



FINDING OF INQUEST

An Inquest taken on behalf of our Sovereign Lady the Queen at Adelaide in the State of South Australia, on the 29th day of October 2019 and the 2nd day of June 2021, by the Coroner's Court of the said State, constituted of David Richard Latimer Whittle, State Coroner, into the death of Lochlan Brodie Mortimer-Shearer.

The said Court finds that Lochlan Brodie Mortimer-Shearer aged 18 years, late of 22 Francis Street, Clarence Park, South Australia died at Magazine Road, Dry Creek, South Australia on the 21st day of June 2016 as a result of unascertained cause. The said Court finds that the circumstances of his death were as follows:

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Lochlan Brodie Mortimer-Shearer was born on 24 October 1997 and died on 21 June 2016. He was 18 years old.
- 1.2. In the early hours of the Tuesday of his death, Mr Mortimer-Shearer was driving a stolen high-powered car, which was seen and briefly pursued by police. At the time, Mr Mortimer-Shearer was on bail and in breach of a curfew condition, which required him to be at his home by 10pm. The chase was quickly abandoned, but Mr Mortimer-Shearer drove on, at high speed, eventually crashing the car. He then drove it another two kilometres before abandoning it near a wetland and salt pans, and running away. Police searched extensively for him in the darkness and the rain, assisted by a police dog and, later, a helicopter with infrared scanning equipment. They eventually abandoned the search. Thereafter, Mr Mortimer-Shearer was presumed to be on the run and actively avoiding police. Twenty-four days later, Mr Mortimer-Shearer's body was found, almost fully submerged, face down in shallow water in a salt pan drainage ditch, where he presumably died on the night of the search.

2. Cause of death

- 2.1. A post mortem examination was conducted on 15 July 2016 by forensic pathologist Dr Stephen Wills.¹ Dr Wills could not determine the cause of death, which remains unascertained.
- 2.2. Dr Wills concluded that there was no evidence of significant natural disease or pathologically significant injury, either occurring in the car accident or subsequently. Dr Wills states that there are a number of possible causes of death, which include drowning, suffering the effects of immersion in cold water, suffering the effects of cold and exposure, suffering cardiac dysfunction secondary to a combination of stimulant abuse and physiological stress, or a combination of these factors. He notes that these possibilities could not be confirmed or refuted by examination, and are hypothetical.
- 2.3. Alcohol of 0.016% was detected in the blood sample taken from Mr Mortimer-Shearer. Dr Wills considered this result likely to be due to post mortem microbial production and not as a result of ingestion of alcoholic drinks prior to his death.
- 2.4. 0.16mg of methylamphetamine per litre was detected in the blood, which is consistent with use by Mr Mortimer-Shearer of that illicit drug. Cannabinoids were also detected. Both findings are consistent with the evidence in the affidavit of BC², a friend of Mr Mortimer-Shearer who was with him earlier and also stole a car, who states that Mr Mortimer-Shearer would smoke about ten cones of cannabis per day and was using large quantities of methylamphetamine prior to his disappearance.
- 2.5. A specialist examination of the brain was undertaken by Professor Blumbergs, who concluded there was marked decomposition with no evidence of traumatic brain damage.³
- 2.6. On the evidence, I am unable to draw a conclusion as to the cause of Mr Mortimer-Shearer's death, and so I find that he died as a result of an unascertained cause.

¹ Exhibit C1a

² A young offender, not here requiring identification by name

³ Exhibit C2a

3. Mandatory inquest

- 3.1. Mr Mortimer-Shearer's death was a death in custody, as defined in section 3 of the Coroners Act 2003, as he was evading apprehension by police.
- 3.2. Section 21 of the Coroners Act 2003 provides that an inquest must be held to ascertain the cause and circumstances of a death in custody.

