



IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

COR 2019 001516

FINDING INTO DEATH FOLLOWING INQUEST

Form 37 Rule 63(1)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Inquest into the Death of Cameron Douglas Boyes

Delivered On:	4 January 2023
Delivered At:	Melbourne
Hearing Dates:	1 September 2022
Findings of:	Coroner Leveasque Peterson
Police Coronial Support Unit:	Leading Senior Constable Lee Thomson
Keyword/s:	High speed vehicle impact

I, Coroner Leveasque Peterson, having investigated the death of Cameron Douglas Boyes, and having held an inquest in relation to this death on 1 September 2022 at Melbourne find that:

- a) the identity of the deceased was Cameron Douglas Boyes, born 2 May 1975; and
- b) the death occurred on 25 March 2019 at Hazelwood North, from multiple injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident (driver).

Further, I find under section 67(1) (c) of the *Coroners Act 2008* ('the Act') that the death occurred in the following circumstances.

THE CORONIAL INVESTIGATION

1. Cameron's death constituted a 'reportable death' under the Coroners Act 2008 (Vic) (the Act), as Cameron resided in Victoria and his death arose from an accident or injury.
2. In the circumstances, I considered it appropriate to hold a summary inquest which occurred on 1 September 2022.
3. At the hearing, a summary of the evidence was provided to the Court by Leading Senior Constable Lee Thomson, of the Police Coronial Support Unit.
4. The individual witnesses who provided statements in the brief were not required to give evidence at the inquest as, after carefully considering all of the material in the brief, I was satisfied that there were no factual disputes or controversies which remained unresolved.
5. Relevant parties were however, given an opportunity to make submissions in relation to the evidence.
6. The jurisdiction of the Coroners Court of Victoria is inquisitorial.
7. The role of the Coroner is to independently investigate reportable deaths to ascertain, if possible, the identity of the deceased person, the cause of death and the circumstances in which death occurred.

8. Surrounding circumstances are limited to events which are sufficiently proximate and causally related to the death.
9. It is not the role of the Coroner to lay or apportion blame, but to establish the facts.
10. It is not the Coroner's role to determine criminal or civil liability arising from the death under investigation, or to determine disciplinary matters.
11. The expression "cause of death" refers to the medical cause of death, incorporating where possible, the mode or mechanism of death.
12. For coronial purposes, the phrase "circumstances in which death occurred," refers to the context or background and surrounding circumstances of the death. Rather than being a consideration of all circumstances which might form part of a narrative culminating in the death, it is confined to those circumstances which are sufficiently proximate and causally relevant to the death.
13. The broader purpose of coronial investigations is to contribute to a reduction in the number of preventable deaths, both through the observations made in the investigation findings, and by the making of recommendations by coroners. This is generally referred to as the Court's "prevention" mandate.
14. Coroners are also empowered to:
 - a. report to the Attorney-General on a death;
 - b. comment on any matter connected with the death they have investigated, including matters of public health or safety and the administration of justice; and
 - c. 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.
15. These powers are the vehicles by which the prevention role may be advanced.

16. This Finding draws on the totality of the material obtained in the coronial investigation, that is, the Court File, the Coronial Brief prepared by the Coroner's Investigator and further material obtained by the Court, together with a transcript of the Inquest hearing.
17. All coronial findings must be made based on proof of relevant facts on the balance of probabilities.
18. The strength of evidence necessary to prove relevant facts varies according to the nature of the facts and the circumstances in which they are sought to be proved.
19. In determining these matters, I am guided by the principles enunciated in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw*.
20. The effect of this and similar authorities is that coroners should not make adverse findings against, or comments about, individuals or entities, unless the evidence provides a comfortable level of satisfaction that they caused or contributed to the death.
21. Proof of facts underpinning a finding that would, or may, have an extremely deleterious effect on a party's character, reputation or employment prospects demands a weight of evidence commensurate with the gravity of the facts sought to be proved.
22. Facts should not be considered to have been proven on the balance of probabilities by inexact proofs, indefinite testimony or indirect inferences. Rather, such proof should be the result of clear, cogent or strict proof in the context of a presumption of innocence.

