



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 Shadari Ramesh Athrey.

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is Shadari Ramesh Athrey, date of birth 1 December 1993.
- b) Ms Athrey was 29 years of age and was an architect. She was born and raised in Bangalore in a close family with loving parents and two younger sisters. She met her husband, Rishab Jaiswal, whilst she was studying for her undergraduate degree and the pair lived in Brisbane. Mr Jaiswal described her excellence at her work, her loving and supportive nature, and her passion for planning trips.

At the time of her death, Ms Athery and her husband were holidaying in Tasmania. Ms Athery suffered fatal injuries in a motor vehicle crash when she was a front seat passenger in a vehicle being lawfully driven by her husband on 7 April 2023 on the Arthur Highway at Copping. The crash occurred when another vehicle travelling in the opposite direction entered the incorrect lane directly into the path of the vehicle being driven by Mr Jaiswal. There was no opportunity for Mr Jaiswal to avoid the crash, even though he made every effort to do so. The driver of the other vehicle, Storm Tientjes, was solely responsible for the crash and for the death of Ms Athery because of her dangerous driving. Ms Tientjes was affected by illicit drugs and having had no sleep the night before the crash. It is likley that she entered the incorrect lane and caused the crash because she fell asleep.

- c) Ms Athrey died from multiple trunk, pelvic and limb injuries.
- d) Ms Athrey died on 7 April 2023 at Copping, Tasmania.

In making the above findings, I have had regard to the evidence gained in the investigation into Mrs Athrey'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;
- Hospital and ambulance records;
- Affidavits and statutory declarations from witnesses to the crash and surrounding circumstances;
- Affidavit of seven attending and investigating police officers, including the crash investigator, together with photographs and body worn camera footage;
- Documentation regarding criminal charges against Storm Tientjes;
- Comments on Passing Sentence of Justice Wood;
- Toxicology Reports from Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Traffic, vehicle inspection, weather and airbag reports;
- Police video interview with Storm Tientjes;
- Extracted information from mobile phone of Storm Tientjes; and
- Licensing information for both drivers.

Comments and Recommendations

Ms Athery, a young woman on holiday with her husband, lost her life because of a driver who should not have been driving a motor vehicle.

Storm Tientjes was charged with and pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving as well as numerous summary offences arising from her driving. Attached to this finding are the Comments on Passing Sentence of Justice Wood of 6 November 2024. Her Honour imposed upon Ms Tientjes a sentence of imprisonment of three and a half

years for the charge of causing Ms Athrey's death by dangerous driving¹. On that charge, Her Honour also disqualified Ms Tientjes from driving for a period of four years from her release from prison.

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer Constable Jared Gowen for his thorough investigation and report.

The circumstances of Ms Athrey'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 Ms Athrey in respect of her tragic death.

Dated 27 January 2026 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner

¹ With a minimum non-parole period of 21 months.

Storm Cecilia Tientjes has pleaded guilty to one count of causing death by dangerous driving and summary offences arising from the same course of driving: reckless driving, two charges of possess thing used for administration of controlled drug, drive a motor vehicle whilst a prescribed illicit drug is present in blood, possess a controlled drug, smoking inside a motor vehicle whilst child present, drive whilst not the holder of a driver licence, dishonestly alter or display a plate in a way calculated to deceive, use unregistered motor vehicle, and fail to comply with a requirement for the taking of blood for analysis.

The defendant's dangerous driving led to the death of a woman, Shadari Athrey, aged 29. She and her husband, Rishab Jaiswal, had been married for just over a year. They lived in Queensland and were in Tasmania on holiday. They had hired a car, a white SAIC MG hatchback, to go sightseeing. On the 7th April 2023, they intended to drive from Primrose Sands to Bicheno.

On the 6th April, the defendant drove to Dunalley with a friend, Ms Aimee Williams, and Ms Williams's infant son. The defendant has never held a driver licence. They travelled in the defendant's Toyota Camry sedan, which was unregistered and displaying stolen registration plates. They visited a friend, a fisherman, on a boat moored at the Dunalley jetty. They stayed overnight, but there were limited beds onboard, and the defendant did not get any sleep.

