



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

Inquest:	Inquest into the death of Fares Abounader
Hearing dates:	14 April 2026
Date of findings:	2 June 2026
Place of findings:	Coroners Court of New South Wales at Lidcombe
Findings of:	Judge Joan Baptie, Deputy State Coroner
Catchwords:	CORONIAL LAW – cause and manner of death – unsolved homicide by unknown person or persons
File number:	2020/00251977
Representation:	Counsel Assisting the Coroner, Ms Tracey Stevens, instructed by Ms Vivian Wei, solicitor, Department of Communities and Justice, Legal
Non-publication & Non-disclosure order:	Non-Publication and Non-Disclosure Orders were made on 14 April 2026 and 26 May 2026 which prohibits the publication and/or the disclosure of evidence in the brief of evidence, as well as the identities of various persons. The Orders are annexed to these Findings.

Findings:	Identity: The person who died was Fares Rachid Abounader. Date of death: Mr Abounader died on 29 August 2020. Place of death: Mr Abounader died at Wall Avenue, Panania, New South Wales. Cause of death: The cause of Mr Abounader's death was as a result of multiple gunshot wounds Manner of death: Mr Abounader's death was the result of homicide committed by a person or persons unknown.
Recommendations:	To the NSW Commissioner of Police: Pursuant to section 82 of the <i>Coroners Act</i>, the death of Fares Abounader be referred to the Unsolved Homicide Squad for further investigation in accordance with their protocols and procedures.

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The Coroners Act in section 81(1) requires that when an inquest is held, the coroner must record in writing his or her findings as to various aspects of the death. These are the findings of an inquest into the death of Fares Rachid Abounader.

Introduction

- 1 This inquest concerns the death of Mr Fares Rachid Abounader.
- 2 Mr Abounader was born on 2 July 1981 in Lebanon. He died on 29 August 2020, outside his family home in Panania, New South Wales. He was 39 years of age.
- 3 The identity, date and place of Mr Abounader's death are not in dispute, nor are the cause and manner of his death.
- 4 This inquest is mandatory and was required to be conducted as Mr Abounader appeared to have died as a result of a homicide.
- 5 Mr Abounader's family were involved in the inquest and provided background to the Court about Mr Abounader's life and personality. I would like to express my sincere condolences for their loss. I hope that Mr Abounader's memory has been honoured by the careful examination of the circumstances surrounding his death.

The role of the Coroner and the scope of the inquest

- 6 A coroner is required to investigate all reportable deaths and to make findings as to the person's identity; as well as when and how the person died. A coroner is also required to identify the manner and cause of the person's death. In addition, a coroner may make recommendations, based on the evidence deduced during the inquest, which may improve public health and safety.
- 7 Proceedings conducted pursuant to the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW) are not criminal proceedings. These proceedings are not directed at determining whether a known person or persons committed an offence. As such, Coronial Findings are to be made on the balance of probabilities, rather than the higher criminal standard of beyond reasonable doubt.
- 8 During these proceedings, evidence has been received in the form of statements and other documentation, which was tendered in court and admitted into evidence as the "Brief of Evidence".

- 9 All the material placed before the Court has been thoroughly reviewed and considered. I have been greatly assisted by oral submissions prepared by counsel assisting, Ms Tracey Stevens. At times, I have embraced her descriptions in these findings.
- 10 Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation surrounding Mr Abounader's murder, both Non-Publication Orders and Non-Disclosure Orders have been made prohibiting access to, and the publication of, material contained in the brief of evidence. Numerous persons of interest, as well as witnesses have had their names anonymised in these Findings.

Background

A Brief Overview of Mr Abounader's Life

- 11 Mr Fares Rachid Abounader was born in Lebanon. He attended a French Christian Catholic school in Lebanon, where he became fluent in both Lebanese Arabic and the French language.
- 12 He arrived in Australia with his family on 24 October 1991 as a ten-year-old child.
- 13 After leaving high school, Mr Abounader worked as a concreter. At the time of his death, he was a part owner of a fitness gymnasium.
- 14 In August 2007, Mr Abounader confirmed with NSW Police that he was a member of the Comanchero Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (**the Comanchero OMCG**).
- 15 On 22 March 2009, Mr Anthony Zervas was killed during a melee between the Comanchero and the Hells Angels OMCGs at Sydney Airport. Mr Abounader and several other Comanchero OMCG members were charged with murder, riot and affray. Mr Abounader was acquitted by a jury of the charge of murder. In February 2010, he was subsequently charged with possessing a pistol related to the same incident, which was later withdrawn by the Director of Public Prosecutions.
- 16 In 2014, Mr Abounader commenced a personal relationship with Ms AA.
- 17 In October 2017, Mr Abounader was charged with being in possession of a Glock pistol and was subsequently convicted and imprisoned.
- 18 In 2018, Mr Abounader and Ms AA were married.

