



CORONERS COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Inquest: Inquest into the death of Thumbarian Govender

Hearing dates: 17 September 2026

Date of findings: 17 September 2026

Place of findings: Coroners Court Lidcombe

Findings of: Judge R. Hosking, Deputy State Coroner

Catchwords: Natural death in custody

File number: 2026/83142

Representation: Police Advocate assisting the inquest: Seargent Karissa McKay

Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW: Timothy Dinjar, solicitor

Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network: Gladys Amal, solicitor

Findings: **Identity of deceased:** Thumbarian Govender

Date of death: 26 February 2026

Place of death: Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick

Cause of death: Metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma, with end-stage renal failure and atrial fibrillation identified as significant contributing conditions

Manner of death: Natural causes

Recommendations: N/A

Introduction

- 1 The role of the coroner is to make findings as to the identity of the nominated person and in relation to the place and date of their death. The coroner is also to address issues concerning the manner and cause of the person's death.¹ A coroner may make recommendations, arising from the evidence, in relation to matters that have the capacity to improve public health and safety in the future.²
- 2 This inquest is held pursuant to the jurisdiction conveyed by s 23 (1)(d)(ii) of the Act in circumstances where at the time of his death, Thumbarian was 'temporarily absent' (as he had been hospitalised) from a correctional centre within the meaning of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (NSW).

Background

- 3 Thumbarian was born on 14 November 1941 in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and was the fifth of eight children.
- 4 He spent most of his life in South Africa, although he briefly lived in Australia in the early 1980s and later returned regularly to visit family residing here. He worked as a motor mechanic and test driver for BMW South Africa.
- 5 He had three children from his first marriage. That marriage ended and he later re-married.

Custodial and Medical History

- 6 At the time of his death, Thumbarian was serving a sentence of 20 years' imprisonment for commercial drug importation. He was sentenced on 5 February 2017, with a non-parole period of 11 years, and was eligible for parole on 4 February 2028.

¹ S 81 of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW) (**the Act**)

² S 82 of the Act.

- 7 Thumbarian had a significant medical history, including chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis, hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, heart failure, and previous myocardial infarctions.
- 8 On 28 January 2026, Thumbarian was diagnosed with metastatic pancreatic cancer involving the liver following investigations for abdominal and back pain, reduced appetite, nausea and vomiting.
- 9 He was reviewed by the oncology team at Prince of Wales Hospital and advised that his life span was approximately six months. An Advance Care Directive and resuscitation plan were completed, and his treatment thereafter focused on symptom management and palliation.
- 10 A palliative care consultant subsequently confirmed his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer with liver and possible lung metastases. His goals of care were limited to ward-based treatment, with no CPR or intubation, and discussions commenced regarding the withdrawal of dialysis.
- 11 On 18 February 2026, Thumbarian was transferred to Prince of Wales Hospital with worsening abdominal symptoms and dehydration. During that admission he developed sepsis, end-stage renal failure and atrial fibrillation. Despite treatment, his condition deteriorated, and following discussions between his treating specialists and family, he was transitioned to end-of-life care on 20 February 2026.
- 12 On 26 February 2026, Thumbarian deteriorated to a point where he had a slight pulse and difficulty breathing. Nurses attended to take observations at 9.35 and he was declared deceased.
- 13 Thumbarian was identified by his brother.

Post-Mortem Examination

- 14 An external post-mortem examination was conducted by Dr Issabella Brouwer on 4 March 2026.

- 15 Dr Brouwer opined that Thumbarian died from metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma, with end-stage renal failure and atrial fibrillation identified as significant contributing conditions.

Investigations

- 16 The coronial investigation revealed no care and treatment concerns.

Statutory findings required by s 81(1)

- 17 As a result of reviewing the brief of evidence tendered in the inquest, I make the following findings:

Identity of the deceased:

The person who died is Thumbarian Govender.

Date of death:

Thumbarian died on 26 February 2026.

Place of death:

Thumbarian died at Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, New South Wales.

Cause of death:

Metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma with end-stage renal failure and atrial fibrillation being significant contributing conditions.

Manner of death:

Natural causes.

- 18 I offer my condolences to all those who miss Thumbarian and I thank Sgt. Karissa Mackay and Plain Clothes Snr. Cst. Dean Hodges for their assistance in this inquest.

I close this inquest.



Judge R Hosking

Deputy State Coroner

Lidcombe
