



CORONERS COURT OF QUEENSLAND

FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION

CITATION: Non-inquest findings into the deaths of Mia Mishka Annie Ayliffe-Chung and Thomas Leslie Jackson

TITLE OF COURT: Coroners Court of Queensland

JURISDICTION: Cairns

DATE: 30 June 2020

FILE NO(s): COR 2016/3505 & COR 2016/3639

FINDINGS OF: Nerida Wilson, Northern Coroner

CATCHWORDS: Coroners published non-inquest findings; stabbing death; multiple fatality; Home Hill Queensland; backpacker deaths; backpacker accommodation; fruit pickers; drug induced psychosis (cannabis); paranoid schizophrenia; foreign nationals; Mental Health Court (Queensland), criminal charges discontinued; gender based violence.

Contents

Legislative Framework	1
Background	1
Next of Kin Concerns	2
Work Arrangements between Hostel and Farms.....	4
Events Prior to 16 August 2016.....	4
Events Between 16 and 23 August 2016	7
Interaction between Ayad and Mia	9
Was There a Request for a Change of Room?	10
Events on Monday, 22 August 2016	14
Events on Tuesday, 23 August 2016.....	15
Autopsy Results	21
Criminal and Mental Health Court Proceedings	23
Background Checks	24
Treatment and Repatriation.....	24
Acknowledgment and Condolences	25
Findings Pursuant to s45 of the Coroners Act 2003.....	26

Legislative Framework

1. These findings concern the deaths of Mia Mishka Annie AYLIFFE-CHUNG and Thomas Leslie JACKSON who both died as a result of being physically attacked and stabbed at a backpacker hostel in Home Hill shortly before 11:30pm on 23 August 2016.
2. Pursuant to section 45(2) of the *Coroners Act 2003* I am required to make the following findings:
 - a) The identity of the deceased;
 - b) How the person died;
 - c) When the person died;
 - d) Where the person died;
 - e) What caused the person to die.
3. Pursuant to section 46(3) of the *Coroners Act 2003* I must not make any comment or statement that a person is or may be:
 - a) Guilty of an offence; or
 - b) Civilly liable for something.
4. I hold the discretion to conduct an inquest if I am satisfied that it is in the public interest to do so. In determining whether it is in the public interest, I may consider the extent to which drawing attention to the circumstances of the deaths of Mia and Thomas, may prevent deaths in similar circumstances from happening in the future and any relevant guidelines issued by the State Coroner.
5. Additionally, a person may apply for an inquest to be held. Mia's mother, Rosie Ayliffe, and Thomas' father, Les Jackson by way of joint correspondence directed to the Coroner's office requested that an inquest be held into the deaths of their adult children.
6. I determined, for reasons that will be set out in these findings, that an inquest should not be held in relation to the deaths of Mia and Thomas. However, I do consider that it is in the public interest that these findings be published and will set the reasons for doing so.
7. Ms Rosie Ayliffe and Mr Les Jackson raised a number of concerns and I address the relevant concerns in the course of these findings.

Background

8. Home Hill is located approximately 98 kilometres south-east of Townsville and is a predominantly agricultural economy that draws labour from foreign nationals travelling through Australia on working visas. Both Mia and Thomas were UK nationals travelling in Australia on working holiday visas and were engaged in farm work at the time of their deaths.

9. Mia Mishka Annie AYLIFFE-CHUNG, was born on 7 October 1995 and died on 23 August 2016, she was aged 20 years. Mia died after being stabbed multiple times with a knife. The most significant of those knife wounds was to her chest.
10. Thomas Leslie JACKSON, was born on 7 November 1985 and died on 29 August 2016 after being stabbed multiple times with a knife on 23 August 2016; he was aged 30 years. The most significant of Thomas' knife wounds was to his head.
11. All wounds were inflicted by Smail AYAD who was also in Australia on a working holiday visa.
12. Smail AYAD (aged 29) was a French national from Marseille. For the purposes of these findings I will refer to him as 'AYAD'.
13. All necessary checks, conducted within Australia and through INTERPOL confirm that AYAD had no recorded criminal history.
14. Mia, Thomas and AYAD were all guests at a backpackers Hostel, located on Ninth Street, Home Hill also known as 'Shelly's Backpackers'. Mia and Thomas were not known to each other, nor did either of them know AYAD at any time prior to them meeting at the backpacker accommodation.

Next of Kin Concerns

15. Mia's mother, Ms Rosie Ayliffe, and Thomas' father, Mr Les Jackson raised a number of general and specific concerns in relation to the deaths of their children.
16. Their general concerns related to the hostel industry and working visa framework; namely:
 1. People travelling on working visas were especially vulnerable to financial exploitation that may prevent them from being able to move on from a place if they no longer felt safe;
 2. Hostels were promoting accommodation in circumstances where there was insufficient employment available for hostel occupants to meet their cost of living;
 3. The safety needs of hostel occupants were overridden by the commercial function or commercial imperative of the hostel;
 4. Whether or not information was made available to 'young travellers' at hostels about how to access mental health services either for themselves or on behalf of others.
17. Their specific concerns included:
 5. Mia had apparently asked to move rooms because she was "frightened" by AYAD's prior behaviour however this request had been declined by the hostel operator;

6. AYAD was allegedly involved in an altercation with another hostel occupant sometime prior to 23 August 2016, that this altercation involved a knife, the event was reported to police but the knife was not seized;
 7. The availability of alcohol and illicit drugs at the hostel may have masked AYAD's symptoms;
 8. That Thomas' passport was being held by the hostel and this prevented him from leaving at an earlier time.
18. Whilst I acknowledge the first three general concerns above, I do not address them in these findings as they fall outside the remit of this coronial investigation. I have nonetheless had regard to the 'Harvest Trail Inquiry', a comprehensive Inquiry conducted by the Commonwealth Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO), commencing in August 2013.
19. That Inquiry examined various workplace arrangements amongst people working in the agriculture sector including those people on working holiday visas. The Inquiry also gave consideration to the role of accommodation providers. The findings were released on 22 November 2018 and are publicly available on the FWO website. A copy will be provided to next of kin with these findings.
20. With regards to the fourth general concern I am not informed as to whether the particular backpacker hostel at Home Hill had information available to guests about the availability of mental health or any other health services. I am conscious though that AYAD formed a close bond with some of the staff members, in particular Ms Natasha Weaver who was employed as a cleaner and Assistant Manager at the hostel eight years previously.
21. Ms Weaver described AYAD as someone who was 'respectful, 'nice' and 'happy'. She had the opportunity to observe and interact with AYAD for a five month period prior the events of 23 August 2016.
22. Similarly, Mr Grant Scholtz, who was Night Manager of the hostel described AYAD as "*one of the good ones*" because he did not cause any 'trouble'.
23. Both Ms Weaver and Mr Scholtz describe conversing with AYAD during the course of his stay at the hostel.
24. In addition to those statements I have the benefit of a statement from Mr David Carrara, an Italian national that was a guest at the Hostel. He resided at the backpackers for a similar length of time as AYAD and at some stage they worked together on the same farm. Mr Carrara recalls an occasion when AYAD attended a doctor in relation to a back injury. I am satisfied that AYAD was aware of and availed himself of medical services as required.
25. As for access specifically to mental health services I note that Home Hill is proximate to Townsville – the largest regional centre in Queensland and access to mental health services (indeed any medical service) if required.

26. Consular assistance and online information is available to travellers, either within their home or destination countries, should medical assistance or advice be required.
27. I will address all remaining concerns raised by Mia and Thomas' parents during the course of these findings.

Work Arrangements between Hostel and Farms

28. There was an informal arrangement between the Hostel and at least one of the farms (the [REDACTED] Farm) in the surrounding area. That [REDACTED] Farm was operated by [REDACTED].
29. The Hostel is owned and managed by wife and husband Shelley and Gregory Norris.
30. There was no financial relationship between them however when the [REDACTED] Farm required labour they would contact the Hostel, notify them of the number of workers required and the Hostel would organise transport.
31. There was also evidence before me of other informal recruiting arrangements, whereby backpackers that already had a working relationship with any particular farm might also source additional labour by introducing their fellow backpacker(s).

Events Prior to 16 August 2016

32. AYAD first entered Australia on 5 November 2015.
33. He first commenced residing at the Hostel that same month, engaged in mango picking work during this time. AYAD left the hostel on 23 December 2015 when it closed for Christmas. I am not informed about any concerns either for AYAD's mental health or behaviour more generally during this time.
34. Mia and Thomas were unknown to each other however their paths began to converge when they both entered Australia, on different flights into Sydney, but on the same date, 13 January 2016.
35. AYAD departed the country on 17 February 2016 and re-entered the country on 11 March 2016.
36. Records confirm that AYAD took up work picking grapes at a vineyard at Lowden, Western Australia in March 2016. AYAD resided at a backpacker hostel at Donnybrook during this time. No specific concerns were raised either for AYAD's mental health or behaviour more generally during this time. The only concerns raised related to his 'work ethic', consumption of cannabis and failure to pay accommodation charges before departing Donnybrook.
37. AYAD left Donnybrook on or about 10 April 2016 and travelled to Perth where he stayed for one night. Thereafter AYAD returned to Queensland and took up

accommodation at the Hostel. Records confirm he returned there on 1 May 2016.

38. Thomas was already resident at the Hostel at this time however. Check in records confirm that he commenced residing at the Hostel on 24 April 2016, one week prior to AYAD's arrival. At the time of his arrival a photocopy was taken of Thomas' passport. This was the standard procedure at the Hostel. Thomas' passport was ultimately returned to the UK and his family has possession of it.
39. It appears that Thomas and AYAD became acquainted with each other and interacted in friendly terms.
40. UK National, Ms Chloe Connolly, made the following observation:

"I often saw Thomas and AYAD talking while having a smoke and they seem to get along".

41. In late June, AYAD commenced working at the [REDACTED] Farm. Through this employment AYAD was in charge of a crew of seven workers. His employer regarded him as a good worker who was polite and showed good leadership.
42. On 19 July 2016, AYAD's employer observed that he was experiencing back pain. AYAD told him that it was related to a previous kidney operation. His employer told him to take some time off and that AYAD's job would be held for him. AYAD returned to work approximately one week later. This incident seemingly corresponds with the incident described by fellow backpacker Mr Carrara, who was aware of AYAD attending a doctor in relation to a back issue.
43. Between 1 May 2016 and 16 August 2016 there was only one incident of note involving AYAD. That incident occurred at approximately 1am on 16 July 2016 when AYAD became involved in an altercation with two other male guests at the Hostel. The altercation arose when AYAD had complained of another backpacker stealing his jacket.
44. During the previous day AYAD had approached Assistant Manager Ms Weaver, about his stolen jacket. Ms Weaver described AYAD as appearing 'angry' and this was the first occasion she had seen him become angry about anything. There was some suggestion that another backpacker who was also a French national (Bernard) may have been involved in the theft of the jacket. Witnesses to the altercation describe AYAD and Bernard engaging in a 'fist fight' and there is no suggestion of any weapons being used by either party. A third French national (Aurelien) was also involved in the fight.
45. Other backpackers intervened to separate AYAD and Bernard, one of those was Mr Carrara; he knew some French and heard AYAD and Bernard yelling and swearing at each other in French. During the separation Mr Carrara heard AYAD say: *"let me take my knife, I will kill one of them"*. Mr Carrara then moved AYAD into his room, thereafter all parties became settled.

46. Mr Carrara describes this as the only occasion when he observed AYAD to become aggressive or show any confrontational behaviour. Other backpackers and staff members support this observation.
47. There is no suggestion that either AYAD or any other person produced a knife at any stage during this argument. There is no suggestion that AYAD or any other person was carrying or concealing a knife during this altercation. There is no suggestion that AYAD sought to retrieve a knife either after returning to his room or at any later stage.
48. Mr Yoann Grenier heard AYAD make a number of comments using French during this altercation including “*Quand je rente en France je vais vous tuer*”, which Mr Grenier translated as “*When I come back in France I will kill you*”. Mr Grenier also heard AYAD say words to the effect ‘*come on you don’t scare me, come on I will hit you*’. Mr Grenier does not depose to hearing AYAD make any comment about a knife although he was well placed to hear and understand it if that were the case.
49. Ms Melanie Piermay heard AYAD say in French: “*Ja vais te tuer, tu ma voler mas veste et apres il a dit donner moi mon couteau*” which Ms Piermay translated as: “*I want to kill you, you are steal[ing] my jacket, give me my knife*”.
50. I accept AYAD made reference to knife although the incident did not otherwise involve a knife.
51. This is the first and only instance of (reported) aggressive behaviour by AYAD in the months preceding the events on 23 August 2016.
52. This altercation also came to the attention of staff at the Hostel.
53. Assistant Manager Ms Weaver stepped in and told all parties to ‘calm down’ as did Owner / Manager Ms Norris. Ms Norris also made a telephone call to Policelink.
54. I have the benefit of the QPS incident report in relation to that call and subsequent police attendance. The initial details were taken as follows:

“Person/Property in Immediate Danger. Large French group fighting up on top of the balcony. Lots of shouting and arguing can be heard in background. INFT [informant] states approximately 10X males involved in the fight – possibly all drunk, nil WPNS [weapons] sighted loud disturbance heard in the background of the call INFT [informant] is the Manager of the ILPINR IVNR CHNR”
55. The incident was tasked as an ‘urgent’, ‘street disturbance’.
56. Ms Weaver deposes that after this incident both Bernard and Aurelien were asked to leave the Backpackers on account of their involvement and other alleged thefts. AYAD was permitted to stay on at the Backpackers seemingly because he appeared to be “*quite calm*” during the incident.

57. The QPS incident report documented the following:

“evicting some people from the LOC [location], keeping the peace whilst that happens”

58. The reference to ‘evicting some people’ I take to be a reference to Bernard and Aurelian.

59. Returning to the concern raised by Mia and Thomas’ families I find that there was an altercation involving AYAD during which he made reference to a knife. Police were informed at the time that no weapons were involved and as such they had no reason or cause to search for or seize any knife.

Events Between 16 and 23 August 2016

60. During her stay in Australia, Mia made friends with other foreign nationals including Mr Christopher Bowers and Mr Sam Gostelow, two fellow UK nationals whom she met at the Gold Coast. Together they decided to gain work farming so that they could extend their working visas.

61. Together they booked flights to travel from Brisbane to Townsville on 15 August 2016. Mr Gostelow did not ultimately travel with them on that date however Mia and Mr Bowers continued on. They stayed one night in Townsville before travelling to Home Hill on 16 August 2016.

62. Mia and Mr Bowers both checked into the Hostel on 16 August 2016. Mia’s check-in documents reveal she was only in possession of a temporary passport at that time as her original had been lost in Bali. However a copy of her Visa Grant Notice was taken. Mia and Mr Bowers were allocated to room ‘2L’ which contained two double bunks. AYAD was also allocated to room 2L.

63. AYAD had request no one else be placed in room 2L as, up until the arrival of Mia and Mr Bowers, he previously had the room to himself. Cleaner / Assistant Manager Ms Weaver deposes that on the day Mia and Mr Bowers were due to arrive she had a conversation with AYAD about their pending arrival. AYAD told her:

“Don’t put them in my room, put them, in Lance’s room”.

64. Ms Weaver deposes that she raised AYAD’s request with Mr Scholz (Night Manager) who informed her that it would not be AYAD’s choice and guests should otherwise accept their room allocations.

65. Mr Bowers first met AYAD on the day of his arrival (16 August 2018). Mr Bowers describes his first impression of AYAD as being *“a really nice guy”* that *“kept to himself”* but would say ‘hello’. Mr Bowers does not describe there being any incidents whilst they all shared the same room.

66. I refer to the following extract from Mr Bowers' statement to understand the dynamic of the room whilst they were sharing:

"[AYAD] was on the bottom bunk on the right hand side of the room. [AYAD] would use a mattress protector to cover the side of the bunk for privacy. I would only know that he was there if I could see his feet hanging over the end of the bed or he made some noise".

"Neither Mia or I ended up working with [AYAD]. We would only see him when he would get something from the room, bedtime or when he was sitting outside the kitchen. I would see him occasionally talking to people, but he mainly seemed to keep to himself. Whenever I asked him if he wanted to join us for a beer or anything, he always said 'maybe', but never did".

67. Whilst Mr Bowers seemingly did not hold any concerns with respect of AYAD I am informed of an occasion when Mia confided in Mr Bowers that she thought AYAD was "weird". She was concerned because AYAD locked her and Mr Bowers out of their bedroom on more than one occasion. It is apparent that Mr Bowers did not share the same concern; he deposed:

"I just thought it was because he wanted privacy"

68. Mia raised this concern with at least one other resident, a female UK national.

69. I requested additional information from the Hostel as to the policies and procedures for accommodating backpackers at the Hostel. I am informed that the only procedures related to check in, which required guests to provide a photocopy of their passport, working visa and driver licence.

70. The only policies were in effect 'house rules' governing people's conduct whilst staying at the Hostel. There was to be no intimidation, verbal or physical abuse to management, staff or guests. Management reserved the right to evict any guest if they breached the house rules. Whilst I am satisfied that those rules are sufficiently broad to capture a number types of conduct, they do not specifically identify sexual assault or sexual harassment. For reasons I will identify shortly, I consider this to be a gap in the Hostel policies.

71. I also proceed on the basis that there was no specific policy regarding the housing of female guests at the Hostel. I am of the view that unless a female has requested to sleep in mixed dormitories or bedrooms, best practice would be served by placing women with other women. Such high density sharing arrangements are already fraught, even without the added layer of vulnerability a woman may experience being accommodated with males not known to her.

72. In Mia's case she was placed in a room with only two other males, one of whom was a stranger to her, had previously been involved in a confrontation with two other guests (which regardless of the circumstances would still have constituted a breach of the house rules), and had also put management on prior notice of his unwillingness to share the room with others.

73. Whilst I accept management should retain the discretion as to how rooms are allocated, they should also bring some judgement to bear over which guests should or should not be housed together, not simply as a matter of convenience.

Interaction between Ayad and Mia

74. By various accounts, the timing of Mia's arrival aligns with a change in AYAD's character and behaviour, and the evidence supports a view that AYAD developed a focus on Mia. The evidence suggests that the only interaction between AYAD and Mia arose in the context of the shared room, they were otherwise not known to socialise or work together.

75. Mr Matteo Bellusci, an Italian national who was staying at the Hostel at the time of Mia and Mr Bower's arrival, recalled a conversation with AYAD in the kitchen area of the Backpackers. Mr Bellusci deposed as follows:

"[AYAD] told me that he thought Mia was wonderful and that she has a good body and that when he leaves he will take Mia with him. [AYAD] said to me that Mia is his wife. I did not think this made sense because he is not Mia's husband or boyfriend".

76. Another guest, Ms Josie Bennett, a UK national, recalled a separate conversation she had with three other male guests (one of whom was AYAD) about one week prior to the events on 23 August 2016. This would have likely been very shortly after the time Mia and Mr Bowers arrived. Mia's name came up in conversation amongst the male guests, although she was not present. AYAD commented:

"Yeah but she is in my room, she is my wife, I want to sleep with her".

77. I note that when Ms Bennett, heard that comment she observed the other male guests 'shrug it off' and not say anything to AYAD. The comments were a matter of concern to Ms Bennett.

78. The comments made by AYAD and his actions towards her were demonstrative of a sexual interest towards Mia.

79. In circumstances where AYAD and Mia had only been known to each other for an extremely short period of time and had limited interactions with each other I consider these behaviours should have caused serious concern to those who either heard or potentially observed them.

80. I am not informed of whether Mia was made directly aware of these comments or whether they were raised with any of the staff at the Hostel. However had Mia been made aware of the comments AYAD was making to others, it may have further alerted her and confirmed the concerns she herself held about him.

Was There a Request for a Change of Room?

