



**CORONERS COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Inquest:	Into the death of Richard Willett										
File number:	2018/194750										
Hearing dates:	10 December 2020										
Date of findings:	10 December 2020										
Place of findings:	Coroners Court, Lidcombe										
Findings of:	Deputy State Coroner E.Truscott										
Catchwords:	Coronial Law-Cause and manner of death- natural causes- death in lawful custody- aged care										
Representation:	Advocate assisting Ms K Mackay Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW Ms C Livanos Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network Mr H Norris										
Findings:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Identity</td> <td>Richard Willett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of Death</td> <td>23 June 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Place of Death</td> <td>Long Bay Hospital, Malabar NSW</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cause of death</td> <td>Complication of metastatic colorectal adenocarcinoma</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manner of death</td> <td>Richard Willet died of natural causes whilst in the lawful Custody of Corrective Services NSW</td> </tr> </table>	Identity	Richard Willett	Date of Death	23 June 2018	Place of Death	Long Bay Hospital, Malabar NSW	Cause of death	Complication of metastatic colorectal adenocarcinoma	Manner of death	Richard Willet died of natural causes whilst in the lawful Custody of Corrective Services NSW
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Non-Publication and Access Orders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursuant to section 74(1)(b) of the <i>Coroners Act 2009</i> (NSW), the following information contained in the brief of evidence tendered in the proceedings not be published: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The names, phone numbers and any other 										

	<p>information that might identify any member of Richard Willet's family or his friends; and</p> <p>b. The names, phone numbers and any other information that might identify any of Richard Willet's public guardians/power of attorney/s</p> <p>2. Pursuant to section 65(4) of the <i>Coroners Act 2009</i> (NSW), a notation be placed on the Court file that if an application is made under section 65(2) of that Act for access to Corrective Services NSW documents on the Court file, that material shall not be provided until Corrective Services NSW has had an opportunity to make submissions in respect of that application.</p>

IN THE CORONERS COURT
LIDCOMBE
NSW

Section 81 Coroners Act 2009

REASONS FOR DECISION

Introduction

1. This is an inquest into the death of Richard Willett pursuant to sections 23 and 27 of the *Coroners Act 2009*. (Act)
2. Mr Willett died whilst in NSW Corrective Services custody on 23 September 2018. At the time of his death he was 86 years old.
3. Pursuant to s81 of the Act the Coroner is to make findings as to identity, place, date and manner of cause of death. Pursuant to s82 of the Act the coroner may also make necessary or desirable recommendation.
4. Mr Willett was born on 1 July 1931. He spent his adult life in south western New South Wales predominately within the Corowa area. He is estranged from his family.
5. On 21 April 2015 Mr Willett was charged with numerous historical offences. He was convicted of those offences and was refused bail by the District Court on 7 April 2017. He entered corrective services custody and was transferred to Junee Correctional Centre. On 12 April 2018 Mr Willett was sentenced to an aggregate term of 9 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 4 years and 6 months. He was eligible for parole on 5 May 2021.

Richard Willetts health and treatment in custody

6. On 7 April 2017 Mr Willett completed a Corrective Services NSW and Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network reception screening assessments. Mr Willett reported that he had a previous diagnosis of hypertension, constipation,

gastroesophageal reflux disease (GORD), melanoma, high cholesterol, spinal degeneration, a physical disability and he used reading glasses. An on-call doctor prescribed his regular medications and arranged for a medical review. Following that review on 10 April 2017 he attended 12 appointments between 11 April 2017 and 15 May 2017. On 11 May 2017 he underwent contrast CT scans at Wagga Wagga Hospital. On 15 May 2017 he was advised that he had a diagnosis of metastatic descending colon cancer, with liver and lymph node metastasis. He was referred to Prince of Wales hospital for oncology review.

7. Mr Willett was transferred to MSPC Long Bay Correctional Centre and attended admitted Prince of Wales Hospital on 22 and 24 May 2017. He underwent various tests and a treatment plan was established and implemented. On 9 June 2017 he underwent a stent procedure and commenced on chemotherapy.
8. On 26 June 2017 Mr Willett commenced palliative chemotherapy. However, on 5 September the chemotherapy was discontinued due to the toxic effects on Mr Willett. On 26 September 2017 in consultation with his managing oncology team a decision was made to stop treatment. Mr Willett was referred to the palliative care team and he attended numerous appointments at Prince of Wales for treatment.
9. On 14 June 2018 Mr Willett attended an appointment with Nelune Comprehensive Cancer Centre Prince of Wales Hospital where his illness was discussed with him and he was advised that he was no longer suitable for ongoing treatment and it was agreed that he would commence end of life care.
10. Mr Willett was discharged to the Medical Surgical Unit at Long Bay hospital to facilitate comfort measures. He died at 8.42am on Saturday 23 June 2018.
11. Mr Willett was in custody at the time of his death, as a result NSW Police conducted an investigation. His death was not considered to be suspicious. No issues were identified with the medical care and treatment Mr Willett received while in custody.
12. A post mortem examination was performed by forensic pathologist Alexandra Kullen. The examination by direction of the coroner was limited to an external examination including review of medical records and post-mortem imaging. The

cause of death was identified as complications of metastatic colorectal adenocarcinoma.

13. Mr Willet died of natural causes whilst in lawful custody. His identity was confirmed by Correctional officer Roger Morris.

Findings

Identity	Richard Willett
Date of Death	23 June 2018
Place of Death	Long Bay Hospital, Malabar NSW
Cause of death	Complication of metastatic colorectal adenocarcinoma
Manner of death	Richard Willet died of natural causes whilst in the lawful Custody of Corrective Services NSW

Magistrate E Truscott
Deputy State Coroner
10 December 2020