



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 Nancy Muriel Hazell

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Nancy Muriel Hazell.
- b) Mrs Hazell was born on 12 January 1922 and was aged 100 years at her death. She was widowed and, since 2014, she had been a resident at Uniting AgeWell Queenborough Rise nursing home in Sandy Bay. Although she was very healthy for her age, she had been slowly deteriorating physically and cognitively. Since the commencement of her residency at the nursing home, she had had a number of unwitnessed falls. She was subject to regular falls risk assessments and, in accordance with those assessments, falls prevention measures were put in place for Mrs Hazell by the nursing home. These prevention measures included a bed and chair sensor, a personal call bell pendant and a physiotherapy program for muscle strengthening.

On 25 June 2022 Mrs Hazell had an unwitnessed fall, apparently having left her armchair and then using her over-bed table as a walking aid before falling. Staff members discovered her on the floor, conscious and in significant pain. She was transported by ambulance to the Royal Hobart Hospital where she was assessed as having sustained a fracture to her right neck of femur (hip). She underwent orthopaedic surgery the following day but post-operatively her condition declined. Given her poor prognosis, a decision to treat her palliatively was made with her family and she passed away on 30 June 2022 in the Whittle Ward.

- c) Mrs Hazell died as a result of frailty and a fracture of the right neck of femur.
- d) Mrs Hazell died on 30 June 2022 at Hobart, Tasmania.

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

- The police and hospital reports of death for the coroner;
- An opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Affidavits confirming life extinct and identification;
- Affidavits of a doctor and nurse from the Repatriation Hospital, who cared for Mrs Hazell;
- Affidavits of Penelope Brown and Elaine Hazell, daughters of Mrs Hazell; and
- Report, records and correspondence from Queenborough Rise nursing home.

Comments and Recommendations

The falls prevention measures implemented by the nursing home for Mrs Hazell were appropriately responsive to her risk. However, one issue arising in this investigation is why Mrs Hazell's chair sensor did not apparently activate before her fall, which may have prompted staff to enter her room to assist her and prevent her falling. The nursing home has provided information that there is no known reason why the alarm did not activate.

I **recommend** that Queenborough Rise nursing home takes any steps necessary to ensure that the chairs sensors in its facility are fully operational.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mrs Hazell.

Dated: 3 April 2023 at Hobart in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner