

IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MORWELL

Court Reference: 1672/2011

FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT INQUEST

Form 38 Rule 60(2)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

I, E C Batt, Coroner having investigated the death of Jacob Anton Van Berlo
without holding an inquest:

find that the identity of the deceased was Jacob Anton Van Berlo

born on 12 August 1991

and the death occurred on 11 May 2011

at Maple Way Warragul

from

1a) Hanging (self inflicted)

Pursuant to section 67(2) of the Coroners Act 2008, I make findings with respect to the
following circumstances:

The deceased was a highly intelligent young person who became frustrated and somewhat directionless in his final years at secondary college. He became depressed and was prescribed Zoloft by his local General Practitioner. Ultimately he left school and obtained an apprenticeship in pre-press graphics at the Warragul Gazette Newspaper in February 2010. In that year it became apparent that he had a gambling problem. One pay day in September 2010 he spent his whole pay at poker machines and after he tearfully reported this to his parents he rang Gamblers Anonymous for help.

In early 2011 he spoke with his employers about his continuing battle with depression and gambling. He went back to his General Practitioner who referred him to a psychologist and prescribed him 100mg daily of Zoloft. His gambling continued however and another occasion occurred when he spent his entire pay on the "pokies". He continued to see his psychologist who was managing him through this gambling addiction. However he was not in control of his problem, and on 9 May 2011 he borrowed money from his Mother having spent the previous week's pay at the "pokies". He promised her he would pay it back and expressed his grave concerns about dealing with his temptation to gamble.

On the date of death 11 May 2011, Jacob Van Berlo's pay for that week went into his bank account. He went to work as usual. At 9.57am he texted a friend to say he will repay \$100.00 he owed him. Then, in his lunch break he went to a gambling venue, the Warragul Downtowner, entering it at 12.19pm. He spent the next 40 minutes playing a pokie machine. Whilst at the venue he made a series of four withdrawals from his bank account totalling \$270.00 at an ATM there, which left a remaining balance of \$25.74. At 1.02pm he left the venue. He didn't return to work. He went to his family home and hanged himself from the ceiling in the garage. His mother discovered him there, lifeless, when she returned from her work at 4.07pm.

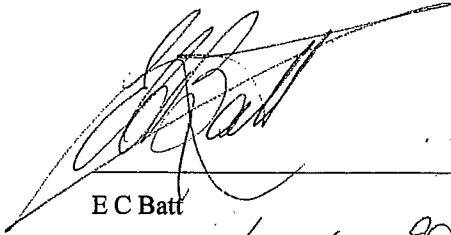
COMMENTS:

Pursuant to section 67(3) of the **Coroners Act 2008**, I make the following comment(s) connected with the death:

There is a strong inference arising from the circumstances of this young person's death that the opportunity to access an automatic teller machine located within the gambling venue, operated to feed his gambling addiction and so fuel his depression as to drive him to commit suicide.

These findings should be brought to the attention of the Executive Commissioner of the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulations and to those responsible for formulating and implementing policy on the retention of ATM'S or similar cash dispensing machines at gambling venues.

Signature:



E C Batt

Date:

6 1 1 2012