



IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

COR 2026 000400

FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT INQUEST

Form 38 Rule 63(2)

*Section 67 of the **Coroners Act 2008***

Findings of:	Coroner Paul Lawrie
Deceased:	Linda Anne Bullen
Date of birth:	11 March 1976
Date of death:	19 January 2026
Cause of death:	Acute pancreatitis
Place of death:	Sunshine Hospital, St Albans, Victoria
Keywords:	Specialist Disability Accommodation, supported independent living, natural causes

INTRODUCTION

1. On 19 January 2026, Linda Anne Bullen was 49 years old when she passed away at Sunshine Hospital from acute pancreatitis. Ms Bullen had a diagnosis of trisomy 21, dysphagia, rheumatoid arthritis and vision impairment.
2. Ms Bullen was a resident of a Specialist Disability Accommodation (**SDA**) dwelling enrolled under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (**NDIS**). From 2019 Ms Bullen received funded daily independent living support provided by disability service provider, Possability Victoria.
3. Ms Bullen used a wheelchair and required varying levels of support for all activities of daily living, including self-care, mobility, and mealtime support. In the twelve months prior to her death, Ms Bullen had been admitted to hospital five times for aspiration pneumonia or chest infections.¹

THE CORONIAL INVESTIGATION

4. Ms Bullen'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. The death of a person in care is a mandatory report to the coroner, even if the death appears to have been from natural causes. Ms Bullen was a "person placed in custody or care" within the meaning of section 4 of the Act, as he was a "prescribed class of person"² due to his status as an "SDA resident residing in an SDA enrolled dwelling".
5. Senior Constable Zoe Pedersen acted as the Coronial Investigator for the investigation of Ms Bullen's death. Senior Constable Pedersen conducted inquiries on my behalf and compiled a coronial brief of evidence.
6. This finding draws on the totality of the coronial investigation into the death of Linda Anne Bullen 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

¹ Statement of Nathan Vincent, dated 3 July 2026, Coronial Brief.

² Section 4(2)(j)(i), *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic).

narrative clarity. In the coronial jurisdiction, facts must be established on the balance of probabilities.³

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

Circumstances in which the death occurred

7. On 18 January 2026, support workers observed Ms Bullen to have rattly breathing, a pale complexion and vomiting.
8. At 12:50pm, Victoria Ambulance paramedics arrived and completed initial observations before transporting Ms Bullen to Sunshine Hospital. She was assessed in the emergency department and investigations identified that she had necrotising pancreatitis, complicated by aspiration pneumonia. Ms Bullen quickly deteriorated due to multiorgan failure.⁴
9. A multidisciplinary discussion between intensive care, general medicine, general surgery, and the emergency department agreed that Ms Bullen's condition was such that comfort measures, consistent with her advanced care plan, was the most appropriate treatment approach. The palliative care team was involved and prescribed appropriate end-of-life medications.⁵
10. On 19 January 2026, Ms Bullen was transferred from the emergency department to a general ward during the late morning. She passed away at 1:44pm.⁶

Identity of the deceased

11. On 19 January 2026, Linda Anne Bullen, born 11 March 1976, was visually identified by her brother, Karl Bullen.
12. Identity is not in dispute and requires no further investigation.

³ 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.

⁴ E-Medical Deposition Form, Sunshine Hospital, dated 19 January 2026.

⁵ E-Medical Deposition Form, Sunshine Hospital, dated 19 January 2026.

⁶ E-Medical Deposition Form, Sunshine Hospital, dated 19 January 2026.

Medical cause of death

13. Adjunct Associate Professor Hans de Boer from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine conducted an external examination on 21 January 2026 and provided a written report of his findings dated 23 January 2026.
14. A post-mortem computed tomography (CT) scan demonstrated retroperitoneal fat stranding and loss of pancreatic definition in keeping with pancreatitis, with no evidence of substantial injury.
15. Associate Professor de Boer provided an opinion that the death was due to natural causes and the medical cause of death was '*I(a) Acute pancreatitis.*'
16. I accept Associate Professor de Boer's opinion.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

17. Pursuant to section 67(1) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic) I make the following findings:
 - a) the identity of the deceased was Linda Anne Bullen, born 11 March 1976;
 - b) Ms Bullen's death occurred on 19 January 2026 at Sunshine Hospital, 176 Furlong Road, St Albans, Victoria from 1a: Acute pancreatitis;
 - c) the cause of death was attributable to natural causes; and
 - d) her death occurred in the circumstances described above.
18. There is nothing to suggest that the care provided to Ms Bullen by the staff at Possability, or the medical care she received at Sunshine Hospital, was anything other than appropriate.

I convey my sincere condolences to Ms Bullen's family, friends and carers for their loss.

I thank the Coronial Investigator and those assisting for their work in this investigation.

DIRECTIONS

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:

Peter Bullen, Senior Next of Kin

Possability Victoria

Senior Constable Zoe Pedersen, Victoria Police, Coronial Investigator

Signature:



Coroner Paul Lawrie

Date: 22 September 2026

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.
