



# MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

## CORONIAL DIVISION

---

4 October 2022

### Media Release

#### **CORONIAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF SIX CHILDREN AT HILLCREST PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Coroner Olivia McTaggart is investigating the death of six children at Hillcrest Primary School on 16 December 2021. Due to the high level of interest within the community regarding this matter, the Coroner wishes to provide an update as to the investigation.

The Coroner has received a large volume of evidence arising from the work undertaken by Tasmania Police in its investigation of the event. That material includes witness affidavits, forensic reports and video and photographic material.

The Coroner has engaged a weather expert to provide an opinion regarding the weather conditions on the day of the event at Hillcrest Primary School. That expert's final report is expected shortly.

WorkSafe Tasmania is also investigating the event. The evidence obtained by WorkSafe Tasmania has not yet been received by the Coroner as that investigation is ongoing. The evidence obtained by WorkSafe Tasmania will be relevant to the coronial inquiry. WorkSafe have engaged experts to provide opinions relevant to its investigations and the reports of those experts are yet to be finalised.

Given the relevance of the evidence obtained by WorkSafe Tasmania during its investigation to the Coronial inquiry, regular meetings have occurred between the Coroner and WorkSafe Tasmania as to the investigations being conducted by WorkSafe Tasmania.

The Coroner has attended sites in Devonport relevant to the event, including the Hillcrest Primary School itself. Counsel assisting the coroner has also been appointed.

A Case Management Conference will be held by Coroner McTaggart on:

**Time and Date: 11.00am on Tuesday 18 October 2022**

**Location: Devonport Magistrates Court, 8 Griffiths Street, Devonport.**

The *Coroner's Rules* 2006, rule 22, governs the holding of Case Management Conferences in Coronial investigations, some of the relevant provisions within this rule being as follows:

#### **22 Case management conferences**

(1) A coroner may request some or all of the persons who have a sufficient interest in an investigation (and their representatives, if any) to attend a conference for the purpose of facilitating the conduct of the investigation or, if applicable, the rest of the investigation;

(1)-(4) .....

(5) The chair of the conference may direct a person attending the conference to do any one or more of the following:

- (a) identify any issues that the person expects to arise in the investigation;
- (b) identify anybody who the person considers might be a potential witness in the investigation and indicate the probable nature of their evidence;
- (c) produce any document or thing that the person considers might be relevant to the investigation;
- (d) confer with any other person about the investigation;
- (e) find out information or procure documents that might be relevant to the investigation;
- (f) take any other reasonable action that it is within the person's power to take for the purpose of facilitating the investigation.

(6) The chair of the conference may also do any one or more of the following:

- (a) appoint the time and place for an inquest, if any;
- (b) allow any person to participate in the conference or any part of it by means of a telephonic or audio-visual link;
- (c) invite or allow disinterested persons to attend and participate in the conference if the chair reasonably considers that they may be able to contribute something of value, such as expert or special knowledge, to the conference proceedings;
- (d) if the chair reasonably considers that the conference or any part of it should be held in private, direct any person to leave, or not to enter, the conference venue;
- (e) adjourn the conference from time to time or from place to place;
- (f) such other thing as the chair considers necessary or expedient having regard to the purpose of the conference.

(7) Except as otherwise provided by this rule of court, the chair of the conference may regulate his or her own proceedings.

The Coroner has requested the attendance of persons and organisations who may have an interest in the investigation. The Coroner will address all parties in attendance at the Case Management Conference about the intended course of the investigation and the state of progress toward the holding of a public inquest.

For more information please contact:

Jane Mcleod, Manager – South, Magistrates Court 616 57134