



IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

Court Reference: COR 2024 000115

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST

Form 37 Rule 63(1)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Deceased: Joseph Michael Romano

Delivered on: 4 May 2026

Delivered at: Coroners Court of Victoria,
65 Kavanagh Street, Southbank

Hearing date: 27 March 2026

Findings of: Coroner Paresa Antoniadis Spanos

Counsel assisting the coroner: Leading Senior Constable Dragos Panoschi, Victoria
Police, Coronial Support Unit

Representation: No appearances

Key words: Home invasion, self-defence, gunshot injury, homicide

INTRODUCTION

1. On 7 January 2024, Joseph Michael Romano (**Mr Romano**) was 20 years old when he died following injuries sustained whilst committing a home invasion. At the time of his death, Mr Romano lived in Victoria with his mother, sister, and stepsister.
2. Mr Romano left school at about 16 years of age. He then started, but did not complete, an electrical apprenticeship with his father. During his teenage years, Mr Romano became involved with unsavoury individuals despite his family's attempts to guide him away from those negative influences.
3. He was remembered as an excellent footballer.
4. According to Victoria Police, Mr Romano had no previous criminal convictions, however there was suggestion he was involved in significant criminal offending, including but not limited to, extortion, assault, and arson.

CIRCUMSTANCES PROXIMATE TO DEATH

5. The incident and the events leading to Mr Romano's death was the focus of the coronial investigation and will be discussed in some detail below. Suffice for present purposes to say that in the early hours of Sunday 7 January 2024, three males, one of whom included Mr Romano, forced entry through the front bedroom window of 7 Middlemount Street, Donnybrook (**the house**).
6. The residents of the house, Tayla Grannan (**Ms Grannan**) and Darcy Curran (**Mr Curran**), were home at the time. A physical altercation ensued between Mr Curran and at least one of the three males. A firearm was produced, which Mr Curran obtained from one of the home invaders during the altercation. He subsequently discharged several shots from the firearm, striking two of the males.
7. One of those males, Mr Romano, subsequently collapsed and died outside in front of the house. The two other males fled the scene, one of whom was later dropped off at the Northern Hospital with life-threatening injuries. Ms Grannan also sustained injuries and was treated in hospital.
8. Victoria Police subsequently charged Mr Curran with murder in relation to the incident. However, the prosecution against Mr Curran did not progress due to the opinion of prosecutors that there were no reasonable prospects of a conviction.

INVESTIGATION AND SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

9. This finding draws on the totality of the coronial investigation into the death of Mr Romano including evidence contained in the coronial file comprising statements, audio and video exhibits, and the inspection report and toxicology report from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM).
10. All of this material, together with the inquest transcript, will remain on the coronial file.¹ In writing this finding, I do not purport to summarise all the material and evidence but will only refer to it in such detail as is warranted by its forensic significance and the interests of narrative clarity.

PURPOSE OF A CORONIAL INVESTIGATION

11. The purpose of a coronial investigation of a ‘reportable death’² is to ascertain, if possible, the identity of the deceased person, the cause of death and the circumstances in which death occurred.³ Mr Romano death clearly falls within the definition of reportable death, specifically section 4(2)(a) of the Act which includes (relevantly) a death that appears to have been unexpected, unnatural or violent or to have resulted, directly or indirectly, from an accident or injury.
12. The cause of death refers to the medical cause of death, incorporating where possible the mode or mechanism of death. For coronial purposes, the circumstances in which death occurred refers to the context or background and surrounding circumstances but is confined to those circumstances sufficiently proximate and causally relevant to the death, and not all those circumstances which might form part of a narrative culminating in death.⁴

¹ Access to documents held by the Coroners Court of Victoria is governed by section 115 of the *Coroners Act 2008* (**the Act**). Unless otherwise stipulated, all references to legislation that follow are to provisions of the Act.

