IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

COR 2026 003991

FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT INQUEST

Form 38 Rule 63(2)

*Section 67 of the **Coroners Act 2008***

Findings of:	Coroner Leveasque Peterson
Deceased:	Gary James Edwards
Date of birth:	2 March 1963
Date of death:	14 July 2026
Cause of death:	1a : Pneumonia 1b : Cerebral palsy
Place of death:	75 Debonair Parade Craigieburn Victoria 3064
Keywords:	Specialist Disability Accommodation resident, supported independent living, disability support, reportable deaths, natural causes

INTRODUCTION

1. On 14 July 2026, Gary James Edwards was 63 years old when he died at his disability support facility in Craigieburn.

2. Gary had several diagnoses including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, an intellectual disability and a hearing impairment. He was supported by his parents, Alan and Marie, until their advanced age prevented them from being able to do so and he transitioned into a Support Disability Accommodation (**SDA**) dwelling enrolled under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (**NDIS**). He received funded daily independent living support due to his advanced needs which was provided by Scope.

3. Gary spent time with his family on the weekends; he was very close with his dad. He loved sports and enjoyed watching the cricket or AFL. He also enjoyed going to the movies, the theatre, bowling and swimming in his brother's pool.

THE CORONIAL INVESTIGATION

4. Gary's death fell within the definition of a reportable death in the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic) (**the Act**) as he was a *'person placed in custody or care'* within the meaning of the Act, as a person with disability who received funded daily independent living support and resided in an SDA enrolled dwelling immediately prior to his death.[1] This category of death is reportable to ensure independent scrutiny of the circumstances leading to death given the vulnerability of this cohort and the level of power and control exercised by those who care for them. The coroner is required to investigate the death, and publish their findings, even if the death has occurred as a result of natural causes.

5. This finding draws on the totality of the coronial investigation into the death of Gary James Edwards. Whilst I have reviewed all the material, I will only refer to that which is directly relevant to my findings or necessary for narrative clarity. In the coronial jurisdiction, facts must be established on the balance of probabilities.[2]

[1] This class of person is prescribed as a 'person placed in custody or care' under the *Coroners Regulations 2019* (Vic), r 7(1)(d).

[2] Subject to the principles enunciated in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336. The effect of this and similar authorities is that coroners should not make adverse findings against, or comments about, individuals unless the evidence provides a comfortable level of satisfaction as to those matters taking into account the consequences of such findings or comments.

MATTERS IN RELATION TO WHICH A FINDING MUST, IF POSSIBLE, BE MADE

Circumstances in which the death occurred

6. During the evening of 13 July 2026, at around 8:50pm, Gary went to bed. The nightshift carer checked on Gary at around 2am and could hear him breathing. At 6am, a different carer checked on Gary and believed that he was sleeping.

7. At around 7am, that same carer entered Gary's bedroom to wake him, but he was unresponsive. They contacted emergency services. Victoria Police officers and Ambulance Victoria paramedics arrived, and Gary was declared deceased at 7:12am.

8. Victoria Police spoke with Gary's general medical practitioner who explained that Gary had a complex medical history and had been experiencing declining health leading to his death.

Identity of the deceased

9. On 14 July 2026, Gary James Edwards, born 2 March 1963, was visually identified by his carer, Chinenye Ezenwke.

10. Identity is not in dispute and requires no further investigation.

Medical cause of death

11. Forensic Pathologist Dr Paul Bedford of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (**VIFM**) conducted an examination on 16 July 2026 and provided a written report of his findings dated 20 July 2026.

12. The post-mortem examination computed tomography (**CT**) scan showed lung changes consistent with pneumonia. Dr Bedford noted that cerebral palsy can predispose individuals to the development of lung infections.

13. Dr Bedford provided an opinion that the medical cause of death was 1(a) *Pneumonia* secondary to 1(b) *Cerebral palsy.*

14. Dr Bedford provided an opinion that the cause of death was due to natural causes.

15. I accept Dr Bedford's opinion.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

16. Pursuant to section 67(1) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic) I make the following findings:

    a) the identity of the deceased was Gary James Edwards, born 2 March 1963;

    b) the death occurred on 14 July 2026 at 75 Debonair Parade Craigieburn Victoria 3064 from 1(a) *Pneumonia* secondary to 1(b) *Cerebral palsy*; and

    c) the death occurred in the circumstances described above.

17. Having considered all the available evidence, I find that Gary's death was from natural causes and that no further investigation is required. As such, I have exercised my discretion under section 52(3A) of the Act not to hold an inquest into his death and to finalise the investigation of Gary's death in chambers.

I convey my sincere condolences to Gary's family, friends and carers for their loss.

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

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

Ms Marie Edwards, Senior Next of Kin

Scope Australia

First Constable Nikoletta Talos, Coronial Investigator

Signature:





Coroner Leveasque Peterson

Date: 05 November 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 investigation. 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.