- 19 On 16 October 2019, Mr Abounader was released from custody and placed on parole, in relation to the 2017 gun charge.
- 20 On 21 October 2019, a white Subaru Forester motor vehicle, subsequently used in the shooting of Mr Abounader, was stolen from Beaumont Hills. On 6 November 2019, a male was arrested and charged with the theft of this vehicle and related fraud matters.
- 21 In February 2020, Mr Abounader and several other Comanchero OMCG members patched over to the Bandidos OMCG.
- 22 On 4 March 2020, Mr Abounader and Ms AA's first child was born.
- 23 In April 2020, Mr Abounader joined the new Bandidos OMCG Inner West Chapter, formed by Mr AB and Mr BC.
- 24 On 17 August 2020, Mr Abounader was at an associate's business to attend a three-hour appointment. When he returned to his car, his side rear vision mirror had been swiped. He was reported to be very upset, however, did not report the incident to the police.

Mr Abounader's involvement with the Comanchero and Bandido OMCGs

- 25 Mr Abounader had been a member of the Comanchero OMCG since at least August 2007.
- 26 By 2020, Mr Abounader had risen through the ranks to become the "Road Captain". His role as Road Captain was to organise and ensure that members attended motorbike "Runs".
- 27 A "Road Captain's" role was different to that of the Sergeant-at-Arms, with the Sergeant-at-Arms being expected to maintain the discipline and compliance of the OMCG's members.
- 28 During the police investigation into the shooting of Mr Abounader, the investigating police became aware that there were several reasons proffered as to why Mr Abounader had decided to leave the Comanchero OMCG and join the Bandidos OMCG.
- 29 The first was that he was concerned about the direction the senior members of the OMCG were heading with the Club.

- 30 The second reason was that he was concerned that a senior member of the Comanchero OMCG was linked to the murder of Mr Abounader's friend, Mr Mamoud (Mick) Hawi.
- 31 Mr Abounader and Mr AB planned to open an Inner West Chapter of the Bandidos OMCG, with Mr AB being the Club President and Mr Abounader becoming the Vice President. To attain the office of President or Vice President within a new Chapter would ordinarily require those senior members to "patch" over a sufficient number of Comanchero OMCG members in order to create sufficient numbers of members within the new club/chapter. Historically, such moves between competing OMCGs were considered significant transgressions, which invariably resulted in violence.
- 32 The investigation suggested that in the initial stages of the proposed move from the Comanchero OMCG to the Bandidos OMCG, the senior members of the Comanchero OMCG, particularly Mr CD approved the move. It has been suggested during the course of this investigation that Mr CD subsequently rescinded his approval for the move during 2020.
- 33 The police investigation was informed that another senior member of the Comanchero OMCG, Mr DE, was in conflict with Mr Abounader regarding the move, and threatened him.
- 34 In April 2020, Mr AB and Mr BC formed the Inner West Chapter of the Bandidos OMCG. The new Chapter comprised of about twenty former members of the Comanchero and Finks OMCGs who had recently left their respective clubs. Mr Abounader joined this new Chapter.

Events on 29 August 2020

- 35 At 6.50pm on 29 August 2020, Mr Abounader sent a message to Mr EG, confirming that he would pick him up and drive him to the Kingpin Bowling Alley at the Harbourside Shopping Centre at Darling Harbour, where they were planning to meet up with three other associates.
- 36 At 8.17pm, Mr Abounader farewelled his wife and child and left to collect Mr EG and drive to the bowling alley.
- 37 At 8.20pm, a white Subaru Forester entered Wall Avenue, Panania, where Mr Abounader resided. The vehicle remained parked in the street until the time of the shooting.

- 38 At 9.26pm, Mr Abounader and Mr EG arrived in Mr Abounader's vehicle at the Harbourside Shopping Centre. At 9.30pm, Mr Abounader and Mr EG met up with the other three associates.
- 39 The five men remained at the bowling alley until 10.58pm.
- 40 Shortly afterwards, Mr Abounader drove Mr EG home and then drove to his own home.
- 41 At 11.55pm, Mr Abounader's vehicle entered Wall Avenue, Panania and parked on the street outside the front of his house. Mr Abounader exited his vehicle and was seen to open the rear door of his vehicle to retrieve something from the rear seat.
- 42 At this time, two unidentified male persons approached Mr Abounader and discharged multiple bullets from a 9mm semi-automatic pistol, striking him and killing him.
- 43 The two offenders were then seen to run towards the white Subaru Forester which was parked about 150 metres away.
- 44 Ms AA and other neighbours entered the street and began attempting to assist Mr Abounader by administering CPR and contacting the emergency services.
- 45 The version of events provided by neighbours appeared consistent with CCTV footage obtained from various sources.
- 46 Police officers and paramedics arrived shortly after the shooting, where it was determined by paramedics that Mr Abounader's injuries were inconsistent with life.
- 47 Police officers observed numerous empty firearm casings close to Mr Abounader's body. Crime scene officers subsequently located eight spent casings and seven live rounds.
- 48 Police reviewed the CCTV footage in an attempt to determine the whereabouts of the white Subaru Forester and the identity of the offenders. The police were able to confirm that the vehicle was not immediately destroyed. Police were not able to identify the offenders.
- 49 At 9.41pm on 30 August 2020, the white Subaru Forester was identified on CCTV cameras entering Carew Street, Padstow. Two male persons were seen close to the vehicle shortly before one of the men threw something in

the driver's side of the vehicle, causing the vehicle to explode and burst into flames. The NSW Fire and Rescue attended the scene and extinguished the fire.