² The term is exhaustively defined in section 4 of the Act. Apart from a jurisdictional nexus with the State of Victoria a reportable death includes deaths that appear to have been unexpected, unnatural or violent or to have resulted, directly or indirectly, from an accident or injury; and, deaths that occur during or following a medical procedure where the death is or may be causally related to the medical procedure and a registered medical practitioner would not, immediately before the procedure, have reasonably expected the death (section 4(2)(a) and (b) of the Act). Some deaths fall within the definition irrespective of the section 4(2)(a) characterisation of the ‘type of death’ and turn solely on the status of the deceased immediately before they died – section 4(2)(c) to (f) inclusive.

³ Section 67(1) of the Act.

⁴ This is the effect of the authorities – see for example *Harmsworth v The State Coroner* [1989] VR 989; *Clancy v West* (Unreported 17 August 1994, Supreme Court of Victoria, Harper J.)

13. The broader purpose of any coronial investigations is to contribute to the reduction of the number of preventable deaths through the findings of the investigation and the making of recommendations by coroners, generally referred to as the prevention role.⁵
14. Coroners are empowered to report to the Attorney-General in relation to a death; to comment on any matter connected with the death they have investigated, including matters of public health or safety and the administration of justice; and to make recommendations to any Minister or public statutory authority on any matter connected with the death, including public health or safety or the administration of justice.⁶ These are effectively the vehicles by which the coroner's prevention role can be advanced.⁷
15. Coroners are not empowered to determine the civil or criminal liability arising from the investigation of a reportable death and are specifically prohibited from including in a finding or comment any statement that a person is, or may be, guilty of an offence.⁸

IDENTITY OF THE DECEASED

16. On 10 January 2024, Joseph Michael Romano, born in 2004, was visually identified by his father, who signed a formal Statement of Identification to this effect.
17. Identity is not in dispute and requires no further investigation.

MEDICAL CAUSE OF DEATH

18. Forensic Pathologist, Dr Joanna Glengarry (**Dr Glengarry**), from the VIFM, conducted an examination on 7 January 2024 and provided a written report of her findings dated 16 February 2024.
19. The post-mortem examination revealed a pathological distant range gunshot entrance wound of the left upper chest, associated with a wound track that was directed from front to back, slightly towards the midline and steeply downwards, ending with a projectile in the subcutaneous tissues of the left back. This was associated with lethal injuries to the heart

⁵ The 'prevention' role is now explicitly articulated in the Preamble and purposes of the Act, compared with the *Coroners Act 1985* where this role was generally accepted as 'implicit'.

⁶ See sections 72(1), 67(3) and 72(2) regarding reports, comments, and recommendations respectively.

⁷ See also sections 73(1) and 72(5) which requires publication of coronial findings, comments and recommendations and responses respectively; section 72(3) and (4) which oblige the recipient of a coronial recommendation to respond within three months, specifying a statement of action which has or will be taken in relation to the recommendation.

⁸ Section 69(1). However, a coroner may include a statement relating to a notification to the Director of Public Prosecutions if they believe an indictable offence may have been committed in connection with the death. See sections 69 (2) and 49(1).

(perforating gunshot wound) and left lung (multiple in-and-out perforating injuries of the left lung upper and lower lobes), associated with a large volume of blood loss into the chest and abdomen (1650 mL in the left chest cavity, 350 mL in the abdomen). The wound track was also associated with injury to the left upper abdominal structures, including the diaphragm and the spleen.

20. Dr Glengarry noted that whilst the gunshot wound was lethal, it is possible that purposeful movements could be performed for some time after the wound was inflicted. She also noted abrasions of the right cheek, chin, and right knee.
21. There was no significant natural disease detected by the autopsy examination.
22. Routine toxicological analysis of post-mortem samples detected cocaine⁹ and its metabolites, pregabalin,¹⁰ and cannabis.¹¹
23. Dr Glengarry provided an opinion that the medical cause of death was “*1(a) Gunshot wound of the chest*”.
24. I accept Dr Glengarry’s opinion.

FOCUS OF THE CORONIAL INVESTIGATION

25. Section 52(2)(a) requires me to hold an inquest into a death if the death or cause of death occurred in Victoria and the coroner suspects the death was the result of homicide.
26. Homicide is a broad term referring to the killing of one person by another and captures deaths resulting from dangerous or negligent acts, including acts of self-defence, as well as what is more commonly referred to in public discourse as homicide in the sense of the crimes of manslaughter and murder.
27. The main focus of the coronial investigation and inquest into Mr Romano’s death was on the circumstances in which he sustained the gunshot wound to which he ultimately succumbed. Specifically, on the sequence of events leading to the home invasion and the altercation,

⁹ Cocaine is an indirectly acting sympathomimetic and is abused for its stimulant properties. Adverse effects of cocaine include agitation, anxiety, confusion, diaphoresis, hypertension, hyperexcitability, irritability, mydriasis and tachycardia. Cocaine has direct cardiotoxicity and cocaethylene may potentiate these cardiotoxic effects. Moreover, cocaine use has been associated with both ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke.

¹⁰ Pregabalin is clinically used for treatment of partial seizures and neuropathic pain.

¹¹ Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the active form of cannabis (marijuana). Persons under the influence of cannabis will experience impaired cognition (reasoning and thought), poor vigilance, and impaired reaction times and coordination.

including the source of the firearm. The only witness called to give evidence was Detective Senior Constable Daniel Fallone (**DSC Fallone**), Coroner's Investigator, who took over the coronial investigation in October 2025 following Detective Senior Constable Daniel Magee's preparation of the coronial brief and provided a detailed summary of the investigation and his opinion as to the significance of aspects of the investigation.

Residents of the house

28. According to Victoria Police, Mr Curran had an extensive criminal history dating back to 2011. Main charges included armed robbery, drugs, and driving offences.
29. Victoria Police intelligence also suggested that he had strong links within Melbourne's Outlaw Motorcycle Gang networks, particularly the Mongols and Comancheros as well as Middle Eastern Organised Crime groups, although no direct affiliations were known.
30. Ms Grannan was heavily pregnant with her first child at the time of the incident.

The assailants

31. In addition to Mr Romano, three other males were involved in the home invasion.
32. Hakan Eser (**Mr Eser**) was 24 years old at the time of the incident. He had multiple previous convictions including armed robbery, aggravated burglary, carjacking, and intentionally causing serious injury. He was known to Victoria Police as a person who was involved in Middle Eastern Organised Crime networks.
33. Mr Eser was shot during the home invasion and later presented to the Northern Hospital before being transferred to the Royal Melbourne Hospital for surgery. He was charged and later pleaded guilty to a charge of aggravated burglary. Mr Eser was sentenced to three years and six months imprisonment.¹²
34. Mr YA¹³ was 20 years old at the time of the incident and has a forensic history including charges of drug possession, theft, and intentionally causing injury. He was also believed to be involved in an organised crime syndicate. While he was not charged in relation to the home invasion, Victoria Police investigators believe he was at the scene and was the driver of the Toyota Kluger (**the Toyota Kluger**) which dropped Mr Eser at the Northern Hospital.

¹² Combined with other convictions, the combined sentence was six years imprisonment, with four years of a non-parole period: Transcript (T) 52.

¹³ Mr YA has been anonymised as he has not been charged in relation to the incident.

35. Ali Saleh (**Mr Saleh**) was 23 years old at the time of the incident. He was in a relationship with Mr Curran's sister at the time and she also resided at the house but was not there at the time of the incident. Having been to the house previously, he was aware of its layout. Like the others, Mr Saleh had multiple previous convictions including for armed robbery, aggravated burglary, reckless conduct endangering serious injury, and drug possession. He too was believed by Victoria Police to be connected to Middle Eastern Organised Crime networks.
36. Arising from the home invasion incident, Mr Saleh was charged with aggravated burglary, possess drug of dependence, handle stolen goods, and drive while disqualified. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment with a non-parole period of two years.

