



Tuesday 4 May 2021

Training on risks of physical restraint needed for safer bars

Victorian Coroner Jacqui Hawkins says greater awareness is needed by bar operators and staff on the dangers of physically restraining patrons following the October 2018 death of Spiros Boursinos at the Antique Bar in Elsternwick.

In the finding released today, Coroner Hawkins found that Mr Boursinos died while being restrained during a drug-induced psychotic episode, having consumed cocaine and whilst also suffering from coronary artery disease.

Mr Boursinos had been holding a broken wine glass behind the bar when two staff and a patron restrained him face down on the floor with the weight of one of the men on top of him. Police were called to the scene, however Mr Boursinos had already lost consciousness.

Coroner Hawkins said the death highlighted the risks posed when bar staff do not have sufficient training in how to manage or physically restrain a person having a mental health episode or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

While security guards and crowd controllers are required to undertake training in conflict resolution, safe restraining holds and risks of physical restraint, bartenders are not.

Her Honour stated that the staff who restrained Mr Boursinos were left vulnerable as they did not have skills to safely stop Mr Boursinos from hurting himself or others.

To ensure the safety of patrons and staff at licensed venues, Coroner Hawkins has recommended:

- The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation produce a safety guide for all licensed bar owners on the risks and dangers associated with people with mental health episodes and aggressive type behaviours and the risks associated with physical restraint.
- The Department of Justice and Community Safety amend the Responsible Service of Alcohol training to include information on how to recognise and manage a person experiencing a mental health or drug-related episode; and the dangers and risks associated with physical restraints.

A copy of the finding can be found here:

<https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/Inquest%20Finding%20into%20the%20death%20of%20Spiros%20Boursinos%2029%20April%202021.pdf>