At around midnight, the police attended a disturbance on the jetty and noticed the stolen plates on the defendant's vehicle, which they removed from the car. They spoke with Ms Williams onboard the boat and she denied any knowledge of the Toyota Camry.

At approximately 2.00 am, the boat left the jetty with the defendant and Ms Williams and her son onboard and returned just after 7.00 am. Ms Williams said to the defendant that she should not drive that morning. The defendant responded that she could not leave her car there, that she did not want to sit on a jetty, and that she would be driving her car.

The defendant and Ms Williams and her child disembarked, and the defendant affixed two other registration plates to her car which belonged to unregistered vehicles.

The defendant drove with her passengers, Ms Williams and her child, and reversed her car off the jetty. A by-stander on the jetty observed the defendant and her driving. He had to give her directions to assist her to manoeuvre her way off the jetty. He observed her eyes were glazed and that she seemed "zoned out", unaware, and confused. Her driving caused him concern; she was not driving in a straight line as she reversed, and she nearly collided with a bollard and then the jetty.

Once she left the jetty, she briefly stopped and filmed herself using her mobile phone in the Snapchat application. She recorded herself lighting a smoking device and using it to smoke cannabis while seated in the driver's seat and exhaling smoke while the infant was in the rear seat.

The defendant recorded herself as she drove north-east on the Arthur Highway at Dunalley. As she did so, she steered her vehicle onto the dirt and gravel edge, and fishtailed the vehicle, swerving left and right, while still recording herself driving. She then drove at a speed of

70 km/h in a signed 60 km/h speed zone. This driving constitutes the crime of "reckless driving". The defendant is recorded saying, "This is what I was doing in fucking Bridgey ... Everyone was so mad." Ms Williams later described the defendant as looking "dead tired" as they left Dunalley.

The defendant continued driving north on the Arthur Highway toward Hobart. At one point, the defendant told Ms Williams that she was tired and she pulled over. The defendant tried to sleep and then got out of the car and walked around for 5–10 minutes. The defendant felt somewhat recovered and Ms Williams observed that the cold air seemed to help wake the defendant up. The defendant then resumed driving towards Hobart.

The traffic was light to moderate, the weather was overcast, and the road was wet.

At about 9.00 am. the deceased and her husband left Primrose Sands to drive to Bicheno and commenced driving in an easterly direction on the Arthur Highway towards Dunalley.

At about 9.20 am, the defendant was driving west towards Sorell when, approximately 600 metres west of the Carlton River Bridge, whilst travelling through a shallow left-hand curve in the road, her vehicle crossed to the wrong side of the road and collided with the car being driven by Mr Jaiswal.

Mr Jaiswal saw a silver car coming towards him in his lane. He recalls his wife yelling, "Rish" as he swerved his car to the right to try and avoid a collision.

The defendant's motor vehicle fully entered the eastbound lane at the time of impact. The investigation confirmed that the driver of the MG had commenced evasive action by steering across the centreline slightly into the opposing lane but was unable to avoid the defendant's motor vehicle. There was nothing Mr Jaiswal could have done to avoid a collision.

The Toyota struck the MG with devastating effect. The main area of impact was the front passenger side of both vehicles, resulting in substantial front-end damage to both vehicles.

The collision caused the MG to spin 180 degrees in an anti-clockwise direction and then roll onto its left side, coming to rest in the ditch on the southern road edge. During this, the front passenger seat in which Ms Athrey was seated buckled and she was ejected rearward through the back passenger door onto the ground at the rear of the vehicle. Ms Athrey suffered multiple severe blunt force trauma injuries and tragically died within moments of the collision.

The Toyota also rotated 180 degrees post impact, travelling down an embankment on the northern side of the road and stopping near a fence.

Members of the public stopped to assist. Emergency services were called and police, fire, and ambulance services, including the rescue helicopter and members of the State Emergency Service, attended the scene. Paramedics attended Ms Athrey but there were no signs of life and, upon examination, she was declared deceased.

Fortunately, no one else was seriously injured. Mr Jaiswal sustained some minor grazing, and Ms Williams and the accused sustained minor injuries. Ms Williams's child was uninjured.

