



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Leigh Mackey, Coroner, having investigated the death of Jim Colin Handley

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

- a) The identify of the deceased is Jim Colin Handley, date of birth 19 January 1992.
- b) Mr Handley is the son of Lynn and Paul Handley and was a chef. He lived with his partner, Olivia Coleman, and their dog, Ruby, in Newstead. They had plans to buy a house, marry and have children. He worked as a sous chef at Silos Hotel (the Hotel).

Mr Handley rode motorcycles and had done so from a young age. He rode extensively around Tasmania and interstate. He owned and rode a black 2017 Aprilia Tuono V4 1100RR motorcycle. Phillip Costello is the chief executive officer of the National Automobile Museum located at 84 Lindsay Street, Invermay, opposite the Hotel. Mr Costello also owned an Aprilia Tuono motorcycle and regularly noticed Mr Handley riding to and from his workplace at the Hotel. He observed him to generally ride the motorcycle appropriately but had noticed in the months leading up to his death that he drove at speed and performed wheel stands along Lindsay Street at times.¹ Approximately 12 months prior his death, Mr Handley narrowly avoided a collision at the intersection of Lindsay and Doyne Streets in Launceston.

Lindsay Street runs in a generally east to west orientation, between the Tamar River and Invermay Road. The Hotel is accessed off Lindsay Street at its western end. The street services a commercial area, a large children's park and the Hotel. The road has a speed limit of 50 km/h. Doyne Street runs in a generally north to south direction and connects Gleadow Street

¹ Statutory Declaration of Philip Costello, page 2.

with Lindsay Street. Doyne Street enters Lindsay Street approximately 150 m east from the Hotel entrance.

On 2 December 2023 Mr Handley commenced his shift at the Hotel at 8.15am. He left the Hotel, at 5.15pm and drove his motorcycle from the staff carpark at the Hotel, turned right onto Lindsay Street and headed east toward Invermay Road. His movements were captured on CCTV covering Lindsay and Doyne Streets. He is seen on CCTV driving his motorcycle at speed along Lindsay Street whilst performing a wheel stand with the front wheel of the motorcycle held aloft and not in contact with the road surface.

At the same time Ms Taylor was driving her white 2018 Subaru XV motor vehicle in a westerly direction along Lindsay Street toward the Hotel and Tamar River. Whilst doing so she stopped and pulled the Subaru to the far-left side of Lindsay Street adjacent to where it intersects with Doyne Street. She then drove the Subaru across the west bound and partway across the east bound lane heading toward Doyne Street.

A blue Triton 4-wheel drive utility vehicle driven by Jilanna Clarkin, followed the Subaru west along Lindsay Street. As the Subaru pulled to the far-left hand side of the street the Triton passed it driving to the inside of it. Once she had passed the Subaru Ms Clarkin observed the motorcycle being driven by Mr Handley as it entered Lindsay Street from the Silo Hotel carpark, heading toward her in the east bound lane. She thought it was going very fast and was doing a wheel stand because of which she could not see its headlight as it was pointed upward. She checked her rear vision mirror and saw the Subaru commence its turn quite close to the rear of her vehicle and believes the Triton would have limited Ms Taylor's view of the oncoming motorcycle.

As Ms Taylor commenced to turn across Lindsay Street towards Doyne Street to effect the U-turn Mr Handley's motorcycle collided with the left side of the Subaru, with the front tyre impacting the lower right section of her front passenger door. The force of the impact caused Mr Handley to be ejected from his motorbike and be lifted approximately one metre into the air before landing on the road surface. Members of the public came to his assistance, emergency services attended and Mr Handley was transported to the Launceston General Hospital where he was pronounced deceased.

Weather conditions at the time of the accident were fine, with a temperature of approximately 21 degrees Celsius, light winds, a dry road surface and good visibility.

The accident was investigated by Constable O'Neil of Northern Crash Investigation Services. Using the CCTV footage which showed the passage of the motorcycle between fixed points leading up to the collision and determining the distance between those points the speed of the motorcycle could be ascertained. On this analysis the motorcycle was travelling at a speed of 103 km/h to 106 km/h whilst it was being ridden up to the point of the collision on Lindsay Street. This estimate is consistent with the catastrophic damage caused to the motorcycle by the collision. The speed of the Subaru was assessed at approximately 16 km/h.² No evidence of braking of either vehicle was found on examination of the scene.

The motorcycle was inspected by Casey Perkins, a Transport Safety and Investigation Officer with the Department of State Growth who concluded that whilst the motorcycle was fitted with an off-market muffler and was, for that reason, noncompliant, it had no defects that caused or contributed to the accident.³

Toxicological analysis confirmed that neither Mr Handley nor Ms Taylor had alcohol or illicit substances in their system at the time of the accident.

Mr Handley suffered significant head, chest, spinal and pelvic injuries in the accident. He had a frontal skull fracture, subarachnoid haemorrhage, multiple facial and rib fractures with small pneumothoraces and a right haemothorax, a compression fracture at T4 of his vertebral column and fracture through the left sacral ala.⁴

I find that the manner of Mr Handley's driving of his motorcycle caused the accident. He was driving at excessive speed and on one wheel which not only reduced his capacity to control the motorcycle and react to other users of the road or those using the nearby park and business facilities but he also limited the ability of Ms Taylor to discern his presence, accurately assess the speed of his approach and the timing of her turn toward Doyne

² Statutory Declaration of Const O'Neil page 7.

³ Affidavit of Transport Safety and Investigation Officer, Mr Perkins, page 6.

⁴ Dr Reid, State Forensic Pathologist, Short Final Report.

Street. Constable O'Neil concluded that had Mr Handley driven the motorcycle at 65 km/h (15 km/h over the applicable limit) Ms Taylor would have cleared the intersection avoiding collision.⁵

Ms Taylor was required to give way to Mr Handley's motorcycle prior to effecting a turn into Doyne Street. She was cognisant of the need to give way reflected by the movement of the Subaru to the far side of Lindsay Street and allowing the Triton to pass on its inside before commencing the turn. She did not see the motorcycle before commencing the turn. Her failure to have done so may reflect an insufficient exercise of vigilance by her. However, the speed at which Mr Handley was travelling, the fact that he was travelling on one wheel with his illuminated headlight pointing upward and the presence of a 4-wheel drive vehicle on the roadway which was lawfully travelling on Lindsay Street between her and the motorcycle would have limited her capacity to see the motorcycle.

I find that Mr Handley drove his motorcycle at a vastly excessive speed on Lindsay Street, a suburban street, and on one wheel and this was a significant cause of the collision. There was no evidence suggesting that he was under any specific time pressure that may have motivated his conduct at 5.15pm on 2 December 2023. Driving along Lindsay Street at speed on one wheel had become a frequent practice by him which belies what is reported to be his usual safe and considered approach to riding motorcycles. He did occupy his correct lane of the roadway and Ms Taylor was obliged to give way to him however circumstances, some of which were of Mr Handley's making such as his speed and wheel stand, limited her capacity to see him. She was entitled to assume that he was travelling at a speed expected and appropriate for the area and given his distance from her, that she had sufficient time to execute the U-turn without risk of collision. Mr Handley denied himself an opportunity to react to the incursion of the Subaru into his lane due to the speed of his travel.

- c) Mr Handley's cause of death was multiple (head, chest, spine, pelvic and limb) injuries.
- d) Mr Handley died on 2 December 2023 at Launceston in Tasmania.

⁵ Traffic crash report page 23.

In making the above findings, I have had regard to the evidence gained in the investigation into Mr Handley's death. The evidence includes:

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- Affidavits confirming identity and life extinct;
- Affidavit of forensic scientist Neil McLachlan-Troup sworn on 20 December 2023;
- Report of forensic pathologist Dr Andrew Reid;
- Affidavit of Olivia Coleman sworn on 15 February 2024
- Statutory declaration of Oliver Courtney-Pratt, declared 3 December 2023;
- Statutory declaration of Jilanna Clarkin, declared 14 March 2024;
- Statutory declaration of Philip Costello, declared 13 April 2024;
- Tasmania Police records and affidavits of on scene police officers;
- Statutory declaration of Constable Matthew O'Neil, declared 21 October 2024;
- Statutory declaration of Constable Marcus Williams, declared 23 October 2024;
- Record of Interview of Michelle Taylor;
- Affidavit of Casey Perkins sworn 22 December 2023;
- Certificate of Analysis – Michelle Taylor;
- Medical records from Kings Meadow Medical Centre, Launceston General Hospital and Ambulance Tasmania;
- Telecommunication records;
- Crash investigation reports; and
- The WorkSafe Tasmania investigation file.

Comments and Recommendations

The collision was preventable had Mr Handley been driving his motorcycle in accordance with applicable road rules and speed limits. His death is a steep price for him, his friends and family, Ms Taylor and those that rose to the distressing task of coming to his aid, to pay for his lack in judgement.

I extend my appreciation to the investigating officer Constable Matthew O'Neil for his investigation and report.

The circumstances surrounding Mr Handley'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 Mr Handley.

Dated: 26 May 2026 at Hobart, in the State of Tasmania.

Leigh Mackey
Coroner