81. As Mia's situation demonstrated, the experiences and the reality for a young female traveller are likely to be very different to that of their male peers. I accept the concern raised by Mia's mother, as to whether Mia had been denied a request to be placed in a different room, is a significant one in the particular circumstances of this case.
82. Its significance lies in the possibility that 'had' Mia requested to be moved rooms, and had such request been granted, it would have removed her from AYAD's immediate proximity and potentially provided a safety net for her.
83. The suggestion that Mia may have requested to be moved to a different room arises from the evidence given by [REDACTED], a sugar cane farmer who owned and operated two properties in partnership with her brother. The circumstances in which [REDACTED] came to give a statement in relation to these events arise on 26 August 2016, three days after the fatal events at the Hostel.
84. On 26 August 2016 [REDACTED] placed a call to the Investigation Centre that had been set up by the Queensland Police Service. As I understand [REDACTED] had not, within the shortly preceding time, been identified a relevant witness. In investigation log report was created in relation to that call, it recorded the following information as being provided by [REDACTED]:
- "[REDACTED] has contacted the IC stating that she is running a farm near Home Hill and has previously employed the suspect AYAD and the victim AYLIFFE-CHUNG.*
- [REDACTED] states that AYLIFFE-CHUNG has disclosed to her that she felt uneasy by AYAD and felt that he was harrassing (sic) her and asking for sex from her."*
85. In response to [REDACTED] call, a task was created to obtain a statement from her. That statement was taken on 26 August 2016, the same day as the call was made.
86. [REDACTED] deposed that she came to know AYAD sometime in April or May 2016 when she went to the Hostel in person, seeking to recruit people to do farm work for her. She deposes this was her usual practice.
87. Two guests, Mr Jack Bethell and Mr Matthew Latto were taken on by [REDACTED] to do work at the farm. She deposes that as they were leaving Mr Bethell and Mr Latto both suggested that she take on AYAD also. [REDACTED] agreed to this and took contact details (mobile phone and email) for AYAD. With the benefit of AYAD's check in documents at the Hostel I accept they were the same details.
88. [REDACTED] further deposed that she then transported AYAD, Mr Bethell and Mr Latto to her farm where they performed work for at least one week but possibly

a week and a half. This was the only interaction ██████ deposed to having with AYAD.

89. Whilst I do not have a statement from Mr Latto, I do have the benefit of a statement from Mr Bethell.
90. Mr Bethell deposes that he arrived at the Hostel on 31 May 2016 (the same day as his 21st birthday). He states that he was placed in room 20 with three other males, one of whom was AYAD. He deposed to sharing a room with AYAD for about two weeks before being placed in a different room. I am not informed of the circumstances of that change although Mr Bethell deposed he “*had no trouble*” whilst he was sharing the room with AYAD and the two other males.
91. In relation to farm work performed by Mr Bethell, he did not depose to working at ██████ farm. He did however depose to working at the ██████ farm (where AYAD was a team leader) in late July 2016. This was the only instance where Mr Bethell deposed to having worked with AYAD.
92. ██████ deposed that AYAD commenced working at his farm on 24 June 2016.
93. The farms operated by ██████ and ██████ are not one in the same.
94. If I am to accept ██████ evidence, as to the contact that she had with AYAD I must accept that it could not have occurred in the timeframe to which she deposed. The events she described could not have occurred prior to 31 May 2016 or after 24 June 2016.
95. In the course of the investigation I sought an additional statement from Ms Norris as to her knowledge of ██████. She deposed:
- “I know ██████ enough to say hello in the street, otherwise I have no personal relationship with her. ██████ and I have never been friends or mixed together in social circles. I think ██████ may be three or four years older than I”.*
96. ██████ deposed that his practice for recruiting would be to ring the Hostel, speak to Ms Norris, inform her of the number of workers he needed and that Ms Norris would then arrange the transport.
97. In relation to her contact with Mia, ██████ deposed that arrangements had been made for a female German national she knew and Franziska (Ms Franziska Kniott) and her friend Lisa (Ms Lisa Faustmann) to perform work on one of ██████ farms on 22 August 2016.
98. At 7:30am on the morning of 22 August 2016 ██████ received an SMS from Ms Kniott informing her that Lisa would not be attending. ██████ informed Ms Kniott that she still required a second worker that day. Ms Kniott then informed ██████ that she knew a person called ‘Mia’ who was available to take on work.

99. ██████ deposed that Ms Kniott and Mia arrived at the farm at 9:30am.
100. Mia and Ms Kniott arrived at the farm at 9:15am. ██████ met them both and as I understand transported them by motor vehicle to where they would be working. ██████ deposed to a conversation between herself and Mia whilst they were driving.
101. ██████ deposes Mia informed her that she was happy to be working. ██████ asked Mia how she getting along with the other residents at the Hostel. What Mia purportedly told ██████ I repeat verbatim:

“Mia told me that she was in a room with two boys and that she was the only girl. I remember that Mia told me there was a guy in her room that was getting too close to her, physically by touching her and was verbally harassing her. Mia said that he was saying things like that he wanted her to be his girlfriend and that he wanted sex from her. I didn’t know who the male was that she was referring to as this point”.

102. ██████ deposes that she was not aware of the identity of the male whom Mia was referring to.

103. Mia is purported to have made additional disclosures to ██████:

“Mia told me that this male would follow her everywhere. She said that she hated being in the room because of this male. She also said that he would constantly stare at her”

“Mia told me that she felt uncomfortable when she was in the room with this male. She didn’t explain exactly what she meant by this”

“I remember thinking that she was a little upset by this male and that was a little frightened by him”

“I asked her why she didn’t organise to be changed to a different room. She told me that Shelley, who I know to be the owner of the Hostel wouldn’t move her”.

104. Ms Norris denies any such request was made of her. She also denies any request being made on Mia’s behalf by a third party.

105. ██████ deposed:

“I don’t know exactly why Mia told me this, but I guess she just felt that she could open up to me”

“I can’t really remember anything else that was said that day. I remember that conversation because that Mia was concerned and I couldn’t work out why she couldn’t be shifted to another room”.

106. ██████████ did not seek to raise Mia's concerns with Ms Norris or any other person or authority that might have intervened on Mia's behalf.

107. I now refer to Ms Kniott's statement in relation to her recollection of events on this day. Ms Kniott's statement was taken on 25 August 2016, the day before ██████████ contacted police and gave her own statement.

108. Ms Kniott arrived at Home Hill about five to six weeks prior to the fatal events. On that basis I would accept that she was staying at the Hostel from about mid-June. Following her arrival she commenced a relationship with Mr Bethell. Ms Kniott knew of AYAD to recognise him by sight but otherwise did not interact with him in any way.

109. Ms Kniott deposed:

"I never had any conversation with anyone concerning [AYAD]. He never came up in any conversations I had. I never worked with him on any farms"

110. Ms Kniott deposed she came to know Mia from the date of her arrival. Whilst they had limited interaction on Friday, 19 August 2016 they had more detailed interactions the following day. I have concluded that Mia felt comfortable discussing more intimate details of her life with Ms Kniott and other members of her group, including Ms Faustmann and Mr Bethell.

111. In relation to the events on 22 August 2016, Ms Kniott confirmed that she and Mia performed work on a farm together that day. Whilst she did not name or identify ██████████ I accept that it was her farm that was described. Ms Kniott deposed:

"Mia and I worked together the whole day. There was only the two of us"

112. During their time together they talked about family and their respective family dynamics, boyfriends and travel. Mia also discussed safety concerns about further travel she was contemplating in the future. Specifically Mia and Ms Kniott discussed their view about the Hostel. Ms Kniott deposed:

"During this conversation we talked about the hostel. We said that the people are awesome. Mia didn't say anything bad about anyone during this conversation. If she had had any problems with anyone at the hostel I believe that she would have said something at this time. She didn't say anything about having problems with anyone".

113. Ms Kniott further deposed:

"[Mia] was really easy to talk to and the conversation flowed. It was fun to be around her for that time. It made the work go quickly"

114.They worked for three hours. Ms Kniott deposes that they were finished at 12:30pm after which they returned to the Hostel. They remained in each other's company for the remainder of the day and into the evening.

115.Ms Kniott's observations of Mia's demeanour on this day do not reconcile with those of [REDACTED].

116.If I am to accept that Mia made the disclosures as deposed to by [REDACTED], I must also accept that Mia made no disclosure of a similar nature to any of the staff at the Hostel or her fellow backpackers whether female or male, in particular Ms Kniott. Had Mia made such disclosures to [REDACTED] then Ms Kniott was best placed to have heard them.

117.Mia had a number of opportunities to interact with her peers (both female and male) in social settings, both at and away from the Hostel and also AYAD.

118.[REDACTED] connection with Mia was founded solely in work being performed at the farm for a finite period of three hours, they were otherwise entirely unknown to each other and had no additional contact after Mia performed the work that day.

119.The standard of proof required of me to make any findings is 'the balance of probabilities'. In stating that I acknowledge the balance of probabilities is a sliding scale whereby the more serious the allegation and gravity of consequences that may flow from a particular finding, the greater the degree of satisfaction I must have before making it.

120.I am unable to conclude that Mia during her brief conversation with [REDACTED] on 22 August 2016:

- a) made any disclosure to the effect of being sexually assaulted or harassed by AYAD; or
- b) made any disclosure to the effect of having requested a change of room that was refused.

121.I do not consider that an Inquest could resolve this issue, noting as I have the evidence that is available to me from the comprehensive police investigation and additional information called in for this coronial investigation.

Events on Monday, 22 August 2016

122.On 22 August 2016 AYAD failed to attend to work. This was the same day that Mia and Ms Kniott performed work at [REDACTED] farm.

123.That afternoon at about 5pm, AYAD sent a lengthy SMS to his employer. The SMS was written in English which was not AYAD's first language. I reproduce that SMS:

"Hey mate I never won't to quit your farm ... I never won't to make trouble in your place or in Home Hill ... I just want to stop to play

because it's not a good game for me ... I saw you like a dad and my dad were Die ... Every one wan't tp fuck me ... I don't know why ... I'm not a bad man ... I'm just a human ... before I starded [sic] ... I just want to do my job for help you ... not for my day ... not for the money just for go back in my country ... I'm not maffiosa ... I know ir I can do nothing I just want to eat and go back home befor I met you ... I help every one me ... just because I thinks good ... and you are similar than me ... But I know I'm not Italian or Australian ... I'm just a fucking French backpackers ... I can't stay ir with out nothing ... But I don't need shit ... I'm really sorry ... I thinks you know me ... you are the boss ... I'm just a shit and you know that ... I really pain in my heart before some day ... so I can't come back today ... I have to excuse me in front of you because you are a man and I know that ... it's for that I really can't come today ... Now I can't fight anymore for you for the moment ... I never won't to quit you"

124. AYAD's employer acknowledged the SMS and sent a short reply wishing him well. AYAD responded in turn to say thank you. There was no further communication between them.

125. That night, sometime between 7pm and 8pm, AYAD had a conversation with another backpacker / French national, Ms Audrey Bongibault, in the communal kitchen at the Hostel. He told her:

"I want to tell you something but don't tell anyone, I want to leave tonight but I need to go to Ayr. I want to leave by myself not when someone wants me to leave. I don't know where I will sleep".

126. Ms Bongibault states she did not understand what AYAD was talking about. She then left the kitchen and went to her room where she slept.

127. At around the same time AYAD had a conversation with Ms Norris. AYAD told her *"I leave tonight"*. She clarified if he was leaving immediately but AYAD informed her that he would leave the next day (23 August 2016). Arrangements were made for AYAD to settle his bill for accommodation.

Events on Tuesday, 23 August 2016

128. The following morning at about 10:30am Ms Bongibault was with a friend when she observed AYAD sitting outside the kitchen smoking. Ms Bongibault asked him: *"are you alright"*? To which AYAD replied: *"No, I feel bad here"*. Ms Bongibault observed that AYAD looked 'sad' at the time.

129. Ms Bongibault had another conversation with AYAD later in the day at about 1pm. He told her:

"Audrey I want to tell you something. Something will happen tonight. I feel like everybody wants bad things for me like something will happen to me".

130. She asked AYAD: *“Why did you say that? Maybe you are doing movies in your head”*

131. AYAD replied: *“No, I just feel something really bad”*.

132. Ms Bongibault observed there was something different in AYAD’s appearance during this conversation. She described his face as appearing ‘sad’ and ‘very bad’ but had some difficulty in describing the look. She also observed that AYAD appeared anxious. AYAD told her: *“be careful of the camera outside”*

133. About two hours later (3pm) Ms Bongibault had another conversation with AYAD which she commenced by asking him if he was feeling better. He replied:

“Don’t talk about that, I told you don’t talk about that when everybody can hear us or with camera”.

134. It is apparent that AYAD was displaying paranoid behaviours at this time.

135. Ms Bongibault told AYAD: *“no worries because we can talk of everything like we did before”*. Whilst she deposes she did not understand the importance of AYAD’s behaviour or comments ‘at that time’, I consider that Ms Bongibault observed and understood that AYAD was unwell.

136. AYAD’s behaviour also came to the attention of UK national, Ms Sarah Blythin who deposes to working in *“mental health”* through her *“social work”*. She considered that AYAD’s behaviour had changed and she was *“a bit worried about him”*.

