

IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

Court Reference: COR 2013 / 2066

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST

Form 37 Rule 60(1)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Inquest into the Death of: BASSILLIOS BYRON PANTAZIS

Delivered On: 1 May 2014

Delivered At: Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000

Hearing Date: 1 May 2014

Findings of: CAITLIN C ENGLISH, CORONER

Police Coronial Support Unit Leading Senior Constable King Taylor 26065

I, CAITLIN CREED ENGLISH, Coroner having investigated the death of BASSILLIOS BYRON PANTAZIS

AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 13 May 2013

at St Vincent's Hospital

find that the identity of the deceased was BASSILLIOS BYRON PANTAZIS

born on 21 January 1945

and the death occurred on 13 May 2013

at St Vincent's Hospital, 59 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy 3065

from:

1 (a) METASTATIC GASTRO-OESOPHAGEAL ADENOCARCINOMA

in the following circumstances:

1. Mr Pantazis was 67 year old male residing at Port Phillip Prison undergoing a term of imprisonment.
2. On 5 June 2008, Mr Pantazis was taken into custody and remanded on charges including perverting the course of justice. On 1 March 2011 he was found guilty in the Supreme Court of perverting the course of justice and dealing with the proceeds of crime and sentenced to nine years jail with a non parole period of six years.
3. Due to Mr Pantazis's 'in custody' status, his death is a reportable death to the coroner (s 11 *Coroners Act* 2008). Further, his 'in custody' status mandates a coroner to hold an inquest into his death (s 52(2)(b)).
4. Mr Pantazis' medical history included asthma, chronic obstructive airways disease, type 2 diabetes, ischaemic heart disease, hypertension and high cholesterol. He was a smoker. He was diagnosed with a right bundle branch block following a myocardial infarction, in August 2010. He had a permanent pacemaker inserted September 2010.
5. Mr Pantazis received on going medical care whilst in Port Phillip Prison, with 71 transfers related to medical appointments. In the final 12 months of his imprisonment, 22 movements were for medical reasons or appointments. These movements were to St John's ward at Port Phillip Prison or St Augustine's ward at St Vincent's Hospital or the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.
6. In January 2012, Mr Pantazis was diagnosed with oesophageal carcinoma. Due to his poor health, namely multiple co-morbidities and poor ventricular function, his surgeons were

reluctant to operate. He underwent a five-week course of chemo-radiotherapy at St Vincent's Hospital in April 2012.

7. In January 2013 Mr Pantazis was admitted to St Augustine's for stent insertion in his oesophageal stricture.
8. On 18 April 2013, while at St Augustine's ward, a computed tomography (CT) scan indicated disease progression with innumerable new hepatic metastases and lymphadenopathy. On 19 April 2013 Mr Pantazis signed a 'not for resuscitation' form.
9. On 1 May 2013 Mr Pantazis was admitted to St John's ward, Port Phillip Prison. On 9 May 2013 he was transferred to St Vincent's Hospital. He was admitted to the oncology ward, and then referred to the palliative care unit. He was then moved to St Augustine's ward and was found deceased at 0045 hours on 13 May 2013.
10. The Office of Correctional Services Review (OCSR) conducts, amongst other things, enquiries when there is a death in custody. It assists the coroner's inquest into a death by addressing systemic issues and recommending improvements. OCSR is located within the Department of Justice but separate from the operational functions of the corrections system.
11. The OCSR report found Mr Pantazis' death was not unexpected given the nature of his medical condition. It concluded '*...Mr Pantazis received appropriate custodial management and healthcare throughout his time in prison.*'
12. Justice Health also prepared a report into the death of Mr Pantazis. Justice Health is a business unit of the Department of Justice responsible for the delivery of health services to prisoners in Victoria. Its findings included that until the time of his death, Mr Pantazis regularly engaged with the health service providers across prison sites. It found that:

'A plan of care was in place to manage Mr Pantazis's health conditions at a quality and standard equivalent to that provided in the community through the public health system.'
13. No autopsy was performed in this case, as the coroner, in consultation with Dr Kate Strachan, Forensic Pathologist with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, directed no autopsy be performed. Dr Strachan performed an external examination of Mr Pantazis in the mortuary. She also reviewed the circumstances of his death contained in the Victoria Police Report of Death Form 83, the medical deposition and medical records from St Vincent's Hospital and results of a post mortem CT scan.

14. Dr Strachan reported a reasonable cause of death was metastatic gastro-oesophageal adenocarcinoma. In all the circumstances, I accept that as the cause of Mr Pantazis's death.

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

Mrs Foula Pantazis

Chief Medical Officer, St Vincent's Hospital

Officer in Charge, Port Phillip Prison

Signature:



CAITLIN ENGLISH

CORONER

Date: 1 May 2014