



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

(These findings have been de-identified in relation to the name of the deceased and family by the direction of the Coroner pursuant to s 57(1)(c) of the Coroners Act 1995)

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of GM

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

- a) The identity of the deceased is GM, date of birth 12 July 2002.
- b) GM was 20 years of age, lived at Newnham and worked as a first-year apprentice painter. He had been a student at St Patrick's College. He is survived by his parents and six siblings. GM was a keen soccer player, having played for the Rangers Club for four years prior to his death. He was the holder of a provisional P2 driver's licence. GM was friends with UE, a member of the same soccer club.

On the weekend commencing Friday 7 October 2022, both GM and UE, along with about ten other players, travelled to an end of season soccer trip at Fonthill Farm in Lemont, south-east of Oatlands. UE was the holder of a Novice P2 licence requiring him to have no alcohol in his body whilst driving.

On Saturday 8 October 2022 the group played golf at the Oatlands Golf Club, following which they attended the Kentish Hotel at about 3.00pm. GM consumed a number of vodka cruisers both during the golf game and at the hotel. The evidence indicates that UE consumed approximately seven drinks over this period. Relevantly, he consumed three pints of beer before he left the hotel. Some of the members of the group who provided affidavits for the investigation said that UE was affected by alcohol, as he was slurring his words and becoming clumsy. Other members of the group did not have concerns regarding his sobriety. All members of the group, except for GM and UE, left the hotel at about 5.30pm. GM and UE may have been making plans to travel to Hobart together rather than return to the group's

accommodation. UE was spoken to by several members of the group, offering to give him a lift and cautioning him against driving due to the alcohol he had consumed.

At about 6:30pm UE commenced driving his Subaru station wagon back to the accommodation. GM was a front seat passenger and had his seatbelt fastened. At about 6.50pm, UE was driving in an easterly direction on Inglewood Road, Andover, 15 km south-east of Oatlands. At this point, the road had a gravel surface and a speed limit of 80 km/h. UE, travelling at a speed of 92 km/h, lost control of his vehicle at the commencement of a right-hand curve. The vehicle rotated in a clockwise direction and onto the incorrect side of the road passenger side first. The rear left wheel and passenger side of the vehicle crashed into trees on the side of the road before coming to rest on its roof. GM was still wearing his seatbelt but sustained fatal head injuries as a result of the crash.

UE was not significantly injured and was able to extricate himself from the vehicle and seek help. A full emergency services response ensued. Later, UE submitted to breath analysis which returned a reading of 0.082 g of alcohol per 100 ml of blood. I find that the significant impairment of his judgement caused by alcohol consumption was the main causative factor in his loss of control, his excessive speed and the crash. GM also made an ill-considered decision to drive with UE, knowing he had been consuming alcohol.

- c) GM's cause of death was head injuries. Post-mortem toxicological testing indicated that his blood alcohol level was very low (0.011 g/mL).
- d) GM died on 8 October 2022 at Andover, Tasmania.

In making the above findings, I have had regard to the evidence gained in the investigation into GM'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 from Forensic Science Service Tasmania;
- Ambulance Tasmania attendance record;
- Medical records from Northern Suburbs Medical Service;
- Affidavit of IF, father of GM;

- Affidavit of Benjamin Hunt, Transport Safety and Investigation Officer;
- Affidavits of eight members of the group attending weekend;
- Affidavit of Justin Burbury, licensee of the golf club;
- Affidavit of Remy Potter, manager of the hotel;
- Affidavit of the motorist who came upon the crash scene;
- Affidavit of five attending and investigating police officers, including photographs and video footage;
- Collision Analysis Report by the crash investigator; and
- Examination of Electronic Devices.

Comments and Recommendations

On 13 February 2025, UE was sentenced, following his pleas of guilty, in the Launceston Magistrates Court on charges of causing death by negligent driving contrary to section 32(2A) of the *Traffic Act* 1925, driving without due care and attention and driving a motor vehicle as a provisional driver with alcohol in his body. He was convicted on these charges and sentenced to a period of imprisonment of five months, wholly suspended for a period of two years on the condition that he not commit another offence punishable by imprisonment during that period. He was also disqualified from driving for a period of 15 months from the date of his sentencing.

There are sound reasons why provisional licence holders must not have alcohol in their bodies whilst driving. They are necessarily inexperienced drivers, and alcohol causes impairment of critical functions required for driving. These include delayed reaction time, loss of coordination, and slowing of information-processing and reflexes. The risk of being involved in a crash increases exponentially as blood alcohol concentration rises.

The crash, and the death of GM, was wholly preventable. The effects of such an event are devastating.

Every year, many lives are lost and people injured because drivers are impaired by alcohol. This is the case despite powerful public road safety campaigns warning of the risks of drinking and driving. It is critical that provisional licence holders who intend to drink alcohol make early and clear plans not to drive and to arrange safe alternative safe transport.

I extend my appreciation to investigating officer Senior Constable Kelly Cordwell for her high-quality investigation and report.

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

Dated: 17 April 2026 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner