CORONERS COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Inquest:	Inquest into the disappearance and suspected death of Matthew Sean Flint
Hearing dates:	16 November 2026
Date of findings:	16 November 2026
Place of findings:	NSW State Coroners Court, Lidcombe
Findings of:	Judge Carmel Forbes, Deputy State Coroner
Catchwords:	CORONIAL LAW – missing person – whether missing person now deceased – manner and cause of death
File number:	2026/00163054
Representation:	Coronial Advocate Assisting the Coroner: D Winter-Mirenzi
Findings:	**Identity of deceased**: The person who died was Matthew Sean Flint **Date of death**: Matthew died on, or sometime after, 20 March 2025 **Place of death**: Matthew died in Leura NSW 2780 **Cause of death**: The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the cause of Matthew's death **Manner of death:** Matthew's death was intentionally self-inflicted

Introduction

1 This inquest concerns the disappearance and suspected death of Matthew Sean Flint. Matthew was last seen alive at around 11:23am on 20 March 2025 when he was captured on CCTV footage walking past 274 Leura Mall in Leura. He was reported missing on 21 March 2025. Despite extensive enquiries and searches, Matthew has not been located.

2 When police suspect a missing person may have died, the suspected death is reportable to the coroner. Once that report is made the coroner has an obligation to investigate in order to answer a number of questions. The primary question is whether the person is in fact deceased. If that can be established, the coroner is to make further findings as to the date, place, manner and cause of death.[1]

3 In addition to deciding these questions, at the conclusion of proceedings, the coroner may, if necessary, make recommendations in relation to matters arising directly from the evidence.[2]

4 At the outset, I acknowledge the profound impact that Matthew's disappearance has had and will continue to have on his family and friends.

Matthew's life

5 Matthew was born on 6 December 1959. He was the eldest child of Catherine McCallister and John Flint. Matthew had two younger siblings, Christopher Flint and Rachael Flint, with whom he was very close. Mrs McCallister told the Court that growing up, Matthew and Christoper were inseparable. When Rachael was born, Matthew doted on Rachael. In turn, when Rachael's son Brandon was born Mathew doted on him.

6 As a child, Matthew played cricket and soccer and had an interest in music. He was particularly fond of the Beatles, Bruce Springsteen and also played the

[1] *Coroners Act 2009*, s 81.
[2] *Coroners Act 2009*, s 82.

guitar. He attended St Patrick's in Sutherland for both his primary and secondary schooling. He completed year 10 and then began working for the public service. He started off by doing clerical work for the State before being offered a position with the Department of Defence.

7 When Matthew was 16 or 17, he left the family home and moved into a unit in Cronulla. He stayed in touch with his family and was in frequent contact.

8 When Matthew was in his late 20s, he started renting properties around the Darlinghurst and Kings Cross Areas. He continued to remain in touch with his family. He was very open with them and was happy to share everything that was going on in his life.

9 In 1999, Matthew bought an apartment at 19/175 Cathedral Street in Woolloomooloo. He initially worked for the public service and then in a clerical position for the Department of Defence. He went on to work for Australia Post and then Sydney Trains.

10 When Matthew was in his 40s, he developed a malignant melanoma in his knee which was successfully treated with multiple surgeries and immunotherapy. Although the cancer did not return, Matthew experienced ongoing side effects including the loss of feeling on one side of his body and always feeling cold.

11 In around 2019, Matthew was medically discharged from Sydney Trains. He did not return to work following this. Rachel told the Court that she observed a real shift in Matthew's behaviour following this. She said that his thinking became very disordered and he expressed strange beliefs. Mrs McCallister told the Court that Matthew's social life was his work, and he began to struggle after losing his job. He also became more socially withdrawn.

12 In September 2023, Matthew suffered a mental health episode and attended St Vincent's Hospital.

13 On the 11 September 2023, Matthew rang Rachael and told her that he thought he was dying. Rachael went to Matthew's apartment and found him to be very emotional, thought disordered and unwell.

14 On or around 18 October 2023, Matthew saw a general practitioner at the Jannali Medical Centre. A mental health treatment plan was prepared which listed Matthew's "problem/diagnosis" as depression.

