



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of Leigh Pearce

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Leigh Pearce, date of birth 24 June 1980.
- b) Mr Pearce was 43 years of age and lived with his partner and daughter in Magra. He was in good physical health and had no known mental health issues. He had ridden motorcycles throughout his life but did not have a motorcycle licence. He held a full medium rigid licence and worked at Norske Skog at Boyer as a forklift driver.

On 19 September 2023, Mr Pearce consumed a significant quantity of alcohol during the day, culminating in him consuming two beers at the Valley Sports Bar in New Norfolk. Shortly after leaving the bar, Mr Pearce was captured on CCTV riding his red Honda “postie” motorcycle through the forecourt of the nearby Shell Coles Express service station in New Norfolk. He was wearing a full-face motorcycle helmet. He exited the forecourt of the service station onto Back River Road New Norfolk and rode north. Shortly afterwards, at 4.00pm, he rode into the car park area of the Valley Sports Bar at 21 Back River Road and travelled along a short gravel road at an excessive speed of at least 40km/h. He did not intend to stop but to exit the car park at the other designated exit on the north-east side. As he approached this exit he failed to see the clearly visible metal link chain blocking the exit and crashed into it.

It is likely that Mr Pearce’s level of intoxication, being approximately 0.140 grams of alcohol per 100 mL of blood, was the main reason for this error. Upon impact with the chain, Mr Pearce and the motorcycle were catapulted into the air with the motorcycle coming to rest 7 metres east of the chain. As Mr Pearce was thrown into the air, his helmet came loose from his head due to the chin strap being missing

(having apparently been previously cut off). A witness described Mr Pearce falling to the ground from a height of approximately two metres and landing on his chest and head. Witnesses at the scene assisted with CPR until ambulance paramedics arrived and continued resuscitation efforts. Unfortunately, Mr Pearce could not be revived due to suffering multiple and severe chest injuries.

- c) Mr Pearce's cause of death was multiple chest injuries (including rib fractures and haemopneumothorax).

- d) Mr Pearce died on 19 September 2023 at New Norfolk, Tasmania.

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

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits verifying identity;
- Opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Toxicology report of Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- General practitioner records for Mr Pearce;
- Affidavit from Talisa Reed, partner of Mr Pearce;
- Affidavit from Brendan Barry, eye witness to the crash;
- Affidavits of two attending and investigating police officers, including photographs and body worn camera footage;
- Affidavit from a Transport Inspector regarding Mr Pearce's motorcycle;
- CCTV footage and body worn camera footage from attending police officers;
- Collision analysis report from crash investigator, Senior Constable Kelly Cordwell:
and
- Tasmania Police records regarding Mr Pearce.

Comments and Recommendations

Mr Pearce, who was significantly intoxicated, was the sole cause of his fatal crash. I am satisfied that there are no other contributing factors in his death.

I extend my appreciation to Senior Constable with Aydenn Whish-Wilson and Senior Constable Kelly Cordwell for their work in this investigation.

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

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr Pearce.

Dated: 13 June 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner