



CORONERS COURT

FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION

CITATION: **Non-inquest findings into the death of Peter Chol Pawuoi**

TITLE OF COURT: Coroners Court

JURISDICTION: Brisbane

DATE: 15 March 2017

FILE NO(s): 2016/35274

FINDINGS OF: Christine Clements, Brisbane Coroner

CATCHWORDS: CORONERS: Investigation, drowning, Transpacific Waste Facility, warning signs

Peter Chol Pawuoi lived at Wren Street, Redbank Plains in Queensland. He died in an apparent drowning at Transpacific Waste Facility at Collingwood Park in Queensland between 14 and 15 December 2016. His death was reported to the coroner. Peter Pawuoi was 21 years of age at the time of his death.

On Wednesday 14 December 2016, a group of young men were at an area identified as a 'lake' in the Transpacific Waste Facility at New Chum.

At about 4:45 that afternoon Peter attempted to swim across a section of the lake as a dare. After about 50 metres he began to struggle and tire. The group called out to him, encouraging him. He called out for help to those present, and Abraham Manyang jumped into the water and swam to assist him. When Abraham reached Peter he started to struggle and became submerged. Abraham felt him gripping his ankle and he was then pulled underneath the water, but Peter Pawuoi lost his grip on Abraham Manyang, who was able to resurface. He was not seen again by any of the young people present at the time.

Taban Chol ran for help and called emergency services. Police and ambulance officers attended at about 5:00pm. They commenced searching, but he was not able to be found that afternoon.

It was not until the following day at about 11:23am that the police dive squad were able to locate his body. His body was about 30 metres directly off the eastern bank at a depth of 14½ metres below the water. It was observed he was a young male of African appearance wearing only a pair of black swimming shorts.

Police confirmed that Peter Pawuoi was in a group of friends when they entered the property from the northeast side. There is a rock wall approximately one metre in height around the edge of the lakefront at the northeastern side. A small clearing beyond the rock wall was used by the group to enter the lake.

The lake has six large signs on the outside northern side. They state 'Private property – no trespassing. For your safety do not enter this water. No swimming. No diving.'

One of the signs was directly in front of the area where the deceased and his friends had entered the lake area.

A smaller sign was also visible approximately 50 metres from the location where the group entered. The smaller sign reads 'Danger keep out'.

AUTOPSY

Autopsy examination was conducted on 20 December 2016 by the forensic pathologist Dr Hutson.

CT imaging showed fluid in the sinus cavities and pleural effusions. These are common findings in drowning.

There was no evidence of injury or trauma to the deceased person who appeared to

be a fit young adult male.

Internal examination showed hyperinflated lungs, significant fluid within the lung and no other injury or disease process.

Toxicology testing did not reveal the presence of alcohol or drugs.

It was confirmed in all the circumstances that Peter Chol Pawuoi died due to drowning.

FATHER'S STATEMENT

Subsequently police obtained a statement from Peter's father, Pawuoi Pawuoi.

Mr Pawuoi was visiting from Africa between 24 November and 24 December 2016.

He said his son (whom he called Chol) was born in the Sudan and moved to Kenya. He came to Australia from Kenya on 20 October 2015.

He believed his son to be fit and well. Nor did not he have any mental health problems. He described his son as a fit healthy and active man who was very strong.

He was volunteering with a charity which supported children who are victims of abuse and neglect. He was also enrolled at the Springfield University.

His father confirmed his son had little experience around the water and did not know how to swim with any confidence. He was unaware whether or not he had previously visited the site where he died.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Peter Chol Pawuoi died tragically due to drowning. He was born in Kenya and arrived in Australia in 2015. He had not learned how to swim at a young age and was barely proficient. Tragically he died when swimming in an area which was clearly unsafe to do so.

The area was signed with warning signs but, inevitably, young men often congregated at the area to swim.

Another of the group, Abraham Manyang described in his statement that he barely survived the incident after attempting to save Peter Pawuoi.

Christine Clements
Coroner
Brisbane
15 March 2017