

IN THE CORONERS' COURT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

Rel No: D0249/2024

Police No: 24 104154

CORONERS FINDINGS
ROAD DEATH 52 OF 2024
Section 34 of the Coroners Act 1993

I, Elisabeth Armitage, Coroner, having investigated the death of a **29 year old Caucasian female** and without holding an inquest, find that she was born on **6 December 1995** and that her **death occurred on 16 October 2024, at Channel Island Road, Wickham in the Northern Territory of Australia.**

Introduction:

These findings concern road death 52 of 2024, the death of a 29 year old Caucasian female.

This crash involved two of the Fatal 5.

The female driver was intoxicated (blood alcohol .11%) and speeding (149kph in a 100kph zone) when she lost control of her vehicle resulting in a single vehicle roll-over crash.

Her loss of life is a tragedy for her family, friends and the wider community.

Cause of death:

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 1(a) | Disease or condition leading directly to death: | Multiple blunt force injuries |
| 1(b) | Morbid conditions giving rise to the above cause: | Single motor vehicle crash (driver) |
| 1 (c) | | Alcohol intoxication |

Following an autopsy on 17 October 2024, Forensic Pathologist, Dr Salona Roopan commented:

Summary of main pathological findings

- Post-mortem CT scan main findings of:
 - o No intracranial haemorrhage.
 - o No acute cervical spinal fractures.

- o Left possible breast haematoma.
- o Large left pneumothorax, small right pneumothorax and small right haemothorax with multiple bilateral rib fractures and a fractured sternum.
- o A fractured right transverse process of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd lumbar vertebrae.
- o Bruising in the right inguinal region but no intra-abdominal haemorrhage and intact pelvis.
- o Fractured right femoral neck with comminuted fracture of the distal femoral shaft on the right.
- o Non-ossifying fibroma in the distal left femur.
- o Comminuted fractures of the distal left tibia and fibula and a left tibial plateau fracture.
- o Comminuted fracture of the proximal right humerus and right elbow.
- Toxicological analysis of preserved femoral blood showed:
 - o Alcohol level of 0.11% was detected (vitreous humour alcohol level was 0.12%)
 - o Ketamine level of 0.89 mg/L
 - o No other drugs listed in the laboratory's attached Scope of Analysis was detected in the samples submitted for analysis.

Comments

- The opinion as to the cause of death is based on the available police and medical information, and a post-mortem examination including ancillary investigations.
- The decedent was a 29-year-old adult female who was reportedly involved in a single motor vehicle collision as a driver. Toxicological analysis of preserved femoral blood and vitreous humour showed a blood alcohol level of 0.11% and ketamine level of 0.89 mg/L. A blood alcohol level of 0.11% correlates with a moderate level of intoxication and although the clinical effects may differ from person to person due to individual factors, the level may have clinical effects that include impaired judgement and coordination. Ketamine is an anaesthetic drug that can be used for therapeutic and recreational purposes. Its presence indicates recent use and although its level is not within the toxic range, it may have potentiated the effects of alcohol.
- I have no reason to believe with the information available and findings made during external examination of the body that the death was due to any other cause than the reported motor vehicle collision as a driver.

Police investigation:

A coronial investigation by police found no suspicious circumstances surrounding this death.

Background:

This female driver was born in France and immigrated to Australia in January 2024. She was employed.

Circumstances:

On the evening of Tuesday 15 October 2024, the female driver drove to Darwin city from Channel Island Road. During the night she attended a number of venues in the city and consumed an unknown amount of alcohol.

Around 2.30am on the morning of Wednesday 16 October 2024, she drove her 2001 Mitsubishi Pajero Wagon, from Darwin city to Palmerston via Tiger Brennan Drive before making her way to Channel Island Road.

On Channel Island Road, 575 meters from the Bladin Village entrance, she veered off the left side of the road before entering a clockwise yaw. The Mitsubishi Pajero crossed the road entering an anticlockwise yaw before tripping and rolling approximately 80 metres, spreading debris along the roads edge. The Mitsubishi Pajero came to rest on its left side after sustaining extensive damage.

Around 4.45am, a passerby was travelling to work and located the vehicle with a lady in the driver's seat. She was not moving. He checked a pulse and found no signs of life. He notified Emergency Services of the crash at 4.50am.

St John Ambulance paramedics attended the crash site at 5.05am. She was declared deceased at 5.19am.

Vehicle:

The vehicle was a 2001 silver Mitsubishi Pajero (Western Australian registration). On inspection, no defects were noted that could have been contributory to the crash.

Crash scene, road features and conditions:

At the location of this crash, Channel Island Road is a dual lane road with a posted speed limit of 100km/h. The road was sealed with bituminous material and finished with blue metal and granite chips of a course to medium structure. Near the crash, the dual-lane road is marked with a single broken white line, there are no marked fog lines and dirt shoulders delineate the lanes. The southbound lane slopes naturally toward a woodland area. The northbound shoulder has a shallow culvert. Both shoulders have natural vegetation of medium density.

The roadway leading up to the accident site is straight. There are no permanent view obstructions to restrict a driver's view of the roadway or associated shoulders. The road surface was dry at the time of the crash and no lubricants were present on the road surface prior to the crash.

The crash occurred at nighttime and there was no lighting in the area.

The weather was fine and clear.



Selected scene photograph courtesy of Officer in Charge

Calculations conducted:

Major Crash investigators attended and documented, photographed and mapped the scene. Calculations conducted on the survey data collected at the scene determined that the vehicle's speed at the commencement of the yaw was 144.72km/h.

Conclusion as to cause of death:

The cause of the crash was loss of control of the vehicle due to driver impairment from alcohol consumption with a mid-range blood alcohol reading of .11%; and excess speed of 144.72km/h where the posted speed limit was 100km/h.

Decision not to hold an inquest:

Under section 16(1) of the *Coroners Act 1993* ("the Act") I decided not to hold an inquest because the investigations into the death disclosed the time, place and cause of death and the relevant circumstances concerning the death. I do not consider that the holding of an inquest would elicit any information additional to that disclosed in the investigation to date and the circumstances do not require a mandatory inquest because:

- The deceased was not, immediately before death, a person held in care or custody; and
- The death was not caused or contributed to by injuries sustained while the deceased was held in custody; and
- The identity of the deceased is known.