



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 Michelle Joy Menz

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Michelle Joy Menz;
- b) Ms Menz died as a result of pelvic trauma (sacral and pelvic fractures) sustained as driver in a motor vehicle crash which occurred on 17 January 2023 on the Tasman Highway near Diana's Basin, Break O'Day Municipality;
- c) Ms Menz's cause of death was pulmonary thromboemboli because of pelvic deep vein thrombosis; and
- d) Ms Menz died, aged 58 years, on 19 January 2023 at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Hobart, Tasmania.

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

- Police Report of Death for the Coroner.
- Affidavits establishing identity;
- Report – Dr Andrew Reid, Forensic Pathologist;
- Report – Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Records – Ambulance Tasmania;
- Medical Records – Ochre Medical Centre, St Helens;
- Affidavit – Lawrence Bretag, sworn 9 April 2023;
- Affidavit – Piper Viney, sworn 6 February 2023;
- Affidavit – Wayne Polden, sworn 7 February 2023;
- Affidavit – Group Officer Michael Aulich, Tasmania Fire Service, sworn 8 February 2023;
- Affidavit – Siobhan Mead, sworn 20 January 2023;
- Affidavit – Barry Spencer, Transport Safety and Investigation Officer, Department of State Growth, sworn 6 March 2023;

- Affidavit – Senior Constable Caroline McGregor, Tasmania Police Forensic Services, sworn 26 April 2023 (and photographs);
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Alison Mackay, Tasmania Police, sworn 2 May 2023 (and body worn camera footage);
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Adam Upston, Tasmania Police, sworn 23 January 2023 (and scene photographs)
- Affidavit – First Class Constable Naomi Davey, Tasmania Police crash Investigation Services, sworn 25 May 2023 (and scene sketch plan);
- Affidavit – Sergeant Scott McKinnell, Tasmania Police Remotely Piloted Aircraft Service, sworn 4 September 2023 (and drone footage); and
- Northern District Crash Investigation Services – Peer Review Certificate, 11 May 2023, First Class Constable (retired) Nigel Housego.

Introduction

Ms Menz was born on 6 October 1964. She was the mother of four children, lived in Scamander and had driven for many years without incident.

At the time of her crash, and subsequent death, she was in the process of moving to Launceston from Tasmania's East Coast.

Circumstances of crash

Late in the afternoon of 17 January 2023, Ms Menz drove from St Helen's south on the Tasman Highway towards her home at Scamander. She had two passengers, one her youngest son, and the other his girlfriend.

Ms Menz was very familiar with the road, having driven it many times.

The road surface was wet but it had stopped raining.

Shortly before 5.00 pm, near 24564 Tasman Highway, Ms Menz lost control of her Hyundai Elantra sedan as she entered a curve with a 55 km/h advisory sign clearly displayed. The vehicle left the road and collided with a wooden power pole.

Ms Menz was badly injured in the crash. She was taken by helicopter to the Royal Hobart Hospital where it was identified she had suffered a fractured clavicle, rib fractures, a collapsed lung, a torn bladder and pelvic fractures.

Ms Menz did not recover from her injuries and died 2 days later.

Investigation

The fact of Ms Menz's death was reported in accordance with the requirements of the *Coroners Act 1995*. After her body was formally identified, an autopsy was performed by the Tasmanian State Forensic Pathologist Dr Andrew Reid. Dr Reid expressed the opinion, which I accept, that the cause of her death was pulmonary thromboembolism due to deep venous thrombosis following pelvic trauma. In summary, Ms Menz developed deep vein thrombosis in vessels adjacent to her fractured pelvis. The deep pelvic vein thrombosis detached and led to a massive pulmonary thromboembolism and cardiac arrest from which she was unable to be resuscitated.

No evidence of alcohol or illicit drugs were detected as having been present in Ms Menz's body at the time of the happening of the crash.

The comprehensive investigation in relation to the circumstances associated with her death lead me to conclude that Ms Menz lost control of her vehicle as she entered a right-hand curve. One tyre on her vehicle was found to be non-compliant; however I am satisfied that that non-compliant tyre is unlikely to have contributed to the happening of the crash.

I am satisfied no other person caused or contributed to the happening of the crash.

The careful investigation by Crash Investigation Services indicates that Ms Menz entered the curve at an excessive speed which caused her to lose control of the vehicle. I am satisfied that is in fact the case.

There are no suspicious circumstances, inconsistencies or anomalies associated with Ms Menz's death.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of Ms Menz'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 Menz.

Dated: 7 March 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Simon Cooper

Coroner