



IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

COR 2022 006877

FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT INQUEST

Form 38 Rule 63(2)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Findings of: Judge John Cain, State Coroner

Deceased: HBG

Date of birth:



Date of death: 30 November 2022

Cause of death: 1(a) Head and neck injuries

Place of death:



Keywords: Family violence; intimate partner homicide;
gambling; no criminal or family violence history

INTRODUCTION

1. On 30 November 2022, HBG was 51 years old when she was murdered by her husband, KUJ. At the time of her death, HBG lived at [REDACTED] Victoria with her husband and their then 11-year-old daughter, MKI.
2. HBG was born to parents TFF and TYU and had one brother, PKN. She was very close to her family. Her parents subdivided their large family block and built two townhouses at the back of the property – one for her and one for her brother. PKN and his wife, RDX, lived in the townhouse next door to HBG and KUJ with their children. The three homes were connected via unlocked gates, and the family members freely moved between each other's properties.
3. HBG was a successful scientist and worked for many years at [REDACTED], followed by [REDACTED]. She was a senior scientist at the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] at the time of her passing.
4. KUJ was born overseas and moved to Australia with his family when he was about four years old. Police noted they had limited information about KUJ's early life, childhood and schooling.
5. HBG met KUJ in 1995 through mutual friends and commenced a relationship. HBG's friends noted that KUJ was a bubbly and extroverted person who was very affectionate towards HBG. They were married in 2006 and welcomed their daughter, MKI, in 2011.
6. Evidence available to the Court shows that KUJ had a history of problem gambling which led to significant debt and had previously impacted his marriage with HBG. He achieved a period of abstinence from gambling, however appeared to have relapsed prior to the fatal incident.
7. During the COVID-19 pandemic, KUJ refused to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and lost his job at [REDACTED]. He started his own handyman business, however he still suffered significant financial difficulties due to his loss of employment. The available evidence shows that KUJ and HBG disagreed about their views on COVID-19 and the vaccine. KUJ became heavily interested in conspiracy theories related to COVID-19, and believed the vaccine was "*poison*".
8. In August 2022, MKI told a teacher at school that her parents were having difficulties and "*bad arguments*" at home. She explained the arguments were due to her father's lack of employment and that he was always arguing with her mother. In the weeks prior to the fatal

incident, MKI told a friend that her parents were thinking about getting a divorce. In the month prior to the fatal incident, friends and family observed both HBG and KUJ to be subdued. HBG's sister-in-law, RDX, noted that both HBG and KUJ were frustrated with one another. HBG met with a friend the day before her death who commented that HBG appeared to be at her "*saturation point*".

THE CORONIAL INVESTIGATION

9. HBG's death was reported to the coroner as it fell within the definition of a reportable death in the *Coroners Act 2008 (the Act)*. Reportable deaths include deaths that are unexpected, unnatural or violent or result from accident or injury.
10. The role of a coroner is to independently investigate reportable deaths to establish, if possible, identity, medical cause of death, and surrounding circumstances. Surrounding circumstances are limited to events which are sufficiently proximate and causally related to the death. The purpose of a coronial investigation is to establish the facts, not to cast blame or determine criminal or civil liability.
11. Under the Act, coroners also have the important functions of helping to prevent deaths and promoting public health and safety and the administration of justice through the making of comments or recommendations in appropriate cases about any matter connected to the death under investigation.
12. Victoria Police assigned an officer to be the Coronal Investigator for the investigation of HBG's death. The Coronal Investigator conducted inquiries on my behalf, including taking statements from witnesses – such as family, the forensic pathologist, treating clinicians and investigating officers – and submitted a coronial brief of evidence.
13. This finding draws on the totality of the coronial investigation into the death of HBG including evidence contained in the coronial brief. Whilst I have reviewed all the material, I will only refer to that which is directly relevant to my findings or necessary for narrative clarity. In the coronial jurisdiction, facts must be established on the balance of probabilities.¹

¹ Subject to the principles enunciated in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336. The effect of this and similar authorities is that coroners should not make adverse findings against, or comments about, individuals unless the evidence provides a comfortable level of satisfaction as to those matters taking into account the consequences of such findings or comments.