137. At about 5:30pm AYAD went to the main officer and spoke with Ms Norris (Owner/Manager) again. They discussed when he wanted to check out. This is the conversation that followed:

Ms Norris: *“You did not check out, do you want to check out tomorrow?”*

AYAD: *“Yes check out tomorrow”*

Ms Norris: *“ok, check out 10am”*

AYAD: *“no I want work”*

Ms Norris: *“so you don’t want to check out tomorrow, you want work”*

AYAD: *“no I leave”*

138. Ms Norris became confused by the conversation so sought the assistance of a French national, Mr Julien Lerat to assist her conversation with AYAD. Mr Lerat then had a conversation with AYAD during which it was established that AYAD wanted to check out of the Hostel but retain his work at the farm Mr Lerat explained that because of the relationship between the Hostel and the farm he would not be able to continue working there if he checked out.

139. AYAD told Mr Lerat: "*ok say to her I don't check out*". Mr Lerat then communicated this to Ms Norris.
140. The conversation between Mr Lerat and AYAD was seemingly lucid and coherent. Mr Lerat did not depose to any issue, confusion or concern arising from this conversation.
141. On the evening of 23 August 2016 Mia attended the Crown Hotel with some of the other residents of Shelley's Backpackers, Ms Sarah Blythlyn, Ms Chloe Connolly, Mr Christopher Bowers, Ms Lucy KING, Ms Lauren Handley and Ms Kelsey Hopkins.
142. Ms Blythlyn arrived at the Crown Hotel and observed that Mia was already present. She described everyone in the group as "*having a good time*". Ms Blythlyn, Ms King and Ms Connolly left the group together at about 6:35pm and returned to the Hostel at 8:30pm.
143. When Ms Blythlyn returned she observed AYAD sitting outside the kitchen. Her observations of him at that time were still that "*something was wrong*". Ms Blythlyn returned to her room to prepare for sleep at about 10:45pm.
144. With regards to all witness statements it is apparent that sometime between 10:45pm and 11pm AYAD commenced shouting. Mr Matteo Bellusci and Mr Scholz (Night Manager) each investigated the shouts and observed AYAD on his own.
145. Mr Bellusci observed AYAD looking at the ground saying "*don't say this, shut up*". AYAD was on his own at the time. Mr Bellusci asked AYAD if he was okay and AYAD replied: "*Yeah, yeah, all good, thank you guys, now I am okay*". This response was seemingly directed to Mr Scholz also who had also asked AYAD why he was making noise.
146. After this interaction both Mr Bellusci and Mr Scholz observed AYAD return to his room.
147. What occurred next was recorded on a CCTV camera installed at the Hostel.
148. The CCTV footage records AYAD re-entering his room at 11:06:33pm.
149. At 11:07:55pm AYAD exited the room back onto the balcony. He was holding Mia in front of him with his right arm around her neck region. He was holding a knife in his right hand, also placed near Mia's neck region. AYAD was forcing Mia out of the room. Whilst holding onto Mia, AYAD appeared to start shouting from the balcony railing.
150. At 11:08:06pm Mr Scholz appeared, standing at the far end of the balcony looking towards AYAD and Mia, he then began to walk towards them.

151. At 11:08:10pm Daniel Richards looked out of the doorway of the room adjacent to the one where AYAD and Mia had emerged. That person was within 1-2 metres of them.
152. Mr Richards pleaded with AYAD to put the knife down. Ms Scholz continued to walk towards them.
153. At 11:08:17pm AYAD brought his right arm away from Mia neck region. He then brought the knife he was holding back up towards the left side of Mia's head and made a swift cutting motion.
154. Mia then fell to the ground following which AYAD then launched into a frenzied attack using the knife against Mia's upper body as she tried to protect herself on the ground.
155. Mr Scholtz attempted to get in close to protect Mia and stop AYAD but was unable to take a hold of either because of AYAD's use of the knife. Mr Scholz sustained a knife wound to his right leg at this time. Mr Richards witnessed these events at close range. He started screaming out for help.
156. At 11:08:27pm AYAD stood up and backed a short distance away from Mia. It appears his attention at that moment was shifting to the people that were beginning to close around him. His attack on Mia lasted 10 seconds.
157. At this moment in time Mia was able to stand up and run away. She had by this time sustained a number of significant knife wounds that would ultimately prove fatal.
158. AYAD remained on the balcony for a short period as people dispersed from around him. He was clearly highly agitated.
159. Mr Richards continued to call out for help and for someone to call the police. He then observed that Mia was "*staggering*" and holding onto her wounds. Mia made it to the end of the corridor where there was a bathroom area with cubicles. Mia locked herself in one of the cubicles.
160. At 11:08:49pm AYAD launched himself from the balcony, head first, with his arms extended as if he was attempting to fly. He landed on the ground on his back.
161. After AYAD threw himself from the balcony Thomas and another male were seen assist AYAD from the ground. They were seemingly unaware of that had occurred on the balcony.
162. The scene at the Hostel was one of chaos, confusion and fear.
163. With regards to the time stamp on the CCTV footage and Mr Richards own statement, it appears that at about 11:09:26pm Mr Richards commenced a call to '000' using a mobile phone. He then passed this phone to Ms Sheryll Richings, the partner of Mr Scholz, she then continued the call. I accept there

was at least one other '000' call made, namely that by Ms Norris at about 11:13pm.

164. Mr Richards then went into the bathroom area and looked over the cubicle wall where he observed Mia. She was laying on the floor and appeared to be breathing. Mr Richards then ran back outside and yelled "*She's been stabbed, she's in the toilet*". Thomas' attention was brought to Mr Richards. He then left AYAD and went upstairs.

165. At 11:10:51pm Mr Richards, closely followed by Thomas went into the toilet area to provide whatever effective aid they could to Mia. They closed the main door behind them. Mr Richards then climbed over the cubicle wall where Mia had sought refuge and unlocked the door from the inside. He rolled her body slightly and observed a deep wound to her chest and stomach. Mr Richards kept pressure on the wounds and attempted to reassure Mia.

166. During this time AYAD went back up onto the balcony and paced along it for a period of time whilst continuing to hold on to the knife. He was shouting and gesturing.

167. At 11:14:37pm Thomas opened the door from the balcony into the bathroom and looked outside, whether to check on the arrival of ambulance or police, or to keep vigilant about AYAD's presence undoubtedly concerned that there was still a risk. AYAD was close by and turned his attention to Thomas. From the CCTV footage it is apparent that Thomas said something to AYAD.

168. Mr Richards, who was still in the bathroom with Mia recalled hearing Thomas say:

"[AYAD], what's the matter calm down, what the fuck are you doing"

169. In the CCTV Thomas can be seen to back away from the bathroom door and attempt to close it behind him. AYAD followed after him.