4. Background

- 4.1. Graham Shearer, the father of Mr Mortimer-Shearer, saw his son on the afternoon of 16 June 2016. Mr Mortimer-Shearer was on bail, with conditions including that he reside at his father's address and be present there each night from 10pm. Mr Shearer told his son to be home by 10pm but he did not arrive home. Police attended that night to check on Mr Mortimer-Shearer's compliance with his curfew. Mr Shearer later spoke to his son by phone, telling him that he would no longer allow him to reside with him on bail and that the police were looking for him. Graham Shearer was upset that his son had breached his curfew condition. Mr Mortimer-Shearer had also been working for his father, but he had been failing to turn up for work for about a week and his pay had been cut off. Once his place of residence on bail was no longer available to him, Mr Mortimer-Shearer was facing arrest for breach of bail and was, in effect, on the run from police, for the remaining four days until his death.
- 4.2. Mr Mortimer-Shearer was on bail on a charge of illegal use of a motor vehicle, relating to an incident on 4 May 2016. Despite his young age, he had an extensive criminal history, mostly for unlawful use and interference with motor vehicles, but also trespass, theft, breach of bail, property damage, drug offending, hinder police, affray and failing to comply with bonds. Mr Mortimer-Shearer had a particular interest in stealing Nissan Skylines and other turbocharged sports cars.
- 4.3. Mr Mortimer-Shearer was using methylamphetamine (ice) heavily in the days before the collision and his friend BC states that he was using between an 8-ball to a half-ball a day, which equates to between 1.75g and 3.5g of methylamphetamine.
- 4.4. BC was with Mr Mortimer-Shearer in the days prior to 21 June 2016 and was present for most of the relevant events that occurred prior to the collision. He was 17 years old at the time. In his statement, he says that they had been '*going all day and night, not*

really eating, using ice and stealing cars'. He said they were '*not in a good way*' and '*critically bad*'. He states that Mr Mortimer-Shearer's '*tongue was hanging out*' and he was '*sketching out*'; they were both paranoid that people were looking for them or were after them and that the police were coming for them.

- 4.5. On the afternoon of Monday 20 June 2016 Mr Mortimer-Shearer called into his father's house briefly. This was the last time Graham Shearer saw his son.
- 4.6. That night, 20 June 2016, BC described driving around Adelaide after 11:30pm in Kelly Salvemini's car with Ms Salvemini, Mr Mortimer-Shearer and his sister, Sapphire Shearer. They were cruising around looking for Nissan Skylines to steal. They found a grey one in a carpark at Kurralta Park and Mr Mortimer-Shearer used a screwdriver to jimmy the window, snap the ignition and start the car. BC and Mr Mortimer-Shearer then used that vehicle to drive around the nearby streets, searching unsuccessfully for other Nissan Skylines to steal. Kelly Salvemini and Sapphire Shearer were in Ms Salvemini's vehicle.
- 4.7. They then drove towards Largs Bay, where they stopped for petrol and left without paying for it. BC describes Mr Mortimer-Shearer doing burnouts on the way.
- 4.8. The pair then broke into a garage on Military Road and stole a white Nissan Skyline. BC remembers Mr Mortimer-Shearer saying to him, '*I feel fucked*'. Thereafter, BC drove the grey Nissan Skyline and Mr Mortimer-Shearer drove the white one.
- 4.9. They then met back up with Kelly Salvemini and Sapphire Shearer before driving along The Esplanade at Semaphore in the three vehicles. As they drove towards the intersection of the Northern Expressway and Birkenhead Bridge, BC saw a police car. The two stolen vehicles had been spotted by police.

5. The police response

- 5.1. Annexed to the statement of Detective Chief Inspector Lambert is a map with timeline⁴ which helpfully and (I accept) accurately describes the main events which occurred between approximately 3:30am and 3:50am, involving the grey Nissan Skyline driven by BC and the white Nissan Skyline driven by Mr Mortimer-Shearer.

⁴ Exhibit C90ac

- 5.2. Constables Worner and Zaknic were already in the Port Adelaide area in their police vehicle, in response to a radio tasking about the white Skyline which, at that stage, was the only vehicle reported as stolen. It had been reported as having been seen with a darker coloured Skyline. They came across both Nissan Skylines travelling east on Semaphore Road at speed. They activated lights and sirens at 3:41am and engaged in a pursuit of the white Skyline driven by Mr Mortimer-Shearer. It accelerated away from their patrol vehicle, turning right onto Nelson Street. The grey Skyline, which turned onto Nelson Street and then right to cross over the Tom 'Diver' Derrick Bridge towards the Port River Expressway, was not pursued. As Constables Worner and Zaknic pursued the white Skyline, it executed a U-turn just prior to the northern end of the Birkenhead Bridge and travelled back along Nelson Street in a northerly direction, and then along Victoria Road. At 3:31am, after 47 seconds of pursuit, the pursuit was terminated for safety reasons.
- 5.3. Thereafter, no other police engaged in a pursuit of either vehicle. After the initial pursuit of the white Skyline by Constable Worner, the SAPOL State Shift Manager advised all patrols not to engage in a pursuit of the white Skyline and cordon points were set, in an effort to conduct tactical observations of the two vehicles.
- 5.4. At about 3:30am Senior Constable Costalos had heard over police radio that the vehicles were approaching the intersection of Nelson Street and the Port River Expressway. He stopped at the intersection and observed the white Skyline turn left to travel north on Victoria Road, while the grey Skyline turned right and travelled east towards the Port River Expressway via the Tom 'Diver' Derrick Bridge.
- 5.5. Senior Constable Costalos followed the grey Skyline, at about the speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour, keeping 75 to 100 metres behind it, as it travelled over the bridge. Then the lights on the grey Skyline were turned off and he lost sight of it. At no time did Senior Constable Costalos activate lights or sirens. After losing sight of the vehicle, he returned to Victoria Road, Birkenhead in search of the white Skyline.
- 5.6. Not long afterwards, he heard over the police radio that the grey Skyline had been located at the intersection of Hanson Road and the Port River Expressway in a ditch. BC had crashed the grey Skyline and fled on foot.⁵