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

Identity of the deceased

14. On 30 November 2022, HBG, born [REDACTED] was visually identified by her sister-in-law, RDX.
15. Identity is not in dispute and requires no further investigation.

Medical cause of death

16. Forensic Pathologist Dr Gregory Young, from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) conducted an autopsy on 1 December 2022 and provided a written report of his findings dated 13 February 2023.
17. The post-mortem examination revealed blunt force injuries to the head, including five scalp lacerations, fractures to the skull and facial bones, and haemorrhage in and around the brain. The multiplicity and distribution of injuries would imply multiple applications of force. The skull fractures and subarachnoid haemorrhage had a predilection for the right side of the head. Blood was seen in the lungs, and air was identified within blood vessels in the neck and heart.
18. In addition, the deceased was noted to have petechial haemorrhages in and around the eyes, as well as on the right side of the neck, overlying an area of haemorrhage in and around the right superior cornu of the thyroid cartilage. These findings were suggestive of an element of pressure on the neck.
19. Given all of the above, Dr Young explained that the mechanism of death was likely to include any, or a combination of, aspiration of blood, air embolism, and neck compression.
20. Blunt force injuries to the upper limbs, noticeably to the backs of the hands, wrists and forearms, were of a distribution and nature that may be seen in so-called 'defence-type' injuries.
21. Toxicological analysis of post-mortem samples did not identify the presence of any alcohol or other common drugs or poisons.
22. There was no post-mortem evidence of any significant natural disease which may have caused or contributed to the death.

23. Dr Young provided an opinion that the medical cause of death was *1(a) Head and neck injuries*.
24. I accept Dr Young's opinion as to the medical cause of death.

Circumstances in which the death occurred

25. On 25 November 2022, KUJ asked a friend for a loan of \$4,500, stating that he had lent money that he earned from maintenance jobs to another friend, however they were unable to repay him in time. He told the friend that he did not want HBG to find out about it and said that if she *did* find out, it would lead to their separation. KUJ asked another friend for the money and the friend later transferred \$4,500 to his bank account on 26 November 2022. It was unclear to police whether KUJ had indeed lent this money to a friend, prior to asking for a loan from other friends. The sentencing judge opined that KUJ's story appeared false and that he likely needed the money due his gambling debts. Between 27 and 30 November 2022, KUJ withdrew \$4,790 in cash from his bank account.
26. On the morning of 30 November 2022, HBG and KUJ had an argument, which MKI described to be about a "*4 or 5 out of 10*". HBG was unhappy that KUJ was not bringing in enough money to support the family. KUJ told HBG that he would try to finish the maintenance job he was working on.
27. KUJ drove MKI to school and HBG went to work where one of her work colleagues noted that she was "*weary*". During the day, KUJ attended a local hotel where he gambled for about three and a half hours. After school, MKI attended a birthday party at a friend's house.
28. At about 5.45pm, KUJ called HBG and noted that he wanted her to be home by 5.00pm. HBG left home shortly after the call. KUJ arrived at his home at about 6.15pm; MKI was still at her friend's house and HBG had not yet returned home from work.
29. HBG arrived home at 7.13pm and drove her vehicle into the garage. After closing the garage door remotely, KUJ attacked her almost instantly. Police were unable to determine whether KUJ was waiting for HBG in the garage, or whether he entered the garage after hearing her arrive home. According to HBG's Apple Watch, her heart rate spiked within 60 seconds of her taking two steps. The entire assault lasted for about two or three minutes.
30. KUJ assaulted HBG with a metal car ramp several times, then placed the car ramp under HBG's head in an attempt to stage an accident. KUJ showered and concealed his clothes in

various locations around the house. He then walked into PKN and RDX's backyard and spoke to them about HBG's upcoming birthday. KUJ suggested he would likely arrange a barbeque for HBG. KUJ also spoke to HBG's father and reported that he was unable to speak to her via phone. He appeared upset at being unable to reach her.

