

IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

Court Reference: COR 2011 1069

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST

Form 37 Rule 60(1)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Inquest into the Death of: JENNIFER CAPES

Delivered On: 2 July 2012

Delivered At: Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000

Hearing Dates: 2 July 2012

Findings of: PETER WHITE, CORONER

Police Coronial Support Unit Sergeant David Dimsey, assisting the coroner

I, PETER WHITE, Coroner having investigated the death of JENNIFER CAPES

AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 2 July 2012

at MELBOURNE

find that the identity of the deceased was JENNIFER ANNE CAPES

born on 25 September 1960

and the death occurred on 23 March 2011

at Norfolk Terrace Community Care Unit in Travencore Crescent, Flemington

from:

1 (a) UNASCERTAINED

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

2 METASTATIC OVARIAN CANCER

in the following circumstances:

1. At approximately 6.00am on the 23rd of March, Jennifer Capes was located by the night nursing staff in her unit when she appeared to be not breathing. Ambulance Victoria was called and staff commenced CPR until the ambulance officers arrived and took over.
2. Ms Capes was found to be in cardio respiratory arrest with asystole and ambulance officers continued for approximately four minutes, but were unable to resuscitate her. She was pronounced deceased at approximately 7.45am on that morning by her attending doctor.

Background

3. Jennifer Capes was residing in Unit 1 of Norfolk Terrace Community Care Unit, 1 Travencore Crescent, Travencore. Norfolk Terrace is a facility which is overseen by the North West Mental Health and Inner West Area Mental Health Service. It is a 24-hour nursing staff facility and accommodates people with mental health issues.
4. Jennifer Capes was being treated at Norfolk Terrace and had been living independently in a Ministry of Housing property whilst on a Disability Pension and had a financial administrator through the State Trustees Office. She was also on a community treatment order due to her

history of poor compliance and poor attendance and engagement with mental health services. This included numerous admissions to the John Cade Acute Inpatient Unit at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

5. In October 2010, she was diagnosed with metastatic ovarian endometrial cancer. On the 31 January 2011, she was referred to the Inner West CCU as she was experiencing difficulty in living independently in the community and had a significant decline in her functioning, secondary to her poor physical health. A decision was made to house her at Norfolk Terrace where she could live and be continuously monitored.
6. On the last review of Jennifer Capes, it was noted that she had metastatic cancer Stage 4 and that she was receiving palliative chemotherapy. Her last chemotherapy was on the 16 March 2011, one week prior to her death.
7. I also note that she was suffering from chronic obstructive airways disease with Type 2 respiratory failure and congestive cardiac failure. She had been treated for this at the Royal Melbourne Hospital from 23 February 2011 until 1 March 2011, and that intervention had not been successful.
8. For the last 24 hours prior to her death she had been noted to have shortness of breath in keeping with her presentations over the previous few months.
9. At approximately 3.00am on 23 March nursing staff at Norfolk Terrace observed that she was sleeping and breathing during their nightly checks.
10. On the check which took place at 6.00am on 23 March she was located in her bed and apparently was not breathing. The nurse contacted and asked for an ambulance to attend and the ambulance officers arrived and took over CPR until her death was finally called later that morning (indistinct).
11. Following an autopsy at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, Dr Malcolm Dodd, Forensic Pathologist, found that the cause of death was unascertained and that a contributing factor was metastatic ovarian cancer.

Finding

I am satisfied on the evidence that Jennifer Capes suffered from a great number of illnesses and contributing diseases and that the cause of death was natural and a combination of these various illnesses and diseases.

I direct that a copy of this finding be provided to the following:

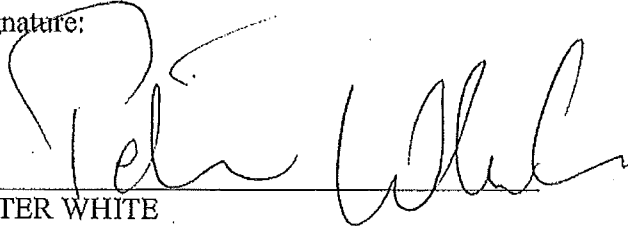
Ms Rae Oates, next of kin

Senior Constable Michael Gifford, Moonee Ponds Police Station, Investigating Member

Dr Ruth Vine, Chief Psychiatrist

Interested Parties

Signature:



PETER WHITE
CORONER
Date: 2 July 2012