⁵ BC was later located by police after an intensive search which included a police dog and the helicopter which later searched for Mr Mortimer-Shearer. Initially BC refused to provide any information to police that might identify the driver of the other vehicle.

- 5.7. Senior Constable Costalos then heard on the radio that the white Skyline had again been sighted and was driving towards the Port River Expressway, so he drove back towards the Expressway over the Tom 'Diver' Derrick Bridge. As he did so, driving at about 60 kilometres per hour, he saw the white Skyline, which was being driven by Mr Mortimer-Shearer, pass him extremely close on the left-hand side, travelling at an estimated 80 to 100 kilometres per hour. He did not pursue it, did not activate lights or sirens and quickly lost sight of it.
- 5.8. After passing Senior Constable Costalos, Mr Mortimer-Shearer drove the white Nissan Skyline along the Port River Expressway, passing a police vehicle driven by Constable Milsom, who was driving at the speed limit of 90 kilometres per hour, at a speed Constable Milsom estimated to be in excess of 160 kilometres per hour. By then Mr Mortimer-Shearer was travelling without lights.
- 5.9. At 3:41am, as recorded on CCTV footage, at a sweeping left-hand bend in the road, the white Nissan Skyline was involved in a collision with a fenced median strip, which divided the carriageways of the Port River Expressway. The vehicle lost its front bumper, and spun onto the westbound carriageway.
- 5.10. Senior Sergeant Kuchenmeister of the Major Crash Investigation Section was later able to calculate, by analysis of the CCTV footage, that about a kilometre before this collision the car was travelling at 156 kilometres per hour and, at the time of colliding with the fenced median strip, was travelling at about 120 kilometres per hour. I accept the accuracy of these calculations.
- 5.11. After the collision Mr Mortimer-Shearer continued to drive north-east, still with his lights off, on the wrong side of the road, narrowly missing two vehicles driven in the opposite direction by members of the public. About 2.5 kilometres beyond the site of that first collision, the white Nissan Skyline had a final collision with the support structure of the Salisbury Highway overpass, where it crosses Port Wakefield Road. This collision was not witnessed by police and at 3:47am a member of the public advised police that the vehicle had been abandoned underneath the overpass. The vehicle had travelled approximately 11 kilometres from the Tom 'Diver' Derrick Bridge.
- 5.12. Senior Constable First Class Roberts was the first police officer on the scene, where he spoke to Mr White, a truck driver who indicated he had come across the accident and

had stopped see if anyone needed assistance, but there was no-one in the vehicle and he had not seen anyone leaving the vehicle or the scene. The vehicle was found to be extensively damaged at the front and on both sides and both airbags had deployed. The windscreen was cracked in a fashion which suggested that the occupant had collided with the windscreen.

6. The search

6.1. An extensive search was undertaken shortly after the collision by police patrols, a police dog and a later a police helicopter.

6.2. The police dog

Senior Constable Stevenson, a police dog handler, was on the scene almost immediately with Police Dog (PD) Iggy and cast the dog from the location of the vehicle, in an attempt to locate the most recent line of scent. The wind was strong and the earlier heavy rain had eased to light rain. PD Iggy gave indications of a track leading north-west from the vehicle towards the south-eastern corner of the nearby salt pans. PD Iggy then continued to indicate and follow a track through a creek and to the barbed wire perimeter fence of the salt pans, which the dog attempted to jump. Senior Constable Stevenson was unable to get the dog safely over the fence and scanned the salt pans with his torch. They appeared full of water and to present limited options for a person to hide. He was also mindful that a helicopter might be utilised to search that area if required.

