

IN THE CORONERS COURT  
OF VICTORIA  
AT MELBOURNE

Court Reference: COR 2012 0986

**FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST**

*Form 37 Rule 60(1)*

*Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008*

**Inquest into the Death of: ARGYRIOS CARRAS**

Hearing Dates:	9 May 2013
Police Coronial Support Unit	Senior Sergeant Jenny Brumby
Findings of:	AUDREY JAMIESON, CORONER
Delivered On:	9 May 2013
Delivered At:	Coroners Court of Victoria Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street, Melbourne 3000

I, AUDREY JAMIESON, Coroner having investigated the death of ARGYRIOS CARRAS

AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 9 May 2013

at MELBOURNE

find that the identity of the deceased was ARGYRIOS CARRAS

born on 5 February 1974

and the death occurred on 17 March 2012

at Austin Health, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, 300 Waterdale Road, Heidelberg West 3081

**from:**

1 (a) ASPIRATION PNEUMONIA IN THE SETTING OF CEREBRAL PALSY

**in the following circumstances:**

1. Mr Argyrios Carras was 38 years of age at the time of his death. He lived at 79 Telopopea Crescent, Mill Park, Share Supported Accommodation, Disability Services, North and West Metropolitan Region (NWMR) – a Department of Human Services facility.
2. Mr Carras had intellectual and physical disabilities including Congenital Cerebral Palsy, scoliosis and oesophagitis. He received all of his food and medication via a PEG tube. He was wheel chair bound and required full assistance for all activities of daily living. He was susceptible to Lower Respiratory Tract Infection and had a history of frequent chest infection. Mr Carras was non verbal but had good comprehension skills and would indicate preferences by smiling and frowning.

**Surrounding Circumstances**

3. In the two months leading up to Mr Carras' death, he was noted to have increased spasms and/or seizure activity.
4. On 10 March 2012, Mr Carras was administered Diazepam for increased spasms with little effect. That evening staff contacted the on-call for a further Diazepam order reporting that Mr Carras was having increased spasms, sweating and not breathing well. Staff were directed to contact an ambulance service to transport Mr Carras to hospital.
5. On 11 March 2012, Mr Carras was admitted to the Austin Hospital at approximately 8.20am. He was subsequently admitted to Medical Unit 1 for investigations to explore potential causes

of his increasing spasm. An electroencephalogram (EEG) showed no obvious evidence of epilepsy – type electrical activity. A chest X-Ray identified changes which appeared to be consistent with pneumonia or aspiration. Mr Carras was treated with intravenous antibiotics and frequent suctioning for upper airway secretions. His condition however continued to deteriorate.

6. On 16 March 2012 active management was ceased and palliative care implemented following a discussion with Mr Carras' mother. On 17 March 2012, Mr Carras was transferred to the Palliative Care Unit. He died later that day with his mother in attendance.

## **INVESTIGATION**

### **Identity**

7. The identity of Argyrios Carras was without dispute and required no further investigation.

### **Medical Investigation**

8. Dr Matthew Lynch, Forensic Pathologist at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine performed an external examination on the body of Argyrios Carras and reviewed a post mortem CT scan. Dr Lynch reported that in the absence of a full post mortem examination, and having regard to the circumstances, a reasonable cause of death could be attributed to aspiration pneumonia in the setting of cerebral palsy.

### **Police Investigation**

9. The police investigation and preparation of the coronial Brief of Evidence was prepared by Constable Daniel Elliott.

## **INQUEST**

10. An inquest was held in accordance with section 52(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008* as immediately before his death Mr Carras was *a person placed in custody or care* as it is defined in section 3 of The Act.
11. No issues were identified in the course of the investigation and a summary of the circumstances was provided to the Court by Senior Sergeant Jenny Brumby from the Police Coronial Support Unit.

## Finding

I accept and adopt the cause of death as identified by Dr Matthew Lynch and find that Argyrios Carras died from aspiration pneumonia in the setting of cerebral palsy.

AND I further find that there is no evidence of a relationship between the fact that Mr Argyrios Carras was *a person placed in custody or care* and the cause of his death.

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

Mrs Shirley Carras

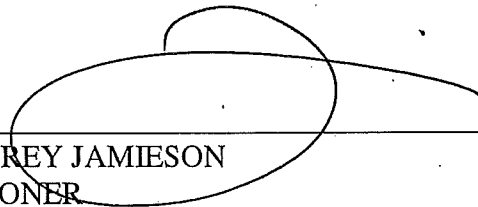
Austin Health

Constable Daniel Elliott, Greensborough Police Station

Mr Shane Beaumont, Disability Services, Department of Human Services

Pursuant to section 73(1) of the **Coroners Act 2008**, I order that the following be published on the internet:

Signature:



AUDREY JAMIESON  
CORONER

Date: 9 May 2013