The home invasion

37. At 4.18am on 7 January 2024, three males forced entry into the house through the front bedroom window. The three men were: Mr Romano, Mr Eser, with the third suspected to be Mr YA. The trio were armed with axes, dressed in black, and wearing masks and hoods.
38. Ms Grannan was alone in the bedroom at the time and when she heard the window smashing, she got out of bed and crouched in the corner of the room against the wall at the foot of the bed. Upon entering, one of the male offenders struck her with an axe to her lower left leg, which caused an injury. She stated:¹⁴

I remember that I could see that they were all dressed in black as they came through the window. I'm sure but I think that they ripped the blinds down and I know that they would have had to climb over the bed head to get into the bedroom.

All I remember is that there was at least 3 persons dressed in black with masks and hoods and I could see that they had weapons. I don't remember what type of weapons they all had, and even though the lights in the bedroom were off, I could see from the outside streetlights that they all had weapons. I remember getting hit on the left leg just below my knee with something, but I was screaming to them as they came in that I was pregnant.

¹⁴ Coronial Brief (CB) 161.

I had, I think at least two standing over me and one of them touched my shoulder and held me and said shoosh we're not going to hurt you. I remember that there was another one in the room, but I can't remember if he was standing over me as well. ...

39. Mr Curran was sleeping in the rear yard at the time. When he heard the glass breaking, he immediately entered via the rear door and made his down the hallway to the front of the house. When he got to the master bedroom, Mr Curran engaged in a physical altercation with the offender closest to the bedroom door at which time a firearm was produced. Mr Curran overpowered the offender, gained control of the firearm and discharged several shots, striking two of the males. Later investigation indicates they were Mr Romano and Mr Eser.

40. In a subsequent scene recreation at the request of Victoria Police, Mr Curran stated:¹⁵

This person that was closest to me was the one with the – with the first gun I could see...

So he's flung around. I've sort of grabbed the gun. ...

... I could see them sort of on top of her [Ms Grannan], and then I've just - yeah, just let off shots. I've just stepped back and let off shots.

41. And later:¹⁶

And then as I've come in, he sort of turned around and, like, in the same motion, he's turned into me, you know ...

... and I've been able to - to sort of grab the gun ... step back.

As soon as I got a step back ... and they were coming towards this way.

42. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage from a nearby residence captured the sound of five gunshots. Police later found five fired casings – two in the master bedroom, one outside the master bedroom, and two in the hallway.

43. In evidence at inquest, DSC Fallon confirmed that according to Mr Curran, the firearm was “ready to go”, that is he was able to discharge the firearm immediately and did not need to “rack the slide forward to bring a projectile into the chamber”. In response to my question,

¹⁵ CB 283-284.

¹⁶ CB 288.

DSC Fallone confirmed this meant the person originally holding the firearm was also ready to discharge it.¹⁷

44. In terms of the position of the assailants when the shots were fired, in his statement Mr Curran referred to discharging shots at the two offenders assaulting his partner.¹⁸ And, in interview with police, Mr Curran denied the assailants were in the hallway when he fired – he confirmed they were in the bedroom but were approaching him and he stepped back.¹⁹ In addition, and in response to a question about whether Mr Romano was shot in the bedroom or whilst running away, DSC Fallone highlighted that Mr Romano had been shot in the chest, not the back, which suggested Mr Romano was facing Mr Curran at the time of impact and this was inconsistent with him being impacted whilst he was running away from the scene.²⁰
45. Following the gunshots, the three males retreated from the house but Mr Romano collapsed and died on the front nature strip, whilst the two other assailants fled.
46. Mr Curran fled over the rear fence, later returning to the front of the house and Ms Grannan.
47. Ms Grannan subsequently contacted emergency services and ran out to Mr Romano, who was unresponsive on the ground, and shook him. She then returned to the house, fearful that the intruders would return to collect their colleague.
48. Victoria Police members arrived at the scene at 4.35am, finding Mr Romano on the ground wearing black clothing, gloves, and a mask however his face was exposed showing his mouth, nose, and eyes. There appeared to be no signs of life but police members administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation (**CPR**) until Ambulance Victoria paramedics arrived at 4.50am. Paramedics could not revive Mr Romano who was verified deceased at 5.01am.
49. Victoria Police members conducted a search of the house, finding three axes – one in the bedroom and two on the front lawn.
50. Mr Curran and Ms Grannan left the scene before police arrived at the house. As they drove to another location, Mr Curran showed Ms Grannan the firearm wrapped in a cloth (his t-shirt) and asked her what he should do with it. She asked where it had come from, to which Mr Curran replied, “*it’s theirs*”.²¹ They stopped the vehicle and Ms Grannan took the firearm

¹⁷ T 39.

¹⁸ T 38.

¹⁹ CB, Exhibit 62, page 41.

²⁰ T 43.

²¹ CB 164.

and threw it over a nearby fence. She later explained, *“I know it was wrong of me to have taken the gun off Darcy and thrown it away. I shouldn’t have done this, but I was just panicking and stressed about what had just happened to us”*.²²

51. At 4.23am, a grey Toyota Kluger dropped Mr Eser off at the Northern Hospital. He was assessed as having sustained two gunshot wounds – one to the buttocks and one to his back – and was subsequently transferred to the Royal Melbourne Hospital for further treatment.
52. At 4.50am, Ms Grannan and Mr Curran presented to the Northern Hospital due to a six-centimetre laceration to Ms Grannan’s leg.
53. Later that morning, police attended the Northern Hospital and arrested Mr Curran in relation to the incident. Ms Grannan advised police of the location of the firearm, which was later found at the location she disclosed to police, being a reserve in Doreen.
54. Mr Romano’s vehicle, a Holden Colorado Utility (**the Holden Colorado**), was found engulfed in flames in Beveridge at about 8.37am later that morning. Police subsequently found and seized a mobile phone found in the vehicle.
55. The Toyota Kluger was also set on fire later that morning at about 10.30am in Broadmeadows. Police later conducted a forensic examination of the vehicle, including taking DNA swabs.
56. Police believe that the motivation for the home invasion was Mr Saleh’s concern that Mr Curran would divulge his (that is Mr Saleh’s) involvement in the arson of a restaurant linked to a serious organised crime entity. However, this is merely a hypothesis developed by investigators and cannot be confirmed by evidence. In an interview with police, Mr Curran noted that Mr Saleh had told him about the arson and this led Mr Curran to Mr Saleh that he was no longer welcome in his house.²³ Following this conversation, Mr Saleh had accused Mr Curran of divulging this information to others.²⁴

Forensic examination

57. At the house, police conducted an analysis and examination of the crime scene including videoing, photographs, and seizing relevant exhibits. A black beanie with hair was found at

²² CB 165.

²³ CB Exhibit 62, page 29-30.

²⁴ CB Exhibit 62, page 32-33.

the scene, along with several fired cartridge cases, and a fired bullet. Several blood swabs were also collected from the scene.

58. A ballistic examination on the fired bullet retrieved from Mr Romano's chest, the fired bullet retrieved from Mr Eser, and the fired bullet located in the ensuite at the house were examined and confirmed to have all been fired from the same firearm.²⁵ Police also analysed all collected fired cartridges from the crime scene as well as a fired cartridge from the seized firearm obtained during the forensic examination. They concluded that all were fired from the same firearm.
59. Biological analysis conducted on the handle of the red and black axe situated on the front lawn at the house confirmed Mr Romano's DNA to be present on the handle.
60. Biological analysis of the grip and trigger of the seized firearm confirmed Mr Curran's DNA to be present. DSC Fallon confirmed that Mr Curran's DNA was only found on the trigger, not the magazine, which suggested that he only handled the firearm to shoot it. It was also noted that the three offenders wore gloves during the home invasion. There was no evidence at the scene, such as ammunition matching the firearm, to indicate the firearm belonged to Mr Curran.²⁶

Analysis of Mr Romano's mobile phone

61. Police analysed the phone found in Mr Romano's burnt-out Holden Colorado, which uncovered messages sent through an encrypted instant messaging application (Signal). In summary, a group chat using pseudonyms for Mr Eser, Mr YA, Mr Saleh, Mr Romano, and one other person was used to make plans for the home invasion. This included buying clothes, gloves, axes, and a fuel can. Another chat between Mr Romano and an unknown person indicated Mr Romano would be provided with a firearm; he later confirmed possession of same.
62. Analysis of Mr Romano's mobile phone also indicated the following information collected by the Google Maps application:
 - (a) at approximately 8.30pm on 6 January 2024, Mr Romano's phone was in the vicinity of Mr Eser's home address;

²⁵ According to oral evidence from DSC Fallon, the two remaining bullets penetrated the structural timber frame of the house and could not be removed: T 42.