6.3. Other police officers located apparently fresh footprints in the grass about 100 metres north, still on the Port Wakefield Road side of the salt pan fence. Senior Constable Stevenson moved with the dog to that location, from which he cast the dog in an effort to have him locate and follow a scent, firstly on the saltpan service road, and then on the main road side of the fence. There was at this point some damage to the fence. On neither side of the fence did the dog indicate a scent trail. Senior Constable Stevenson considered that this was explicable, even if the target had made the footprints, by reference to contamination by the police officers who found the footprints, or that the target had entered the nearby creek bed in the direction of Port Wakefield Road, or by reference to the wet weather generally.

6.4. Shortly afterwards, apparently fresh footprints were found by other police in the clover near the wetlands on the eastern (opposite from the salt pans) side of Port Wakefield

Road and, amongst some vegetation in that area, PD Iggy behaved similarly to when locating a person. There was no person in that location. The reaction of the dog was also consistent with the reaction to a 'scent pool' left behind by a person who had been stationary there for some time.

- 6.5. Senior Constable Stevenson was then called to a site of muddy footprints exiting the wetlands to Everglade Street, Mawson Lakes, which bordered an area of housing approximately 1.5 kilometres from the site of the collision. PD Iggy was unable to indicate any track from the conclusion of the muddy footprints.
- 6.6. By this time Senior Constable Stevenson and those police who were directing and coordinating the search, had been led by all the circumstances to believe, wrongly as it transpired but not unreasonably, in my opinion, that the person they were seeking had initially entered the salt pans by climbing the fence where PD Iggy tried to jump it, then had exited the salt pans where the footprints were found about 100 metres north from the presumed point of entry, crossed Port Wakefield Road in an easterly direction into the area of the wetlands, and then continued undetected, until outside the cordoned areas.
- 6.7. The police helicopter
At 3:47am, as soon as police became aware that Mr Mortimer-Shearer's stolen and crashed car had been abandoned, the on-call Police Special Tasks and Rescue (STAR) Group Operations Manager, Sergeant DS⁶ received a request for assistance with the search by police helicopter (known as and referred to as POLAIR). Sergeant DS made all the necessary arrangements, including recalling to duty two STAR Group officers trained to operate the search function of the helicopter, and consulted with Senior Constable Stevenson about the details of his search with PD Iggy, as well as with other police at the scene.
- 6.8. POLAIR 53, a helicopter fitted with an ultra forward-looking infrared (FLIR) sensor was airborne by 4:44am. The specialist STAR Group search crew were briefed by Sergeant DS.

⁶ All Star group police officers referred to in this finding are referred to only by their initials

- 6.9. The helicopter first attended the scene of the abandoned grey Nissan Skyline and searched unsuccessfully for its driver.⁷
- 6.10. By the time the POLAIR helicopter arrived at the site of the crashed and abandoned white Nissan Skyline, the focus of the search was, for reasons I have explained, the wetlands on the eastern side of Port Wakefield Road and the adjacent residential area. This area was searched by the helicopter, without success.
- 6.11. The POLAIR crew was not directed to search the salt pans on the western side of Port Wakefield Road using the FLIR sensor. The helicopter left the scene at 5:21am on 21 June 2016 and returned to base.
- 6.12. It cannot now be known whether, if that area was searched with the FLIR sensor, Mr Mortimer-Shearer would have been detected on the salt pans. There is reason to suspect that he would not. Sergeant DS refers in his statement⁸ to simulations previously undertaken with the FLIR sensor, to determine the likelihood of a person immersed in water being detectable. In simulation, a person submerged in water was almost impossible to see, despite that person's exact position being known. Sergeant DS expresses the opinion⁹ that if Mr Mortimer-Shearer, whether alive or not, was submerged in water during a search utilising that FLIR sensor, it would have been extremely difficult to locate him, or his body.

