



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 Sashant Sigdel

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Sashant Sigdel, date of birth 29 January 1995.
- b) Mr Sigdel was 27 years of age and single at the time of his death. Mr Sigdel was of Nepalese origin and immigrated to Australia about five years before his death. He worked as a baker and lived with friends at their shared residence in Ulverstone. He had no family in Tasmania. He was described by his employer as an excellent worker with a friendly and calm personality.

On the morning of 30 March 2022, Mr Sigdel commenced a motorcycle ride to Stanley, a journey estimated to take about an hour and a half. His intention was to prepare for his motorcycle licence test the following day. At that time, he held a learner motorcycle licence and was lawfully permitted to undertake the ride.

On his journey, at 2.40pm, Mr Sigdel was driving his motorcycle, a Honda CMX500, along the Bass Highway on the west-bound lane near the Wilkinson Street and Oldina Road intersection at Wynyard at a speed of 90km/h. The speed limit for the highway at that point was 100km/h. At the same time, another motorist, Fiona Heazlewood, was driving her Nissan Dualis SUV along Wilkinson Street. Ms Heazlewood stopped at the intersection intending to cross over the highway to Oldina Road. Contrary to the give way sign facing her, she then continued to cross the Bass Highway and drove into the path of Mr Sigdel coming from her left-hand side. She did not see the motorcycle, as she should have, before pulling out onto the highway. A crash occurred and Mr Sigdel was thrown into the air and over Ms Heazlewood's car, before landing on the road.

Motorists stopped to provide assistance to Mr Sigdel who was unconscious and unresponsive. Emergency services were called. Ambulance Tasmania paramedics

arrived and made all possible resuscitation attempts. Mr Sigdel was declared life extinct at 3.23pm at the scene. A full police investigation took place.

- c) Mr Sigdel's cause of death was multiple (thoracic, trunk and limb) high velocity injuries, including thoracic aorta rupture.
- d) Mr Sigdel died on 30 March 2022 at Wynyard, Tasmania.

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

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits confirming identity;
- Opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Toxicology reports;
- Ambulance Tasmania report;
- Affidavit of Caleb Davies, transport inspector regarding condition of both vehicles;
- Affidavits (or statutory declarations) of five witnesses to the circumstances of the crash;
- Affidavits of four attending and investigating police officers;
- Affidavit of Senior Constable Haydn Barnard, crash Investigator;
- Scene photographs, mapping, Tasmania Police records, CCTV footage; and
- Magistrates Court documentation relating to the charge against Fiona Heazlewood.

Comments and Recommendations

I am satisfied that a thorough investigation has taken place in respect of Mr Sigdel's death.

I am satisfied upon the evidence that no part was played in this crash by alcohol, drugs, road and weather conditions, or defects in either vehicle.

I am satisfied upon the evidence that Mr Sigdel's death was caused solely by Ms Heazlewood's failure to keep a proper lookout and failing to give way. She was an experienced driver but, unfortunately, her momentary lack of proper attention had tragic consequences.

Ms Heazlewood was charged with and pleaded guilty to the charge of causing Mr Sigdel's death by negligent driving contrary to section 32(2A) of the *Traffic Act 1925*.

On 29 April 2024, she was convicted and sentenced by a magistrate in the Burnie Magistrates Court to three months imprisonment, wholly suspended for 12 months on the condition she commits no offence punishable by imprisonment during that period. Ms Heazlewood was also disqualified from holding or obtaining a driver's licence for a period of 6 months.

I note that, since this crash, safety upgrades have been made to the intersection in question. There is now a dedicated right turn lane from the Bass Highway into Oldina Road and a deceleration lane on the highway for vehicles turning left into Oldina Road. Wilkinson Street has also been completely closed at the Bass Highway end, preventing vehicles from entering onto the Bass Highway. This removes the potential for crashes involving vehicles crossing the highway between Wilkinson Street and Oldina Road, such as in this case.

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer Senior Constable Haydn Barnard for his thorough investigation and report.

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

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

Dated: 4 November 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner