

---

**JURISDICTION** : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
**ACT** : CORONERS ACT 1996  
**CORONER** : SARAH HELEN LINTON, DEPUTY STATE CORONER  
**HEARD** : 31 MARCH 2022  
**DELIVERED** : 13 APRIL 2022  
**FILE NO/S** : CORC 1751 of 2021  
**DECEASED** : AL SAIDI, FAYCAL

---

*Catchwords:*

Nil

*Legislation:*

Nil

**Counsel Appearing:**

Senior Constable C Robertson assisted the Coroner.

**Case(s) referred to in decision(s):**

Nil

Coroners Act 1996  
(Section 26(1))

## RECORD OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEATH

*I, Sarah Helen Linton, Deputy State Coroner, having investigated the disappearance of **Faycal AL SAIDI** with an inquest held at the **Perth Coroner's Court, Court 85, CLC Building, 501 Hay Street, Perth** on **31 March 2022**, find that the death of **Faycal AL SAIDI** has been established beyond all reasonable doubt and that the identity of the deceased person was **Faycal AL SAIDI** and that death occurred on or about **2 December 2020** in the **Indian Ocean adjacent to Salmon Beach, Esperance**, as a result of drowning in the following circumstances:*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
LAST CONFIRMED SIGHTING .....	4
SEARCH FOR MR AL SAIDI.....	6
CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH.....	9
CONCLUSION .....	9

## INTRODUCTION

1. Mr Faycal Al Saidi was a Belgian National who moved to Australia in March 2018. He lived with his partner Norshamimi (Mimi) Mohamad Izani in Osborne Park. In late 2020, Mr Al Saidi and Mimi hired a campervan and began touring the south of Western Australia.
2. On 2 December 2020, Mr Al Saidi and Mimi went to Salmon Beach in Esperance. It was a fine and sunny day, and the couple decided to go for a walk along the rocks on the east side of the bay. A number of witnesses saw Mr Al Saidi walking out onto the black, slippery rocks, near the waters' edge. He was apparently unaware of the dangers of doing so, despite there being warning signs in the area. Mr Al Saidi was struck unexpectedly by a wave, causing him to fall. He was seen to try to stand up again, but the rocks were slippery. Before he could regain his footing, Mr Al Saidi was struck by another wave and he was swept from the rocks into the ocean.
3. Mimi went into the water to try to reach him, but was washed back onto the rocks. She managed to crawl back onto the rocks to safety, but was injured in the process. Other members of the public had seen what occurred, but it was too dangerous for them to enter the water to try to rescue Mr Al Saidi due to the current, the increasing swell and the close proximity to the rocks. Mimi and another witness tried to throw a life preserver ring into the water in the hope that Mr Al Saidi might be able to reach it, but it landed some distance from Mr Al Saidi and he was unable to make his way to it as he could not swim. Further attempts to throw the life ring closer to him were also unsuccessful. Mr Al Saidi was seen struggling in the water for about five minutes before he went under and was not seen again.
4. Local police were informed of the incident and arrived just after Mr Al Saidi disappeared under the surface. A large scale marine search and rescue operation was commenced, which continued for two days on the land and water in the vicinity of where Mr Al Saidi was last seen. No sign of him was found, apart from the shoes and hat Mr Al Saidi had with him when he went into the water.
5. On the basis of the information provided by the WA Police in relation to Mr Al Saidi's disappearance, I determined that pursuant to s 23 of the *Coroners Act 1996* (WA), there was reasonable cause to suspect that Mr Al Saidi had died and his death was a reportable death. I therefore made a direction that a coroner hold an inquest into the circumstances of the suspected death.<sup>1</sup>
6. I held an inquest at the Perth Coroner's Court on 31 March 2022. The inquest consisted of the tendering of documentary evidence compiled during the police investigation conducted into Mr Al Saidi's disappearance, as well as hearing evidence from Senior Constable Michael Gravenall, who authored the report prepared in relation to Mr Al Saidi's disappearance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 23 *Coroners Act* Direction of Deputy State Coroner dated 25 November 2021.

**LAST CONFIRMED SIGHTING**

7. Mr Al Saidi had moved from Belgium to Australia about three years prior to his disappearance. He was working for a temporary employment agency based in Perth and lived in Osborne Park with his partner Mimi. They were planning to get married in the near future.<sup>2</sup> Mr Al Saidi was in generally good health and appeared to be happy and well.
8. The couple rented a camper van and drove to the south west for a holiday towards the end of 2020. The trip was part of the celebrations for Mimi's birthday, which was on 3 December 2020. They drove from Perth to Esperance and were planning on heading back from Esperance to Perth in a loop. On 2 December 2020, the couple drove to Salmon Beach in Esperance. They arrived at the beach at about 11.00 am. After sharing a meal, Mimi had a sleep in the van, before they decided to go for a walk on the beach.<sup>3</sup>
9. Mimi recalled that there were very large waves and the water was white in parts with sea foam at the time. Mr Al Saidi was taking photos of her on the rocks to the east of where their van was parked. Mr Al Saidi then walked out farther onto the rocks, while Mimi remained closer to the shore. Mr Al Saidi was wearing dark shorts and holding a t-shirt, his phone and some thongs in his hand while he walked out on the rocks.
10. Another couple were at the beach, Timothy Batty and Carina Bruce. They saw the couple and recalled that Mr Al Saidi walked out nearly to the end of the rocks while Mimi stayed a lot closer to the sand. Where Mr Al Saidi was standing appeared to be dry, but Mr Batty noticed that the rocks were wet very close to where Mr Al Saidi was standing due to waves crashing over them. Ms Bruce also noticed that Mr Al Saidi had walked onto the black rock area, which was dark because it was wet. She thought the rocks looked slippery and noted a big and dangerous swell coming behind him. She turned and said to her partner, Mr Batty, that she thought Mr Al Saidi probably shouldn't be on there.
11. At about the same time, Ramon Dellaca, a cabinetmaker who was working on a house near the beach, looked out the window and saw Mr Al Saidi walking towards the end of the point and onto the black and slippery rocks. Like Mr Batty and Ms Bruce, Mr Dellaca was immediately concerned for Mr Al Saidi's safety and said to his colleague, "This bloke is going to go in if he's not careful."<sup>4</sup> Mr Dellaca was sufficiently concerned that he took a photo of Mr Al Saidi with his mobile phone, as a record.
12. Similarly, a worker employed by the Shire of Esperance, Mr Reginald Haynes, became concerned when he drove past Salmon Beach and saw Mr Al Saidi standing out on the rocks only a few metres from the water with waves coming up onto the rocks where he was standing. Mr Haynes thought Mr Al Saidi was in a dangerous position and was sufficiently concerned that he drove into the Salmon Beach car

---

<sup>2</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2 and Tab 4.

<sup>3</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4 and Tab 12.

<sup>4</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 7 [13].

park, got out of his vehicle and tried to attract Mr Al Saidi's attention by waving his arms and calling out to him. Unfortunately, due to the distance and noise of the ocean, Mr Al Saidi did not seem to see or hear him.

13. While all of these people immediately recognised the dangerous position Mr Al Saidi was in, due to his lack of familiarity with the area, it does not appear that Mr Al Saidi appreciated the danger.
14. As the tide went out behind him, Mr Al Saidi turned and walked out even further towards the water. Seconds later, Mr Al Saidi was hit by a wave, which knocked him over. He fell onto all fours. Mr Batty could see from a distance that Mr Al Saidi was scrambling to get back up, but before he could do so, another wave crashed over him and Mr Al Saidi slid into the water. Mr Al Saidi was calling out his partner's name and she could see him trying to get back out of the water onto the rocks. He did not know how to swim and had no experience with rough ocean conditions, so Mimi was immediately very concerned for his safety.<sup>5</sup> Other witnesses could see that Mr Al Saidi had been pulled into an area where a whirlpool had formed between two rocks, which would have made it very difficult for him to get out, even if he could swim well.<sup>6</sup>
15. Mimi could see Mr Al Saidi had been pulled towards the beach in the water, so she jumped in the water to try and help him. A wave pushed her back onto the rocks and she hit her head. She was worried she would lose her glasses, which she required to see Mr Al Saidi in the water, so she waited for another wave to push her back onto the rocks and managed to crawl back up onto the rock. Mimi cut her legs very badly on the rocks in the process.<sup>7</sup>
16. After she had crawled back onto the rocks, Mimi ran to where a lifesaving ring was located and tried to get it off the stand, but she struggled as it was heavy. Mr Batty, who had witnessed the events and begun to run towards the life ring, assisted Mimi to get the life ring off. Mr Batty then took the life ring and ran onto the beach because he had seen that Mr Al Saidi had drifted away from the rocks. Mr Batty threw the ring as far as he could from the shore, but Mr Al Saidi was approximately 20 to 25 metres away at that stage and the ring did not reach him. Mr Batty could see that Mr Al Saidi was still conscious at this stage, but appeared to be struggling to stay above the water.<sup>8</sup>
17. The life ring washed back towards Mr Batty on the shore, so he threw it two or three more times out towards Mr Al Saidi, but each time it did not go far enough to reach Mr Al Saidi. As Mr Al Saidi did not know how to swim, he could not make his way towards the life ring. Mr Batty ran back up to the rocks to see if he would have more success from there. As Mr Batty got back onto the rocks, he saw Mr Al Saidi go under the water and he did not see him re-surface. Mr Batty tried to throw the life ring to where he had last seen Mr Al Saidi but it was taken away from that area by the waves. Mr Batty returned to the shore and observed the water to see if he could

