



**CORONERS COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Inquest:	Inquest into the death of Nils Noa Enzo Samrud-Sage
Hearing dates:	25 May 2023
Date of findings:	26 May 2023
Place of findings:	Lidcombe
Findings of:	Magistrate Kennedy Deputy State Coroner
Catchwords:	CORONIAL LAW – Missing persons, witnessed fall into the ocean, police search, less than 6 months since reported missing,
File number:	2023/36704
Representation:	Mr Durand Welsh, Advocate Assisting

<p>Findings:</p>	<p>I make the following findings pursuant to Section 81 of the <i>Coroners Act 2009</i> (NSW):</p> <p>The identity of the deceased The deceased person was Mr Nils Noa Enzo Samrud-Sage</p> <p>Date of death 18 January 2023</p> <p>Place of death Bluefish Point, Manly, New South Wales</p> <p>Cause of death The evidence does not allow a finding on the cause of death</p> <p>Manner of death Misadventure</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>I make the no recommendations pursuant to Section 82 of the <i>Coroners Act 2009</i> (NSW)</p>

1. This is an inquest into the disappearance and suspected death of Nils Noa Enzo Samrud-Sage, a young man of twenty years of age who was washed out to sea at Bluefish Point, Manly, on the 18 January 2023. Although his death is reasonably suspected, he was not found nor recovered. His family and friends call him Noa, and as such I will refer to him that way.

Purpose of Inquest

2. An inquest is not an adversarial process, but instead inquisitorial. The purpose of it is not to attribute blame or punish anyone, but rather to investigate if a person died, and when, where and how a person died.
3. Section 27 of the *Coroners Act 2009* requires that an inquest is held in these circumstances where it has not been sufficiently disclosed whether a person has died, as in this case. Section 28 provides that the coronial investigation must find if possible identity, how a death occurred, the cause of death, together with when and where the death occurred.
4. In circumstances such as these, where a death is reasonably suspected but a person is not recovered, an inquest is needed to be held to enable a formal determination to be made as to whether the person is deceased. Proof that the missing person is deceased must be clear, cogent, and exact before such a significant finding of the fact of a person's death is made. That is the first determination that must be decided at this inquest.
5. If I can be satisfied on that issue, the time, place, date, manner and cause of Noa's death will then be explored as per the requirements of section 81 of the *Coroner's Act 2009*.

Background to the disappearance of Noa

6. Nils Noa Enzo Samrud-Sage was born on the 29 September 2002. He was a Swedish national living in Australia on a temporary visa, and at the time of his disappearance, he resided at 105 Bower St in Manly, with his flatmates Johnathan Nordenfelt and Emil Engstrom.
7. On 17 January 2023 four additional friends arrived in Australia from Sweden to visit him and his group of friends.
8. At about 4:30 p.m. on the 18 January 2023, Noa, his two housemates and the four visiting friends from Sweden decided to visit a place they knew as the Mermaid Pools. The four visiting friends were Tove Schodin, Daniel Goergom Andreasson, Jacob Rolf Igglund and Moa-Isabel Lahdo Laurbar. The pools were near the ocean at Bluefish Point, Manly.
9. The group drove to a carpark near the location and then walked to the cliffs. They proceeded down a walking track along the perimeter of the North Head Water Treatment Plant. The track extends through dense bushland before opening onto a cliff edge. To access the pools the group needed to descend the cliff face using a pre-existing rope at the location. Investigations revealed that Noa had visited the location previously.
10. At the bottom, Noa, Johnathan Nordenfelt and Emil Carl-Johan Engstroem decided to swim in the ocean while the rest of the group remained nearby. Noa and his two companions swam for about thirty minutes before the group decided to return to the top of the cliff.

11. The group scaled the cliff to a small landing without incident and without assistance.
From this landing to the cliff top, the pre-existing rope was available to assist the climb to the top of the cliff.
12. Tove Schodin and Emil Carl-Johan Engstroem ascended first, followed by Moa-Isabel Lahdo Laurbar.
13. Moa-Isabel Lahdo Laurbar stated that once she reached the cliff top, she turned around and saw that Jacob Igglund, Noa and Daniel Goergom Andreasson were waiting to climb the rope. Jacob Rolf Igglund began climbing using the rope, while Noa began climbing the rock face beside him, unassisted.
14. Moa-Isabel Lahdo Laurbar gave an account that she saw Noa suddenly lose his grip on the rockface and fall backwards onto the lower landing, roughly one-and-a-half meters below, striking his head. He appeared to her to instantly lose consciousness. Due to the momentum of the fall, Noa continued to roll off this landing, falling a further five meters to the base of the cliff, which was partially submerged by water.
15. Johnathan Nordenfelt's account was very similar, although he says he observed one of the fingerholes Noa using to break, and this caused him to fall backwards from the cliff face.
16. Jacob Igglund and Daniel Goergom Andreasson provide similar accounts, but were not as detailed in their recollection.
17. Jacob Igglund and Daniel Goergom Andreasson attempted to scale back down to the base of the cliff to reach Noa, but he had already been swept out into the ocean. There were high waters and currents preventing them from reaching him. The group members watched in shock as Noa, apparently unconscious, remained floating in the ocean for a short period of time before he disappeared. Although witness estimates

vary in relation to the length of time that Noa was visible in the water, the consensus is that it was somewhere between 30 seconds to a few minutes.

18. As soon as possible after he fell, party members contacted emergency services on mobile phones. This occurred at approximately 5:30 p.m. He was last seen wearing a plain white tee shirt and black shorts.

Police search and investigation

19. Water Police and Manly Life Savers responded to the scene immediately and searched the cliff line but could not locate Noa in the water. A police helicopter and rescue helicopter also responded and conducted searches of the water with no result. Land searches at the scene were also conducted. All search efforts were suspended at 7:27 p.m. on the 18 January 2023 due to poor light, the swell, and an impending electrical storm.
20. On Thursday the 19 January 2023, Water Police and police divers attended the location. The divers entered the water and searched as close as they could to the rocks, but due to adverse weather conditions the dive search had to be abandoned.
21. A police helicopter, rescue helicopter and a drone continued searching with no result.
22. Surf Lifesaving and NSW Water Police continued an offshore search but could not locate Noa.
23. On Friday the 20 January 2023, the search for Noa continued, including NSW Water Police searching Sydney Harbour and Surf Lifesaving searching from Manly to Bluefish point. The searches on 20 January 2023 did not locate him.
24. The search continued on Saturday 21 January 2023. Around 8:30 am Surf Lifesaving resources were redirected to Shelly Beach regarding a shark sighting. Water Police and PolAir conducted a search from Splash Point to South Head, slowly proceeding out to

sea. Around 10:20 am police divers arrived at Bluefish Point and commenced dive operations. During this operation, police divers located a torn piece of a pocket of a white t-shirt that appeared to match the t-shirt Noa was wearing at the time he disappeared, having a matching chest pocket. The shirt was torn in a pattern that police believed could be suggestive of a shark's teeth marks.

25. A marine and aerial search continued through the 22 January 2023 with no result.

26. At 1:30 p.m. on the 23 January 2023, the Marine Area Commander concluded the search.

27. The white t-shirt police divers recovered at Bluefish Point was the only piece of forensic evidence located in the water during the search. Police contacted the Department of Primary Industries seeking further information about the marks. Photographs of the shirt were provided.

28. Marcel Green, Program Leader of the Shark Programs at the Department of Primary Industries responded to the enquiry and indicated that they had consulted two of their shark experts on the matter. According to Marcel Green, the marks and tears on the t-shirt were consistent with shark tooth imprints. However, it was not possible to determine the size or species of shark or when the bites were made.

Evidence from the officer in charge

29. Constable Desbrow gave evidence. She painted a picture of the day Noa went missing as a day with rough and high seas, and she described a large storm rolling in by the time police were in attendance. The location where Noa was last seen she described as an off-the-track area, not one the general public would find obvious or easy to access.

30. She gave evidence that following her investigation she conducted signs of life checks, but these checks disclosed no activity associated with Noa after his disappearance. To this date, there has unfortunately been no further evidence located that indicates Noa is still alive.

Family Statement – Noa

31. An important part of the inquest process is the family statement. It is a time to reflect on the person who is the subject of the inquest, and reflect on their lives. Noa was the focus of this inquest, and it is important to reflect on who he was.