The defendant was questioned by police officers at the scene and stated that a person named "Sam" had been driving and had fled the scene. She provided a description and said that he

lived at Kingston. Police resources were deployed to try and locate the driver in the area of the collision on the basis of her false information.

The defendant was taken into custody for the purpose of a sample of blood pursuant to the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970*, and for further investigation. She continued to maintain her false account for some hours until admitting that she was in fact the driver.

Specialist police investigators and forensic officers conducted a crash scene investigation. A critical curve speed analysis was conducted and established the defendant did not enter the incorrect side of the road as a result of side slipping.

Speed analysis determined the speed of the defendant's vehicle was approximately 82 km/h at the time of the crash, with the accelerator pedal depressed and no evidence of braking.

The Airbag Control Module of the defendant's vehicle provided 5 seconds of pre-crash data which was analysed and confirmed the results of the crash scene investigation. The vehicle was travelling at 82 km/h at 4.5 seconds prior to deployment of the airbags and accelerated to a speed of 86 km/h at deployment. The brakes were not applied in that time. (The accelerator had been slightly released at 2.5–3.5 seconds before deployment.)

The speed limit at the crash location is 100 km/h.

Inspection of the vehicles revealed that the MG hatchback had been in a roadworthy condition at the time of the crash. The Toyota Camry driven by the accused had not been in a roadworthy condition and a number of defects were identified, but these defects did not contribute to the cause of the collision.

During a search of the defendant's car, a glass smoking device (ice pipe) was located with two snap-lock bags containing .54 grams of methamphetamine.

The defendant was required to provide a sample of blood for analysis but refused, citing trauma and a phobia of needles. A forensic order was obtained authorising the procedure and a blood sample was taken at 3.00 pm. THC was detected at a concentration of 8.1 micrograms per litre and methylamphetamine at a rate of .070 milligrams per litre, as well as therapeutic or sub-therapeutic levels of Ibuprofen and prescription medication. Obviously, this was a significant number of hours after the collision. It is not possible to determine the extent to which the defendant was affected at the time of the collision. It is expected that the combined use of THC and methylamphetamine would result in an overall impairment of driving performance. The witness at the Dunalley wharf observed the defendant to be affected and she consumed cannabis after that before driving onto the Arthur Highway.

The defendant was arrested and spontaneously made admissions. She told police she fell asleep, and she did not remember the impact. Her account is not disputed by the State, and the results of the scene investigation, the airbag pre-crash data, and the damage to the vehicles indicate that the defendant drove onto the wrong side of the road and into the path of the vehicle driven by Mr Jaiswal, and she did not apply the brakes before impact, which is consistent with her account that she fell asleep at the wheel.

She co-operated with police at that stage and provided the police with her mobile phone and passwords, and the video she took of her own reckless driving was discovered.

A post-mortem examination of Ms Athrey revealed an injury to her neck was consistent with traction abrasion from the seat belt sash. An injury to her right iliac crest was consistent with a traction abrasion from the lap belt. The forensic evidence was that the front passenger seat was twisted, and the seat belt was still clipped in.

The pathologist commented that it is possible for a passenger to be ejected from a motor vehicle when a seat belt is worn and engaged properly. There are variable factors that would explain that scenario, including collision impact momentum and vehicle damage with intrusion, and post impact trajectory of the vehicle.

This crime of causing death by dangerous driving involves a number of aggravating factors. The defendant drove after ignoring her friend's warning that she should not drive. It was also obvious to the defendant she should not be driving. She was unlicensed. She was sleep-deprived, and she was aware of her fatigue, stopping the car before the collision to try and wake herself up.

She consumed cannabis immediately before driving and drove knowing she had ~~also~~ consumed methylamphetamine.

The defendant's condition was such that she represented an ever-present risk of inattention or falling asleep for every moment that she was behind the wheel. Her driving represented a danger to her passengers and whoever chanced upon that section of highway at that time.

It was Good Friday and motorists were both expected to be on that section of road and in fact present. Given the nature of the road, the speed limit of 100 km/h, and the prospect that other motorists would be driving at a speed close to the limit, a collision was likely to result in grave harm.