7. Further enquiries and search of wetlands

- 7.1. Having concluded that Mr Mortimer-Shearer must have slipped the police cordon and escaped apprehension, the search of the immediate area was abandoned, but efforts to locate and apprehend him by other means were escalated. Police remained in contact with his family, monitored social media and bank accounts and employed other extensive investigative means of ascertaining his whereabouts. It was believed that Mr Mortimer-Shearer was on the run and actively avoiding police, but that there would soon be intelligence indicating his whereabouts. When there was no sign of him, concerns for his safety escalated.
- 7.2. In an effort to ensure that nothing had been missed, police conducted a further search of the wetlands area in daylight hours on 1 July 2016, with the assistance of a police

⁷ BC, who was later apprehended

⁸ Exhibit C46 p14

⁹ Exhibit C46 p15

helicopter. Many police were involved, including specialist STAR Group search and rescue personnel, but nothing was located. In the wetlands, there were many places which could have concealed evidence of Mr Mortimer-Shearer's presence. Again, the circumstances of the night of the crash were considered to point only to that area.

8. Mr Mortimer-Shearer's body is found

- 8.1. Grant Thorp¹⁰ was an employee at the Dry Creek salt fields, whose duties included monitoring water flow in about 50 kilometres of drains. At about 8am on 14 July 2016, 24 days after the collision, Mr Thorp was checking a portion of drain G, which he had not inspected for a few weeks, when he saw what appeared to be a body, face down in about 15 centimetres of water, fully dressed, with sneakers on. Police were contacted. It was later established to be the body of Mr Mortimer-Shearer. Mr Thorp stated the water level would not have changed significantly since he previously inspected it.
- 8.2. Allan Matheison¹¹ was the site manager at the salt fields. He explains that the area was used for the production of salt for industrial purposes, although it was in the process of having the last of the salt harvested before being closed and remediated. Annexed to Mr Matheison's statement is a plan of the site and a satellite image upon which the location of Mr Mortimer-Shearer's body has been marked. This point is approximately 500 metres from the site of the collision.
- 8.3. It is not known exactly how Mr Mortimer-Shearer got to the drain in which he was found 24 days after the collision, but I observe that the surface of the salt pan between the fence and the drain in which he was found had a hard crust and was capable of supporting Mr Mortimer-Shearer's weight if he ran over it, so it is reasonable to presume that he ran there. The drain is a distant shallow channel, which would not have been visible to Senior Constable Stevenson scanning the area with his torch.

9. Evidence of Mr Mortimer-Shearer's drug use and car theft

- 9.1. Mr Mortimer-Shearer's drug use, and the extent of it, may well have played a part in his death. BC's statement in relation to Mr Mortimer-Shearer's methamphetamine use

¹⁰ Exhibit C19

¹¹ Exhibit C20

is corroborated by the statement of Mr Mortimer-Shearer's sister, Sapphire Shearer. She describes the impact that the drug ice had on her brother:

'When Lochy smokes crack there is a little sequence he went through. Lochy would run, but the second he stops he would chuck his guts up and passes out.'¹²

She states that she saw him behave like this on three occasions. She would end up looking after him as he struggled to wake up. He was known to like stealing cars, usually fast Japanese cars. On one occasion he was caught stealing a car then ran from the scene and got into a cab, in which he passed out. He later told Sapphire that it was the crack that made him pass out after running.

9.2. Jodie Mortimer¹³, the mother of Lochlan Mortimer-Shearer recalls Sapphire and Lochlan telling her that Lochlan would pass out a lot after he smoked crack.

9.3. On the night of Mr Mortimer-Shearer's death, Sapphire describes her brother as:

'Off his head on crack and the worst I had seen him and he was scaring me. He was pretty bad and was buzzing and making that noise with his mouth when you are off your face on crack.'

9.4. Sapphire Shearer told police that Mr Mortimer-Shearer had spoken to her about evading police in a pursuit; significantly, he said that he would crash somewhere and that he could run from police and that if he was getting chased by the police dogs he would step in water so that the dogs could not get his scent. He had also mentioned that if he was being chased by a police helicopter, he could jump into something cool to avoid being detected by the heat sensors on the helicopter.

9.5. Alea Devine had been dating Mr Mortimer-Shearer and told police that Lochlan was using about a gram of 'meth' per day. She states:

'I am probably a little bit to blame for how bad his habit got.'

She also states that he stole cars and was obsessed with Skylines. He would see one and ask her to write down the address so that he could return later to steal it.

