SHEERAN, Hannibal "Harry" Charles Patrick 29 June 1899

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Foreman Shunter	Perth Yard	Shunting operations

Hannibal “Harry” Sheeran was 28 years of age when he was fatally run over in the Perth shunting yard. Harry and his family had recently arrived in WA from Victoria and Harry was learning the yard. They lived in Perth with their two children. Harry was interred at Fremantle Cemetery and he is remembered in a special memorial at the Fremantle Cemetery (Heritage Trail/Skinner Street Headstones/0029).

RAILWAY FATALITIES.
A FOREMAN SHUNTER RUN OVER.
Shortly before 9 o'clock last night a railway employee named Harry Sheeran met with a shocking death during the performance of his duties at the Perth Railway Station. Sheeran was employed as a foreman shunter, and was engaged at the time in placing a lamp on the end of a truck forming part of a train to which was attached an engine. By some means the unfortunate man was struck by the truck and thrown on the rails, his head being run over. Death must have been instantaneous, for another employee of the Department, Peter Miller, a truck examiner, saw his comrade a few seconds later, and he was then dead. Dr. McWilliams was hastily summoned, and on his arrival pronounced life to be extinct. The body was therefore removed to the morgue and the Acting-Coroner (Dr. E. Black), being notified of the occurrence, directed that an inquest be held at the Coroner's Court at 2 p.m. to-day. Sheeran had been employed for some time past on the railway, and bore an excellent character, being a sober and industrious man. He leaves a widow and two young children, for whom deep sympathy is felt at the untimely death of their breadwinner.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Friday 30 June 1899 Page 5.*

THE RAILWAY YARD FATALITY.
CORONER'S INQUEST.
The Acting-Coroner (Dr. E. Black), with a jury of three, yesterday, opened an inquiry into the cause of the death of H. H. Sheeran. Mr. G. W. Stead, District Superintendent, and Inspector Campbell appeared to watch the proceedings on behalf of the Department.

Peter Miller, truck examiner, gave evidence of identity of deceased, whom he last saw alive in the railway yard, Perth, about 8.20 p.m. on the previous day. He was then standing between the short loop and No. 6 road, clear of the wagons, and was talking to witness. Witness turned away, and immediately afterwards heard the trucks behind him bump. He turned round and saw deceased lying under one of the wagons. Witness signaled to the driver of the engine to stop. The driver had, however, stopped. Witness removed deceased, his head and body lying face downwards. The wheels appeared to go over his chest. Witness laid the body "ambulance fashion" on the 6ft. way, and summoned the foreman shunter, who sent for a doctor. The trucks had been kicked off by the engine, and collided with the wagon near which deceased was standing. The train was being made up. Every precaution was exercised by the driver. Deceased was quite sober. There was a bright light from the electric lights in the yard, so witness could see all that was going on.

By the Jury: Deceased was learning the yard.

By the Coroner: Deceased duties would be to direct matters generally. He was standing almost at the back of the wagon while talking to witness.

Dr. McWilliams said that about 8.30 pm. on Thursday he was summoned to attend a man who had been injured. On reaching the spot witness found deceased on a stretcher, quite dead. A quantity of blood had flowed from his mouth, and some brain substance from the right ear. The lower jaw was fractured in two places. Witness found no other injuries of importance. The cause of death was apparently a fracture of the base of the skull. The injuries could have been caused by a truck running over deceased, as described by the last witness.

Thos. F. Massey, head shunter at Perth, said that at about 8.30 on Thursday he was shunting. He instructed his assistant to set the road for a cross over and push through the short loop. The engine was on the long loop taking water, and he could not see how the points were set. Witness instructed the driver to give "a sharp hit up" to clear all roads. Witness next saw the points set for the short loop, so he ran and put the brakes down. He then heard three trucks collide with two wagons on the short loop. Next he heard a cry that a man was hurt. When the moving trucks struck those which were standing, the former were travelling about six miles an hour. It was the duty of a man named Hodge to look after the points. When he saw there had been a mistake Hodge ran to put the brakes down. Witness went to where deceased lay in the 6ft. away after hearing the cry that a man was hurt.

By the Jury Witness was riding on the wagons when he gave the signal "to kick." The trucks got on to the short loop through the points being set wrong.

By the Coroner It was the usual practice "to kick" trucks on to others in the short loop, but not at the speed at which the trucks were "kicked" on Thursday night. The short loop was used to run trucks on to that were to be kept out of the way. By the Jury. Witness did not see that the road was set wrong till the trucks were separated from the engine. He gave the order "to kick" for weighbridge No. 10, then cross over and run through the short loop.

Ernest H. Hodge, assistant shunter, said he was on duty at the goods shed when the accident occurred. The head shunter made one shunt to No. 10 road. Witness then called to him, " Where to next, Tom," and the instructions he got were " Way through short loop" Witness set the road for the short loop, where there were three K trucks and a GB at the end of the loop where witness was. Witness then went towards the GB and K trucks to see that they were coupled together, as witness was under the impression the head shunter was going to back on to them and go straight through the short loop. The engine hit up some trucks which witness saw were coming at too great speed towards those on the short loop, so he ran towards those moving and put the brakes on. The trucks were running about four miles an hour, but had slowed down to three miles an hour when they struck the standing trucks, which they knocked a truck length. After the collision witness heard Miller call for assistance. Witness saw that Sheeran had met with a severe accident, and went for Dr. McWilliams.

By Mr. Stead: Witness would not expect anyone to be at the back of the standing trucks on the short loop.

By the jury: Witness put the brake down because he thought the trucks were running too fast and not because he saw he had made a mistake.

By the Coroner: It was usual to shout instruction from a distance of 35 or 40 yards.

Peter Millar, recalled, said that deceased and witness placed their lamps on the wagon. Deceased's lamp was still there and his hat also after the accident. His hat was between the lamp and the end of

the wagon, as if the impact had knocked it off. It was customary to carry a lamp in the hand, but at times it was expedient to put it down.

By the jury: Deceased, as an experienced man, would not attempt to cross the line behind the truck. By the Coroner He must have leaned in some way towards the truck near which he had been standing, probably to take his lamp.

Albert E. Harris, engine-driver, said that on the night of the 29th he was in charge of an engine at the time of the accident. He received a signal from Massey to "kick off" two trucks. Massey said he wanted to "kick " for the crossover and short loop. Witness obeyed the instructions, and the trucks went into the short loop instead of the cross-over. The instructions meant that the trucks were to be sent on to the cross-over and the engine to move to the short loop.

P.C. McAuley said that about 200 yards from the William-street crossing he saw the body of the deceased. Witness took charge of the body and removed it to the Morgue.

The inquiry was adjourned, till 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday next.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Saturday 1 July 1899 Page 3.*

THE FATALITY AT THE RAILWAY STATION.
The Acting-Coroner and jury yesterday concluded the inquiry into the death of H. Sheeran, who was killed in the railway station yard on the 29th ult. The evidence of the foreman shunter on duty at the time having been taken, the jury returned a verdict that deceased died from the result of an accident, no blame being attachable to anyone.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Wednesday 5 July 1899 Page 4*