



# 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 Lance Royal Smith

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Lance Royal Smith, date of birth 27 October 1961.
- b) Mr Smith was 62 years of age and lived in Moogara with his partner. Approximately three months before his death, Mr Smith purchased an unregistered Harley Davidson motorcycle. It had several mechanical defects and was not compliant with requirements for registration. At 11.00am on Saturday 4 November 2023 Mr Smith rode his motorcycle from home for what was intended to be a “test drive”. At 11.35am, whilst he was riding on Plenty Valley Road, Glenfern, he failed to negotiate a slight right hand corner. His motorcycle travelled from the bitumen road surface and continued straight over a short soft gravel shoulder before continuing up an embankment and then re-entering the road surface. It is likely that he was travelling at a speed of 100 km/h or more at the time of the crash. However, the crash investigator was unable to determine a precise speed from scene analysis. Road and weather conditions played no part in the crash. Mr Smith told witnesses after the crash that there may have been either a stone or stick on the road which caused him to crash. However, no such object was seen by the witnesses and it is unlikely that a stick or stone was present on the road. Mr Smith’s blood sample following the crash revealed that he had used cannabis before riding. This may have impaired his ability to control his motorcycle. It is also possible that the motorcycle’s mechanical defects contributed to the crash. No other person or vehicle was involved in the crash.

As a result of the the crash, Mr Smith fell from his bike and was assisted by a passing motorist. He was conscious and was transported by ambulance to the Royal Hobart Hospital. In hospital, he was assessed as having suffered a

subarachnoid haemorrhage, pneumothorax, acute aortic injury, multiple rib fractures and fractures of the thoracic vertebrae. Despite treatment and normal recovery over the course of one week, he died unexpectedly in hospital on 12 November 2023.

- c) At autopsy, the forensic pathologist observed that Mr Smith suffered advanced atherosclerotic and hypertensive coronary vascular disease. I am satisfied that Mr Smith's advanced heart disease was the primary cause of his sudden, unexpected death. However, his multiple traumatic injuries sustained in the motorcycle crash significantly contributed to his death.
- d) Mr Smith died on 12 November 2023 at Hobart, Tasmania.

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

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Tasmanian Health Service Death Report to Coroner;
- Affidavits verifying identity;
- Opinion of the forensic pathologist regarding cause of death;
- Toxicology report from Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Tasmanian Health Service Records;
- Witness and police affidavits;
- Report of the transport Inspector regarding condition of the motorcycle;
- Report of the specialist crash investigator, Senior Constable Jimi Morris; and
- Medical review by Dr Anthony Bell, coronial medical consultant.

### **Comments and Recommendations**

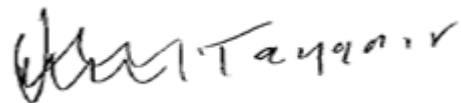
It is unlikely that Mr Smith would have died as a result of his existing heart disease had he not suffered multiple serious injuries in the crash. Mr Smith should not have been driving his unregistered and defective motorcycle, particularly at speed and after having consumed cannabis.

I am satisfied that the care and treatment received by Mr Smith in hospital was of a good standard.

The circumstances of Mr Smith'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 Mr Smith.

**Dated:** 16 April 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olivia McTaggart". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

**Olivia McTaggart**

**Coroner**