170. At 11:14:46pm AYAD kicked open the bathroom door entered. AYAD commenced attacking Thomas with the knife. Thomas and AYAD grappled with each other during which Mr Richards took the opportunity to extract himself from the bathroom to get more help. Mr Richards stood out on the balcony and screamed out for help. No one answered to that call.

171. At 11:16pm QAS Paramedic Jane Arthur (Home Hill Ambulance Station) received a call from the QAS Communications Centre directing her to attend the Hostel in relation to a stabbing. She was at that time the relieving Office in Charge of the Station.

172. The first Police Officers on the scene were Constables Whitney De Bree and Reece Weber. They attended from Ayr Police Station, located approximately 12km north of Home Hill. Cameras worn by both Constable confirm they were at the Hostel and engaging with AYAD by 11:20pm.

173. Paramedic Arthur was in her ambulance and on the road to the Backpackers by 11:22pm.
174. AYAD was standing on the balcony shouting in French. Both officers gave verbal commands to AYAD to lie on the ground. He complied with that direction. The officers then approached AYAD walking from the ground level up the stairs leading onto the balcony. As both officers stepped onto the balcony AYAD stood up and began to move away from them. Constable Weber shouted at AYAD to get back on the ground. AYAD did not comply but went into one of the backpacker rooms. Constables Webber and De Bree then drew their tasers.
175. AYAD emerged out the room and began to approach Constables Weber and De Bree who were holding the tasers. Both Constables shouted at AYAD, repeatedly warning him that if he did not get on the ground he would be tasered.
176. AYAD eventually complied with the direction and lay face down on the ground.
177. At 11:22:30pm Constable Weber secured AYAD with handcuffs.
178. With AYAD secured Constable De Bree entered the bathroom and was confronted with the sight of Thomas and Mia.
179. Constable De Bree stayed with Thomas and Mia for a short period of time before she had to return to assist Constable Weber in restraining AYAD who was beginning to struggle against his restraint.
180. At 11:25pm Paramedic Arthur arrived at the Hostel. She was the first Paramedic on the scene. Paramedic Arthur was confronted by a number of people, whom I understand to be residents of the Backpackers, who were clearly distressed and yelling at her to hurry up. This was occurring whilst Paramedic Arthur was endeavouring to retrieve equipment from the back of Ambulance.
181. Paramedic Arthur then proceeded to the bathroom where Mia and Thomas were located. She too was confronted by a deeply distressing scene, one I consider she did not fully expect or anticipate. AYAD was still shouting close by and there were others yelling too. It was a chaotic scene.
182. After absorbing that scene, Paramedic Arthur set to work assessing what injuries had been inflicted on Mia and Thomas. She checked them both to establish whether or not they had a pulse. She was unable to detect a pulse in either. Paramedic Arthur then attempted to establish the extent of Thomas' injuries. She observed a number of stab wounds to his head and neck area. She then assessed Mia and observed a number of stab wounds to her chest area.
183. At 11:28pm a second QAS Paramedic (Samantha Carter) arrived at the scene.
184. Paramedics Arthur and Carter set about assessing who they would treat first. At this time, whilst Mia was known to have chest wounds, she did not appear to have extensive blood loss. Thomas however, did appear to have experienced

significant blood loss although was not actively bleeding at the time. He did not have a pulse but had one or two agonal breaths in the space of a minute. His injuries were considered to be incompatible with life.

185. Because of these indicators a decision was taken to focus efforts on reviving Mia.

186. Paramedics Arthur and Carter commenced CPR on Mia. Defibrillation pads were applied and it was observed that Mia had 'pulseless electrical activity', that is non-shockable rhythm. CPR was continued and Paramedic Arthur commenced ventilation. During these compressions Paramedic Carter came to observe that Mia's wounds were producing blood and her stomach was becoming distended due to internal bleeding.

187. Three other QAS Officers then arrived; Paramedics Megan Jerkic, Renae Birch and Peter Kane.

188. Paramedic Kane was quickly briefed regarding Thomas' condition then went to assess him. Paramedic Kane applied defibrillator pads to Thomas that confirmed a heart rate of 100 beats per minute. This indicated that Thomas may have still been alive. Paramedic Kane then placed a blood pressure cuff on Thomas' right arm and obtained a blood pressure of 90 systolic. Thomas then started moving his head and made a gurgling sound from his airway.

189. Paramedic Kane then cleared Thomas' airway. Attempts to insert IV cannulation into his right arm were unsuccessful because Thomas' veins were shutting down. Treatment efforts then shifted to Thomas with Paramedics Arthur and Carter ceasing CPR on Mia.

190. Mia was declared deceased at 11:35pm at the scene.

191. Efforts shifted to the rapid extraction of Thomas to the Ayr Hospital.

192. Thomas was first admitted to Ayr Hospital that night before being transferred to the Townsville Hospital where he was placed in Intensive Care. Thomas did not recover from his injuries and he was pronounced deceased at 2:16pm on 29 August 2016.

Autopsy Results

Mia

193. A post mortem examination was conducted on 24 August 2016.

194. The following injuries were documented:

- a) A 20mm long stab wound to the left side of the scalp, the blade had fully penetrated the scalp and entered but not penetrated the skull;
- b) Bruising to the left side of the neck and behind the left ear;
- c) A 5mm "superficial" cut to the back of the neck;

- d) A 30mm stab wound to the left breast;
- e) A 55mm long stab wound to the lower aspect of the right breast;
- f) A second “superficial” cut to the lateral aspect of the right breast;
- g) A 9mm cut above on the inside of her right elbow; and
- h) A 32mm long wound to the left side of the abdomen adjacent to the umbilicus.

195. The Forensic Pathologist who conducted the autopsy considered the stab wound to the left breast (referred to in (d) above) was the fatal wound. He described it as having associated twisting movement. It passed through the subcutaneous tissue and sternum adjacent to the left fourth rib and entered the pericardial sack ending in the right atrium of the heart.

196. The Forensic Pathologist further identified that the stab wound to the abdomen (identified in (h) above) penetrated the abdominal cavity and cut part of Mia’s small bowel.

197. Mia’s cause of death was given as:

1(a). Stab wound to heart

198. I accept the conclusions of the Forensic Pathologist as to the cause of death.

Thomas

199. Thomas’ post mortem examination took place on 1 September 2016.

200. The following injuries were documented:

- a. Penetrating wound to the right side of the right pupil in the right eye but not penetrating the cranial cavity;
- b. 21mm long wound above the right eyebrow penetrating the skull;
- c. 21mm long wound above the left eye (not penetrating the skull);
- d. 5.1cm long slash wound to the left cheek;
- e. 31mm long wound at the left temporal aspect of the forehead penetrating the skull;
- f. Two wounds to the scalp (not penetrating the skull); being 23mm and 25mm in length;
- g. Two stabs wounds to the left side of the neck, respectively 22mm and 25mm in length;
- h. 5cm long stab wound to the base of the left side of the chest passing through the tenth interspace to injure the stomach and spleen;
- i. Two stab wounds to the right side of the abdomen, respectively 1.5cm and 3cm in length one of which had associated damage to the right kidney.

