



# 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 Laurence Charles Twining

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Laurence Charles Twining;
- b) Mr Twining died as a result of injuries sustained by him as a passenger in a single motor vehicle crash;
- c) The cause of Mr Twining's death was trauma of the chest and abdomen; and
- d) Mr Twining died, aged 70 years, on 29 September 2023 on the Bass Highway at Devonport, Tasmania

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained in the investigation into Mr Twining's death which includes:

- Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits confirming identity;
- Report – Dr Donald Ritchey, Forensic Pathologist;
- Report – Forensic Science Service Tasmania - Marlene June Twining;
- Records – Ambulance Tasmania;
- Medical Records – Tasmanian Health Service - Laurence Twining;
- Medical Records – Marlene Twining;
- Medical Records – City Medical, Burnie – Laurence Twining;
- Medical Records – City Medical, Burnie – Marlene Twining;
- Record of Interview – Marlene Twining – 30 October 2023;
- Affidavit of John Lawson, sworn 6 October 2023;
- Affidavit of Derek Singline, unsworn;
- Affidavit of Jake Walter-Youd, Police Officer (Rank not stated), sworn 8 November 2023 (and body worn camera footage);

- Affidavit of Detective Senior Constable Rory Carmichael, sworn 23 October 2023 (and body worn camera footage);
- Affidavit of Constable Sven Mason, Tasmania Police, Crash Investigation Section, sworn 3 December 2023;
- Affidavit of First-Class Constable Dean Wotherspoon, Tasmania Police, Forensic Services, sworn 15 November 2023 (and scene photographs);
- Affidavit of Caleb Davies, Transport Safety and Investigation Officer, sworn 26 October 2023; and
- Miscellaneous records, licence details and crash data.

### **Circumstances of death**

On 29 September 2023, Mr and Mrs Twining attended a medical appointment at the Royal Hobart Hospital before leaving Hobart at about 10am. Mr Twining drove their Toyota Rav 4 from Hobart to Campbell Town where they stopped for refreshments. At Campbell Town, Mrs Twining took over driving.

Evidently their trip home along the Bass Highway was uneventful. Mr Twining slept in the front passenger seat. Both Mr and Mrs Twining were wearing seatbelts.

Mrs Twining drove in a westerly direction along the Bass Highway through the city of Devonport heading towards Burnie.

At about 1.20pm, the Rav 4 left the Bass Highway and commenced to roll onto its side before colliding with a large rock sitting adjacent to the highway.

After smashing into the rock, the Rav 4 caught fire. Mr and Mrs Twining were both trapped in the cabin of the vehicle. The fire was quickly extinguished by several members of the public who then assisted Mr and Mrs Twining before the arrival of police and emergency services.

Unfortunately, Mr Twining died at the scene. Mrs Twining was able to be extracted by emergency service personnel.

### **Investigation**

An investigation into the circumstances of the crash which claimed Mr Twining's life was commenced at the scene. His body was formally identified at the scene before being transported to Hobart for autopsy.

Dr Donald Ritchey examined his body and provided a report in which he expressed the opinion that the cause of Mr Twining's death was severe chest injuries including multiple bilateral rib fractures, sternum fracture, right hemopneumothorax, diaphragm rupture, traumatic abdominal wall hernia along with fractures of the left clavicle and some of the bones of Mr Twining's face.

I accept Dr Ritchey's opinion.

Forensic examination of samples taken both from Mr Twining and Mrs Twining indicate that alcohol was not a factor in the happening of the crash.

Experienced crash investigator Constable Sven Mason carried out a comprehensive investigation which has helped inform these findings. As part of that investigation Constable Mason interviewed Mrs Twining. She was unable to provide any explanation as to why it was that the vehicle left the road.

The evidence is that the weather on the day of the crash was fine, clear and sunny. I am quite satisfied that the weather, and in particular the sun, was not a factor in the crash.

The road surface was dry and free of any defects, obstructions or fluids which could have caused or contributed to the happening of the crash.

An examination of the Rav 4 showed that it was mechanically sound and roadworthy.

As I have already mentioned, Mrs Twining's blood analysis showed she had no alcohol in her body at the time of the crash. Some prescription medication was found to have been present in those samples, but there is no evidence that that medication caused or contributed to the happening of the crash.

I am also satisfied that excessive speed was not a factor. There is no evidence to suggest that Mrs Twining was distracted by the use of her mobile phone or similar.

Finally, there is no evidence, at all, of the involvement of any other person in the happening of the crash.

## **Conclusion**

There are no suspicious circumstances associated with Mr Twining's death.

In my view, having regard to the evidence as a whole, the most likely explanation for the happening of the crash in which Mr Twining died is that his wife fell asleep at the wheel. I note in her interview with Constable Mason she denied that was the case but to my mind

there is no other rational explanation for what occurred. The conclusion is also consistent with the evidence of a witness at the scene whom Mrs Twining told she was tired.

### **Comments and Recommendations**

The actions of several members of the public who gave valuable assistance at the scene including Mr Derek Singline, Mr Shaun Bolton and Mr Joshua Langmaid are to be commended.

The circumstances of Mr Twining'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 Twining.

**Dated:** 18 December 2024 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

**Simon Cooper**  
**Coroner**