15 In around December 2023, Rachael took Matthew to the Enough is Enough Counselling service where he was referred to a psychogeriatric psychologist, however this appointment was cancelled by Mr Flint.

16 In November 2024, Matthew was admitted to Sutherland Hospital after he reported having a "chill" and then fell to the ground. He was found to have a kidney infection and infection in the bloodstream.

The last recorded sighting of Matthew

17 On 19 March 2025, Matthew and Mrs McCallister went shopping in Gymea. Matthew told Catherine that he needed to return to his unit in Woolloomooloo the next day due to a fire inspection. During the evening, Matthew, McCallister and Rachael spent the evening together. He appeared to be in good spirits at the time.

18 On the morning of 20 March 2025, Mrs McCallister got up early to make sure that Matthew had something to eat before he returned to his unit. Matthew was wearing his best clothes, being navy trousers, a white t-shirt with a blue shirt over the top and a blue denim jacket. Matthew gave Mrs McCallister a kiss goodbye and Mrs McCallister asked him to call if he was not going to be home later that night.

19 At 7:48am, Matthew used his Opal card to tap on at Kirrawee train station.

20 At 8:38am, Matthew tapped off at Central train station.

21 At 8:45am, Matthew tapped back on at Central train station.

22 At 10:50am, Matthew was captured on CCTV footage getting off a train at Leura train station. At 10:51am, Matthew tapped off at Leura train station.

23 At 10:53am, Matthew walked past the Polar Bear Café, which is located at 135 Leura Mall.

24 At around 10:54am, Matthew walked past the Raine and Horne office.

25 At around 11:23am, Matthew walked past 274 Leura Mall in a southerly direction. This was the last recorded sighting of Matthew. If Matthew continued walking southbound, he would have reached the intersection with Olympian Parade. From this intersection, Matthew would have had access to a number of bushwalking trails and lookouts. These lookouts and trails, whilst well known, are not frequented as often as other attractions in the upper Blue Mountains area. This area is also a short distance away from various cliffs which are over 100m high.

The police investigation and efforts to locate Matthew

26 On the evening of 20 March 2025, Matthew did not return home and also did not call Mrs McCallister. As a result, Mrs McCallister became concerned and contacted Rachael. They decided that they would wait until the next morning before taking further action. At 7:08pm, 7:10pm and 7:28pm, Rachael called Matthew, but he did not answer the phone or respond to her message.

27 On the morning of 21 March 2025, Mrs McCallister called Rachael and said that Matthew still had not returned home. At 11:47am, Rachael called Matthew again and left a message. She did not receive a response. As a result, at around 11:13am, she contacted Kings Cross Police and requested a welfare check. At around 2:00pm, Kings Cross Police attended Matthew's unit and found no evidence that he was or had been there. The building manager told police that the fire inspection had been scheduled for the following week. Kings Cross Police advised Mrs McCallister to make a missing person report to Sutherland

Police. At around 5:40pm, Rachael attended Sutherland Police Station and made a missing person report.

28 In the days following Matthew's disappearance, police spent a considerable amount of time canvassing for and reviewing CCTV footage. This enabled police to identify Matthew's movements on 20 March 2025 as identified above.

29 On 22 March 2025, Rachael and her husband attended Mrs McCallister's residence and looked through Matthew's room. Rachael located a four-page handwritten letter dated 19 March 2025 which appears to be consistent with a suicide note. In the note, Matthew said:

> "I am sorry but I have taken a 'dive'. This note should be given to the solicitor as it may speed up the issue of a death certificate. I didn't want to do this although I know I should have done this a few years back".

30 Matthew also referred to his ongoing health issues. At some point after this Rachel attended Matthew's unit and located another handwritten note which said, "I am not missing. I have taken a 'dive'. I'm sorry. Matt".

31 On the same date, police issued a media release in relation to Matthew's disappearance.

32 On 25 March 2025, the NSW Police Airwing attended for the purpose of conducting an aerial search. However, they had to abort the search due to the weather conditions. Police Rescue also searched the area from the top of Olympia Rock, Elysian Rock and Gordon Falls lookouts as well as the track in between. Nothing of interest was located. Various other enquires were made with local hospitals and potential witnesses from nearby vendors.