I have taken into account that the defendant's driving did not involve acts of recklessness such as high speed or deliberate dangerous manoeuvres associated with the collision. The defendant was driving under the speed limit because she was aware that she was tired. There was nothing she could do in her condition, however, to offset the danger she posed by driving.

Her passengers and others on the road were exposed to danger for the entirety of the defendant's journey from Dunalley wharf to the collision, a distance of approximately 12 kilometres. Relevantly, she was intending to drive a lengthy distance to Gagebrook.

It is relevant to her culpability that she drove recklessly in the earlier part of the same journey. This is not a case where the dangerous driving was an isolated act of driving confined to the circumstances of the collision.

Her degree of culpability is significant. The difficulty she had negotiating the wharf, her reckless driving at the beginning of the journey, and her stopping the car to rest provided opportunities when she could have reflected and realised that she should not have been driving. The presence of Ms Williams' baby should have been a reminder of the fragility of life and her heavy responsibilities as a driver.

The commission of summary offences have a bearing on the crime of causing death by dangerous driving. The defendant's consumption of illicit drugs has relevance to the objective seriousness of the crime of causing death by dangerous driving. As mentioned, the reckless

driving bears on an assessment of her culpability and the opportunity she had to rethink her terrible decision to drive.

In terms of the offence of reckless driving; it is a serious example in and of itself involving deliberate risk-taking and deliberately driving with reduced control in loose gravel in circumstances where her capacity to properly respond and drive safely was impaired. It also involved an act of showing off. She was recording her driving with the intention that others would view it on social media, and carried the risk that they would be encouraged to drive irresponsibly as well.

I have been provided with a victim impact statement from Mr Rishab Jaiswal which eloquently conveys the devastating impact of the death of his wife, his unbearable sense of loss, and his grief, which is profound.

Victim impact statements are important as they provide insight into the magnitude of the consequences of these crimes for family and loved ones, and the harm that they will suffer for the rest of their lives.

No sentence can restore the life that has been lost and the suffering and harm caused, and the sentence should not be taken as an indication of the value of the life that has been taken.

At the time of the incident, the defendant was aged 26 years of age. After the crime was committed in April last year, she was remanded in custody. She was later granted bail and her bail was later revoked.

At the time she committed the crime of causing death by dangerous driving, she had no prior convictions. This year, on 18 April, however, she was sentenced for earlier offending, namely an offence of stealing and destroy property in October 2022; drive with an illicit drug, namely methylamphetamine, present in her blood; drive unlicensed committed on 12 March 2022; and some driving offences committed on 6 April 2023, the very same day she drove to Dunally, namely drive unlicensed, drive an unregistered motor vehicle, and an offence of reckless driving, which relevantly included filming herself with a mobile phone whilst driving, fishtailing her vehicle on the unsealed road edge, and driving at an excessive speed around a roundabout.

On that same sentencing date of 18 April 2024, she was sentenced for offending that she committed after the crime on 7 April 2023. It involved an offence of assault a police officer on 8 April 2023 by headbutting a female police officer to the face, committed when she was in custody, and then offences committed while on bail, including breach of bail and breach of bail conditions, and two offences of common assault committed on 29 June 2023. The defendant was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for the offences of violence and periods of disqualification for the driving offences. For the offence of reckless driving, she received a cumulative period of 6 months' licence disqualification and a fine of \$500. She is disqualified until 18 April 2025.

Since the criminal conduct committed in April last year, the defendant has spent periods of time on remand and on bail, and served a sentence of three months' imprisonment. Those periods of remand in custody, excluding the three-month sentence, amount to a total of 371 days, including today. I note that she has been in custody continuously since 4 January 2024.

The subjective circumstances of the offender also require consideration.

The defendant's upbringing was unstable. She was raised by her single father; her parents having separated when she was a baby. She was homeless at three years of age because her mother burned down their father's home. She moved out of home at 15 years of age. Her father died suddenly when she was 17.

She excelled at school until her mental health deteriorated in her high school years.