---

<sup>5</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4 to Tab 6.

<sup>6</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 9.

<sup>7</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

<sup>8</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

sight Mr Al Saidi, and then walked to another part of the shoreline to see if he could get a better view, but he did not see Mr Al Saidi again. Mr Batty estimated that Mr Al Saidi was in the water for a total period of approximately five minutes from the time he was washed in until he disappeared beneath the waves.<sup>9</sup>

18. Ms Bruce had gone to comfort Mimi and she took Mimi's phone and used it to call emergency services. They then walked to the beach to meet emergency services personnel. Mr Dellaca, who had been witnessing the events through the window of the house nearby, had already called emergency services and reported the incident, so police were on their way.
19. Mr Haynes, who was in the carpark, had also pressed the duress button on his GPS tracker provided by the Shire in order to try and get help quickly. This was immediately after Mr Al Saidi was swept into the water. Mr Haynes then walked up the road to try and get a mobile phone signal, and once he got a signal he called his supervisor at the Shire and asked him to phone the police.<sup>10</sup> Mr Haynes then returned to the carpark to try to keep an eye on Mr Al Saidi in the water so that he could direct emergency services to his location. Mr Haynes could see Mr Al Saidi struggling to stay afloat in the water for a period he estimated to be between five and ten minutes, but then, like Mr Batty described, he saw Mr Al Saidi go under and he did not emerge again.<sup>11</sup>
20. I note that none of the witnesses, other than Mimi, had attempted to enter the water to try and rescue Mr Al Saidi, as the conditions were very dangerous and it would have put their own safety at risk. Mimi had sustained cuts and bruises from the rocks when she had attempted to go in and help Mr Al Saidi. After she managed to return to safety, Mr Haynes sent word through another person to tell her not to try to go in the water again, as it was too dangerous. It was apparent to the locals who know the area that there was an under-tow current running out from the beach to the ocean that day and the beach is generally not considered "friendly"<sup>12</sup> to swimmers.<sup>13</sup>
21. Other people came to support and reassure Mimi, who was inconsolable, while they waited for the police and other emergency services to arrive.<sup>14</sup>

### **SEARCH FOR MR AL SAIDI**

22. Local police officers from Esperance Police Station were notified at about 2.45 pm that a person had been washed from the rocks into the ocean at Salmon Beach. A number of officers immediately drove to the beach under priority conditions, arriving at about 2.55 pm.

---

<sup>9</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 5.

<sup>10</sup> Exhibit 1, Tabs 4 to Tab 8.

<sup>11</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.

<sup>12</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 9 [4].

<sup>13</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8.

<sup>14</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 9.

