons unknown. His paranoid state of mind is likely to have contributed. He eventually stopped attending the RSL club, did not remain in contact with his friends and was rarely seen.

Circumstances Surrounding Death

Police officers conducted a welfare check upon Mr Besgrove on 9 January 2019. At that time, the officers noted him to be in reasonable health and did not seem to have any physical or mental issues of immediate concern.

On 17 March 2019, police officers again attended Mr Besgrove’s address at Bicheno after a community member reported that he had not been seen for some time. Police officers attended, gained entry to his locked house and located who they believed to be Mr Besgrove, deceased and lying face-down in the bathroom. His body was in an advanced state of decomposition. Attending officers located a quantity of prescribed medication and a small amount of cannabis. The house, whilst untidy, appeared secure and the officers reported no signs of forced entry or suspicious circumstances.

Formal identification was completed at the Royal Hobart Hospital by fingerprint matching. A post-mortem examination was conducted by Forensic Pathologist, Dr Donald Ritchey, on 18 March 2019. In his report, Dr Richey provided the following opinion as to Mr Besgrove's cause of death:

"The autopsy revealed a normally developed adult Caucasoid man in a moderately advanced state of post mortem decomposition. Decomposition of the remains precluded determination of a specific cause of death".

I note that samples of Mr Besgrove's blood could not be obtained for testing due to decomposition.

Unfortunately, I cannot determine Mr Besgrove's cause of death or exactly when, during the period that he was not seen, he died. I am satisfied that there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding his death and that no other person was involved. Mr Besgrove was found deceased in a position that suggested he suffered an unexpected medical or accidental event but the evidence does not suggest what such an event might have been. There was no evidence of suicide. There was also no evidence in his home of an overdose of drugs or alcohol. However, I am unable to rule out that his death occurred as a result of any of these possibilities.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of Mr Trevor Besgrove's death are not such as to require me to make any recommendations pursuant to Section 28 of the *Coroners Act 1995*.

I extend my appreciation to Senior Constable Christopher Richardson and Senior Constable Peter Houston, investigating officers.

I particularly acknowledge the efforts of Constable Allan Skeggs (now retired) and those police officers and community members in Bicheno who greatly helped Mr Besgrove in the last years of his life.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr Besgrove.

Dated: 2 November 2020 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner