



**STATE CORONER'S COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Inquest:	Inquest into the death of Peter Junghans
Hearing dates:	24 March 2015, 17 June 2015
Date of findings:	19 June 2015
Place of findings:	State Coroners Court, Glebe
Findings of:	Deputy State Coroner C. Forbes
Catchwords:	Coronial Law-Cause and manner of death-self-inflicted
File number:	2013/130625
Representation:	Ms E Sullivan, Counsel Assisting instructed by Mr S Milesi, Crown Solicitor's Office Mr Spartalis representing the NSW Commissioner of Police Mr Gooley representing BVM Clean Scene Pty Ltd
Findings:	I find that Peter Junghans died on 25 April 2013 at 19 Quarter Sessions Road, Westleigh, NSW. I am satisfied the cause and manner of his death was a self-inflicted gunshot wound to his head.

NOTE: PURSUANT TO S 75 (5) OF THE CORONERS ACT
2009 I PERMIT A PUBLICATION OF A REPORT OF THESE
PROCEEDINGS

IN THE STATE CORONER'S COURT
GLEBE
SECTION 81 CORONERS ACT 2009

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. This is an Inquest into the death of Peter Junghans. On the 25 April 2013 Mr Junghans died as result of a self-inflicted shotgun wound. Moments before he took his own life he inflicted fatal shotgun wounds to his friend Matthew Thomas.
2. The role of a Coroner as set out in s.81 of the *Coroners Act 2009* ("the Act") is to make findings as to:
 - (a) the identity of the deceased;
 - (b) the date and place of the person's death;
 - (c) the physical or medical cause of death; and
 - (d) the manner of death, in other words, the circumstances surrounding the death.
3. The primary issue explored in this inquest has been the circumstances surrounding the deaths and in particular why the shootings occurred.
4. Mr Peter Junghans was born on 15 February 1983 to Paul Junghans and Cheryl Blair. His parents divorced in around 1997/8 and Mr Paul Junghans subsequently married Julie-Anne Twist. Mr Peter Junghans has two half-sisters, Kadifa and Tamara, a half-brother Matthew, and a step-sister, Danielle.
5. During the 1990s Mr Junghans attended Turrumurra High School with Mr Thomas. They became good friends, they were described as "best friends". After leaving school, they remained friends and enjoyed shared interests, such as cars, watching movies and mixed martial arts. Mr Junghans also had an interest in guns.
6. Mr Junghans and Mr Thomas had a number of friends in common. Although the two would often argue, days later they would resolve their differences and resume the friendship. However, police inquiries reveal that friends of the two men were aware of a conflict between them in the months prior to their deaths.
7. After leaving school in Year 11, Mr Junghans sought to join the Army but was ultimately unable to complete the training; he later worked in his father's paving business and also in

the IT industry for a period. Since at least 2010 however, Mr Junghans had begun dealing cannabis. A number of his friends were aware of this, including Mr Thomas.

8. The evidence clearly establishes that Mr Junghans had become increasingly concerned about the prospect of his illegal activities being advised to police.
9. By February 2013, within Mr Junghans' and Mr Thomas' friendship group, there were discussions about the cannabis operations. In particular, on the evening of 22 February, Michael Suey, a friend of both, was contacted by Mr Thomas, who had apparently argued with Mr Junghans. In this conversation, Mr Thomas told Mr Suey that he had told his brother, Clint Thomas, about Mr Junghans selling drugs.
10. Apparently having reflected on this discussion, two days later, on 24 February, Michael Suey called Mr Thomas, and told him that he should tell Mr Junghans that he had told his brother about Mr Junghans' drug activities as he believed that Clint Thomas would probably go to the police. However, Mr Thomas assured him that it was okay, and that his brother would not do so.
11. The following day, on 25 February 2013, Mr Thomas called Mr Suey, and told him not to tell Mr Junghans about the conversation. Mr Thomas said he was worried that Mr Junghans would find out he had told his brother about the cannabis.
12. In early March (on either 3rd or 10th), Mr Junghans told Mr Suey that he had met Mr Thomas for a drink the previous night, and that Mr Thomas had "sounded really strange". Mr Junghans also said that Mr Thomas had said that Mr Suey would "dob" Mr Junghans into the police. It was then that Mr Suey told Mr Junghans that it was Mr Thomas who had in fact told Clint, his brother about the cannabis, but that Mr Thomas had also said he did not think his brother would go to the police.
13. Uriah Fowler, a friend of both men, refers to a conversation with Mr Thomas around February 2013. He says Mr Thomas described meeting Mr Junghans in a park, and said that Mr Junghans had asked whether "he should be worried about anything". Mr Thomas had apparently assured him that there was nothing to worry about. However, Mr Thomas told Mr Fowler that he thought Mr Junghans believed Clint Thomas would have told police that he was a drug dealer.
14. Mr Junghans told his father that he had heard from a friend that Mr Thomas had told his brother he was dealing marijuana, and that his brother worked for customs, and was likely

to tell the police. Mr Junghans told his father that he had then approached Mr Thomas, and asked what happened, but that Mr Thomas reassured him “nothing had happened”, and also said he had told his brother that what he’d earlier told him when he was upset “wasn’t true.” Mr Junghans was arrested a few days later.

15. On the evening of the shooting Mr Junghans told Mrs Thomas, Mathew’s mother, that he was “paranoid” about getting caught before he was arrested and “couldn’t sleep”.
16. Mr Junghans’ illegal activities in fact came to police notice around January 2013 in the context of Operation Ipswich, which was an investigation into the supply of prohibited drugs within the Ku-ring-gai Local Area Command. Mr Junghans was first observed at a suspicious Warrawee residence on 25 January 2013. Targeted covert surveillance of him then commenced a month later, on 27 February 2013.
17. On the afternoon of 20 March 2013, Mr Junghans was driving in Thornleigh when he was stopped by Senior Constable Douglas Polley and Senior Constable Mark Lucas. He had been under police surveillance earlier that day.
18. Senior Constable Polley told him that he was in possession of “intelligence” or “information” suggesting that Mr Junghans was involved in the supply of prohibited drugs and advised him that a search of the vehicle was intended.
19. Police exercised their search powers under the *Law Enforcement Powers and Responsibilities Act* (LEPRA) and searched Mr Junghans’ vehicle. Cannabis was located in the boot. Mr Junghans was arrested and conveyed to Hornsby police station to be charged
20. At Hornsby Police station Mr Junghans asked how the police received information about him. Senior Constable Polley told him that his car had been seen at an address that was under surveillance.
21. A search warrant which was executed at 93 Quarter Sessions Road at 7.45pm that evening uncovered a hydroponic cannabis operation consisting of 153 plants. Mr Junghans was charged with a range of offences, including supply, possession and cultivation of prohibited drugs under the *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985*.
22. Those criminal matters were listed for mention at the Downing Centre on 5 June 2013.
23. The information conveyed by Senior Constable Polley to Mr Junghans about his arrest was appropriate and in compliance with LEPRA. There is no evidence that he was told that any

person, including either Clint or Matthew Thomas had told police that Mr Junghans was involved in drug dealing.

24. It is clear that prior to his arrest Mr Junghans suspected either Mr Thomas or Clint Thomas might tell the police about his drug dealing and the evidence establishes that his suspicions cemented upon his arrest.
25. Among other conversations he had with friends about his belief he had been “dobbed in” Mr Junghans told a friend, Mr Paul Franklin, that he thought Mr Thomas had “done the worst thing possible to a mate and had completely ruined his life” and wanted to get back at him.
26. On 25 April 2013 Mr Junghans obtained two .303 calibre Lithgow bolt-action rifles from a family friend, John Wardell, purportedly for the purposes of an Anzac Day shooting competition that weekend (on Saturday, 27 April 2013).
27. After briefly returning home, Mr Junghans then went to Mr Thomas’ house at 19 Quarter Sessions Road around 6.30pm.
28. It appears that Mr Thomas had spent the day at home with his brother, Clint, and Clint’s fiancé Doneen, and his dad, Glyn. Louise Thomas, Mr Thomas’ mother, had been home since around 1 pm.
29. After Mr Junghans arrived at around 6.30 pm, there was some conversation between Louise Thomas, Matthew Thomas and Mr Junghans about Mr Junghans’ upcoming court case relating to the charges. Mr Thomas drank some beer, Mr Junghans some bourbon. Mrs Thomas states that Mr Junghans talked for about an hour, and mentioned his paranoia about being caught prior to the arrest, and that he could not sleep. Mr Junghans also stated: “someone’s dobbed me in”, and suggested that although the police had not told him this in “so many words”, he had worked it out from what they were saying and who he had sold to. He stated: “Yeah I need to speak to Clint about that”. Mr Junghans also said that the police were going to charge his father, he would lose the house and that the Crime Commission would become involved. He said he thought he would get five years in jail.
30. Mrs Thomas then went off to have a bath. Soon after, she heard the front door, followed a short time later by three bangs. Mrs Thomas thought the sound may have been a car backfiring, but after putting her dogs in the kitchen, went down to Mr Thomas’ room and

made the terrible discovery of her son having been shot in the head and chest, and also Mr Junghans having suffered a head injury.

31. Mrs Thomas contacted the NSW Ambulance Service, and attempted to administer first aid to her son assisted by an ambulance telephonist, until ambulance paramedics arrived at 7.59pm. Police were also called, and arrived at the same time as paramedics. Unfortunately, both Mr Thomas and Mr Junghans suffered fatal injuries, and ambulance officers declared them deceased at 8.02pm and 8.05pm respectively.
32. A post mortem examination determined that Mr Thomas died from gunshot wounds of the head and chest. A post mortem examination of Mr Junghans found the cause of death to be a gunshot wound to the head. I accept the forensic evidence that Mr Junghans inflicted two gunshot wounds to Mr Thomas' head and chest and then after firing a hesitation shot put the rifle to his own right temple and fired the fatal shot.
33. I am satisfied that the reason Mr Junghans shot Mr Thomas is that he believed Mr Thomas was involved in the police arresting him and charging him with the drug related offences.
34. I make the following formal finding:

I find that Peter Junghans died on 25 April 2013 at 19 Quarter Sessions Road, Westleigh, NSW. I am satisfied the cause and manner of his death was a self-inflicted gunshot wound to his head.

C.Forbes

Deputy State Coroner

19 June 2015

Non-Publication Orders

Section 74 (2) (a) *Coroner's Act 2009* (the Act) refers to the principal that coronial proceedings should generally be open to the public. Section 75 (5) states that a report of proceedings must not be published in an inquest where the death of a person is self inflicted unless the coroner makes an order permitting the publication of the report. Section 75 (6) states that a Coroner may make an order under subsection 5 if the Coroner is of the opinion that it is desirable in the public interest to permit a report of the proceedings. In this case as Mr Junghans had inflicted the wounds upon himself shortly after inflicting fatal wounds on Matthew Thomas I am of the opinion that it is in the public interest for a publication of this finding