



## FINDING OF INQUEST

*An Inquest taken on behalf of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at Adelaide in the State of South Australia, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of May and the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2020, by the Coroner's Court of the said State, constituted of Brian Malcolm Nitschke, Deputy State Coroner, into the death of Mervyn Maxwell Taylor.*

*The said Court finds that Mervyn Maxwell Taylor aged 48 years, late of 276 Marion Road, Netley, South Australia died at Netley, South Australia on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of January 2019 as a result of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. The said Court finds that the circumstances of his death were as follows:*

### **1. Introduction and cause of death**

- 1.1. Mervyn Maxwell Taylor was born on 18 June 1970 and died on 17 January 2019 at his home address. He was 48 years of age.
- 1.2. A post mortem examination of Mr Taylor's remains was performed by forensic pathologist, Dr Stephen Wills, at Forensic Science South Australia on 21 January 2019. Dr Wills' post mortem report was tendered to the inquest.<sup>1</sup> Dr Wills reports that the cause of Mr Taylor's death was atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, and I so find.
- 1.3. Examination of Mr Taylor's coronary arteries revealed stenosis of 75-80%. Individuals with significant narrowing of the major epicardial coronary arteries are at increased risk of cardiac dysfunction, arrhythmia and sudden, unexpected death. Toxicological analysis revealed that Mr Taylor's blood sample contained only a non-toxic concentration of paracetamol.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibit C2a

<sup>2</sup> Exhibit C3a

## **2. Reason for inquest**

- 2.1. This was a mandatory Inquest pursuant to section 21(1)(a) of the Coroners Act 2003 as Mr Taylor was subject to home detention bail at the time of his death. Mr Taylor had been released from custody and granted home detention bail on 29 June 2017.

## **3. Background and medical history**

- 3.1. Mr Taylor was born in Queensland and was the third oldest of six siblings. Mr Taylor's father died from lung cancer in 1986 when Mr Taylor was 16 years of age. From that time Mr Taylor took on the role of the head of his family.<sup>3</sup>
- 3.2. Mr Taylor had three children, a son Dillon, and two daughters, Natasha and Chantelle. He was also a grandfather.
- 3.3. Mr Taylor had served periods of imprisonment in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia. On 7 December 2016, he was arrested and charged with manufacturing a controlled drug for sale. He was granted police bail in respect of that allegation. On 7 March 2017, he was arrested and charged with three counts of importing a marketable quantity of a controlled precursor. He was remanded in custody in relation to those allegations until 29 June 2017 when he was placed on home detention bail with electronic monitoring at his mother's address in Netley.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.4. While on home detention bail Mr Taylor's mother described him as a changed man and she was proud of him and how he had turned his life around. Mr Taylor rekindled his relationship with his former partner and gained paid employment in the construction industry in November 2017. His employer, David SC Coleman, described him as a fantastic worker who was never late. Mr Taylor won employee of the month in September 2018.<sup>5</sup>
- 3.5. Mr Taylor's Community Corrections Officer whilst he was subject to home detention bail, Deanne Ranford, described Mr Taylor as compliant with the conditions of his home detention bail and she believed he was making a genuine effort to live a law-abiding lifestyle.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Exhibit C5a

<sup>4</sup> Exhibit C5

<sup>5</sup> Exhibits C7 and C7a

<sup>6</sup> Exhibit C8

- 3.6. Mr Taylor had no relevant medical history and was not taking any prescription medication. He was under a mental health care plan to assist with his cessation of methylamphetamine at the time of his death.<sup>7</sup>

#### **4. Events leading to Mr Taylor's death**

- 4.1. Mr Taylor attended work on 16 January 2019 and his employer noticed nothing out of the ordinary. Mr Taylor was last seen alive by his mother during the evening of 16 January 2019. Mr Taylor arrived home from work at about 6pm that evening and went about his usual evening routine of shower, eating dinner and watching television, before retiring to his bedroom at about 7pm.<sup>8</sup>
- 4.2. The following morning Mr Taylor's employer, David Coleman, noticed that he had not attended work. Mr Coleman attempted to contact Mr Taylor and his family members without success. At 1:30pm Mr Coleman spoke with Mr Taylor's partner who advised that her phone calls to Mr Taylor were also going unanswered.<sup>9</sup>
- 4.3. Mr Coleman requested that someone check on Mr Taylor's welfare. At about 2:45pm on 17 January 2019 Mr Taylor's son Dillon attended at Mr Taylor's home detention bail address in Netley. Dillon Taylor entered the house using a key and located his father lying on his back in bed with the television on. Mr Taylor was clearly deceased.<sup>10</sup>
- 4.4. Paramedics attended and Mr Taylor was pronounced deceased at 3:07pm.

#### **5. Coronial investigation**

- 5.1. Detective Brevet Sergeant Daniel Soper of the Southern District Criminal Investigation Branch of SAPOL investigated the death of Mr Taylor and prepared a comprehensive report for the State Coroner.<sup>11</sup>
- 5.2. Detective Soper considered that the circumstances surrounding Mr Taylor's death were not suspicious and were not the result of self-harm. There were no adverse findings with respect to the Department for Correctional Services nor any medical practitioners.

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<sup>7</sup> Exhibit C9

<sup>8</sup> Exhibit C5

<sup>9</sup> Exhibits C7 and C7a

<sup>10</sup> Exhibit C4

<sup>11</sup> Exhibit C13

**6. Conclusions**

6.1. I find that Mr Taylor died from natural causes being atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. I further find that he was in lawful detention at the time of his death and that the detention had no bearing on his death.

6.2. I have no recommendations to make in this matter.

*Key Words: Death in Custody; Natural Causes; Home Detention*

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

*Seal the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November, 2020.*

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*Deputy State Coroner*