

IN THE CORONERS COURT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Rel No: D0263/2024

Police No: 24 110094

CORONERS FINDINGS

ROAD DEATH 54 of 2024

Section 34 of the Coroners Act 1993

I, Elisabeth Armitage, Coroner, having investigated the death of a **56 year old Caucasian male** and without holding an inquest, find that he was born on **25 January 1968** and that his **death occurred on 31 October 2024, at Elrundie Avenue and Chung Wah Terrace, Moulden in the Northern Territory.**

Introduction

2024 was a particularly deadly year on Territory roads. 60 persons lost their lives that year. These findings concern the death of a 56 year old Caucasian male motorcyclist, the 54th road death in 2024.

During the afternoon of 31 October 2024, the driver of a grey ute made an unsafe right hand turn and the motorcyclist collided with the ute. He died immediately from the injuries caused in the crash. The driver of the ute was charged with, and pleaded guilty to, careless driving, drug driving and failing to give way at an intersection.

The motorcyclist's family are devastated by his death.

His partner lost her soulmate. His mother lost her youngest child. His brother lost his right hand man.

Cause of death

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 1(a) | Disease or condition leading directly to death: | Multiple blunt force injuries |
| 1(b) | Morbid conditions giving rise to the above cause: | Reported motor vehicle crash (rider) |
| 2 | Other significant conditions contributing to death but not related to the condition causing death: | Cannabis toxicity |

Following an autopsy, Forensic Pathologist, Dr Salona Roopan commented:

Summary of main pathological findings

- Post-mortem CT scan showed:
 - Moderate subarachnoid haemorrhage with blood tracking down fourth ventricle and around brainstem. Nasal bone fractures also noted.
 - Haemorrhage of prevertebral space but no cervical fractures.
 - Multiple bilateral rib fractures with comminuted fracture of sternum.
 - Bilateral superior and inferior pubic ramus fractures.
 - Bilateral femoral fractures and complex right hind-foot fracture.
 - Fracture-dislocation of the left elbow
- External examination showed:
 - The body of a fully clad adult Caucasian male with features of medical intervention including an intravenous line in the right antecubital fossa, neck brace in the body bag and bilateral black knee braces.
 - Abrasions of the face, chest, hands and lower limbs.
 - Compound open fracture of the left elbow.
 - Laceration to the right buttock, left thigh and right foot.
 - Bilateral closed femur fractures.
 - Bilateral healing scars of both knees.
- Toxicological analysis of preserved femoral blood showed:
 - The presence of cannabinoids and its metabolites only.
 - No other drugs listed in the laboratory's Scope of Analysis were detected in the samples submitted for analysis.

Comments

- The opinion as to the cause of death is based on the available police and medical information, and a post-mortem examination including ancillary investigations.
- Toxicological analysis detected cannabinoids and its metabolites only which indicates recent use.
- I have no reason to believe with the information available and findings made during external examination of the body that the death was due to any other cause than the reported motor vehicle collision as a motorcyclist.

Background

This motorcyclist was employed and in a longstanding defacto relationship. He was awarded a Bravery Medal in 1999, when he rescued a colleague during an active shooting incident. He was adored by his family and friends.

Circumstances

On the morning of 31 October 2024, he rode his 2019 black Harley Davidson from his home to his workplace at East Arm. He commenced work at about 6.00am as a truck driver delivering refrigerated goods around Darwin. He finished work around 2.00pm. His manager said he had a good day at work.

That day, at an unknown time and location, he consumed an unknown quantity of Cannabis. After work, he rode his motorcycle from East Arm towards his home address. He was

wearing a black open-faced helmet, riding boots, a bright fluorescent yellow work shirt and a rainbow coloured bandanna that covered his nose and mouth.

CCTV from the intersection of Kirkland Road and Elrundie Avenue in Durack captured him riding along Kirkland Road and turning right into Elrundie Avenue at 2.21.45 pm. The front headlight of the motorcycle was illuminated.

At the intersection of Chung Wah Terrace and Elrundie Avenue, he was involved in a crash with a grey ute. The crash was reported to emergency services by multiple people at 2.26 pm. Two off-duty defence medical personnel attended to him at the scene. He had multiple injuries including a fracture of the humerus, displaced pelvis, significant blood loss from his buttock area and they could not find a carotid or radial pulse. He was unconscious and not breathing and, although these medical personnel believed he had passed away, CPR was commenced.

Paramedics arrived at 2.32pm, and at that time CPR was in progress by Police and Fire Services. He remained unresponsive and CPR was discontinued at 2.38pm.

The crash was investigated and the 28 year old female driver of the ute was charged with careless driving, drug driving and failing to give way at an intersection. She pleaded guilty to those charges in the Darwin Local Court on 14 July 2026.

Agreed facts were tendered which set out the circumstances of the crash as follows:

The defendant in this matter is a 28-year-old female.

The victim in this matter is an adult male. He will be referred to as the deceased.

The deceased was 56 years of age.

On the evening of 30 October 2024, the defendant smoked a joint of cannabis.

On 31 October 2024, at about 2:25pm, the defendant was the driver of a grey Ford Raptor Ranger utility bearing Northern Territory (NT) registration.

It was daytime, the road was dry, the weather was overcast and traffic was medium to heavy.

At the time of driving, the cannabis that the defendant had smoked the evening prior had a small adverse effect on her driving.

The defendant was travelling in a northwest direction along Elrundie Avenue, towards the intersection of Chung Wah Terrace, Moulden.

At the same time, the deceased was riding his black Harley Davidson motorcycle bearing NT registration in a southeast direction along Elrundie Avenue, Moulden.

The deceased was travelling behind witness M, who was driving a dual cab utility.

As the deceased and witness M approached the Chung Wah Terrace intersection, M merged into the left turn lane whilst the deceased remained on Elrundie Avenue, positioned in the middle to left section of the lane.

The defendant entered the right turn lane, designated for traffic turning right from Elrundie Avenue into Chung Wah Terrace and slowed to a speed of 29 - 30 km/hr as she approached the intersection.

The defendant did not see the deceased's motorbike which was initially blocked by the utility.

The defendant failed to give way to the deceased and commenced a right turn across the lane the deceased was riding in.

The deceased was unable to take evasive action and collided with the front left area of the defendant's vehicle.

The impact resulted in the deceased becoming airborne before coming to a final rest on the road.

Civilian witnesses contacted 000. Police and ambulance arrived and provided emergency CPR; however, the deceased was pronounced dead at the scene a short time later.

Investigators from the Major Crash Investigation Unit attended and processed the scene.

The defendant participated in roadside drug and alcohol testing at the scene which returned negative results for both drugs and alcohol, however, the defendant made admissions to smoking cannabis the night prior.

The defendant was later transported to the Royal Darwin Hospital by St Johns Ambulance for medical treatment and for blood testing.

A sample of the defendant's blood was taken as per requirements of the Traffic Act. The blood was forensically analysed and returned positive results to cannabis (Tetrahydrocannabinol). The level detected was 4.6 ug/L (micrograms per litre of blood). The cannabis in the defendant's blood had a small adverse effect on her driving.

A sample of the deceased's blood was taken and forensically analysed and returned positive results to cannabis (Tetrahydrocannabinol). The level detected was 1 7ug/L. There is no evidence that the cannabis in the deceased's system contributed to the collision.

As at the time of collision, the speed of the deceased's motorcycle was not determined.

At the time of offence, Elrundie Avenue, Moulden was a public road, open to and in use by the public.

The defendant's driving was careless in that she failed to give way to the defendant.

The speed limit for the section of Elrundie Avenue where the collision occurred was 80 kilometres per hour.

Tetrahydrocannabinol is a prohibited drug for the purposes of the *Traffic Act* 1987.

On 4 September 2026 the driver of the ute was sentenced to 2 months imprisonment to be served by an intensive community corrections order. She was also placed on a community corrections order for 12 months and ordered to pay restitution in the sum of \$7770 within 2 years.

Crash site



Image courtesy of Major Crash Investigation

The intersection of Chung Wah Terrace and Elrundie Avenue, Moulden, is controlled by a stop and give-way sign. The posted speed limit for traffic travelling in both directions on Elrundie Avenue is 80 km/hr.

Tests and/or Calculations Conducted

The grey Ford Ranger Raptor utility vehicle was imaged utilising Collision Sciences Crash Scan technology that confirmed it was travelling at 30km/h at the point of impact. The data further confirmed that it had slowed to a speed of 29 - 30km/h prior to commencing the turn.

Enquiries with Harley Davidson confirmed the motorcycle did not have an Event Data Recorder fitted and as a result investigators were unable to confirm the speed in the lead up to the crash. However, there was no information to suggest the Harley Davidson was exceeding the speed limit of 80km/h.

Vehicles/inspection

The Ford Raptor Ranger utility was inspected by a Transport Inspector on 3 April 2025. Several crash related defects were noted, however, these were not considered to have contributed to the crash.

The Harley Davidson was also inspected and crash related defects were noted, however, these were not considered to have contributed to the crash.

Weather and Lighting Conditions

Nil adverse weather was reported on the day. At the time of the crash, it was overcast but visibility was good. The road surface was described as dry with light rain falling around the time of the crash.

Comments

Enquiries were made with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) as to the frequency of crashes at the Chung Wah Terrace and Elrundie Avenue intersection between October 2023 and October 2024. DLI reported three 'angle collisions' having occurred on 3 June 2024 at 3.10pm, on 22 June 2024 at 2.14pm, and on 11 August 2024 at 12.14pm.

On 18 December 2024, a 'close call' dash cam video was published by the NT News depicting a near miss at the same intersection.

To prevent future serious or fatal crashes, Major Crash investigators recommended to DLI that consideration be given to converting this intersection into a traffic light controlled intersection and, for accountability and transparency, I will repeat that recommendation.

Recommendation

1. I recommend to the **Department of Logistics and Infrastructure** that it consider converting the intersection of Chung Wah Terrace and Elrundie Avenue into a traffic light controlled intersection.

Decision not to hold an inquest

Under section 16(1) of the *Coroners Act 1993* I decided not to hold an inquest because the investigations into the death disclosed:

- The time, place and cause of death;
- The relevant circumstances concerning the death;
- I do not consider that the holding of an inquest would elicit any information additional to that disclosed in the investigation to date; and
- The circumstances do not require a mandatory inquest because:
 - The deceased was not, immediately before death, a person held in care or custody; and
 - The death was not caused or contributed to by injuries sustained while the deceased was held in custody; and
 - The identity of the deceased is known.