

FORM 37

Rule 60(1)

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Court reference: 2745/09

Inquest into the Death of UNKNOWN REMAINS COMPRISING A HUMAN CRANIUM

Delivered On:	23 March 2010
Delivered At:	Melbourne
Hearing Dates:	23 March 2010
Findings of:	Coroner Parkinson
Representation:	N/A
SCAU	Senior Constable Kelly Ramsey

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In the Coroners Court of Victoria at Melbourne
I, KIM PARKINSON, Coroner

having investigated the death of:

Details of deceased:

Unidentified	UNKNOWN REMAINS COMPRISING A HUMAN
Human Remains:	CRANIUM

**AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 23 March 2010
at Melbourne**

find that the identity of the deceased was unknown and that the remains comprising one human
cranium are of indigenous Aboriginal ancestry

and death occurred on an unknown date

at an unknown location

from

1a. UNKNOWN CAUSE

in the following circumstances:

1. This matter was listed for inquest this day. This case commenced in 2009, prior to the commencement of the Coroners Act 2008. S16(5) of that Act provides that a coroner must discontinue the investigation into the death if the coroner determines that the death probably occurred more than 100 years before it was reported. In this case the substantive aspects of the investigation had been completed prior to the commencement of the Act. In that circumstance I proceed to conduct the inquest and find as to circumstances.

2. On Sunday 31 May 2009, Ms Christine Hardiman of Mitcham Victoria attended at the Melbourne Museum to hand in a skull which she believed to be human. The skull was handed to the Melbourne Museum Information Officer, Mr Simon Hinkley. Ms Hardiman reported that the skull had been given to her as a child by her uncle and that he had first received it in about 1930 from another relative. The details of where or when the skull was found are unknown.

3. The skull was handed to Victoria Police and was examined by Dr Soren Blau, Forensic Anthropologist with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine. Dr Blau reported that she examined a complete and well preserved human cranium. Dr Blau reported that the morphology of the cranial vault, orbit and nasal aperture is typical of those seen individuals of Australian Aboriginal Ancestry. The remains were likely female and adult at least older than 25 years of age.

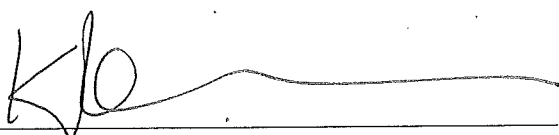
4. Dr Blau reported that it is not possible to determine the exact age of the human remains without scientific dating techniques, however, that the remains were more than likely archaeological and therefore of no forensic interest. She concluded:

"the human cranium is that of an adult female of indigenous aboriginal ancestry. The dentition and alterations to the temporo-mandible joints are typically seen in pre-contact Aboriginal people. The individual has evidence of trauma to the front of her head and skeletal changes indicating metabolic disease".

5. On the available evidence it is not possible to make findings as to identity, where, when or in what circumstances the person died. In the circumstances, I am satisfied that the bones are of indigenous Australian Aboriginal origin and of archaeological, not forensic significance. No further investigation is required. I conclude that the death probably occurred more than 100 years before it was reported.

6. I hereby order the release of the skeletal remains to Museum Victoria in accordance with the provisions of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, Act. No. 16/2006.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Parkinson', written over a horizontal line.

Kim M.W. Parkinson

Coroner

Date: 23rd March 2010