



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

Inquest:	Inquest into the death of Clem McCullough
Hearing dates:	18-20 May 2026
Date of findings:	2 June 2026
Place of findings:	NSW State Coroner's Court, Lidcombe
Findings of:	Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes
File number:	2019/00180751
Catchwords	CORONIAL – open finding on place and manner of death – referral to NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit
Representation:	Mr M McAuliffe, Counsel Assisting instructed by Ms S Breen, Crown Solicitors Office Mr A Rogers for Whitney Tipple instructed by Elizabeth Zouein of Legal One Services
Findings:	Clem McCullough died between 8-10 June 2019 of mixed drug toxicity. The available evidence does not enable me to make findings as to the place or manner of his death.

Recommendation:	To the New South Wales Commissioner of Police: I recommend that the death of Clem McCullough be referred to the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit.
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Introduction

1. This is an inquest into the death of Clem McCullough. Clem was 18 years old when he was found deceased in the back seat of his car parked outside 8 Auld Street Terrigal. An autopsy determined that he died of mixed drug toxicity due to the combined effects of oxycodone, alprazolam, alcohol and cocaine.
2. Section 81(1) of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW) (**the Act**) requires that when an inquest is held, the coroner must record in writing their findings as to whether the person has died and if so, the date and place of the person's death, and the cause and manner of their death. Sections 21 and 27 of the Act requires a coroner to conduct an inquest if the place of death and manner, or circumstances surrounding the death, have not been disclosed.
3. Initially Clem's death was not considered suspicious. He had a history with drugs and had recently returned from a residential rehabilitation program.
4. Credible evidence obtained by police since he was found, raises serious questions about the manner and place of Clem's death.

Clem McCullough

5. Clem was born on 1 January 2021 to his parents Joanne Murray and Greg McCullough. Clem was the youngest of five siblings: Jacob, Max, Freya, and India McCullough.
6. He was a bubbly and witty person who had a happy childhood. In his younger years, he enjoyed playing basketball, and as he entered his teenage years, he developed an interest in computer games. Clem was particularly close to his sisters Freya and India and was a popular and well-liked child. Freya gave a moving family statement about Clem during the inquest. She explained that there are two versions of her, the one that existed before Clem passed and the one that will exist forever.
7. Clem's whole family are suffering with their loss and are deeply troubled that emergency services were not called before he passed away. They wish to know what happened with Clem at the time of his death.

Suspicious circumstances

8. There is a relatively consistent body of information indicating that on the evening of 8 June 2019 Clem was suffering from an overdose at 32 Auld Street Terrigal and was given cocaine in an attempt to wake him up.
9. There is also evidence that Clem was then moved from the house and down the road into his vehicle before or after he passed away by the persons who gave him the cocaine. This body of evidence comes from a number of credible witnesses.
10. The persons who were last with Clem have either given no account of what occurred or inconsistent versions of events on the last time they saw him.
11. It would be inappropriate for me to comment further on the evidence surrounding the circumstances of Clem's death as there is an ongoing investigation.

Conclusion

12. On the available evidence, I am satisfied on the balance of probabilities, that Clem died between 8-10 June 2019. The available evidence only allows me to make findings in relation to his identity, his date of death and the cause of his death. At this point of the investigation, I am unable to make findings in relation to the place, or the manner of his death.
13. I am also satisfied that there should be a continuing investigation. I recommend that his death be referred to the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit for ongoing investigation in accordance with the protocols and procedures of that Unit.
14. I offer my condolences and sympathy to Clem's family who have clearly been deeply affected by his death and the unanswered questions surrounding the circumstances of his death. I thank them for participating in this inquest, when it has been so difficult and sad for them. I hope that in the future some evidence can be uncovered to provide more information about the circumstances surrounding Clem's death.

Findings pursuant to s 81 (1) Coroners Act (2009):

Identity

The person who died was Clem McCullough

Date of death

Clem McCullough died between 8-10 June 2018

Place of death

The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the place of Clem McCullough's death.

Cause of death

Clem McCullough died as a result of mixed drug toxicity.

Manner of Death

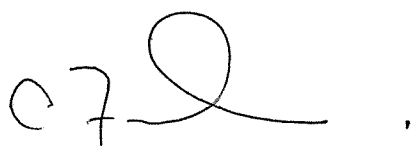
The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the manner of Clem McCullough's death.

Recommendation:

To the New South Wales Commissioner of Police:

I recommend that the death of Clem McCullough be referred to the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit.

I close this inquest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CF' followed by a large, stylized flourish.

Judge Carmel Forbes

Deputy State Coroner

2 June 2026

NSW State Coroner's Court Lidcombe