



# MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

## CORONIAL DIVISION

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### **Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)**

*Coroners Act 1995  
Coroners Rules 2006  
Rule 11*

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of Jalissa Maree Ferguson,

**Find, pursuant to Section 28(1) of the Coroners Act 1995, that**

- a) The identity of the deceased is Jalissa Maree Ferguson, date of birth 2 February 1994.
- b) Ms Ferguson was aged 29 years and lived in George Town with her brother and nephew. She has two daughters, born in 2015 and 2016, with a former partner. She subsequently entered into a new relationship, which ended in 2022. She held a current, full Tasmanian driver's licence. On 19 March 2023 Ms Ferguson purchased a 2001 Mitsubishi Magna sedan. The vehicle was non-compliant with required standards, was poorly maintained and had not yet been transferred into Ms Ferguson's name.

At approximately 10.30pm on Saturday 8 April 2023, Ms Ferguson left her house, advising her brother that she was going to Launceston to do Easter shopping, also mentioning that she was going to see a particular associate. Ms Ferguson's brother offered to look after her daughters and they therefore remained at home with him.

At 6.03am on Sunday 9 April 2023 Ms Ferguson sent a text message to her brother stating that she had left Launceston and was "heading to the highway now".

At 6.10am Ms Ferguson was driving her vehicle towards George Town in a northerly direction along the East Tamar Highway between Mount Direction and Hillwood. At that time, she overtook another motorist in an overtaking lane at an estimated speed of 140 km/h. At 6.17am Ms Ferguson overtook another motorist at a speed of 120-130 km/h and almost lost control of her vehicle in the process of doing so. About one minute later, that same motorist came across Ms Ferguson's vehicle, facing in a southerly direction crashed on the side of the

highway. He called 000 and subsequently saw that the driver was trapped under the vehicle, apparently deceased. Paramedics and SES personnel attended. They removed the vehicle from Ms Ferguson's body and confirmed that she was deceased.

The evidence in the subsequent investigation allows me to find that leading to the crash, Ms Ferguson was travelling at a minimum speed of 95km/h, crossed over double white lines on the highway and travelled onto the opposite road verge and drainage culvert, eventually impacting with a concrete drain. She unsuccessfully attempted to brake. Upon impact with the concrete drain, the vehicle became airborne and Ms Ferguson, who was not wearing her seatbelt, was ejected from a window. When the vehicle came to rest on the verge, her body became trapped under the front wheel arch.

Post-mortem investigations revealed that she had methylamphetamine and cannabis in her blood at the time of the crash. It appears that fatigue may have also been a factor in her loss of control of the vehicle as there is no evidence that she slept during the day and night prior to the crash. No other person was involved in the crash and the road and weather conditions played no role. Her vehicle was not roadworthy but it is unlikely that any defects would have been contributory compared to the other causative factors.

- c) Ms Ferguson's cause of death was multiple head, neck, trunk, pelvic and limb injuries sustained in a single vehicle crash as the driver.
- d) Ms Ferguson died on 9 April 2023 at Bell Bay, Tasmania.

In making the above findings, I have had regard to the evidence gained in the investigation into Ms Ferguson's death. The evidence includes:

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits confirming life extinct;
- Opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Toxicology report of Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Launceston Medical Centre patient records for Ms Ferguson;
- Affidavit Tammy Cameron, mother of Ms Ferguson;
- Affidavits of two eyewitnesses at the scene;
- Affidavit Quentin Ferguson, brother of Ms Ferguson;
- Affidavit of the previous owner of Ms Ferguson's vehicle;

- Affidavits of attending and investigating police officers, together with photographs, drone footage and body worn camera footage;
- Affidavits of Senior Constable Michael Rybka and Constable Naomi Davey, crash investigators;
- Affidavit of Casey Perkins, Transport Inspector, regarding condition of Ms Ferguson's vehicle; and
- Crash data for the area, weather reports and Tasmania Police information.

### **Comments and Recommendations**

Ms Ferguson chose to drive her vehicle at speed, having consumed illicit drugs and without wearing a seatbelt. She placed herself at high risk of death, and that risk, sadly, eventuated.

The circumstances of Ms Ferguson's death are not such as to require me to make any comments or recommendations pursuant to Section 28 of the *Coroners Act 1995*.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Ms Ferguson.

**Dated:** 17 May 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

**Olivia McTaggart**

**Coroner**