



## **CORONER'S COURT**

**Name of Deceased:** Margaret RAE

**File Number:** 2011/390597

**Hearing Dates:** 29-30 April 2013

**Location of Inquest:** Coroner's Court Glebe, NSW

**Date of Finding:** 30 April 2013

**Coroner:** Magistrate P. A. MacMahon  
Deputy State Coroner

**Representations:** Ms B Lorenc – Coronial Advocate

**Non-publication order made pursuant to Section 74(1)(b) Coroners Act 2009:**

Nil

**Findings made in accordance with Section 81(1) Coroners Act 2009:**

Margaret Rae (born 5 May 1931) died on 11 September 2011 at Sutherland Hospital Caringbah in the State of New South Wales. The cause of her death was complications of inhalation of the products of combustion that occurred following a fire in the bedroom of her home caused by the ignition of a microwavable personal warmer commonly known as a wheat bag or wheat pack that she had placed in her bed.

**Recommendations made in accordance with Section 82 (1) Coroners Act 2009:**

**To: The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for Fair Trading**

That Fire and Rescue NSW in conjunction with NSW Fair Trading develop a coordinated public awareness campaign highlighting the fire risks associated with the use of microwaveable personal warmers commonly known as wheat bags or wheat packs. That such campaign should highlight the particular dangers that may be experienced by the elderly and young persons using such products.

**To: The Minister for Police and Emergency Services**

That the current research being undertaken by the Fire Investigation and Research Unit within Fire and Rescue NSW concerning the fire risks associated with the use of microwavable personal warmers commonly known as wheat bags or wheat packs be developed further so that the nature, extent of and factors contributing to such risks may be better understood and responded to.

That action be taken to establish a unique code within the Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS) for fires associated with microwaveable personal warmers, commonly known as wheat bags or wheat packs, so as to ensure that the best information as to the risks associated with the use of such products might be available.

**To: The Chief Executive, Standards Australia**

That Standards Australia gives consideration to the development of an Australian Standard for microwavable personal warmers commonly known as wheat bags or wheat packs.

**To: The Chief Executive, Therapeutic Goods Administration  
(TGA)**

That the TGA revise their classification of risk for microwavable personal warmers commonly known as wheat bags or wheat packs from *Low Risk (Class 1) medical devices* to a level that recognises the

fire risk associated with the use of these devices by the elderly and children.

Magistrate P A MacMahon

Deputy State Coroner

2 May 2013