32. Mr Oliver Samrud-Sage attended the inquest remotely. He generously contributed to the inquest sharing with us insight into his son Noa, and made a very moving family statement. Noa's mother had spent time backpacking in Australia in the 1980's and Noa was drawn to Australia to spend time here. He hoped to stay for a number of years and was enjoying living in Manly. He was well travelled, and his family had lived in three different countries, including within the Middle East, but they had a family home which was based in Sweden. He is sadly missed by his brother and sister. In fact, the family will remember Noa's 21st birthday together at the family home. He worked as a waiter for Sweden's best chef, before he decided to make the move to Australia. He was excited to spend time here, and he lived an active, healthy and very social life, loved by his friends.

33. On the 17th of January his father received an unexpected call from Noa and they spoke at length. His son was happy, and that would be the last conversation the family would have with Noa.

34. Mr Samrud-Sage was dignified and generous. He thanked the New South Wales police who had treated the family with respect and great care when he attended Australia following the tragedy.

35. It is clear that Noa was loved by all, but particularly by his family who are left bereft without him.

Conclusion

36. The last time Noa was seen alive was at 5:30 p.m. on the 18 January 2023. Several witnesses were present, including his two housemates, Emil Carl-Johan Engstroem and Johnathan Nordenfelt, who have confirmed his identity in their statements to police. The location he was last seen was in the ocean off Bluefish Point, Manly. The only evidence recovered from the water was a piece of t-shirt consistent with the t-shirt Noa was wearing at the time he disappeared.

37. It is clear that Noa was much loved by friends and family. He had a love for life and adventure, for his friends and family. The police fully investigated and there has been no access to bank accounts, internet, or mobile since he went missing. He was a young man with too much connection and love for his family and friends to fail to contact them if he could.

Findings

38. This was a more unusual missing persons case because the misadventure that befell Noa was witnessed. He slipped or lost his grip, he hit his head and landed, injured or unconscious into the ocean. Friends watched helplessly as he floated out to sea and then disappeared from sight.

39. The police undertook a comprehensive land, air and water search, but could not find him. They did manage to find a shirt that I accept on the evidence did belong to Noa.

The finding of that shirt was extraordinary, but speaks volumes about the meticulous nature of the search. The police did their utmost to exhaust all means available in their attempts to find Noa.

40. It was also impressive that they had the shirt further analysed, which found that the marks in the shirt were possibly caused by shark bites. They did not identify what type of shark. It is not possible to make any finding of when a shark came in contact with that shirt, nor what type. The shirt is important, however, as the final confirmation that sadly Noa did not survive.

41. The deepest of sympathies are extended to Noa's family. The loss of Noa in these circumstances touched so many in our community. The disappearance of anyone in these circumstances is a tragedy. It is made all the more difficult and painful because Noa was so far from home and his family. He had come to Australia for an adventure. He was out doing just that, enjoying nature with his friends. He was innocently enjoying a beautiful day when a terrible accident occurred, and his life was lost. I am satisfied on the evidence that Noa did not survive, and I find on the evidence before me that he is now deceased.

Acknowledgements

42. Thank you firstly to the Officer in charge Constable Desbrow who acted swiftly to bring some comfort to the family by preparing a thorough and careful brief of evidence.

43. Thank you to Mr Welsh, Coronial Advocate assisting, for a thorough and careful preparation, great attention to detail and appropriate, compassionate and thorough submissions made to assist in this inquest.

44. I am also grateful to Assistant Coroner Iain Watt, for taking an early and caring lead in this matter, helping it to progress and facilitating the early listing.

Formal Findings

45. I make the following findings pursuant to Section 81 of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW):

The identity of the deceased

The deceased person was Mr Nils Noa Enzo Samrud-Sage

Date of death

18 January 2023

Place of death

Bluefish Point, Manly, New South Wales

Cause of death

The evidence does not allow a finding on the cause of death

Manner of death

Misadventure

46. I make no recommendations pursuant to Section 82 of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW)

Conclusion

47. I extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Noa, to those friends who traumatically witnessed his loss, and to his family who were not only suffering shock and grief at the loss of their young man, but had the added complication of facing this difficult process in a different country and far from home.

48. I now close this inquest.