

# Police reopen Sydney gay-hate homicide cases

**Exclusive**  
Ava Benny-Morrison

For the third time in three decades, the deaths of three men in Sydney's eastern suburbs will be investigated after being linked years later to a spate of gay-hate crimes.

John Russell's body was found at the bottom of the Bondi-Tamarama cliffs in 1989, four months before Ross Warren disappeared and his possessions were found in the same area.

Gilles Mattaini, also a gay man,

went missing from the same coastal stretch in 1985. Almost two decades after the botched initial police investigations into their deaths, a coroner found Mr Russell and Mr Warren were murdered and Ms Mattaini probably met a similar fate.

Now the NSW Unsolved Homicide Team has reopened the investigation into the three men's deaths in the hope of putting their killers behind bars.

Fairfax Media understands Homicide Squad commander Detective Superintendent Mick Will-

ing reopened the investigation earlier this year after the cases were reviewed.

It was partly prompted by information detectives came about while investigating the Manly cliff death of 27-year-old Scott Johnson. "Flowing on from the UHT's ongoing investigation into the death of Scott Johnson, the investigations into the deaths of Gilles Mattaini, John Russell, and Ross Warren have been recommenced," Superintendent Willing said.

"As the death of Scott Johnson is

subject to an upcoming coronial inquiry, and will touch on these matters, I'm not in a position to comment further. I would like to remind the community there are government rewards on offer for information in each investigation."

The investigation will be overseen by Detective Inspector Chris Oien, who led the investigations into the Lin family murders and the death of Senior Constable David Rixon.

Mr Johnson's body was found at the bottom of cliffs near Blue Fish Point in Manly in 1988. After hear-

ing gay-hate assaults might have been behind Mr Russell's, Mr Warren's and Mr Mattaini's deaths, the Johnson family questioned if that had happened to their loved one.

"They don't support the suggestion he committed suicide.

Mr Johnson's case will go to inquest for the third time in July.

Rewards totalling \$300,000 are on offer for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of killers in each case. Anyone with information can contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

## Legionnaires' outbreak: Fifth person diagnosed

An elderly man has become the fifth person in Sydney's inner-west to be diagnosed with legionnaires' disease as the state health department battles to contain the deadly outbreak.

The man, in his 80s, remains in a stable condition in hospital. There have been more than 50 cases of legionnaires' in NSW already this year, which have resulted in two deaths. NSW Health acting chief health officer Dr Jeremy McAululty (pictured) said the state average was about 60 each year.

Dr McAululty said it is still unclear whether this latest case is linked to the original Burwood outbreak which claimed a life last week. "During his exposure period, he travelled to multiple places but did not visit the Burwood shopping centre or the Sydney CBD," Dr McAululty said.

"The four cases of legionnaires' disease notified last week all reported common exposures around the Burwood shopping area."



But Dr McAululty told Fairfax Media he did not believe the case was from a new outbreak. He said the man was diagnosed on Saturday after he first reported feeling unwell on May 12.

The new case comes as the state government is under pressure from Labor to take over control of cooling tower inspections from local government.

On Saturday Labor's health spokesman Walt Secord predicted more outbreaks because the warm weather has led to air conditioners being used for longer periods.

Legionnaires' disease, a life-threatening form of pneumonia caused by the bacteria legionella, is not contagious. The bacteria can multiply in the water supply of air-conditioning units used in large buildings.

Passers-by then inhale the contaminated vapours floating in the air outside. The disease most often affects older people, smokers and those with chronic lung disease.

Final results about the source of the Burwood outbreak will be available at the end of this week.

## Woman killed in alleged hit and run in Guildford

Police are appealing for information after a woman was killed in an apparent hit-and-run in western Sydney. It's believed the 39-year-old woman had been attempting to cross a road in Guildford when she was struck on Saturday night. The driver of the car allegedly involved failed to stop. Despite attempts by police and paramedics to revive the woman, she was pronounced dead on arrival at Westmead Hospital.

In a separate incident, a 27-year-old man has died after his car smashed into a power pole on the Golden Highway in the Hunter Valley on Saturday night.

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