



FINDING OF INQUEST

An Inquest taken on behalf of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at Adelaide in the State of South Australia, on the 6th day of May 2016 and the 1st day of September 2016, by the Coroner's Court of the said State, constituted of Anthony Ernest Schapel, Deputy State Coroner, into the death of Frank Dorman.

The said Court finds that Frank Dorman aged 81 years, late of Pennwood Green Nursing Home, 75 Hilltop Drive, Oakden, South Australia died at Oakden, South Australia on the 29th day of July 2014 as a result of haemopericardium due to ruptured myocardial infarction due to coronary artery atheroma and thrombosis. The said Court finds that the circumstances of his death were as follows:

1. Introduction and reason for Inquest

- 1.1. Frank Dorman was 81 years old when he died on 29 July 2014 at the Pennwood Green Nursing Home at Oakden. At the time of his death Mr Dorman was subject to orders pursuant to section 32 of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 that included orders that he reside at and be detained in such place as his appointed guardian thought fit. Pennwood Green was that place. Mr Dorman's death was therefore a death in custody for which an Inquest was mandatory. These are the findings of that Inquest.

2. Cause of death

- 2.1. A post-mortem examination of Mr Dorman's remains was conducted by Dr Cheryl Charlwood of Forensic Science South Australia. The principal autopsy findings were that there were no significant injuries, that there was ischaemic heart disease, a left circumflex coronary artery thrombosis, granular kidneys and pulmonary oedema. Dr Charlwood concluded that Mr Dorman's cause of death was haemopericardium due

to ruptured myocardial infarction due to coronary artery atheroma and thrombosis¹. In essence, Mr Dorman had a fatal heart attack. I find that the cause of Mr Dorman's death is as stated by Dr Charlwood.

3. Background and circumstances of death

- 3.1. Mr Dorman had moved to Australia from Hungary in 1956. He worked in the Kalgoorlie mines for the early part of his life. He became fixated on the notion that he suffered from severe sulphur poisoning from this time in his life. He believed that all subsequent medical issues stemmed from that poisoning. He believed that he deserved to be compensated by the Government for this.
- 3.2. During his life Mr Dorman experienced mental health issues surrounding his belief that he had been exposed to industrial sulphur poisoning and his fixation with the notion that doctors had been administering him with medication that would rob him of his memory of the poisoning so as to deny him compensation for the same. Mr Dorman also had Parkinson's disease.
- 3.3. In late 2013 Mr Dorman was admitted to the Alice Springs Hospital under the Mental Health Act. He had been refusing to take his medication for Parkinson's. He had suffered falls and was becoming unsteady on his feet. While he was treated in hospital he was evicted from his care home in the Northern Territory due to his behaviour towards staff. He remained at the Alice Springs Hospital for approximately three months as he essentially had nowhere else to go. Consequently, the authorities began looking for other suitable accommodation for him. Pennwood Green in South Australia was thus identified.
- 3.4. Pennwood Green is a home that caters for residents of European origin. The facility had Hungarian speaking staff. It served Hungarian food. It was felt that that this familiar environment might settle Mr Dorman. He was initially happy at Pennwood Green, but unfortunately he began to experience the same issues as before. He refused to take his medication as he believed it was being given to him in order to poison him. He began to experience falls.
- 3.5. On 7 April 2014 the Guardianship Board of South Australia appointed Ms Martha Bevan, a friend, as Mr Dorman's guardian. On 28 April 2014 the Board granted her the special powers under section 32 of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993

¹ Exhibit C2a

to which I have already referred. These orders were to remain in place unless otherwise reviewed or revoked.

- 3.6. At about 4am on 29 July 2014 Mr Dorman was observed by a registered nurse to be sleeping in a chair next to his bed with his head slumped to the side. This observation is believed to represent the final occasion on which Mr Dorman was seen alive. At about 7:30am on the same day Mr Dorman was located deceased in the bathroom that was attached to his bedroom. He was found by a worker at the retirement village. The light in the bathroom was on. Mr Dorman was found slumped on the bathroom floor with his back against the wall and his legs out in front of him. His arms were to his side and his head was down. He was positioned such that it appeared he had slid down the wall into a sitting position. Mr Dorman had no injuries to suggest that he had suffered a fall. It was suspected by staff that Mr Dorman had likely suffered a heart attack while attempting to go to the bathroom. This proved to be the case at autopsy. Life was declared extinct at 7:45am.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. This death was comprehensively investigated by SAPOL. The conclusion reached by police was that Mr Dorman's detention pursuant to the order of the Guardianship Board was lawful and appropriate. I agree with that conclusion. Mr Dorman's detained status did not have any bearing on his death.
- 4.2. Mr Dorman died of natural causes.
- 4.3. The police investigation did not reveal any evidence of deficiency in Mr Dorman's care.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. There are no recommendations.

Key Words: Death in Custody; Section 32 Powers; Natural Causes

In witness whereof the said Coroner has hereunto set and subscribed his hand and

Seal the 1st day of September, 2016.

Deputy State Coroner