



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, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the suspected death of Stephen James O'Connell

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Stephen James O'Connell;
- b) Mr O'Connell died as a result of actions undertaken by him alone, voluntarily and with the express intention of ending his own life;
- c) The most likely cause of Mr O'Connell's death is drowning; and
- d) Mr O'Connell died, aged 74 years, on 2 October 2024 in the waters of the Derwent River, Tasmania.

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

- Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Medical Records;
- Affidavit – Beverlyn Jones, sworn 7 October 2024;
- Affidavit – Carol O'Connell, sworn 17 February 2025;
- Statutory Declaration – Louise O'Brien, made 3 October 2024;
- Affidavit - Martin O'Connell, sworn 1 March 2025;
- Affidavit – Darren O'Connell, sworn 10 February 2025;
- Affidavit – Erin Neal, sworn 17 February 2025;
- Affidavit – Adam Gibson, sworn 4 October 2024;
- CCTV footage – Prince of Wales Bay Marina;
- Statutory Declaration – Edward Lawrence, made 3 October 2024;
- Affidavit – Constable Lyndon Glancy, sworn 3 April 2025;
- Affidavit – Senior Sergeant Peter Borish, sworn 10 April 2025;
- Affidavit – Constable Ellen Osborne, sworn 3 April 2025;

- Affidavit – Senior Constable Benjamin Cunningham, sworn 29 March 2025;
- Affidavit - Constable Michael Fogarty, sworn 10 April 2025;
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Matthew Smith, sworn 4 October 2024;
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Eileen Langford, sworn 24 October 2024;
- Affidavit – Detective Sergeant Michael Manning, sworn 13 March 2025 (and body worn camera footage);
- Affidavit – Constable Oliver Mundy-Castle, Forensic Services, sworn 31 October 2024 (and photographs);
- Affidavit – Senior Constable Lucy Brown, Missing Person’s Unit, State Intelligence Service, sworn 31 July 2025; and
- forensic and other evidence including mobile phone download, police information holdings and last will and testament.

Mr O’Connell died in the waters of the Derwent River, probably Neal White Rock, sometime between 7.00am and 3.00pm on Wednesday, 2 October 2024.

His boat was found washed up on the beach at Kingston, but his body was, despite an extensive search, never found.

I am quite satisfied that he is dead and that his death was the result of suicide on his part. It seems likely that he wrapped chain around his body before entering the waters of the river. His web search history indicates he researched buying chain and how much weight was needed to keep a body from a floating to the surface of water on 1 October 2024.

There are no suspicious circumstances, anomalies or inconsistencies associated with Mr O’Connell’s disappearance and death.

His extensive medical history contains recorded suicide attempts in 1997 and 2005 as well as a significant history of mental health conditions that date back to at least 1973.

There is evidence that in late 2024 Mr O’Connell had expressed concern regarding his financial situation and mentioned experiencing constant back pain.

In summary, having regard to the extensive evidence obtained in relation to this investigation I am satisfied that Mr O’Connell was experiencing significant stress. The evidence, including his Internet search history and the discovery of the handwritten

will, all points to a conclusion that he formed a plan to take his own life and then executed that plan.

### **Comments and Recommendations**

The circumstances surrounding Mr O'Connell's death are not such that 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 O'Connell.

**Dated:** 12 September 2025 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

**Simon Cooper**  
**Coroner**