Autopsy and post mortem report

50 Dr Irvine performed an autopsy on 1 – 2 September 2020.

51 Dr Irvine observed in her very comprehensive autopsy report dated 24 March 2021, the following:

“Postmortem examination revealed a somewhat muscular young adult man with seven separate gunshot wounds, as well as one superficial injury on the left side of the jaw likely related to a missile fragment or secondary missile. A gunshot wound on the left cheek which passed through the brain was almost certainly rapidly fatal, while the two gunshot sounds of the abdomen would almost certainly have been fatal (due to massive disruption of the liver). Four gunshot wounds were superficial (lateral left abdomen, left upper thigh, posterior left leg, and a graze wound of the left elbow).”

52 Dr Irvine further noted that the:

“Toxicological examination of postmortem [leg] blood showed no detectable alcohol, common drugs of potential abuse or common therapeutic drugs”.

53 Dr Irvine was of the opinion that the cause of Mr Abounader's death could be described as resulting from “Multiple Gunshot Wounds”.

The Police investigation and evaluation of evidence

54 The abridged brief of evidence tendered in these proceedings comprehensively outlines the extensive investigation which has been undertaken since the shooting of Mr Abounader.

55 The investigation, codenamed Strike Force Manifold, has considered numerous statements, forensic material and telecommunication records.

56 The investigating police considered various possible motivations for Mr Abounader to be targeted and murdered. These included suggestions that there had been a dispute over a financial issue, an issue relating to religion,

the Comachero OMCG issue or the earlier death of Mr Anthony Zervas, to name a few.

- 57 After extensive enquiries were undertaken, some parties have been eliminated as persons of interest, whilst others have not been eliminated and remain persons of interest in the shooting murder of Mr Abounader.
- 58 Many of the suspects have declined to answer police questions on the advice of their legal representatives.
- 59 It is clear from the available evidence that the police investigation is ongoing and current.
- 60 It is my view that a Recommendation pursuant to section 82 of the *Coroners Act* is appropriate and I will be recommending that Mr Abounader's matter be referred to the Unsolved Homicide Squad for further investigation in accordance with their protocols and procedures.

Family statement

- 61 At the conclusion of the evidence at the inquest, one of Mr Abounader's family members gave a moving and eloquent statement to the Court with the assistance of Counsel Assisting.
- 62 His family remembered him as,
- “a very funny person who like to joke a lot, and his character was described as a funny clown,” and that he “had a very soft heart.”
- 63 The statement also recalled that,
- “Fares had no fear in his heart even since he was young and he never cared about accumulating wealth or material possessions.
- 64 It was very clear that his family continue to grieve, noting that his death has,
- “caused lots of internal pain to our souls, minds, bodies and spirits.”
- 65 A range of photographs were also provided by the family, showing Mr Abounader as a happy child and as a teenager.

Conclusions

- 66 The murder of Mr Abounader has been the subject of an extensive investigation by NSW Police.
- 67 Numerous lines of enquiry have been undertaken.
- 68 Some of those lines of enquiry have enabled police to eliminate certain individuals from their list of persons of interest.
- 69 A number of individuals remain the subject of the ongoing homicide investigation.

Closing Observations

- 70 I would like to acknowledge Mr Abounader's family and friends who continue to experience profound loss, trauma and heartbreak as a result of Mr Abounader's very tragic passing.
- 71 I would like to record my gratitude to counsel assisting, Ms Tracey Stevens, and her instructing solicitor, Ms Vivian Wei for their assistance, their commitment and their untiring efforts to prepare and present this case.
- 72 I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Officer in Charge of the investigation, Detective Chief Inspector Stuart Cadden, whose professionalism and commitment has been outstanding. Similarly, I acknowledge the earlier efforts of Detective Sergeant Luca Altamura and Detective Sergeant Kristy Jennar.
- 73 Finally, I would again like to record my most sincere condolences to Mr Abounader's family.

Findings required by section 81(1)

- 74 As a result of having considered all of the evidence and submissions, I make the following findings pursuant to section 81 of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW):

The identity of the deceased

75 The person who died was Mr Fares Rachid Abounader.

Date of Death

76 Mr Abounader died on 29 August 2020.

Place of Death

77 Mr Abounader died at Wall Avenue, Panania, in New South Wales.

Cause of Death

78 The cause of Mr Abounader's death was as a result of multiple gunshot wounds.

Manner of Death

79 His death was the result of homicide committed by persons unknown.

Recommendations

To the NSW Commissioner of Police

80 Pursuant to section 82 of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW), the death of Fares Abounader be referred to the Unsolved Homicide Squad for further investigation in accordance with their protocols and procedures.

I now close this inquest.



Judge Joan Baptie
Deputy State Coroner
26 May 2026