

# Killer on run dies in crash

Michael Wray  
CHIEF POLICE REPORTER

A KILLER linked to Melbourne's gangland wars who had a \$150,000 bounty on his head has died in a motorcycle crash in Queensland.

Heathcliff Jonathan Wilson, who changed his surname to Wirihana, had fled to Queensland in fear of his life after his DNA was allegedly found on the gun used to kill drug baron Jason Moran.

The fact Wirihana was in jail when Moran and his associate Pasquale Barbaro were shot dead while sitting in a van, did not stop rivals in the deadly war placing a \$150,000 bounty on Wirihana's head.

He died about 6am on Sunday after his motorcycle smashed into a power pole on Anzac Avenue, Kallangur, north of Brisbane.

Police said initial investigations suggested Wirihana failed to negotiate a sweeping bend and left the road before hitting the pole.

The death was not being treated as suspicious.

Wirihana, 36, had been found guilty in the Victorian Supreme Court of the manslaughter of his violent and paranoid brother, Raymonde Benjamin Thomas.

His de facto brother-in-law was found guilty of Thomas's murder and sentenced to 15 years' jail.

The pair had armed themselves with a mattock handle and small knife when they planned to rescue Wirihana's mother, Sheryl Thomas, from her youngest son.

Ms Thomas told the trial she had lived in fear of Raymonde Thomas, who would wake her with a knife to her throat.

A jury found that Wirihana had not intended to harm his brother.

While in jail, Wirihana was put in protective custody after allegations his DNA had been found on the gun used to kill Moran at the height of the underworld wars in which 27 people were killed.

As claims of bounties and rivalries played out in jail, Victoria's Corrections Commissioner ordered that prisoners with underworld connections be split in the state's two maximum security jails.

How Wirihana's DNA came to be on the gun has never been explained.

It was not known how long he had been living in Queensland after changing his name.

# THE \$1m WOMAN



SURVIVOR ... Sasha Maggiolo was nearly killed in a crash.

Picture: Liam Kidston

Janelle Miles  
HEALTH REPORTER

ONE million dollars — that's how much doctors estimate it cost to keep Sasha Maggiolo alive after a motorcycle accident left her so close to death a Catholic priest administered her the last rites.

As she was undergoing emergency surgery hours after the crash, doctors emerged from the theatre to tell her family her chance of surviving the operation was no more than 1 per cent.

It was a verdict her mother, Rita, refused to accept.

Mrs Maggiolo took one doctor's hand, looked into her eyes and pleaded: "If you go back down there and fight, she will fight with you. Please, do whatever you can."

She survived the surgery, but doctors told her family they were assessing her chances on a "five minute, by five minute" basis.

Sasha's hold on life was so tenuous, three weeks after the accident she had to be revived after her heart stopped.

That was more than a year ago. These days, Sasha is back walking, enjoying life and preparing to return to work after what her family describes as a "miracle recovery".

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital intensive care director Jeff Lipman credited her against-all-odds survival to her treatment.

"There's a lot of whingeing, but there's no question that this is the best health care service in the world in Australia," said Professor Lipman, a South African who has worked at the RBWH for 11 years.

"In most other countries, I don't think she would have survived. Her treatment would have been unaffordable."

Even with the best available care, Professor Lipman admits to being surprised Sasha is still alive and doing so well.

"From all statistics, she should have died," he said.

"She was on life support, she was on 100 per cent oxygen ... her heart needed stimulants. She was terrible.

"She was so sick for so long ...

it's one of the best survivals we've had, no question."

Sasha severed a major blood vessel in the crash, ruptured her liver and broke many bones.

She required 398 units of blood and blood products — a record for the most blood transfused into one patient at the RBWH.

"It's something I am eternally grateful for because without the blood, without the people who donate, I just wouldn't be here," the 35-year-old said.

She has no memory of coming off her bike outside Brisbane's Eagle Farm Racecourse on a rainy morning in May last year. The next 100 days in the RBWH intensive care unit are also

largely a blank as she teetered between life and death.

Her first recollection is asking her mother through a drug-induced haze in ICU how long she had been there.

"Mum said: 'How long do you think you've been here?' I said: 'A couple of days'. My mother turned around and said: 'No, it's been almost three months'."

Sasha spent five months in hospital and required 15 operations, the last in April.

She's still having physiotherapy twice a week but life is returning to normal.

Although she has private health insurance, because she was on her way to work at the time of the crash, most of her treatment costs were paid by the State Government through WorkCover and Queensland Health.

Her father, Gilberto, has joined with the RBWH Foundation to set up a trust to raise cash for the improvement of training for doctors and nurses in critical care.

To donate, log on to [www.sashamaggiolo.com.au](http://www.sashamaggiolo.com.au)

## Cost of care

- 100 days in intensive care at \$4000 a day = **\$400,000**

- Blood and blood products = **\$120,000+**

- Treatment with the drug, activated factor VII, to help the blood clot = **about \$70,000**

- 15 operations at \$20 a minute in theatre costs = **\$100,000+**

- Bed costs outside ICU, kidney dialysis, pathology, massive doses of antibiotics and other drugs = **\$300,000+**

source: Queensland Health estimates only

## 'If you go back down there and fight, she will fight with you'

A plea by Sasha's mum to doctors

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