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

Identity

23. On 27 March 2019 Cameron Boyes, born 2 May 1975, was identified by fingerprint analysis. Identity is not in dispute and required no further investigation.

Medical Cause of Death

24. Forensic Pathology Fellow Dr Matthew Lynch from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) conducted an examination on 28 March 2019 and provided a written report of his findings dated 23 April 2019.
25. Dr Lynch reviewed a post-mortem computed tomography (CT) scan, which revealed multiple injuries sufficient to cause death.
26. Toxicological analysis of post-mortem samples did not identify the presence of any drugs or alcohol.
27. Dr Lynch provided an opinion that the cause of Cameron's death was 1(a) *Multiple injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident (driver)*.
28. I accept Dr Lynch's opinion.

Circumstances of death

Background

29. Cameron was the youngest child of Douglas and Irene Boyes. He was described by Irene as a sporty, energetic, and popular child.
30. As a teenager Cameron started to use cannabis and other drugs, which affected his behaviour.
31. Cameron left school in year 11 and started a plumbing apprenticeship. He was a very reliable employee, who spent time in both Western Australia and New South Wales before returning to Victoria in 2016 after his father was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Douglas died in March 2017 and his death devastated Cameron.
32. Cameron was the father of three children, from two previous relationships. During the course of these relationships, Cameron was party to numerous Family Violence Orders. The evidence also suggests that Cameron had a difficult relationship with his children and had limited contact, particularly in later years of his life.

33. Shortly after returning to Victoria in 2016 Cameron reconnected with Angela, who he had known since they were teenagers. Their relationship progressed quickly, with Cameron moving in with Angela and becoming engaged in 2017.
34. Angela described their relationship as “pretty good” but stated that when Cameron drank too much his behaviour was problematic. Angela noted that Cameron was never physically violent toward her, however he would sometimes lash out at their dog in anger and frustration.
35. Angela told Cameron early in their relationship that taking drugs would be a “dealbreaker” for them, and she maintained that throughout their relationship Cameron did not take drugs.
36. Cameron and Angela were due to be married on 31 March 2019. In the lead up to Cameron’s bucks party, he had mentioned to Angela that he may take drugs. Angela reiterated to Cameron that any drug use would result in the end of their relationship.
37. The bucks party occurred on 9 March 2019. After the party Angela suspected that Cameron had used drugs. She confronted Cameron and he admitted he had taken pills during the party. In the week following, Angela said she had talked to Cameron about cancelling the wedding, and Cameron had reacted to this with an apparent calm and there were no fights or arguments that ensued following the discussion. This issue placed a strain on the relationship and caused Angela to have second thoughts about going through with the marriage.
38. Angela began to confide in a male friend about her doubts. Soon after taking her friend into her confidence, a bond developed, and Angela began a secret relationship with him.
39. Angela’s hen's party was held on Saturday 16 March 2019 at her home.
40. In the hours before the event Angela told a girlfriend that she was having doubts over marrying Cameron because of his drug taking and assaults on their dog. During the party Angela had also been messaging her male friend and after a few exchanges she asked him to come and see her.

41. At approximately 10:00 pm Angela left her party and met up with the male friend. The pair drove around Morwell talking, then stopped the vehicle at the nearby Morwell East Football Oval.
42. At the party Angela's friends had noticed her disappearance and became concerned. Friends contacted Cameron and he drove to Angela's house to see if he could find her.
43. Police were also contacted and attended to look for Angela.
44. As Angela had left her Apple Watch at her home, the device was used to track her phone via the "Find My Phone" App. The app indicated that her phone was in the vicinity of the Morwell East Football Oval.
45. A group of Angela's friends drove to the football oval where they located a dark coloured SUV. This vehicle left the football oval immediately, evading Angela's friends, causing them to believe Angela may have been kidnapped.
46. Angela and her male friend drove back to her house and sat in the car. Cameron saw them and approached. Cameron saw the male and became aggressive, yelling at him and hitting the vehicle with his fist. Cameron kept referring to Angela as "my girl" and demanding she get out of the car. Angela tried to calm Cameron however he refused to listen or calm down. Angela's friend then left, and two cars of Angela's friends began to follow him as they were still unsure of Angela's circumstances.
47. A passing Police Highway Patrol vehicle observed a silver Commodore following the SUV very closely. The police members intercepted the Commodore and were told by the agitated occupants from the party that they were following the car because they believed Angela had been kidnapped. Shortly after this intercept Cameron passed police in his car and pulled alongside the SUV, then intentionally colliding into the rear of the SUV with the front end of his vehicle.
48. No one was injured as the collision occurred at relatively minor speed but there was moderate damage caused to both vehicles. Police attended a short time later. Constable Schefman tried to speak to Angela, however she refused to talk about what had happened

