

The Newcastle Herald, Friday, June 19, 1981

'Unknown person' bashed pensioner

A CORONER said yesterday that an unknown person had caused injuries to a man found bashed last year in a Birdwood Park toilet.

The man died in a Newcastle hospital three days later.

In Newcastle Coroner's Court, Mr R. Meehan, SM, said: 'It seems obvious that somebody else caused the injuries.'

Mr Meehan found that Richard Slater, pensioner, of [redacted], Cooks Hill, died, aged 69 years, on December 22 at Royal Newcastle Hospital from traumatic brain damage and a heart attack after having been admitted to the hospital on December 19 after having been found in Birdwood Park, King St, Newcastle, suffering from injuries.

Mr Meehan delivered an open finding as to the circumstances that Mr Slater received the injuries.

The regional forensic pathologist, Dr L. Banathy, said Mr Slater's injuries were consistent with having been beaten, kicked or hit.

'I couldn't say that bruising in that distribution could have been caused by a simple fall,' Dr Banathy said.

A tendered statement by a grandson to Mr Slater, Mr R. Williams, said Mr Slater had a medical condition that forced him to go to the toilet frequently.

Mr Williams said it was Mr Slater's routine when shopping to park his car in King St walk to The Store to buy lottery tickets and then walk through Birdwood Park to a shopping centre to buy groceries.