



**QUEENSLAND  
COURTS**

**OFFICE OF THE STATE CORONER**

**FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION**

**CITATION:** **Non-inquest findings into the death of  
Shane Craig Frazer**

**TITLE OF COURT:** Coroners Court

**JURISDICTION:** Northern Region

**DATE:** 15 December 2015

**FILE NO(s):** 2015/699

**FINDINGS OF:** Kevin Priestly, Northern Coroner

**CATCHWORDS:** Coroners: non-inquest findings, motor  
vehicle collision, deceased driver overtaking  
on double lines, likely major contributor's  
methamphetamine intoxication and fatigue.

## **Introduction**

At about 7.08am on 20 February 2015, Shane Frazer was driving his Kia Pregio van headed south on the Bruce Highway between Wrights Creek and Warner Road, near Gordonvale. He was the only occupant. The van crossed double white lines to overtake a rigid truck also headed south. There was oncoming traffic, the first was a grey Holden Colorado utility headed north. The driver of the utility turned left and off the road to try and avoid the imminent collision. The van turned further to the right, and off the road, colliding with the utility just off the bitumen on the western side of the highway. Mr Frazer was trapped in the van, initially conscious. However, after extrication and transfer to the ambulance, he arrested and was unable to be revived. Mr Frazer was pronounced deceased.

## **Forensic Crash Investigation**

An investigator from the Forensic Crash Unit (FCU) within Qld Police Service attended and conducted a scene and follow up investigation. There is no issue about the movement of the respective vehicles. There were witnesses to the sequence of events and their accounts are entirely consistent with the physical evidence at the scene. The issue is why did Mr Frazer attempt the overtake manoeuvre in the face of oncoming traffic?

A view of the scene from the perspective of a southbound vehicle is shown in a photograph in Appendix 1. Also shown is a photograph depicting the final positions of the vehicles.

The FCU investigation revealed:

- The road has a single lane in each direction with solid double white lines in the centre and a speed limit of 80kph;
- The road was in good condition with a bitumen seal and level grade.
- Southbound - drivers experience a gradual open right bend that straightens towards traffic lights at Warner Road;
- The weather was warm, sunny and visibility was excellent;
- The damage to the Colorado was consistent with it being 'T boned' to the right side which corroborates witness accounts of a sharp change of direction in an attempt to avoid the collision;
- Mechanical inspections of both vehicles failed to reveal any pre-existing defect that might have contributed to the incident;
- The point at which the van crossed the double lines was 200m before the point of collision;
- Mr Frazer regularly drove that section of road and it was well known to him.

Further investigations revealed that Mr Frazer may not have slept since midnight. A check of incoming and outgoing calls and SMS logs showed constant use since about midnight with the last telephone call (a missed outgoing call) at 7:07:09, moments before collision.

Dr Botterill, Forensic Pathologist, conducted an autopsy and concluded that death was due to multiple injuries due to motor vehicle collision against a background of methylamphetamine intoxication. Dr Botterill reported that toxicology showed the presence of methylamphetamine and metabolite at high levels in the reported potentially lethal range, as well as the presence of ephedrine/pseudoephedrine and cannabis metabolite. Alcohol was not detected. Dr Botterill reported that the

methylamphetamine may have contributed to the circumstances leading to the collision, as well as to the consequences of the effects of the injuries sustained.

The impacts of such drugs on driving has been known for a long time.

Driving is a divided attention task, requiring fine motor skills, intelligent decision making, and rapid and appropriate responses to stimuli. The driver must simultaneously steer, brake, accelerate, operate turn signals, observe and anticipate the behaviour of other road users, accurately judge time and distance, and observe and obey traffic signals and road signs. Impairment of any of these operations by drugs having an effect on the central nervous system, will have a negative effect on overall driving performance.

Methylamphetamine using drivers are exposed, during the psychoactive stage, to the risk of impaired judgement and increased risk taking behaviour; and then during the withdrawal stage, to fatigue, hypersomnolence and depression. This translates to driving behaviour such as drifting out of the lane of travel, erratic driving, weaving, speeding, drifting off the road and high speed collisions.

## **Conclusion**

Although it is impossible to know what Mr Frazer was thinking and what might have influenced his thinking at the time of starting the overtaking manoeuvre, his behaviour gives rise to the compelling inference his decision making and fine motor movements were seriously affected by drug intoxication and fatigue.

I find that Mr Frazer died of multiple injuries due to a motor vehicle collision against a background of methylamphetamine intoxication.

## **Findings required by s. 45**

**Identity of the deceased –** Shane Craig Frazer

**How he died –** Mr Frazer crossed double white lines in his van in an attempt to overtake a rigid truck, and collided with an oncoming utility who left the road way to avoid the head on collision. His judgement and motor skills were seriously affected by methylamphetamine intoxication.

**Place of death –** Bruce Highway GORDONVALE 4865 AUSTRALIA

**Date of death–** 20 February 2015

**Cause of death –** Multiple injuries due to a motor vehicle collision against a background of methylamphetamine intoxication.



Kevin Priestly  
Coroner  
CAIRNS  
15 December 2015

## APPENDIX 1 Photographs of the Accident Scene



The view of the scene from the perspective of a southbound vehicle



The scene of the collision