and she would not disclose any further information to police, except to state that she was in the vehicle by choice.

49. Cameron was spoken to regarding the incident and underwent a field interview. He was cooperative with police stating that he had been searching for his fiancée, who had gone missing from her hen's party when he observed the SUV parked not far from his house. He further stated he had shone his phone light into the car and seen Angela in the backseat and then the car drove away. He stated his reason for dangerous driving was " I was concerned for my fiancée's safety and wanted to make sure she was okay".
50. After assessing the information police found no evidence of family violence and determined that the pursuing parties held genuine concerns for Angela's safety and wellbeing, so the matter was treated as a traffic collision. Cameron was released pending summons for dangerous driving.
51. Angela subsequently called off her wedding to Cameron on or around 20 March 2019. At the time she sent out a generic text message to family, friends and invited guests explaining that the wedding had been cancelled, without going into specific detail.
52. Cameron and Angela continued to reside together between 17 and 25 March 2019 but had limited contact with each other.
53. Text messages indicate that Cameron attempted to maintain communication and the relationship, but Angela refused to engage in discussion.
54. On 19 March 2019 Cameron went to his mother's home for a few days. Text messages indicate Angela responded agreeing it was a good idea for Cameron to go to his mother's place.
55. On 17 March 2019 Cameron contacted his employer Laurie Hall from HCM Constructions. Cameron was extremely upset and crying during the call, telling Mr Hall that his engagement had fallen through, and he needed some personal leave to get his life together. Consequently, Cameron took leave from 18 to 21 March 2019. Mr Hall spoke to him on 20 March 2019 and observed that he was "a lot calmer".

56. Cameron returned to work on 22 March 2019 and appeared to be in a good mood.
57. On 24 March 2019, however, Cameron called Mr Hall and advised him that he had found out that his fiancée had cheated on him. Cameron brought his annual leave forward to 25 March 2019 advising Mr Hall that he was looking for houses in Traralgon and needed time to move. During this call Cameron said he had done "silly things" in the past and that he needed to remove himself from the situation to avoid doing something he would regret.

Circumstances proximate to death

58. On 23 March 2019 at approximately 8:33 am, Cameron contacted the Latrobe Regional Hospital Mental Health Triage and spoke with Clinician Mr Edward Kamanyi. Records indicate Cameron seemed highly distressed and advised Mr Kamanyi that he had not slept or eaten properly and had been thinking of driving off a cliff. He also revealed he had a history of substance abuse and severe depression, but he had been clean and stable until his buck's party.
59. Cameron was advised to make an appointment with his General Practitioner (**GP**) to consider medication to enable him to relax. During the consultation potential risks of Cameron's presentation were discussed including the possibility of suicidality and homicidal intentions, however as Cameron was able to "think problem solving and was happy to see his GP for support" he was deemed fit to return home and seek help in the community.
60. At approximately 11:05 am on 23 March 2019 Cameron attended at the Hillcrest Medical Centre and consulted Dr Rushani Menikpura. He told the doctor that he felt sad, could not sleep or work and was having suicidal thoughts and planning to hang himself with a rope he had already obtained. He also requested a prescription of Diazepam. Dr Menikpura declined to provide Diazepam to Cameron as she did not consider it necessary.
61. Dr Menikpura tried to persuade Cameron to admit himself to the Latrobe Regional Hospital Mental Health Ward as a voluntary patient and explained the requirements for

involuntary admission. Cameron then became frustrated and uncooperative and left the medical practice before the consultation ended.