She became pregnant at 15 and her child, a daughter, was born when she was 16. The father of her child moved to Queensland with her daughter, then aged one and a half years of age. She was struggling with the care of her daughter at that time because of her own circumstances, but was committed nonetheless. The move was without her consent and contrary to the parenting order in place. The defendant has not had any contact with her daughter since. She has been distraught, but taking the necessary steps to restore contact has been particularly difficult because of her own circumstances, namely her lack of resources, lack of legal representation, and chaotic lifestyle.

She was introduced to amphetamines as a young adult and used the drug infrequently at first, but then developed a daily habit. She used ice to escape her traumatic past and as a coping mechanism regarding her daughter.

She stopped using amphetamine at the age of 20 without any intervention and stayed abstinent for over five years. She able to remain abstinent despite being involved in a succession of abusive relationships.

At the age of 20, she was in a violent relationship and was the victim of extreme abuse. After a number of attempts to escape, she fled to a women's shelter. Her next partner was similarly abusive. On one occasion, she was admitted to hospital after a prolonged episode of serious violence.

I am informed that the defendant has been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Her general practitioner has identified that she suffers from symptoms of anxiety and depression. She has used cannabis and methamphetamine over the years to manage her trauma and anxiety symptoms.

When she was approximately 24, she experienced a period of stability. She was offered a lease and for the first time had a stable and safe living environment. She enrolled in certificate courses at TAFE with a view to starting her own business.

For a time, things went well until the tenancy came to an end and she was again homeless.

In the period immediately prior to the offending, she was selling her belongings to save enough money to move to Queensland to commence proceedings for contact with her daughter. She was not being prescribed medication for her mental health conditions.

She was informed that she would be able to gain employment on a fishing boat and the defendant travelled to Dunalley to meet the master of the vessel, with Ms Williams accompanying her with her child for a day out. It transpired that there was an opportunity for employment. She decided to drive to Gagebrook where she was planning to leave her car and return to take up the opportunity. There were various practical concerns that influenced her decision to drive, including that she did not have somewhere to stay at Dunalley, and that she had run out of cannabis, which she used to regulate her anxiety and to enable her to sleep

properly. This explanation does not mitigate in any way or excuse her decision to drive and to place the lives of others at risk.

The defendant feels deeply the loss of life that she has caused. I accept that when the defendant drove on this day, she did not wish to harm anyone or put any lives at risk. She has described in words that have been read in Court her genuine remorse for the suffering she has caused. The victim impact statement in its detail has brought home to her the consequences of her actions.

There are also convincing expressions of remorse and empathy for the victim documented in the Community Corrections report dated 1 November 2024.

It is noted she has no wish to drive again, even when lawfully able to do so.

The defendant pleaded guilty soon after trial papers were filed. While it is not an early plea of guilty, no other preparation on behalf of the State had been done for the trial. The defendant's plea has saved the expense of a trial and the witnesses, particularly Mr Jaiswal, the stress associated with a trial.

She is motivated to do everything she can to lead a better life for herself and her daughter. She wants to find ways to live a meaningful existence, and to cause less harm to herself and others over the rest of her life. In short, she has expressed a strong desire to reform.

The defendant intends to pursue contact with her daughter on her release and once her sentence is finalised, she intends to move to Queensland to be closer to her.

She is making the most of opportunities available to her in prison. She has enrolled in a tertiary preparation program with the University of Southern Queensland to prepare her for undergraduate study in humanities and psychology. Pursuing her study while in maximum security has been challenging but she has maintained focus. Once she has served her sentence, she aspires to pursue a double degree in psychology and law.

She has sought support and engaged in therapy for her trauma and mental health diagnoses. She is engaging with the Sexual Assault Support Service to help with her difficult past and her trauma symptoms. I have a letter from a therapeutic specialist with the service. The defendant is described as highly motivated and takes responsibility for the harm that was caused. She is also described as working hard to engage with the support available to her for her recovery and rehabilitation. The defendant has expressed an intention to continue with counselling during her time in prison and upon her release.

The defendant has been participating in the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy program since 25 January 2024, a form of cognitive-behavioural therapy. I have a letter from the Senior Clinician of Interventions Programs at the Women's Prison, Ms Katie Duggan, confirming her participation. It indicates she has engaged well and consolidated her learning and demonstrated the application of skills she has been taught.

