



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 Allan Leslie Forrest

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Allan Leslie Forrest;
- b) Mr Forrest was born on 31 May 1955 and was 66 years of age at his death. He was divorced and was a father of four children. He lived in Mathinna and was unemployed. During his working life, he was a fitter and turner. Mr Forrest was in poor health at the time of his death. He suffered advanced heart disease as well as advanced lung disease caused by smoking. He also had a history of alcohol dependence. More recently before his death, he had been suffering from blackouts and seizures. In October 2020, Mr Forrest lost control of his car when driving as a result of a suspected medical episode. His Tasmanian driver's licence was suspended in March 2021 upon medical grounds and remained suspended at the time of his death.

In the late morning of 10 June 2021, Mr Forrest attended the St Mary's Hospital with left calf pain, and was investigated for deep vein thrombosis possibly related to his Astra Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine on 1 June. He was provided with blood thinning medications at that time. After the appointment, Mr Forrest drove his car to Fingal to visit his friend. Mr Forrest told his friend that he was not well and she also observed that he was unsteady and not thinking rationally. She advised him not to drive home. Mr Forrest did not take that advice and, at 1.30pm, he left his friend's residence in his car. The investigation evidence allows me to conclude that Mr Forrest travelled nearly 11 kilometres before he lost control of his car on Mathinna Road, crossing into the oncoming traffic lane and running off the roadway into a drainage culvert. He then struck a tree which was situated in the drain. He suffered severe head injuries which caused his death at the scene. He was not wearing his seatbelt and later testing revealed that he had been using cannabis before the crash.

The thorough crash investigation allows me to find that Mr Forrest was not travelling at a high speed and did not apply the brakes before the crash. Autopsy revealed severe heart and lung disease, with the State Forensic Pathologist indicating that his marked atherosclerosis of the aortic arch may have caused significant impairment of blood flow into the carotid arteries. Further, his significant atherosclerotic vascular disease of the coronary arteries may have caused cardiac arrhythmia resulting in syncope (blackout). He also stated that the possibility of a seizure causing loss of control of the vehicle could not be excluded.

- c) The cause of death was blunt trauma head and chest; and
- d) Mr Forrest died on 10 June 2021 at Mathinna, Tasmania.

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

- Tasmania Police Report of Death;
- Opinion of the State Forensic Pathologist who conducted the autopsy;
- Affidavits confirming life extinct and identification;
- Toxicology report regarding analysis of post-mortem blood sample;
- Affidavit and medical notes of Dr Cyril Latt, Mr Forrest's general practitioner at St Mary's Hospital;
- Affidavit of Michael Forrest, Mr Forrest's son;
- Affidavit of Elizabeth Hussain, Mr Forrest's friend and last person to see him before his death;
- Affidavit of Dylan Brown, witness at the scene;
- Transport Inspector's report regarding the condition of Mr Forrest's vehicle;
- Affidavit and photographs of Forensic Services officer, Senior Constable Tracy Lincoln;
- Affidavit of Senior Constable Cameron Salter, the first officer at the scene;
- Affidavit of Senior Constable Michal Rybka, qualified crash investigator; and
- Correspondence from Department of State Growth regarding Mr Forrest's licence suspension.

Comments and Recommendations

Mr Forrest should not have been driving as his driver's licence was suspended upon medical grounds and he was not in a fit state to drive due to his illness. I am satisfied that he suffered a medical episode causing loss of control of the vehicle which, in turn, resulted in the crash. Mr Forrest's failure to wear his seatbelt caused or contributed to his fatal injuries.

Finally, I am satisfied upon the medical evidence that his COVID-19 vaccination did not cause any medical condition and played no role in Mr Forrest's death.

The circumstances of Mr Forrest'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 the investigating officer, Senior Constable Michal Rybka.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Allan Leslie Forrest.

Dated: 5 January 2022 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner