

IN THE CORONERS' COURT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Rel No: A0015/2024

Police No: 24 29810

**CORONERS' FINDINGS**  
**ROAD DEATH 15 OF 2024**

*Section 34 of the Coroners Act 1993*

I, Elisabeth Armitage, Coroner, having investigated the death of a **20 Year Old Aboriginal Male** and without holding an inquest, find that he was born on **2 October 2003** and that his **death occurred on 24 March 2024, at intersection of Larapinta Drive and Aldridge Street, Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.**

**Introduction:**

These findings concern the tragic road death of a 20 year old Aboriginal male pedestrian. The pedestrian was intoxicated (0.2%) as he crossed the road at nighttime and in the rain. The driver who struck the pedestrian did not stop and was later located and charged with several offences including hit and run.

**Cause of death:**

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 1(a) | Disease or condition leading directly to death:   | <b>Blunt force head and limb injuries</b>            |
| 1(b) | Morbid conditions giving rise to the above cause: | <b>Reported motor vehicle collision (pedestrian)</b> |
| 1(c) |   | <b>Acute Alcohol &amp; Cannabis intoxication</b>     |

Following an autopsy on 26 March 2024, Forensic Pathologist, Dr Salona Roopan commented:

*Summary of main pathological findings*

- Post-mortem CT scan findings showed:
  - Extensive facial fractures including orbital floor fractures with intracranial haemorrhage including blood in the ventricles.
  - Fractured mandible.

- o Fractured 5th and 6th cervical vertebra.
- o Fractured left clavicle.
- o Comminuted fracture of the left elbow predominantly involving the proximal ulna.
- o Thoracic and lumbar spine and pelvis intact.
- o Supra condylar fracture of the distal right femur with complete dislocation of the right knee joint. Patella is displaced but appears intact. Left lower limb intact.
- o No significant abdominal injuries seen.

*Comments*

- The opinion as to the cause of death is based on the available police and medical information, and a full post-mortem examination including ancillary investigations.
- At autopsy, significant blunt force head injuries which included skull fractures, base of skull fractures, intracranial haemorrhage and brain herniation was present. Severe limb injuries were also present including a degloving compound fracture of the right leg. Toxicology analysis showed a blood alcohol level of 0.20% and presence of cannabinoids and their metabolites. Although the clinical effects of alcohol differs from person to person, a blood alcohol concentration of 0.20% is associated with a moderate level of intoxication and can be associated with impaired judgement, balance and confusion.
- The severity of injuries indicate that the decedent was involved in a high impact collision but a crush-type injury was not evident. The external blunt force injuries were non-patterned and there were no tyre marks evident on the body but it should be noted that the decedent had attended the hospital, and no clothing was present at autopsy for examination.
- The features at autopsy are not in keeping with a run-over type collision (collision in a lying down position) because of the findings of significant impact to the head with a stellate-type scalp laceration and extensive head injuries suggesting significant posterior impact on a hard surface and not a crush-type injury. The injuries on the body therefore favour a high impact collision in a standing position thereafter resulting in a fall backwards with significant impact to the head.

**Background:**

The 20 year old pedestrian was born at Alice Springs Hospital and grew up in communities in central Australia. He enjoyed playing football for local teams, making music and singing. His grandmother said he was a lovely grandson who was caring and liked to stay at home and sit down with family. He is greatly mourned and missed.

**Circumstances:**

On Saturday 23 March 2024 the pedestrian and his partner were socializing and drinking at the Rock Bar in Alice Springs. The happy evening was marred by an incident with other patrons that spilled out onto the street and KFC car park and police attended.

The couple requested and were given a lift home from attending police. They were dropped home at 0307hrs.

The pedestrian was unsettled and said he was angry. He walked out of the front yard and onto Larapinta Drive. As he was crossing Larapinta Drive he was struck by a Black Ford Ranger with NT Registration with force, sending him sprawling onto the road. Unsure of what he had hit the driver did not stop and fled the scene.

At 0415hrs police communications received a call from a member of the public reporting a person lying on the road at the intersection of Larapinta Drive and Aldridge Street, apparently unconscious and possibly hit by a vehicle.

St John ambulance attended at about 0420hrs on Sunday 24 March 2024. They located the pedestrian lying prone on the road in wet and dark conditions. Paramedics identified a pool of blood underneath him, he was bleeding consistently from the head, he had an open right leg femur fracture and blood in his airway. Paramedics could not see any rise and fall of the chest and no pulse was present.

He was rolled onto his back and lifted into the ambulance with the use of a sheet to get out of the weather and due to road safety. Paramedics provided emergency treatment, and he was conveyed by ambulance to the Alice Springs Hospital. Shortly after arrival he was pronounced deceased at 0510hrs on Sunday 24 March 2024.

#### **Location and scene:**

Larapinta Drive is a public street, open to and in use by the public. At the time of the crash, it was nighttime, there was street lighting, a light amount of traffic and the weather was wet and raining.

#### **Prosecution:**

At 1200hrs on Sunday 24 March 2024 the Black Ford Ranger and driver were located by police at an outstation. The vehicle was declared a crime scene and seized for forensic examination. At 1250hrs the driver was arrested and conveyed to the Alice Springs watch house where he was processed into custody. A blood sample was taken which returned a result of .237 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of breath, however, as several hours had passed between the collision and the analysis this was not evidence of intoxication at the time of the collision.

The driver was charged with: Hit and Run Cause Death; Breach of Bail and Drive a Motor Vehicle While Unlicensed. He pleaded to guilty to the charges and on 10 October 2025 he was sentenced in the Darwin Local Court to 20 Months imprisonment suspended after 10 months with residential rehabilitation and supervision conditions.

#### **Decision not to hold an inquest:**

Under section 16(1) of the *Coroners Act 1993* 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.