

MERCURY

SCALES OF JUSTICE

Aliesha Hayers, 17, died from an acute asthma attack while waiting for an ambulance

david killick, Mercury

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A 72-MINUTE wait for an ambulance was "regrettable" but timely treatment might not have saved a mother-to-be who suffered a fatal asthma attack, a coroner has found.

Aliesha Emily Hayers was 21 weeks pregnant when she died at Southport, in Tasmania's far south, on February 29 last year.

In a record of investigation released yesterday, Coroner Rod Chandler said Ms Hayers, 17, had died from an acute asthma attack and no person had contributed to her death.

She woke that day feeling unwell with symptoms of asthma and took medication.

Her family called 000 at 8.27am and reported she was having breathing difficulties.

But the volunteer officer was off duty, the Huonville and Kingston ambulances were on a job at Cygnet and the nearest available ambulance was in Hobart 95km away and departed at 8.36am.

The family made further emergency calls and at 9am Ms Hayers collapsed.

At 9.05am they reported she was not breathing and began CPR.

The ambulance arrived almost 40 minutes later.

Paramedics continued resuscitation efforts but Ms Hayers was declared dead at 10.15am.

"It is regrettable Aliesha's urgent need for emergency medical treatment could not be met by an ambulance crew located nearer to her home," the coroner said.

"However, even if one of the nearer crews had been available it does not follow that emergency treatment would have been administered in time to save Aliesha's life."

Ambulance Tasmania CEO Dominic Morgan expressed condolences to Ms Hayers' family.

"Three vehicles raced against time on February 29 to reach Ms Hayers. While the Coroner did not find that Ambulance Tasmania and its response contributed to the death of Ms Hayers, significant change has occurred within the area over recent years," he said.

Aliesha's boyfriend, Dale Williams, was with her when she died.

His father, Paul Williams, a former ambulance volunteer, said neither he nor his son had seen the coroner's report.

Mr Williams said the rescue helicopter or a doctor should have been dispatched if it was clear an ambulance was not going to respond in time.

"Why the hell can a Victoria bushwalker who ... has twisted their ankle at Cradle Mountain or Freycinet set off an EPIRB and be picked up an hour later?" he said.

"The helicopter should have been sent. They landed on the oval ... beside the house."

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