²⁶ T 34-35.

- (b) at approximately 11.59pm, Mr Romano's phone was in vicinity of Mr YA's home address and remained at this location until 12.55am on 7 January 2024;
- (c) between 2.37am and 4.33am, the mobile phone remained in Epping in the vicinity of Knoll Walk. Police believe Mr Romano left the phone in his Holden Colorado at this location;
- (d) at 4.40am, immediately after the home invasion, Mr Romano's phone was within the vicinity of Mr YA's home address;
- (e) between 5.19am and 6.33am the phone travelled to Beveridge; and
- (f) at 6:33am, Mr Romano's Holden Colorado arrived in Beveridge where it was set on fire with his phone inside.

63. Some of the above movements were confirmed by independent CCTV footage.

64. Further analysis of Mr Romano's mobile phone found numerous other 'chats' within the Signal application relating to criminal activity, which I do not need to refer to here other than noting a chat about collection of the Toyota Kluger, which was a stolen vehicle used in the home invasion.

Police surveillance

65. At the time of the incident, police were conducting surveillance on another person and coincidentally captured a conversation between Mr YA and Mr Saleh in the hours immediately after the home invasion the content of which suggests Mr YA was at the scene and was one of the three males who conducted the home invasion.

STANDARD OF PROOF

66. The standard of proof for coronial findings of fact is the civil standard of proof on the balance of probabilities, having regard to the 'Briginshaw sliding scale'.²⁷ When finding facts, a coroner has to reach a comfortable or reasonable satisfaction having regard to all of the available evidence relevant to the questions in issue in the investigation.²⁸ When considering whether that level of satisfaction has been achieved, regard must be had to the seriousness of

²⁷ *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336.

²⁸ *Anderson v Blashki* [1993]2 VR 89 at 96; *Secretary to the Department of Health and Community Services v Gurvich* [1995] 2 VR 69 at 73.

the allegation; the inherent likelihood or unlikelihood of an occurrence of fact, and; the gravity of the consequences flowing from a particular finding.²⁹

67. This is particularly so with regard to adverse comments or findings about an individual in their professional capacity which should only be made when a coroner has reached a state of comfortable or reasonable satisfaction based on the evidence that they departed materially from the standards of their profession and, in so doing, caused or contributed to the death.³⁰
68. It is axiomatic that the materiality of any departure from applicable standards must be assessed without the benefit of hindsight, only on the basis of what was known or should reasonably have been known at the time, and not from the privileged position of hindsight. Patterns or trajectories that may become apparent subsequently or may even be obvious once the tragic outcome is known, are to be eschewed in favour of a fair assessment made from the perspective of the individual at the material time

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

69. The applicable standard of proof for coronial findings is the civil standard of proof on the balance of probabilities, with the *Briginshaw* gloss or explications.³¹
70. Adverse findings or comments against individuals or institutions are not to be made with the benefit of hindsight but only on the basis of what was known or should reasonably have been known or done at the time, and only where the evidence supports a finding that they departed materially from the standards of their profession and in so doing caused or contributed to the death under investigation.
71. Having applied the applicable standard of proof to the available evidence, I find that:
- (a) the identity of the deceased was Joseph Michael Romano, born in 2004;
 - (b) the death occurred on 7 January 2024 at 7 Middlemount Road, Donnybrook, Victoria;
 - (c) the medical cause of Mr Romano's death was gunshot wound to the chest; and

²⁹ *Briginshaw v Briginshaw*, op cit, at 362.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336 especially at 362-363. “*The seriousness of an allegation made, the inherent unlikelihood of an occurrence of a given description, or the gravity of the consequences flowing from a particular finding, are considerations which must affect the answer to the question whether the issues had been proved to the reasonable satisfaction of the tribunal. In such matters “reasonable satisfaction” should not be produced by inexact proofs, indefinite testimony, or indirect inferences...*”.