201. Examination of the brain indicated it was in a “*very fluid degenerate state*” with bleeding associated with the left side of the brain, correlating to the wound to the left temporal aspect, penetrating the skull (referred to in (e) above).

202. A subsequent macroscopic examination confirmed that the penetrating wound extended from the left temporal lobe downwards to the right and transected the brain stem in the diagonal plane.

203. Thomas’ cause of death was given as:

1(a). Stab wound to the brain

204. I accept the conclusions of the Forensic Pathologist as to the cause of death.

Criminal and Mental Health Court Proceedings

205. AYAD was initially placed in custody at the Ayr Watch House where he was examined by a QAS Officer at 1:30am. Advice was given that AYAD would need to be transferred to the Ayr Hospital. Upon admission at Ayr Hospital, AYAD was described as having been combative.

206. A progress note dated 24 August 2016 at 2am, completed at the Ayr Hospital, documented AYAD as experiencing paranoid thoughts with no insight into the events of the night. A recommendation was made that AYAD be further assessed pursuant to the *Mental Health Act 2000*.

207. AYAD was then transferred to Townsville Hospital where he was admitted at approximately 4:40am on 24 August 2016.

208. AYAD remained in custody and on 25 August 2019 was transferred to the Townsville Correctional Centre where his care was transferred to the Prison Mental Health Service

209. AYAD was initially charged with sixteen offences under the *Criminal Code (Qld)* including the murder of Mia and the attempted murder of Mr Scholz. AYAD was remanded in custody.

210. Following Thomas’ death on 29 August 2016 the Queensland Police Service commenced an additional charge of murder against AYAD; there were therefore a total of seventeen charges against him.

211. All criminal charges were brought before the Magistrates Court at Townsville.

212. On 8 September 2016 AYAD was transferred to a High Security Inpatient Unit at a Brisbane-based mental health care service.

213. During this admission AYAD was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, major depressive episode and cannabis dependence.

214. I am informed by various statements taken from other occupants at the backpacker hostel that AYAD was known to consume cannabis in the time leading up to the events of 23 August 2016, although I am unable to make any finding as to the frequency and quantity of his cannabis consumption.
215. A blood sample taken from AYAD pursuant to a Forensic Procedure Order (dated 24 August 2016) confirmed the presence of Δ^9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in the amount of 0.002 mg/kg.
216. All of AYAD's charges were referred to the Mental Health Court. The referral of the charges to the Mental Health Court had the effect of suspending all criminal proceedings until such time as a determination was made.
217. On 5 April 2018 the Mental Health Court decided that AYAD was of unsound mind at the time all the offences were committed. That decision had the effect of discontinuing all criminal charges against AYAD and precluding any further proceedings from being taken against him. In addition to that decision the Mental Health Court made a Forensic Order that resulted in AYAD being readmitted to the High Security Inpatient Unit at a Brisbane Hospital on 8 April 2018.
218. I have since called in the associated court files. The material contained therein does not further inform or assist my consideration of the matters I am required to determine as Coroner.
219. On 6 April 2018 the Queensland Police Service formally offered 'no evidence' with respect of the criminal charges; this marked the conclusion of the criminal proceedings and marked the first occasion when the Coroner's Court could assume jurisdiction of the matter.

Background Checks

220. During the course of this investigation I sought details of any background checks that had been conducted with regards to AYAD.
221. I am informed that all necessary checks in relation to AYAD's criminal history were conducted within Australia and through INTERPOL. Those checks confirmed AYAD had no recorded criminal history.

Treatment and Repatriation

222. AYAD remains admitted as an inpatient at treatment facility in Queensland and is responding to the treatment he receives.
223. It is proposed that AYAD will be repatriated to France. I am informed the final decision with respect to repatriation rests with the Australian Border Force.
224. AYAD's will continue to receive treatment in a French medical facility upon repatriation.

225. AYAD has received legal advice and consented to the publication of these findings.

Acknowledgment and Condolences

226. These shocking and unforeseen deaths occurred at the hands of a psychotic individual under the influence of cannabis.

227. All persons present during these events were exposed to what can only be described as a horrifying and frenzied attack on two young people.

228. Both Mr Thomas Leslie Jackson and Mr Daniel Leigh Richards exhibited extraordinary bravery and compassion remaining with Mia rendering assistance whilst their own safety was still at risk. Thomas sustained fatal injuries during those efforts.

229. I express my sincerest condolences to both Mia and Thomas' parents, family, and friends for their tragic loss. I have often said that words are trite in circumstances such as these.

230. Both Ms Ayliffe (Mia's mother) and Mr Jackson (Thomas's father) continue to reside in the United Kingdom. They have responded to each and every enquiry made by our office with dignity and decency. They have each provided their consent to publish these findings.

231. Mia and Thomas were in the prime of their life and enjoying a carefree experience of a lifetime in a country that is by all standards otherwise considered safe. Their life, and their death, touched many.

232. I do not intend to conduct an Inquest into these deaths.

233. I am in a position to formulate findings without recourse to an Inquest because of the extensive material and evidence before me. I note that many key witnesses have dispersed and that AYAD remains in care pending repatriation to France.

234. An inquest will not yield further meaningful information that will assist me to either arrive at a different conclusion, or to make recommendations to prevent similar deaths from happening in the future.

235. I acknowledge Counsel Assisting the Northern Coroner Mr Joseph Crawfoot for his significant assistance in the preparation of these findings for publication, and for the sensitivity he demonstrated at all times in his dealings with Ms Ayliffe and Mr Jackson.

Findings Pursuant to s45 of the Coroners Act 2003

Identity of the deceased -	Mia Mishka Annie Ayliffe-Chung and Thomas Leslie Jackson
How they died -	On 23 August 2016 Mia Mishka Annie Ayliffe-Chung and Thomas Leslie Jackson both nationals of the United Kingdom temporarily worked as fruit pickers in and around Home Hill Queensland. Whilst staying at a local backpacker hostel, they each received stab wounds during a frenzied attack perpetrated by a French backpacker who was then psychotic and under the influence of cannabis. Mia and Thomas died as a result of the injuries sustained in that attack.
Date of death -	23 August 2016
Place of deaths -	The place of deaths of the deceased persons was 30 Ninth Street, Home Hill QLD 4896
Cause of deaths -	(Mia) Stab wounds to chest (Thomas) Stab wound to brain

236.I now close the coronial investigation.

Nerida Wilson
Northern Coroner
CORONERS COURT OF QUEENSLAND
30 June 2020