62. Dr Menikpura subsequently contacted the Mental Health Triage Team and spoke with Dr Kamanyi, however because Mental Health Services could not engage with Cameron unless he presented at the hospital, Dr Menikpura contacted Traralgon Police Station and reported her concerns to Constable Thorpe.
63. After speaking to the doctor, Constable Thorpe despatched a job to Police Communications for a welfare check to be conducted on Cameron.
64. At 11:37 am police contacted Cameron on his mobile telephone. During this call Cameron told police all he wanted was some medication to help him sleep and that he did not wish to speak to police. Cameron then terminated the call.
65. At 11:53 am police attended at Cameron's last known recorded address, which was the home of his mother. They spoke with Irene, and she called Cameron who repeated what he had told police earlier about needing sleep.
66. Irene described Cameron's address to police however she was unable to assist with a house number or description of either Cameron's or Angela's cars.
67. Police located the premises based on the description provided by Irene. At approximately 12:10 pm Senior Constable Goddard, Constable Arthur, and Sergeant Sinclair attended. Cameron refused police entry to his house and denied making a threat to harm or kill himself. He told police that he was upset and angry over his "Mrs" cheating on him and because the doctor wouldn't give him any medication. He emphasised he just wanted to be left alone.
68. After speaking with Cameron, Sergeant Sinclair considered that Cameron did not meet the criteria for apprehension under section 351 of the *Mental Health Act 2014*. Police left the property and had no further contact with Cameron prior to his death.

69. Dr Menikpura contacted the Traralgon Police Station to follow up regarding Cameron and was advised that police had spoken to him, but he could not be held under section 351 of the *Mental Health Act 2014* based on that interaction.
70. After speaking with police, Dr Menikpura completed paperwork for an Involuntary Inpatient Assessment Order under section 30 of the *Mental Health Act 2014* and faxed this order to the Traralgon Police Station. Evidence suggests the Order was never received and consequently never actioned. Inquiries concerning the respective fax lines at the Hillcrest Medical Centre and the Traralgon Police Station indicate that, at approximately 1:40 pm on 23 March 2019 the Hillcrest Medical Centre fax line contacted the Traralgon Police Station fax line, however this transmission was not recorded as received at Traralgon Police Station.
71. Between 23 and 24 March 2019 Cameron sent a series of text messages to Angela claiming that he had been involuntarily admitted to the Flynn Ward. Angela responded on 24 March 2019 when she wrote, "Sorry Cam, I wasn't sure you were telling me the truth after the 'tragic thing happening' message the other day. I came to Tams to clear my head. Your mum is going to pick you up. Are you okay?".
72. The last known text communication between Cameron and Angela was on 24 March 2019 at 12:21 pm when Cameron messaged her, "Hey". Angela did not respond to this message.
73. Cameron's movements on 24 and 25 March 2019 are largely unknown. A telephone usage report indicates the last person Cameron had contact with was at 4:28 pm on the 25 March 2019 when he received a call from his mother.
74. Angela was also unable to provide a full account of her movements on 25 March 2019, as she subsequently sustained Post Traumatic Amnesia as a result of injuries arising from the collision. Evidence confirmed the last contact Angela had with anyone prior to the incident was on 25 March 2019 at 12:20 pm.

