



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the death of Joanne Johnston.

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Joanne Johnston;
- b) Mrs Johnston died as a result of injuries sustained by her as a driver in a two vehicle motor vehicle collision;
- c) The cause of Mrs Johnston's death was multiple (chest, pelvic and limb) injuries; and
- d) Mrs Johnston died, aged 65 years, on 3 October 2023 at the North West Regional Hospital, Burnie, Tasmania.

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

- Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits confirming identity;
- Report – Dr Andrew Reid, Forensic Pathologist;
- Toxicology report – Forensic Science Service Tasmania (Johnston);
- Toxicology report – Forensic Science Service Tasmania (Perkins);
- Records – Tasmanian Health Service, Somerset Medical Centre and Ambulance Tasmania;
- Affidavit – Charles Johnston;
- Affidavit – Debbie Butt;
- Affidavit – Erin Hefferon;
- Affidavit – Tim Broom;
- Affidavit – David Hursey;
- Affidavit – Codie Fisher;
- Affidavit – Elizabeth Perkins;
- Affidavit – Jacqui Perkins;

- Affidavit – Shaun Perkins;
- Affidavit – Sarah Perkins;
- Affidavits of attending and investigating police;
- Scene photographs, vehicle inspection reports, site crash data, CCTV footage and dash cam footage.

Mrs Johnston died as a result of injuries sustained by her when she was involved in a head-on collision with a vehicle driven by Ms Elizabeth Perkins.

The collision occurred when Mrs Johnston drove her vehicle into the wrong lane on the Bass Highway at Hellyer, near Rocky Cape west of Burnie.

At the time of the crash, Mrs Johnston had a blood alcohol reading of at least 0.276 g/100 mL of blood, that is to say more than five times the legal limit.

The crash in which Mrs Johnston died was entirely her fault. Road and weather conditions played no role. Neither did mechanical defect or visibility issues.

In contrast to Mrs Johnston, Ms Perkins had no alcohol in her body and was driving in her correct lane in an appropriate manner at the time of the collision with other members of her family in the car. She had no chance whatsoever to take any evasive action to avoid Mrs Johnston. It is fortunate indeed that no-one else was killed.

Comments and Recommendations

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

Dated: 5 December 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Simon Cooper
Coroner

These findings have been amended by an order under section 58 of the *Coroners Act 1995* dated 11 February 2025 by removing reference to the speed Mrs Johnston was travelling at from the original findings.