33 On 26 March 2025, a larger canvass of the area was organised targeting residential dwellings, businesses, dash cameras and bus footage on the southern end of Leura Mall. Police used a drone to conduct an aerial search of Echo Point and Spooners Lookout. However, the vegetation made it difficult to do a proper search. Police also obtained and reviewed CCTV footage from

Leura railway station which confirmed that Matthew had not returned to the station.

34 On 27 March 2025, enquiries were made with taxi and bus services in the area. A further drone search was conducted in the vicinity of Tarpean Rock, Bridal Viel Falls and Olympian Rock. Nothing of interest was located but the search was cut short due to weather conditions.

35 On 28 March 2025, a Cellebrite extraction of Matthew's phone indicated that on 17 March 2025, he conducted a search for a 14-day weather forecast for the Katoomba area. Police Rescue also abseiled down Olympian Rock and searched around the base of the lookout in both directions. Nothing of interest was located. A further drone search of the Gordon Falls area was conduct but nothing was located.

36 Police have also conducted checks with AUSTRAC, Westpac, Opal and Medicare, none of which indicate that Matthew has made any transactions, claims or utilised public transport since the date of his disappearance.

37 On 7 September 2026, Detective Sergeant Hardy indicated that Blue Mountains police conducted a further land search near the Lady Darley Lookout. Unfortunately, Matthew was not located.

38 Update signs of life checks were conducted for this inquest. The missing persons unit have Matthew's DNA profile from his family, and no match has been made to date.

39 Following the investigation, Detective Sergeant Hardy is of the opinion that there were no suspicious circumstances or any evidence of foul play and opined:

> "As investigating officer, it is my opinion that Matthew intentionally travelled to the Blue Mountains area due to the cliffs/remote natural location. The timing was consistent with the weather and early morning departure, with Matthew taking minimal belongings it shows he had no intention to return. Matthew was medically unwell, socially isolated with a documented history deterioration in

his mental health. Matthew prepared a suicide note, deliberately travelled to the Blue Mountains and was last seen heading towards high-risk terrain. All of the evidence indicates that Matthew has taken his own life".

Consideration

Whether Matthew is now deceased

40 A finding that a person is deceased is a finding of great significance and gravity, not only for the family members of that person and the emotional toll that such a finding will invariably bring, but also because such a finding carries with it important legal and administrative consequences. Such a finding is made on the balance of probabilities, but there must be clear, cogent and exact evidence that a person has died before it can be made.[3]

41 The available evidence establishes the following:

(1) Matthew was last seen alive in Leura on 20 March 2025. According to his family, he had no reason to be in the Leura area.

(2) He was last seen walking southbound along Leura Mall in the direction of high-risk terrain. There is no evidence indicating that Matthew left the Leura area by taxi, bus or train.

(3) Matthew would always keep in touch with Mrs McCallister and Rachael. However, there has been no contact since the morning of 20 March 2025.

(4) Despite extensive and comprehensive searches undertaken by police, no evidence has been obtained indicating that Matthew is still alive.

(5) Matthew left two handwritten notes in which he stated that he was not missing and had taken a "dive".

[3] *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336.

(6) There have been no confirmed sightings of Matthew since his disappearance.

42 Having considered all of the evidence and, in particular, the matters set out above, I am satisfied on the balance of probabilities that Matthew is now deceased and that he took his own life.

Date and place of death

43 In relation to the date and place of Matthew's death, the evidence establishes that he took a train to Central to Leura and then commenced walking southbound along Leura Mall. He was last seen alive at around 11:23am on 20 March 2025 when he was captured on CCTV footage walking southbound past 274 Leura Mall. He was not captured on any other CCTV footage in the area following this and his Opal card has not been used since he tapped off at the Leura train station earlier that day. Similarly, there are no charges on Matthew's bank account. It follows that there is no evidence that Matthew left the Leura area by train or by taxi or other rideshare service. As Matthew was last seen heading towards the bushland, I am satisfied on the balance of probabilities that he died in Leura on, or sometime after, 20 March 2025.

Cause and manner of death

44 In light of Matthew's note indicating that he had taken a "dive", it is possible that he died from injuries caused by a fall from height. However, as Matthew has not been found and a post-mortem examination has not been performed, the available evidence does not allow me to make a finding as to the medical cause of Matthew's death.