75. On 25 March 2019, at 4:19 pm, Angela's male friend received a message from Angela's Messenger account which read "Shit Fuck Head and it's all your fault. The cat's out of the bag". Angela suspected the message was sent by Cameron.
76. Two neighbours confirmed Cameron's presence at his home on the morning of 25 March 2019, however neither noticed anyone in his car when he left the property.
77. CCTV showed Cameron in the car between 4:18 and 4:28 pm. The footage does not show the car being driven in a dangerous or erratic matter or at excessive speed. Cameron is visible driving the vehicle, however the car windows are tinted and fully wound up, and it is not possible to determine if anyone else is in the car with him.
78. At approximately 4:40 pm Cameron was driving along Clarkes Road, Hazelwood North. It is clear that Angela was in the car at the time; however it is not clear where she was positioned in the car or whether she was in the vehicle voluntarily.
79. As noted above, Angela has no memory of the events leading up to the collision. She cannot recall meeting with Cameron, and she does not know how she came to be in the car. However, whilst she had no memory of how or why she was in the vehicle, Angela told police there was "not a chance" she voluntarily left the house dressed in nothing but a dressing gown with Cameron.
80. Clarkes Road is a two lane, bitumen road tending approximately north to south comprising of one lane of traffic in each direction and divided by a single broken white line. The road runs in a generally north south direction between Hazelwood Road and the C475 Road and is 2.1 km in length. There is only one residential property along the road which is a short distance from the Hazelwood Road intersection on the western side of the road. The remainder of the road is surrounded by paddocks.
81. The speed limit along this section of Clarkes Road is 100 km per hour. Immediately opposite the Clarkes Road intersection with Sanders/Mattingley Hill Road is an embankment, lined with trees. The embankment abuts 225 Clarkes Road which is a 10-acre rural residential property.

82. At 4:41 pm Cameron had a telephone call with his mother. He said “goodbye” and asked for her to take care of his dog. Irene did not know where he was at the time, or if he was in the car, and said Cameron ended the call before she could ask him anything.
83. At approximately 4:45 pm Police Communications received a phone call from Graham Juett, a friend and neighbour of Irene. Mr Juett requested police attend Cameron’s address. Graham told the operator that Cameron may have been attacking his ex-partner and told the operator that “we were listening to it on the phone”. Mr Juett identified both Irene and Angela during the call. In a later conversation with police, Mr Juett denied that he made this statement to the police operator.
84. Cameron drove in a southerly direction on Clarkes Road between Hazelwood Road and Sanders/Mattingley Hill Roads. The subsequent investigation determined he intentionally increased his speed and deliberately drove through the T intersection at Sanders/Mattingley Hill Road and made no attempt to stop or take evasive action. He narrowly missed colliding with another vehicle being driven by Paige Frendo and her six-year-old son.
85. Cameron’s car struck the embankment with such force that the exhaust system from the vehicle dislodged and became embedded in the embankment.
86. The car continued up the embankment and become airborne, colliding with trees and vegetation at a height of approximately 2.2 metres above the ground. The car subsequently flipped onto its roof and travelled approximately 60 metres from the embankment.
87. Angela was ejected from the vehicle.
88. A review of the scene examination undertaken by the Victoria Police Collision Reconstruction and Mechanical Investigation Unit concluded that at the time of the collision the vehicle was under 100% acceleration and travelling at a speed of 217 km/h.
89. The collision was heard by Natalie Jones, who immediately attended the site of the collision, joined minutes later by Paige Frendo. Angela was found approximately 6

metres away from the vehicle, unconscious and naked, with her dressing gown almost fully dislodged.

90. Emergency Services were contacted and subsequently attended. When police and paramedics arrived, Cameron was still in the car, with his seatbelt on. He was pronounced deceased on site.
91. There was no evidence to suggest Cameron attempted to slow or stop the car or take evasive action. At the time of the impact the weather was fine, traffic was light, driver visibility was good and there were no obstructions on the road.
92. Angela was transported to The Alfred Hospital where she underwent several surgeries and spent significant time in an induced coma. Angela had no injuries consistent with wearing a seatbelt.

CONCLUSION

93. Having held an inquest into the death of Cameron, I am satisfied that Cameron Boyes drove with the intention to kill both himself and Angela.
94. Cameron was clearly struggling with a deterioration in his mental health in the context of his break-up with Angela. Although he had sufficient insight to seek help initially, Cameron failed to follow through and engage with mental health service providers in a meaningful way.
95. Despite growing concern for Cameron's mental health shown by friends, family, police and medical practitioners, Cameron's aberrant behaviour continued to escalate.
96. Dr Menikpura, police at Traralgon, and other clinicians who had contact with Cameron in the days prior to his death demonstrated significant professionalism and humanity in the way they sought to assist Cameron.

I order that this finding be published on the Internet.

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

Michael Boyes, Next of Kin

Detective Sergeant Simon Ross, Coroners Investigator

Signature:



Coroner Leveasque Peterson

Date: 30 March 2023

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.
