



QUEENSLAND COURTS

CHAMBERS OF State Coroner Terry Ryan

15 July 2021

Mr Paul French
Co-convenor
Brisbane CBD BUG

brisbanecbdbug@gmail.com

Dear Mr French

Road traffic crash inquest reporting terminology

Thank you for your letter of 4 July 2021 urging the Coroners Court to use the words “crash”, “incident” or “collision” instead of “accident” when reporting findings into inquests about traffic crashes.

I referred your letter to the coroners for their consideration and we have discussed the issues you identified. The Road Collision Reporting Guidelines referred to in your letter include the following point for publishers:

Avoid use of the word ‘accident’ until the facts of a collision are known. Most collisions are predictable and before an enquiry or court case the full facts are unlikely to be known. It is particularly important to avoid the word when someone has been charged with driving offences. Using ‘crash’ or ‘collision’ instead leaves the question of who or what is to blame open, pending further details.

Coroners are independent judicial officers who are required to make findings under s 45 of the *Coroners Act 2003* in relation to matters such as how the person died and what caused the person to die.

Coroners’ findings in relation to deaths involving a cyclist will not be made until after the Queensland Police Service Forensic Crash Unit has provided a report into the incident, and any criminal proceedings have been finalised. Coroners are prohibited from making any findings of criminal or civil liability.

The Road Collision Reporting Guidelines will assist our consideration of the appropriate terminology to use in findings at the conclusion of a coronial investigation.

Your sincerely

Terry Ryan
State Coroner

Office of the State Coroner
Brisbane Magistrates Court
363 George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
G.P.O Box 1649
Brisbane QLD 4001

PH (07)
FX (07)
www.courts.qld.gov.au