



**CORONERS COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

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| Inquest: | Inquiry into a fire at Unit 3/40 Bowman Street, Richmond |
| Hearing dates: | 15 December 2015 |
| Date of findings: | 15 December 2015 |
| Place of findings: | State Coroner's Court, Glebe |
| Findings of: | Deputy State Coroner T O'Sullivan |
| Catchwords: | CORONIAL LAW – Fire |
| File number: | 2013/240773 |
| Representation: | Sgt Sasha Harding, Sgt assisting |
| Findings: | Cause of fire: Deliberate pouring and igniting of accelerant by unknown person. Origin of fire: Inside the premises known as Unit 3, 40 Bowman Street, Richmond. |

Introduction

This is an Inquiry under 30 (1) of the Coroners Act 2009, into a fire that occurred on the 5th July 2013 at 'Planet X' 3/40 Bowman Street Richmond.

Planet X, owned by Mark Piper and Daniel Spice, is an indoor trampoline park. At the time of the fire the business had been open for 9 weeks and had taken approximately 8 months to build.

The evidence

The police investigation of the fire determined that the fire was deliberately lit. The person responsible is captured on CCTV footage pouring ignitable fluid from the back entrance of the premises all the way through to the front desk before it was ignited. Evidence obtained from Crime Scene and the insurance investigator indicates both kerosene and petrol were used as ignitable fluids. A mixed DNA profile was located on the Molotov cocktail used in an attempt to light the ignitable fluid; however the DNA profile is not strong enough to be compared with profiles on the DNA database.

Police conducted a thorough investigation of the incident however were unable to positively identify the person captured in the CCTV footage.

There is no evidence to suggest that the owners Daniel Spice and Mark Piper were involved in deliberately causing a fire for insurance purposes.

Expert evidence

A cause and origin report was prepared by Insurance Investigator Mark Pelligrino. He concludes that the fire originated along the walkway between the front door and the counter, alongside the southern end of the trampoline structure. In that area a large pour pattern was evident along the painted concrete floor. Samples were collected from the floor in that area. They tested positive for a kerosene-based residue.

In terms of security, the construction of the rear entrance door identified that the strike plate and cavity were not properly constructed. Jimmy marks adjacent the lockset indicated that the door was forced open.

Taking into account the evidence of forced entry to the rear door, along with the presence of flammable liquids, and a large pour pattern inside the premises, Pelligrino formed the opinion the fire was deliberately lit in an attempt to cause significant damage to the property and business.

Findings

That on the 5th July 2013, 'Planet X' at Unit 3/ 40 Bowman Street, Richmond, was subject to a fire, which originated along the walkway between the front door and the counter of the premises. The cause of the fire was the deliberate pouring and ignition of an accelerant by an unknown person.

Cause of fire: Deliberate pouring and igniting of accelerant by unknown person.

Origin of fire: Inside the premises known as Unit 3, 40 Bowman Street, Richmond.

I would like to thank the Officer in Charge, Detective Senior Constable Matthew Stokes for preparing the brief and Senior Sergeant Sasha Harding for her work in assisting me.

I close this inquiry.

T. O'Sullivan
Deputy State Coroner

15 December 2015