¹² Exhibit C7

¹³ Exhibit C14

10. Summary and conclusions

- 10.1. At 3:31am on 21 June 2016 a stolen white Nissan Skyline driven by the deceased, Lochlan Mortimer-Shearer, was seen by Constable Worner on Semaphore Road and then pursued for 47 seconds from Semaphore Road into Nelson Street. The pursuit was abandoned to ensure the safety of the driver of the stolen vehicle, the pursuing police and the public. Thereafter, Mr Mortimer-Shearer was not pursued, although he was observed by other police, whose vehicles he passed while driving at high speed, with no headlights, on the Port River Expressway.
- 10.2. It was lawful and beyond criticism for police to commence pursuit, just as it was prudent and in accordance with SAPOL General Orders to abandon the pursuit once it was clear that Mr Mortimer-Shearer intended to drive dangerously in an effort to evade police.
- 10.3. At 3:41am, as recorded by CCTV, at a sweeping left-hand bend in the road, which Mr Mortimer-Shearer took at about 120 kilometres per hour, having earlier been travelling at about 160 kilometres per hour, the white Nissan Skyline collided with a fenced median strip and broke through the fence onto the carriageway for vehicles travelling in the opposite direction, losing its front bumper during the collision.
- 10.4. Mr Mortimer-Shearer then resumed driving the vehicle with lights off, at high speed, in the rain, in the wrong direction for that carriageway. He is known to have passed at least two vehicles which were travelling in their correct direction.
- 10.5. Shortly afterwards, about 2.5 kilometres beyond the site of that first collision, the white Nissan Skyline had a final collision with the support structure of the Salisbury Highway overpass, where it crosses Port Wakefield Road. This came to the attention of police at 3:47am when a member of the public reported that a vehicle had been abandoned underneath the overpass.
- 10.6. It is now clear from all the circumstances that Mr Mortimer-Shearer fled from the stolen Nissan Skyline into the adjacent salt pans after the collision, and I find that he did. The two obvious routes to the drain where he was eventually found are directly across the salt pan and around the perimeter track. Whichever route he took, it is likely that he sprinted.

- 10.7. To pronounce upon what exactly happened thereafter would require more speculation. It is nevertheless clear that Mr Mortimer-Shearer must have been in a state of high arousal, as a result of stealing a car, engaging police in a brief high-speed pursuit, continuing to drive dangerously in order to evade police apprehension, and being involved in two collisions, and his state of arousal would undoubtedly have been exacerbated by the effects of methamphetamine, which he was abusing. He demonstrated by his driving a preparedness to do whatever he could to avoid apprehension. He had previously spoken of laying in water to avoid detection by police helicopter.
- 10.8. At post mortem, Mr Mortimer-Shearer's body showed no evidence of natural disease or significant injury. It was not possible for Dr Wills to confirm or exclude drowning or hypothermia as causes of death. As explained by Dr Wills, methylamphetamine and amphetamine are stimulant drugs which may result in catecholamine (adrenaline and noradrenaline) stimulation of the heart and increase the risk of cardiac arrhythmia and sudden cardiac arrhythmic death, or stress cardiomyopathy resulting in transient left ventricular dysfunction, neither of which can be diagnosed after death.¹⁴
- 10.9. In concluding that the cause of death must be recorded as unascertained, I can do no better than to adopt the summary expressed by Dr Wills:
- ‘Thus, the possibility remains that the deceased drowned or suffered the effects of immersion in cold water, suffered the effects of cold and exposure, suffered cardiac dysfunction secondary to a combination of stimulant abuse and physiological stress or a combination of these factors.’¹⁵
- 10.10. It is clearly not possible to determine whether Mr Mortimer-Shearer's death occurred suddenly after sprinting away, or how long he remained alive.
- 10.11. The decisions made by police as to the search were appropriate, in the context and having regard to the exigencies of the situation, despite the fact that focussing the search on the wetlands did not properly identify the area into which Mr Mortimer-Shearer had escaped.

¹⁴ Exhibit C1a, page 3

¹⁵ Exhibit C1a, page 3

10.12. Even if the POLAIR helicopter had conducted a search of the salt pans in the hours of darkness, it is by no means clear that Mr Mortimer-Shearer would have been found and, of course, he may well have been deceased prior to the arrival of the helicopter.

10.13. Once the search at the scene was abandoned by police, in the belief that Mr Mortimer-Shearer had escaped via the wetlands, police efforts to locate him were extensive and appropriate.

10.14. At the time of his flight into the salt pans, Mr Mortimer-Shearer was evading apprehension by police who, although not immediately on the scene, were lawfully seeking to apprehend him.

11. Recommendations

11.1. I make no recommendations.

Key Words: Death in Custody; Police Pursuit

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

Seal the 2nd day of June, 2021.

State Coroner