31. The parent of one of MKI's friends drove her home and she arrived at 7.52pm. MKI noticed the garage light was turned on and started knocking on the door. KUJ answered the door to MKI's friend and the child's parent after a seven-minute delay, then called HBG and left a voicemail to advise her that MKI was home.
32. Once MKI was inside, she asked where her mother was. KUJ denied knowledge of her whereabouts; however, MKI thought her mother might have been in the garage as the garage light was on. KUJ asked MKI if she wanted to check on her mother in the garage, so she did. Inside the garage, MKI observed her mother lying on the floor with significant head injuries. MKI fled the scene and ran to her aunt and uncle's house next door. KUJ called Triple Zero and told the operator that he believed HBG had tripped and hit her head in the garage.
33. PKN and RDX attended the scene and RDX commenced cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) while PKN opened the garage and went onto the street to await emergency services. KUJ reportedly did not assist, paced around the scene and suggested that HBG tripped and fell.
34. Paramedics attended the scene and confirmed that HBG was deceased. KUJ initially told police that he and MKI located HBG's body when they entered the garage. He was arrested on 1 December 2022 and underwent a medical examination. The examination noted scratches on KUJ's hands and arms which appeared to have occurred within 24 hours. KUJ provided some explanation for the scratches and suggested HBG's death was an accident, however, did not provide an account of what occurred.
35. KUJ was remanded in custody and charged with HBG's murder. Prior to the matter proceeding to a trial in the Supreme Court of Victoria, KUJ sought a sentencing indication and pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 24 years' imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 18 and a half years.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS AND CPU REVIEW

36. As HBG's death occurred in circumstances of family violence, I requested that the Coroner's Prevention Unit (CPU)² examine the circumstances of HBG's death as part of the Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths (VSRFVD)³.

Background

37. At the time of KUJ's sentencing, the sentencing judge noted that KUJ had not provided any explanation for HBG's death, although I note that his gambling issues may have been a contributing factor or stressor, given:
- a) KUJ had a history of problem gambling
 - b) KUJ's gambling had previously caused issues in his relationship with HBG
 - c) KUJ started gambling again prior to the fatal incident
 - d) KUJ and HBG were arguing frequently as HBG felt KUJ was not contributing enough money to the household. KUJ believed that his marriage would end if he did not contribute \$4,500 from his maintenance work.
 - e) Despite accepting a loan of \$4,500 on 26 November 2022 in order to contribute to the household, KUJ withdrew more than this sum in the four days prior to the fatal incident. It is unclear what happened to this money, however, would appear likely that it was used for gambling.
 - f) KUJ told HBG on the day of the fatal incident that he would try to finish a maintenance job that day, however it does not appear he did so. He also spent three and a half hours gambling that day.

Link between gambling harm and family violence

² The Coroners Prevention Unit (CPU) was established in 2008 to strengthen the prevention role of the coroner. The unit assists the Coroner with research in matters related to public health and safety and in relation to the formulation of prevention recommendations. The CPU also reviews medical care and treatment in cases referred by the coroner. The CPU is comprised of health professionals with training in a range of areas including medicine, nursing, public health and mental health.

³ The VSRFVD provides assistance to Victorian Coroners to examine the circumstances in which family violence deaths occur. In addition the VSRFVD collects and analyses information on family violence-related deaths. Together this information assists with the identification of systemic prevention-focused recommendations aimed at reducing the incidence of family violence in the Victorian Community.