- (d) the death occurred in the circumstances described above;

72. Further, the available evidence supports the following findings:

- (a) At about 4.18am on 7 January 2024, three males, including Mr Romano, forcibly entered the house through the window of the master bedroom armed with three axes and a firearm.
- (b) The offenders made deliberate efforts to conceal their identities by using face coverings, gloves, and a stolen vehicle.
- (c) Ms Grannan who was some eight months pregnant was alone in the master bedroom. Mr Curran happened to be elsewhere on the property.
- (d) On entering the master bedroom, the intruders assaulted Ms Grannan, striking her leg with an axe and inflicting a six-centimetre laceration.
- (e) Hearing the noise of a window breaking, Mr Curran made his way to the master bedroom where he wrestled control of a firearm from one of the offenders and discharged five rounds toward the two offenders who were assaulting Ms Grannan.
- (f) Mr Romano sustained a fatal gunshot wound to the chest. Mr Eser sustained two gunshot wounds to the buttocks and back and survived.
- (g) Ballistics analysis confirmed that all discharged ammunition recovered from the scene and from the bodies of Mr Romano and Mr Eser was fired from the same firearm and that firearm was found by police at a location disclosed by Ms Grannan.
- (h) Mr Romano's vehicle was burned after the incident. While his mobile phone was found inside the vehicle it was able to be interrogated and its contents informed the subsequent police and coronial investigations.
- (i) While I am unable to determine the precise motivation for the home invasion/aggravated burglary during which Mr Romano sustained fatal injuries, the hypothesis advanced by Victoria Police seems plausible and shows a connection with organised crime activity.
- (j) The home invasion/aggravated burglary was extensively and meticulously planned, including utilisation of an encrypted messaging application.

(k) I am unable to determine the specific intent of Mr Romano or the other intruders and what they stood to gain, however, it is clear they posed a risk of serious injury or death to Ms Grannan and her unborn child, and that they arrived armed with axes and a firearm and a preparedness to harm Ms Grannan and Mr Curran.

73. The evidence indicates that unlike the other intruders Mr Romano had no significant criminal history record and was relatively inexperienced compared with them. However, the evidence obtained from his mobile phone confirms he was a willing participant in the home invasion and had been involved in its planning.

74. While Mr Romano chose to be involved in the home invasion, and his own actions ultimately contributed to his death, he was nevertheless a relatively young man with a life to live, and his death weighs no less on his family. I therefore convey my sincere condolences to Mr Romano's family and friends for their loss.

75. I wish to convey my thanks to Leading Senior Constable Dragos Panoschi from the Coronial Support Unit of Victoria Police for his assistance in the preparation for this inquest and at inquest, and to Detective Senior Constable Fallone for seeing the matter through to its conclusion.

PUBLICATION OF FINDING

76. Pursuant to section 73(1) of the Act, I order that this finding be published on the Coroners Court of Victoria website in accordance with the rules.

DISTRIBUTION OF FINDING

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

Senior Next of Kin

Leading Senior Constable Dragos Panoschi

Detective Senior Constable Dainel Magee, Victoria Police, Coroner's Investigator

Detective Senior Constable Daniel Fallone, Victoria Police, Coroner's Investigator

Signature:



Deputy State Coroner Paresa Antoniadis Spanos

Date: 04 May 2026

NOTE: Under section 83 of the *Coroners Act 2008* ('the Act'), a person with sufficient interest in an investigation may appeal to the Trial Division of the Supreme Court against the findings of a coroner in respect of a death after an inquest. An appeal must be made within 6 months after the day on which the determination is made, unless the Supreme Court grants leave to appeal out of time under section 86 of the Act.