She has commenced Alcohol and Drug counselling in prison, and she is engaged in supportive counselling with the psychologist with the Therapeutic Services Unit at the prison.

She has communicated with her family and has regular positive contact with her mother and other family members, and she will have their support on her release.

She has been engaged in the Red Cross Volunteering for Change Program since January 2024 and graduated as a peer support leader. A letter from the Community Program Officer of Australian Red Cross dated 2 May 2024 explains that volunteers are empowered to identify and improve health, wellbeing, and safety issues in their prison community. The defendant has shown commitment and eagerness to learn throughout the program.

As at the date of the letter, she has contributed 24 hours of her time volunteering while in custody. The letter speaks highly of her engagement and notes there will be the possibility for her to explore volunteering opportunities with Red Cross upon release.

Further, the defendant has completed her First Aid Certificate and is undertaking a mental health first aid certificate. She has completed as many TAFE courses and other programs as she has been able to. The defendant intends to continue volunteering with the Red Cross throughout her incarceration and to engage with all rehabilitation options that are made available to her.

She has obtained employment while in custody.

The defendant has strong prospects of rehabilitation. Despite having very little support and guidance in her formative years and, as a young adult, a profoundly disadvantaged background, there were times where she was able to make progress. She has shown in the past a determination to address her drug use, notwithstanding difficult life circumstances and very negative influences.

The efforts made by the defendant while in prison demonstrate a strong determination to rehabilitate. The Court and the community wish to see the defendant reform and make the most of her life. Her determination and capacity for change has been demonstrated and, indeed, there are indications that she may well be someone who will continue to apply herself and ultimately make a positive difference to her community.

The defendant's rehabilitation is to be given real weight in the sentencing process, but there are competing considerations.

In determining the sentence, general deterrence is an important sentencing objective. It is vitally important that others be deterred from behaving as the defendant did. The sentence must reflect the sanctity of human life and the terrible harm that has been caused. It must reflect society's condemnation of crimes of causing death and serious injury by dangerous driving. These sentencing objectives demand a significant term of imprisonment.

I record convictions. On the count of causing death by dangerous driving, I impose a sentence of three and a half years' imprisonment. The sentence is backdated to 1 November 2023.

Having regard to the defendant's prospects of reform and personal circumstances, I will allow an opportunity for early release on parole. I impose the minimum non-parole period of 21 months.

I impose four years' licence disqualification from the date of release. Her licence is cancelled.

On the charge of reckless driving, I impose six months' imprisonment. Here, I give weight again to the defendant's personal circumstances and prospects, and I suspend the entirety of that sentence on strict conditions which will take effect on her release. The term is suspended subject to a condition that she must not commit an offence punishable by imprisonment for a

period of two years from the date of release with respect to the sentence imposed on the indictment.

Additionally, I impose the following conditions recommended by Community Corrections which are designed to promote the defendant's rehabilitation once she has served her sentence of imprisonment imposed for causing death by dangerous driving.

The defendant must submit to supervision of a probation officer as required by the probation officer for a period of two years from release and comply with all the lawful and reasonable directions of the probation officer.

Further, the defendant must attend educational and other programs as directed by a probation officer; must undergo assessment and treatment for drug dependency as directed by a probation officer; must submit to testing for drug use as directed; and must submit to medical, psychological, or psychiatric assessment or treatment as directed by a probation officer.

In relation to the reckless driving, I impose a period of licence disqualification of 12 months, six months cumulative to the period imposed on indictment. Thus, the total period of disqualification will be four and a half years from release.

For the offence of drive a motor vehicle whilst a prescribed illicit drug is present in blood, I impose a period of 24 months' disqualification backdated to the date of service of the Road Safety Disqualification Notice which is 8 April 2023. I impose a fine of \$810.

For the offence of failing to comply with a requirement for the taking of blood for analysis, I impose 24 months' disqualification concurrent with the period referred to. I impose the minimum fine of \$2,020.

There is no additional penalty on the remaining charges other than the convictions I have imposed.