



# MAGISTRATES COURT of TASMANIA



## CORONIAL DIVISION

---

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

*Coroners Act 1995  
Coroners Rules 2006  
Rule 11*

I, Rod Chandler, Coroner, having investigated the death of Jayde Kaylam Duff

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Jayde Kaylam Duff;
- b) Mr Duff was born in Launceston on 21 August 1996 and was aged 21 years;
- c) The cause of Mr Duff's death was exsanguination with multiple bone fractures sustained in a motorcycle accident; and
- d) Mr Duff died on 31 March 2018 at Hagley, Tasmania.

#### **Background**

Mr Duff was single. He did not have any children. He did not have any serious health conditions. He resided with his mother at 115 King Street in Westbury. In October 2017 he commenced casual employment at Bob Jane T-Mart in South Launceston as a tyre fitter.

#### **Circumstances Surrounding the Death**

At approximately 7.45am on 31 March 2018 Mr Duff left home for work. His start time was 8.00am. He was riding his Suzuki GSX250F ("the Suzuki") east on Meander Valley Road when it came into collision with the rear of a horse float being drawn by a Toyota LandCruiser flat tray ("the LandCruiser") driven by Mr Jackson Miles. The LandCruiser was also travelling east, having shortly beforehand exited from a private driveway to property number 1897 Meander Valley Road. Police and ambulance personnel attended the scene. It was evident that Mr Duff was deceased.

#### **Post-Mortem Examination**

This was carried out by pathologist, Dr Terry Brain. Associated toxicology testing revealed the presence of methylamphetamine and cannabis.

Forensic scientist, Miriam Connor, advises that:

*"Scientific research has demonstrated that methylamphetamine use may result in the following driving behaviours: drifting in and out of the lane, erratic driving,*

*weaving, speeding, drifting off the road and high-speed collisions. Additionally, driving may be adversely affected due to methylamphetamine's capacity to impair perception, judgement, attention, memory and psycho motor function and may cause poorer time estimation (therefore increasing reaction time)."*

And:

*"THC was identified...indicating the possible recent use of cannabis by the deceased. THC has marked effects on driving ability most notably through reduction in performance skills including reaction times to stimuli, divided attention tasks and hand eye co-ordination. THC may also cause poor time and distance perception, disorientation, eyelid tremors and reduced inhibitions. Simple and complex sensory functions are noticeably impaired."*

Dr Brain opined that the cause of Mr Duff's death was exsanguination due to multiple bone fractures sustained in a motorcycle accident. I accept Dr Brain's opinion upon the cause of death.

### **Investigation**

This was overseen by First Class Constable Nigel Housego, a crash analyst attached to the Crash Investigation Section of Tasmania Police.

His investigation shows that:

1. Mr Duff held a learner motorcycle licence but this licence had been suspended indefinitely due to unpaid fines.
2. The Suzuki was not registered.
3. The crash occurred 650 metres from the western end of a 2 kilometre long straight, 2.5 kilometres east of Hagley on the Meander Valley Road and 56 metres east of property number 1897.
4. The Suzuki was defective with a smooth front tyre, defective front and rear brakes and defective front suspension forks. First Class Constable Housego opined that these defects did not cause or contribute to the crash. I accept this opinion.
5. Mr Duff was wearing a motorcycle helmet fitted with a visor. However, the visor had significant pre-crash fine surface scratching and soiling. In First Class Constable Housego's opinion the state of the visor would have compromised Mr Duff's vision. I also accept this opinion.
6. Mr Duff was riding towards the rising sun.
7. The road surface was dry and in good condition. The weather was fine.
8. The Suzuki was calculated to be travelling at a speed of about 120km/h just prior to the crash.
9. When the LandCruiser entered Meander Valley Road the Suzuki was about 271 to 362 metres to the west. In this circumstance it was not, in Constable

Housego's opinion, unreasonable for the LandCruiser to enter Meander Valley Road. I accept this opinion.

10. The LandCruiser had accelerated from a stationary position to a speed of 45km/h to 50km/h by the time of the crash.
11. There was no evidence of any pre-impact braking by the Suzuki.

### **Findings, Comments and Recommendations**

This crash involved the Suzuki seemingly inexplicably colliding with the rear of the horse float on a straight section of road in good driving conditions without there being any evidence of Mr Duff taking any evasive action. This suggests that he did not become aware of the presence of the horse float until it was too late to avoid the collision. First Class Constable Housego's comprehensive investigation has revealed a number of factors which, in combination, provide a likely explanation for this outcome, namely the condition of the helmet's visor, the position of the sun, the effects of illicit drugs and excessive speed.

I am satisfied that Mr Miles was driving in a proper and prudent manner and that his actions did not contribute to the crash to any degree. I am further satisfied that Mr Duff's death was accidental, there not being any evidence that the collision was the result of any intentional act of self-harm on his part.

I have decided not to hold a public inquest into this death because my investigation has been sufficient to disclose the identity of the deceased, the date, place, cause of death, relevant circumstances concerning how his death occurred and the particulars needed to register his death under the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1999*. I do not consider that the holding of a public inquest would elicit any significant information further to that disclosed by the investigation conducted by me. The circumstances of the death do not require me to make any further comment or to make any recommendations.

I convey my sincere condolences to Mr Duff's family and loved ones.

**Dated:** 9<sup>th</sup> day of November 2018 at Hobart in the State of Tasmania.

**Rod Chandler**  
**Coroner**