23. Senior Constable Geoffrey Pritchard stated that as he arrived a witness said he had just lost sight of Mr Al Saidi in the water, only seconds before the arrival of the police. The ocean conditions were poor, with large swells and dangerous waves crashing onto rocks, with many rocks appearing to be submerged under the water, which made it difficult to observe anything in the water. Senior Constable Pritchard used a drone to obtain an aerial view of the water, in an attempt to get a better view and try to locate Mr Al Saidi, but there was no sign of Mr Al Saidi from the air.<sup>15</sup>
24. Senior Constable Gravenall arrived shortly after Senior Constable Pritchard and his partner. Senior Constable Gravenall recalled that on arrival he spoke to a number of the witnesses to get an understanding of what had occurred. He then looked into the water and saw an orange lifesaving ring and what appeared to be a hat floating in the water. There was no sign of Mr Al Saidi, although witnesses confirmed that he had gone under only minutes before.<sup>16</sup>
25. Senior Constable Gravenall gave evidence that the drone up been put up in the air immediately, and if Mr Al Saidi had been on top of the water, he was confident they would have been able to see him. Unfortunately, once he was under the choppy water, trying to find him was much more difficult. Senior Constable Gravenall walked up onto some elevated rocks to get a better view into the water, but could not see anything that might help to locate Mr Al Saidi. Various marine search vessels and some lifesaving jet skis came into the area very quickly, including one person on the back of a jet ski with snorkelling gear to assist with looking into the water, but they also could not find anything of interest.<sup>17</sup>
26. An SES volunteer who was assisting with the land search on the afternoon of 2 December 2020 found two thongs on the shore line, which appeared to have belonged to Mr Al Saidi. He provided them to a police officer and indicated to the police officer where he had found them. Mimi later confirmed these were Mr Al Saidi's thongs. Nothing else of significance was found by searchers.<sup>18</sup>
27. It became very clear to the police and other searchers at an early stage on the afternoon of 2 December 2020 that the prospects of finding Mr Al Saidi alive were very small. The primary focus of the search that afternoon was to try and find Mr Al Saidi's body so that he could be returned to his family for burial. Computer modelling indicated that if Mr Al Saidi's body was on the surface, there was a high likelihood that the water conditions would push his body back into the bay, so the search was focussed in the bay area.<sup>19</sup>
28. As noted above, the search utilised volunteer marine vessels and jet skis from the local Surf Lifesaving WA branch to search the water, as well as a drone and private helicopter to search from the air. Senior Constable Gravenall went up in the helicopter to act as a spotter and they searched the area in circles for two hours, but unfortunately could not see any sign of Mr Al Saidi. Police officers and SES

---

<sup>15</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, Tab 11 and Tab 14.

<sup>16</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3 and Tab 11.

<sup>17</sup> T 7 – 8.

<sup>18</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2 and Tab 10.

<sup>19</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 18.

volunteers continued to search the shore on foot. The search was suspended on 2 December 2020 at 6.15 pm due to failing light. Following a debriefing that evening, a critical decision was made by a Senior Search and Rescue Advisor to stand down the full-scale search as there was no prospect of finding Mr Al Saidi alive. It was noted that a doctor with some expertise in timeframes for survival, Dr Paul Luckin, had been consulted about the likely timeframe for Mr Al Saidi's survival. Based on the eyewitness accounts and known conditions, Dr Luckin's opinion was that Mr Al Saidi had likely died within the first minutes he was in the water. Dr Luckin indicated that as Mr Al Saidi was unable to swim, it was most likely he had panicked and gasped, taking in water, which would have led to his death very quickly.<sup>20</sup>

29. Consideration was given to bringing in the WA Police Dive Squad, but they were already involved in another matter in the Swan River at the time, and the conditions at Salmon Beach were also felt to be too dangerous for divers to enter, so the Dive Squad did not become involved in the search.<sup>21</sup>
30. Mimi informed her family of the sad events and Mr Al Saidi's family, who live in Belgium, were contacted through the Belgian Consulate and advised of Mr Al Saidi's disappearance and suspected death.<sup>22</sup>
31. On 3 December 2020, more limited efforts were continued to try and recover Mr Al Saidi's body for his family, including a Department of Transport vessel searching the water with police on board and utilising an apparatus to view below the surface of the water, and a jet ski patrolling the area. The weather and swell conditions made it dangerous to continue searching, so a decision was made to suspend the water search component after a period of time. A foot patrol was also conducted by police of the shoreline for any items of interest, but nothing was found. The search was suspended entirely at the end of the second day. Mimi was informed that the search for Mr Al Saidi had been suspended, pending any further information.<sup>23</sup>
32. Local police officers from Esperance Police Station continued to attend Salmon Beach and other nearby beaches frequently over the following days to check if any clothing or a body had washed up ashore, but they located no items of significance.<sup>24</sup>
33. A report was prepared by Senior Constable Gravenall on 19 June 2021 indicating that no further information had been obtained since the early days of Mr Al Saidi's disappearance on 2 December 2020, and despite the best efforts of all responding emergency services, Mr Al Saidi's body has never been located. There was no evidence to suggest any other person was involved in his death. The available evidence suggested that Mr Al Saidi had inadvertently walked out onto slippery wet rocks and been washed into the water by a wave. He was unable to swim and, within

