



IN THE CORONERS COURT  
OF VICTORIA  
AT MELBOURNE

**COR 2025 007058**  
**COR 2025 007059**

**FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT INQUEST**

*Form 38 Rule 63(2)*

*Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008*

(Amended pursuant to section 76 of the *Coroners Act 2008* as at 5 March 2026) <sup>1</sup>

Findings of:	Coroner David Ryan
Deceased:	Yuhan Jin born 4 August 2001 Yewen Wang born 18 July 1995
Date of death:	Between 2 and 3 October 2025
Cause of death:	Hypothermia
Place of death:	Lendenfeld Point, Mount Bogong, Victoria
Keywords:	Hiking – Mount Bogong – weather conditions – preparation and planning

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 28 has been amended on 5 March 2026 to correct a typographical error.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. On 3 October 2025, Yuhan Jin and Yewen Wang were found deceased in the Victorian High Country near Mount Bogong. Yuhan was 24 years old and Yewen was 30 years old. At the time of their deaths, they lived together in Clayton.

## **BACKGROUND**

2. Yuhan and Yewen were both Chinese citizens who had moved to Melbourne in November 2024 and February 2025 respectively to study at Monash University. There is no evidence that they were experienced hikers but they had been on a short day trip with friends to Mount Lofty in May 2025. Further, Yuhan was known by her classmates to be an adventurous and energetic person.

## **THE CORONIAL INVESTIGATION**

3. These deaths were 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Victoria Police assigned an officer to be the Coronial Investigator for the investigation of the deaths. The Coronial Investigator conducted inquiries on my behalf, including taking

statements from witnesses – such as family, the forensic pathologist, and investigating officers – and submitted a coronial brief of evidence.

7. This finding draws on the totality of the coronial investigation including evidence contained in the coronial brief. While 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

### **Circumstances in which the death occurred**

8. On 1 October 2025, Yuhan sent a message via WeChat to a classmate advising that she intended to go on a multi-day hike to Mount Bogong. She said that she had been to the city to purchase hiking equipment and she sent a map of her planned route.
9. Yuhan and Yewen had purchased a BMW sedan together and Yewen held a Victorian driver licence. On 1 October 2025 at around 10:30pm they departed from their home in Clayton and drove overnight to the Mountain Creek Campground carpark in Tawonga.
10. Mount Bogong is about 400 kilometres from Melbourne and it takes about 5 hours to drive the Mountain Creek Campground carpark. Mount Bogong is Victoria's highest peak at 1986 metres above sea level. It is a remote location and access is restricted to walking tracks. Snow falls on the high peaks at all times of the year.
11. The route that Yuhan and Yewen intended to take was the *Mount Bogong and Big River Firetrail Figure 8* which starts and finished at the Mountain Creek Campground carpark. It is a three to four day hike over a distance of about 54 kilometres. The route to the summit of Mount Bogong is accessed via the Staircase Walking Track. The trailhead is about two kilometres from the campground. It ascends steeply over about six kilometres towards the summit. The tree line ceases after around four kilometres after which the track, including along the summit ridge, is very exposed. After reaching Mount Bogong, the planned route heads southeast to Cleve Cole Hut, about three and a half kilometres away along the Long Spur Walking track.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

12. At 8.34am on 2 October 2025, Yuhan sent a WeChat message to her mother in China advising that they were starting their hike. She also sent a screenshot of a map of their intended route. As they ascended the Staircase Walking Track, Yuhan sent a number of photographs and videos of herself while they were still within the tree line. Those photographs and videos showed that the pair appeared to be well equipped for the hike, with Yuhan carrying a backpack and walking pole and had been wearing suitable clothing, including a waterproof outer shell jacket, fleecy mid layer, beanie and gloves. In one of the photographs the track is covered in a thick layer of snow.
13. At around 6.00pm, Yuhan sent the following voice message to her mother:

*“It was so tough-honestly, just really, really tough. Oh my god, I’m exhausted. I was carrying a 15 kilogram pack, and today’s goal was to climb 1,300 metres of elevation gain in a single day. That’s a vertical ascent of 1,300 metres over about 14 to 15 kilometres.*

*Those videos I sent you earlier were actually from around noon. There was no signal at the time, so they only went through now.*

*At the foot of the mountain, I could still wear just two light layers. But as I climbed higher, I had to put on my fleece, and then even my hard shell.*

*Oh my god, what a day! It’s only been six hours of hiking! First it rained, then it snowed, then it hailed.”* (translated from Mandarin)
14. This was the last communication from either Yuhan or Yewen.
15. On 3 October 2025 at around 10.55am, Robert and Marguerite Karoly, a married couple who had been hiking and skiing in the area, located Yuhan and Yewen along the Long Spur Walking Track at Lendenfeld Point. They are both medical practitioners and observed that Yuhan and Yewen were clearly deceased. Robert and Marguerite are experienced hikers and skiers and are familiar with Mount Bogong and its conditions. They had departed Cleve Cole Hut about an hour earlier. They reported that the weather conditions had been severe with heavy snow fall and blizzard conditions with poor visibility between 1 and 3 October 2025.
16. Lendenfeld Point is about halfway between the summit of Mount Bogong and Cleve Cole Hut along the Long Spur Walking Track on the summit plateau. The area, which is very exposed and at an altitude of 1940 metres, is marked with a sign on a snow pole.

