
**FINDINGS of Coroner McTaggart following the holding of
an inquest under the *Coroners Act* 1995 into the death of:**

Maurice GEARD

Contents

Record of Investigation into Death (With Inquest)	3
Hearing dates.....	3
Representation	3
Introduction.....	3
Evidence at the inquest.....	3
Background	4
Mr Geard's health.....	4
Circumstances of death	5
Conclusion.....	5

Record of Investigation into Death (With Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of Maurice Geard with an inquest held at Hobart in Tasmania, make the following findings.

Hearing dates

23 July 2026

Representation

Counsel Assisting the Coroner: M Killer

Introduction

1. On 19 March 2026, Maurice Geard died at Risdon Prison, Risdon Vale in Tasmania. At the time of his death, he was serving a prison sentence.
2. The fact of Mr Geard's death was properly reported in accordance with the requirements of the *Coroners Act 1995*.
3. The *Coroners Act 1995* provides that a public inquest must be held where a death occurs in Tasmania and the deceased person was, immediately before their death, a person held in custody. Mr Geard's death meets that definition.
4. Accordingly, I held a public inquest into Mr Geard's death at Hobart on 23 July 2026.

Evidence at the inquest

5. The following material was tendered at the inquest:

C1 – Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
C2 – Royal Hobart Hospital Report of Death for the Coroner;
C3 – Declaration of Life Extinct;
C4 – Affidavit of Identification- Constable J Rayner;
C5 – Affidavit of identification- Anthony Cordwell;
C6 – Report of forensic pathologist, Dr Donald Ritchey, regarding cause of death;
C7 – Medical Records of Royal Hobart Hospital;
C8 – Correctional Service Records – Correctional Primary Health Services;

C9 – Medical Report from Dr Anthony Bell MD FRACP FCICM, Coronial Medical Consultant;
C10 – Correspondence from Dr Anthony Bell MD FRACP FCICM, regarding care of the deceased;
C11 – Affidavit of Joseph Geard, brother of Mr Geard;
C12 – Affidavit of Sarah Monaghan, Correctional Supervisor at Risdon Prison;
C12a – Email from Sarah Monaghan, Correctional Supervisor at Risdon Prison; and
C13 – Tasmania Police conviction history relating to the deceased.

6. I determined that there was no need to call any witnesses to give oral testimony at inquest as the documentary evidence allowed me to make the necessary findings and comments.

Background

7. Mr Geard was 82 years of age. He married Laurel Marchant in 1974 and they maintained a relationship for 30 years before divorcing. Ms Marchant had three children, who were the stepchildren of Mr Geard.
8. Mr Geard was born in Huonville. He went to school in Cygnet and subsequently worked in various forms of employment in the region. His brother, Joseph Geard, stated in his affidavit that Mr Geard ceased working because of back troubles and retired around the age of 60 years. Mr Geard moved to Old Beach in the 1990s before purchasing a house in Queenstown.
9. In 2018, Mr Geard was convicted in the Supreme Court of Tasmania of charges of aggravated sexual assault, indecent assault, maintain sexual relations with a person under 17 years of age, and rape. Mr Geard was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 12 years with a non-parole period of 7 years and 6 months. He was housed in the Ron Barwick unit of Risdon Prison.¹

Mr Geard's health

10. Mr Geard was in very poor health in the lead-up to his death. His existing health conditions included ischemic heart disease, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic kidney disease, diabetic nephropathy, dementia and Parkinson's disease.

¹ A low security unit of the prison.

11. On 10 September 2025, Mr Geard was admitted to the inpatient ward at Risdon Prison for the commencement of end-of-life care.

Circumstances of death

12. On 6 March 2026 Mr Geard had a witnessed fall from a chair in the inpatient ward of the prison. His fall resulted in a fracture of the left neck of femur. He was transported to the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) where his goals of care were altered to allow for surgical repair of the fracture. Mr Geard therefore underwent a left hip hemiarthroplasty on 7 March 2026. This procedure was without reported complication and Mr Geard was returned to palliative care at the prison inpatient ward on 10 March 2026.
13. Mr Geard had in place an advanced care directive which included a direction that he was not for resuscitation. As part of his palliative regime, a syringe driver was commenced on 16 March 2026. He also had visits from family members. Mr Geard died in the early hours of 19 March 2026.

Conclusion

14. On the basis of the above documentary evidence, I make the following formal findings pursuant to section 28(1) of the Act:
 - (a) The identity of the deceased is Maurice Geard, date of birth 11 August 1944;
 - (b) Mr Geard died in the circumstances set out in this finding;
 - (c) The cause of Mr Geard's death was hypostatic pneumonia following recovery from left hip hemiarthroplasty due to fracture of neck of left femur sustained in a fall from standing. His existing serious medical conditions (including advanced atherosclerotic coronary vascular disease, Parkinson's disease with dementia, type II diabetes and emphysema) were a significant cause of his death; and
 - (d) Mr Geard died 19 March 2026 at Risdon Prison, Risdon Vale in Tasmania.
15. Pursuant to section 28(5) of the Act, I comment that the care, supervision and treatment of Mr Geard whilst in custody was of an appropriate standard. In particular, given his frailty and many medical conditions, the accidental fall contributing to his death could not have been reasonably prevented.

16. I express my appreciation to Constable Madison Killer, Coroner's Associate, for her most competent preparation and appearance in this matter.

Dated: 23 July 2026 at Hobart in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner