

IN THE CORONERS COURT  
OF VICTORIA  
AT MELBOURNE

Court Reference: COR 2012 1266

**FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST**

*Form 37 Rule 60(1)*

*Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008*

**Inquest into the Death of: JOSEPH MICALLEF**

Delivered On:	23 August 2013
Delivered At:	Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street Melbourne 3000
Hearing Dates:	25 March 2013
Findings of:	JOHN OLLE, CORONER
Place of Death:	Austin Hospital, Heidelberg
Police Coronial Support Unit	Senior Constable John Kennedy

I, JOHN OLLE, Coroner having investigated the death of JOSEPH MICALLEF of 7 Princes Street Watsonia.

AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 25 March 2013

at Melbourne

find that the identity of the deceased was JOSEPH MICALLEF

born on 15 February 1957, aged 55 years

and the death occurred on 7 April 2012

at Austin Hospital, 145 Studley Road, Heidelberg 3084

**from:**

1 (a) ASPIRATION PNEUMONIA

1 (b) CEREBRAL PALSY AND EPILEPSY

**in the following circumstances:**

1. Joseph Micallef was aged 55 years at the time of his death. Joseph lived in high care support accommodation.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Coronial Brief has fully addressed the circumstances of Joseph's death.

### **Background**

3. At age 51, Joseph was admitted to high care accommodation after his mother suffered a stroke.
4. He suffered cerebral palsy, which caused him to be immobile and confined to a wheelchair. Further, Joseph had difficulty swallowing food and fluid, which caused numerous episodes of aspiration pneumonia.
5. He received the following prescribed medications:
  - Citalopram (Cipramil) 20mg
  - Phenytoin Sodium (Dilantin) 100mg
  - Valproate Sodium (Epilim)
  - Lamotrigine (Lamictal) 80mg

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Human Services.

- Cholecalciferol 50mg
6. Over the years, Joseph had presented at the Austin Hospital with various complaints, including chest infection.
  7. On 7 April 2012, Joseph had developed decreased conscious state, gurgling and shortness of breath. He was admitted to the Austin Hospital and a course of antibiotics prescribed. Sadly, Joseph's condition deteriorated and he died later that day.

### **Post Mortem Medical Examination**

8. On 11 April 2012 Dr Michael Burke, Forensic Pathologist at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) conducted an external examination on the body of Joseph Micallef.
9. Dr Burke found the cause of death to be aspiration pneumonia and cerebral palsy and epilepsy.
10. Dr Burke commented:

“The post mortem CT scan showed no evidence of head injury. There were increased lung markings consistent with pneumonia.

The external examination otherwise unremarkable”.<sup>2</sup>

### **Finding**

I find the cause of death of Joseph Micallef to be aspiration pneumonia and cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

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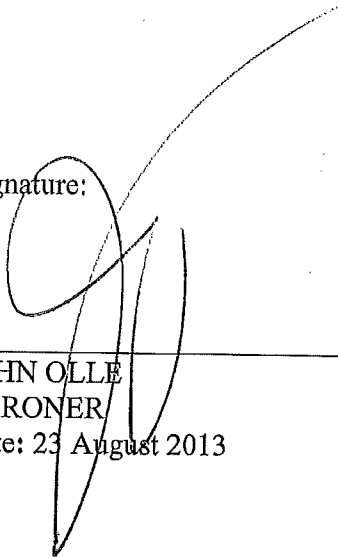
<sup>2</sup> Comments section of Dr Burke's post mortem report.

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

Department of Human Services

First Constable Suzanne Harvey, Seymour Police Station

Signature:



JOHN OLLE  
CORONER  
Date: 23 August 2013