38. Although this area of research is still developing, there is an established link between gambling harm and family violence.⁴ Studies have shown that between 11% and 56% of people with a gambling problem perpetrate family violence⁵, and gambling often escalates the frequency and severity of family violence⁶.
39. The report of the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches published in August 2024 (**‘the Rapid Review’**) commented on the link between gambling and family violence, noting that the gambling industry too often functions as the foundation for the escalation of abuse.⁷ The Rapid Review noted that *“men’s gambling harms can create situations that heighten the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV), such as men experiencing anger and shame over losses and responding with violence when female partners object to gambling-behaviours”*.⁸
40. The Rapid Review noted that Australians spend more money on online gambling than any other country in the world and suggested that there are *“clear regulatory opportunities for governments to prevent problem gambling both online and through restrictions on electronic gaming machines”*.⁹ Recommendations 17 c and d of the Rapid Review relate to these opportunities and are relevant in this case:

17. The Commonwealth and state and territory governments to work with industries that are well positioned to prevent DFSV [Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence], including homicide, with a focus on alcohol and gambling industries in addition to media and pornography. This includes reviewing and strengthening alcohol and gambling regulatory environments to prioritise the prevention of gender-based violence. This should include:

⁴ Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, [Gambling and liquor regulation in Victoria: a follow up of three Auditor-General reports](#) (Inquiry, November 2023) 23.

⁵ Our Watch, *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia*, 2nd edn., Our Watch, 2021; Department of Social Services (DSS), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2023-2025*, DSS, Australian Government, 2023.

⁶ Centre for Innovative Justice, *Compulsion, convergence or crime? Criminal justice system contact as a form of gambling harm*, RMIT University, 2017.

⁷ Ms Elena Campbell et al. [Unlocking the prevention potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) (August 2024), 10.

⁸ Ms Elena Campbell et al. [Unlocking the prevention potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) (August 2024), 106, citing N Hing, C O'Mullan, L Mainey, N Greer and H Breen, ‘An integrative review of research on gambling and domestic and family violence: Fresh perspectives to guide future research’, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2022, 13:1-16.

⁹ Ms Elena Campbell et al. [Unlocking the prevention potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) (August 2024), 106.

c. stronger restrictions leading to a total ban on advertising of gambling (Commonwealth and states and territories);

d. examining the density of electronic gaming machines, and use of online gambling, in relation to the prevalence of DFSV across different populations and communities (Commonwealth and states and territories).¹⁰

41. As of June 2025, there are no publicly available responses by the Victorian Government to the Rapid Review. I therefore intend to recommend that the Victorian Government implements Recommendation 17 c and d of the Rapid Review.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

42. Pursuant to section 67(1) of the *Coroners Act 2008* I make the following findings:

- a) the identity of the deceased was HBG, born [REDACTED]
- b) the death occurred on 30 November 2022 at [REDACTED], [REDACTED], from head and neck injuries; and
- c) the death occurred in the circumstances described above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursuant to section 72(2) of the Act, I make the following recommendations:

- (i) That the **Department of Justice and Community Safety** implement Recommendation 17c and d of the Rapid Review, namely:

17. The Commonwealth and state and territory governments to work with industries that are well positioned to prevent DFSV [Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence], including homicide, with a focus on alcohol and gambling industries in addition to media and pornography. This includes reviewing and strengthening alcohol and gambling regulatory environments to prioritise the prevention of gender-based violence. This should include:

¹⁰ Ms Elena Campbell et al. [*Unlocking the prevention potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](#) (August 2024), 24.

c. stronger restrictions leading to a total ban on advertising of gambling (Commonwealth and states and territories);

d. examining the density of electronic gaming machines, and use of online gambling, in relation to the prevalence of DFSV across different populations and communities (Commonwealth and states and territories).¹¹

I convey my sincere condolences to HBG's family for their loss.

Pursuant to section 73(1A) of the Act, I order that this finding be published on the Coroners Court of Victoria website in accordance with the rules.

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

TYU & TFF, Senior Next of Kin


Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Detective Senior Constable Alex Lewis, Coronial Investigator

Signature:



Judge John Cain
State Coroner
Date: 11 August 2025

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 investigation. 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.

¹¹ Ms Elena Campbell et al. [*Unlocking the prevention potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](#) (August 2024), 24.