

**CERTIFICATE OF FINDINGS**  
**Section 94, Coroners Act 2006**

**IN THE MATTER of Barney Leon AKURANGI**

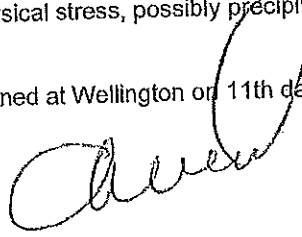
**The Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Wellington**

As the Coroner conducting the inquiry into the death of the deceased, after considering all the evidence admitted to date for its purposes, and in the light of the purposes stated in section 57 of the Coroners Act 2006, I make the following findings:

Full Name of deceased:	Barney Leon AKURANGI
Late of:	4 Liverpool Crescent Flaxmere Hastings
Occupation:	Tractor driver
Sex:	Male
Date of Birth:	15 November 1978
Place of Death:	Pourerere Beach Omakere New Zealand
Date of Death:	17 February 2013
Cause(s) of Death	
(a). Direct cause:	Methamphetamine toxicity exacerbated by underwater physical/physiological stress
(b). Antecedent cause (if known):	
(c). Underlying condition (if known):	
(d). Other significant conditions contributing to death, but not related to disease or condition causing it (if known):	
Circumstances of death (if known):	

I find that Barney Leon Akurangi, late of 4 Liverpool Crescent, Flaxmere, Hastings died at Pourere Beach, Waikawa on 17 February 2013 from methamphetamine toxicity exacerbated by underwater physical stress, possibly precipitating a sudden abnormality of heart rhythm.

Signed at Wellington on 11th day of February 2015.

  
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Coroner Judge Neil MacLean

**IN THE CORONERS COURT  
HELD AT WELLINGTON [IN CHAMBERS]**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Coroners Act 2006

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of an Inquiry into the death of  
**BARNEY LEON AKURANGI**  
Date of Death: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2013

Before: Judge A N MacLean

Date of Findings: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2015

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**FINDINGS OF JUDGE A N MACLEAN  
CHIEF CORONER**

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[1] Introduction

The deceased, Barney Akurangi, was a 34 year old man who resided with his partner at 4 Liverpool Crescent, Flaxmere, Hastings. On 17 February 2013 Mr Akurangi and a friend went for a dive at Pourere Beach to gather seafood. Mr Akurangi got into trouble during this and was found deceased in the water.

[2] I have decided to complete this matter by way of a chambers finding rather than to have it set down for inquest. Notices of this intention have been sent to the parties concerned with this matter and I am satisfied that the provisions of s 77(2) Coroners Act 2006 have been met and that this chambers finding may proceed. These findings are to be read in conjunction with the certificate of final findings made pursuant to s 94 Coroners Act.



[3] For the purposes of this finding I have considered the police report and witness statements, the report of the Police National Dive Squad, a report from the deceased's general practitioner, as well as the post-mortem and toxicology reports.

[4] Mr Akurangi lived with his partner of some 17 years and their children. He worked at the Gourmet Blueberry concern. He had a basic knowledge of scuba diving and had done diving on an irregular basis but had not completed a dive training course.

[5] On the morning of his death he had gone to work as normal and got home in the early afternoon. He told his partner that he was going diving with his workmate buddy.

[6] They all set off just after 3.00 pm in an attempt to coincide with a low tide; the main objective of the dive was to gather kina for an approaching 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party. Mr Akurangi's family also accompanied them to Pourere Beach.

[7] On arrival at the beach Mr Akurangi and his dive buddy began free diving to collect kina but there were not many about and they had noticed other people who had gone diving in deeper water with quite a load of kina. So the pair returned to their vehicles and put on their scuba equipment and continued to dive for the kina but in this deeper water (approximately three metres deep). After about 25 minutes the dive buddy noticed that he was low on air and decided to head to shore. He indicated that to Mr Akurangi who apparently acknowledged that but decided to continue diving by himself.

[8] The dive buddy after discarding his scuba gear noticed that Mr Akurangi was lying motionless face down in the water. Both he and Mr Akurangi's partner recovered him from the water and attempted CPR but that was unsuccessful.



[9] The Police Dive Squad carried out a full investigative report into the diving circumstances. From analysing all aspects of the equipment used they discerned that in general it was in good condition and did not contribute to his death. (It did note that the dive cylinder was out of test and that an analysis of the contents revealed that the moisture level was found to be greater than 130 parts per million against the specification of being less than 80 parts per million. This in itself, however, was not a significant matter to contribute to the cause of death.

[10] A report was also obtained from the deceased's general medical practitioner at the Medical and Injury Centre at Hastings. That concluded that in general Mr Akurangi had reasonable health.

[11] A post-mortem was carried out by forensic pathologist, Dr John Rutherford. At first blush Dr Rutherford could not determine the cause of death and sought further information re toxicology, medical history and the possibility of malfunctioning scuba equipment.

[12] The toxicology test results indicated a presence of methamphetamine (0.2 milligrams per litre of blood).

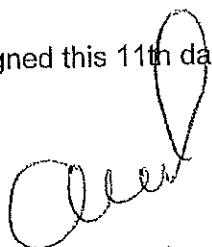
[13] Dr Rutherford completed a supplementary report that then concluded that the cause of death was methamphetamine toxicity exacerbated by underwater physical/physiological stress. Combined, the effects would be quite sufficient to precipitate a sudden abnormality of heart rhythm. Dr Rutherford found that pathological evidence that drowning had occurred was not strong.



Verdict

[14] I find that Barney Leon Akurangi, late of 4 Liverpool Crescent, Flaxmere, Hastings died at Pourere Beach, Waikawa on 17 February 2013 from methamphetamine toxicity exacerbated by underwater physical stress, possibly precipitating a sudden abnormality of heart rhythm.

Signed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of February 2015 at Wellington

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A N MacLean', written in a cursive style.

Judge A N MacLean

Chief Coroner