45 In relation to the manner of death, it is well established that a finding of suicide must never be presumed. In *R v London Coroner; Ex parte Barber* [1975] 1 WLR 1310 at 1313, Lord Widgery CJ (with whom Milmo and Wien JJ agreed) said:

> "[P]erhaps one of the most important rules that coroners should bear in mind … [is] that suicide must never be presumed. If a person dies a violent death,

> the possibility of suicide may be there for all to see, but it must not be presumed merely because it seems on the face of it to be a likely explanation. Suicide must be proved by the evidence, and if it is not proved by evidence, it is the duty of the coroner not to find suicide, but to find an open verdict …"

46 In determining whether a death was intentionally self-inflicted, the civil standard of proof applies. In this respect, in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336 at 361-362, Dixon J said:

> "The truth is that, when the law requires the proof of any fact, the tribunal must feel an actual persuasion of its occurrence or existence before it can be found. … Except upon criminal issues to be proved by the prosecution, it is enough that the affirmative of an allegation is made out to the reasonable satisfaction of the tribunal. But reasonable satisfaction is not a state of mind that is attained or established independently of the nature and consequence of the fact or facts to be proved. The seriousness of an allegation made, the inherent unlikelihood of an occurrence of a given description, or the gravity of the consequences flowing from a particular finding are considerations which must affect the answer to the question whether the issue has been proved to the reasonable satisfaction of the tribunal. In such matters 'reasonable satisfaction' should not be produced by inexact proofs, indefinite testimony, or indirect inferences."

47 Having carefully considered the evidence, I am reasonably satisfied that Matthew's death was intentionally self-inflicted for the following reasons:

(1) On 17 March 2025, Matthew conducted a search on his phone for the weather in Leura for the following week. The evidence indicates that Matthew had no reason to attend Leura. He had no friends or associates in the area. This suggests that there was some advanced planning and that Matthew attended the Leura area with the intent to self-harm, rather than for some other purpose.

(2) Matthew misled Mrs McCallister about the reason for leaving her residence on the morning of 20 March 2025, noting that police subsequently spoke to the Building Manager who indicated the fire inspection was scheduled for the week after.

(3) Matthew had a history of depression. Mrs McCallister and Rachael both noticed that Matthew's mental health deteriorated after he was medically discharged from Sydney Trains. It appears that Matthew's ongoing struggles with his health had a significant effect on his mental health.

(4) Matthew left two suicide notes in which he stated that he was not missing and that he was taking a "dive". In one of the notes, Matthew spoke of the effects of his deteriorating health.

(5) Matthew was last seen walking southbound along Leura Mall and in the direction of cliffs. Detective Sergeant Scott Burton from the Springwood Police Station noted that there have been many self-harm incidents in this area in the past.

(6) Mrs McCallister and Rachael, the two people who knew Matthew best, both believe that Matthew's death was intentionally self-inflicted.

Findings

48 For the reasons set out above, I make the following findings pursuant to s 81(1) of the Act:

Identity
The person who died was Matthew Sean Flint

Date of death
Matthew died on, or sometime after, 20 March 2025

Place of death
Matthew died in Leura NSW

Cause of death
The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the cause of Matthew's death

Manner of death
Matthew's death was intentionally self-inflicted

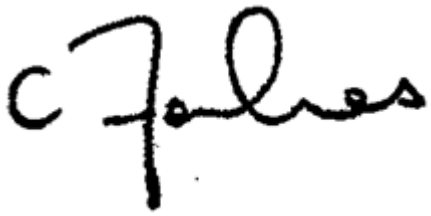
Conclusion

49 On behalf of the Court, I express my sincere and respectful condolences to Matthew's family and friends for their tragic loss. I acknowledge the grief, anguish and uncertainty associated with losing a loved one in these

circumstances. I assure Matthew's family that should further information ever become available; the inquest can be re-opened.

50 I thank the officer in charge, Detective Sergeant Candice Hardy, for the very thorough investigation and for preparing a detailed brief of evidence. I also express my gratitude to the coronial advocate assisting me throughout the inquest, Danny Winter-Mirenzi.

51 I close this inquest.



Judge Carmel Forbes
Deputy State Coroner
16 November 2026

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