17. After confirming that Yuhan and Yewen were deceased, Robert and Marguerite hiked to Michells Hut along the Eskdale Spur Walking Track in severe weather conditions where they contacted emergency services.
18. Victoria Police hiked to the scene and arrived at around 6.00pm. Yuhan and Yewen were found at the scene huddled together. Neither of them were wearing their outer shell jackets or beanies. They were lying partially on a sleeping bag next to their backpacks with a number of the contents strewn around them. Police noted that, although they had been in possession of suitable and adequate clothing, they had not been wearing it at the time they passed away. They were not carrying a tent with them, although they were carrying a lightweight tarp which could be erected as a shelter with the use of walking poles. There was no evidence that they had attempted to use this shelter.
19. Yuhan and Yewen's BMW vehicle was located in the Mountain Creek Campground carpark.
20. The recorded weather conditions in the Mount Bogong area from 1 to 3 October 2025 were severe, with temperatures ranging from -3.2 to 8.1 degrees Celsius, with high winds, heavy snow falls, hail and rain. Visibility was poor with white out conditions.
21. Victoria Police did not find any suspicious circumstances.
22. The clothing worn by Yuhan and Yewen at the time of their discovery was not sufficient for the weather conditions. It is not known exactly where they were planning to spend the night on 2 October 2025 but it may have been Cleve Cole Hut. It is likely that they have become disorientated, confused and fatigued in the evening on 2 October due to the effects of hypothermia which impacted their judgment and resulted in them passing away from exposure to the elements.

### **Identity of the deceased**

23. Yuhan Jin and Yewen Wang were both visually identified by family.
24. Identity is not in dispute and requires no further investigation.

### **Medical cause of death**

25. Forensic Pathologist Dr Chong Zhou from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine conducted examinations of the deceased on 6 October 2025 and reviewed post-mortem

computed tomography (CT) scans. Dr Zhou found no evidence of violence or significant injury.

26. Toxicological analysis of post-mortem samples did not detect the presence of alcohol or other common drugs or poisons.
27. Dr Zhou's examination showed findings in keeping with frostbite and hypothermia.<sup>3</sup>
28. Dr Zhou provided an opinion that the medical cause of the death for both women was *1(a) Hypothermia*.
29. I accept Dr Zhou's opinion.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

30. Pursuant to section 67(1) of the Act, I make the following findings:
  - a) the identities of the deceased were:
    - i. Yuhan Jin, born on 4 August 2001; and
    - ii. Yewen Wang, born on 18 July 1995;
  - b) the deaths occurred between 2 and 3 October 2025 at Lendenfeld Point, Mount Bogong, Victoria, from hypothermia; and
  - c) the deaths occurred in the circumstances described above.
31. Having considered all of the circumstances, I am satisfied that Yuhan and Yewen died after being exposed to the elements in very poor weather conditions while hiking in the Victorian High Country. Their families can take some comfort from the fact that they were together when they passed away.

## **COMMENTS**

32. Visitors planning to hike in the Mount Bogong area should be aware that weather conditions can be severe at any time of the year. Planning and preparation are critical and visitors should make practical and realistic assessments of their abilities, capacities and limitations.

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<sup>3</sup> Hypothermia is defined as a reduction of core body temperature below 35 degrees Celsius. It occurs when regulatory mechanisms of heat production are exceeded by heat loss to the environment. The most common cause is low environmental temperature. Left untreated, hypothermia can lead to death.

33. The Parks Victoria website<sup>4</sup> warns hikers travelling to Mount Bogong to be prepared for snow, high winds and fog - and to always carry suitable clothing including a waterproof layer, and check the forecast before leaving. It emphasises that visitors should be aware of their limitations and that the natural environment can be unpredictable with planning and foresight being critical. The route to the summit along the Staircase Walking Track is a challenging hike. It is noted that the exposed treeless plain to the summit offers little shelter in poor weather. Further, it is noted that navigation can be extremely difficult and it is recommended that hikers turn back if conditions are poor or deteriorating.

I convey my sincere sympathy to the families for their loss.

Pursuant to section 73(1B) 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:

Senior Next of Kin

Senior Constable Wayne Reynolds, Coronial Investigator

Signature:



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Coroner David Ryan

Date: 05 March 2026

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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.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/alpine-national-park/attractions/mount-bogong>.

