

From “Northern Territory News” 12 November 2020, page 17.

by Sarah Matthews

Christopher Malyschko was a “good and loving man” who would do anything for his mum, rather than the “cold-blooded killer he has been portrayed as”, according to his mother Bronwyn Buttery. Ms Buttery made the comments as a three-day inquest into the death of her son in the Darwin Correctional Centre wrapped up on Wednesday.

The inquest heard Malyschko, 31, died last August after he passed out face-down on the floor of his cell [in Holtz prison] from the use of synthetic cannabis, known as Kronic, and asphyxiated due to his obesity. Malyschko had served eight years of a life sentence for the killing of Ray Niceforo – his mother’s abusive ex-partner in 2011 in Katherine.

Counsel assisting the coroner, Kelvin Currie, told the inquest Kronic had become rife throughout the prison because of boredom, with prisoners having little access to recreational activities. He said when prisoners were moved from the previous facility in Berrimah to Holtze in 2014, they were not allowed to take with them any goods such as books, DVDs or musical instruments. Instead, Correctional Services were supposed to roll out a new interactive learning system for each inmate which, six years later, still had not come to fruition.

Mr Currie said the prison was not aware of how big a problem Kronic had become because it was untraceable in urine tests and by sniffer dogs.

The findings of the inquest will be handed down on a date to be set.