---

<sup>20</sup> T 8; Exhibit 1, Tab 2.

<sup>21</sup> T 9.

<sup>22</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3.

<sup>23</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 16.

<sup>24</sup> T 9; Exhibit 1, Tab 13.

a short time he was observed to go under the water. Although no body was recovered, the evidence supports the conclusion Mr Al Saidi drowned.<sup>25</sup>

### **CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH**

34. I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Mr Al Saidi died on 2 December 2020 after he was washed into the water at Salmon Bay in Esperance. I am also satisfied his death was due to drowning, given the witness accounts. I find that the manner of death was by way of misadventure.

### **CONCLUSION**

35. I note that at the time Mr Al Saidi walked out onto the rocks at Salmon Beach, there was a large sign in place at Salmon Beach providing general warnings that the area is subject to strong currents, slippery rocks, submerged objects and large, unexpected waves, with pictures also depicting the dangers for visitors who do not speak English well. It was obvious from the accounts of witnesses, that the local people were well aware of the dangers present at the beach, particularly when walking on the wet, slippery rocks near the waters edge. The lifesaving ring has been placed at that location for the very reason that people have been known to be washed into the water before. Many of those people are rock fishing, which is a common activity in the Esperance area, but it seems that more recently there are also people unwittingly putting themselves into danger for the sake of a photograph.<sup>26</sup>
36. Senior Constable Gravenall, who was stationed in Esperance for three years, gave evidence that as there have been previous reports of people being washed off the rocks in and around the Esperance tourist area, police will patrol Salmon Beach to make sure that tourists are mindful of the rocks. If police do see somebody out on the rocks, they will walk up to the person as safely as possible and call them in before having a conversation with them about the dangers of being where they are and that they need to abide by the signage. He noted that the people often seem surprised by the information, although they are always willing to cooperate and come off the rocks to safety. However, police cannot be there all the time, so people need to mind the permanent signage that is erected there for that purpose.<sup>27</sup>
37. In Mr Al Saidi's case, his partner Mimi told an attending police officer that she and Mr Al Saidi were trying to take a nice picture and she provided the police with a photograph she had taken of Mr Al Saidi almost immediately before he was washed into the water. It is clear that he is standing on the black rock, with the wet portion almost at his feet, and churning water surrounding it. Despite the foaming water, there are no obvious large waves in the picture, which may have given Mr Al Saidi the false impression that he was safe so long as he didn't step closer. Unfortunately, that is what the signage is attempting to warn people about.

---

<sup>25</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 2.

<sup>26</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 19.

<sup>27</sup> T 5.

38. Senior Constable Gravenall noted that many of the tourists who come to the area do not have the surf sense of someone born and raised in Australia, growing up around the ocean and beach and engaging in compulsory swimming lessons, so unfortunately they are often more at risk. Sadly, Mr Al Saidi is not the first tourist who cannot swim who has put himself in a position of danger by going too close to the water's edge and then been washed in to the water. Many of these people lose their lives. Hopefully, reading of the tragic death of Mr Al Saidi, who had planned a future life with his fiancée that was taken away simply because of a lack of awareness of the dangers in his surroundings, might help others to understand better the dangers of the Western Australian coastline and take more precautions. It is not worth risking your life for the sake of a good photograph.<sup>28</sup>

S H Linton  
Deputy State Coroner  
13 April 2022

---

<sup>28</sup> T 10 - 12; Exhibit 1, Tab 12 and Tab 19.