



State Crime Command  
Standard Operating Procedures

# MISSING PERSONS, UNIDENTIFIED BODIES & HUMAN REMAINS

2021

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## Document Control

Title	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>Subject</b>	Standard Operating Procedures – Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains
<b>Strategic Intent</b>	This document provides a comprehensive set of procedures to be followed in the management of Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases in NSW. Police have a common law authority to make all necessary inquiries to protect and preserve life. This document is accompanied by the Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains Policy.
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### Document Classification

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## 1.0 Purpose and Context

This document provides a comprehensive set of procedures for Police Area Command (PAC)/Police District (PD) police and the Missing Persons Registry to follow in the management of Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases in NSW. Police have a common law authority to make all necessary inquiries to protect and preserve life.

Each year, around 11,000 people are reported missing to NSW police. That equates to over 200 missing person reports each week, with this figure having gradually increased over recent years. All different kinds of people go missing. Some choose to disappear to escape aspects of their lives, while others are victims of misadventure or suffering from illness, and some are victims of crime. Most people are located almost immediately, however, some go on to become long-term missing persons. While more than 99% of people reported missing in NSW are located, it is important to remember while investigating a missing person incident, that it may result in a homicide and/or Coronial investigation.

It is likely that every operational police officer will at some time be required to respond to a missing person incident or the discovery of unidentified bodies and human remains (UBHR). As a result, it is important to remember that going missing is not an offence and that once located, the person's whereabouts should not be disclosed against their will.

These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been designed to maximise the opportunity for missing people to be located safe and well. They provide clear direction to New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) officers at each stage of a missing person case via a Risk Assessment Process to determine risk levels that align with nationally agreed protocols including information on what type of assistance is available and where to get it. Ultimately, how police respond could make the difference between life and death.

Given that missing person cases are often highly emotional and potentially serious incidents, it is vital that police have the knowledge and skills to deal with the matter in an appropriate and professional manner. For the friends and family of a missing person, the disappearance of their loved one is extremely distressing.

Police must ensure that reports are taken seriously, risks and vulnerabilities are assessed with accuracy, investigations are thorough, and families are adequately informed in order to resolve missing person cases with professionalism, efficiency and sensitivity.

It is acknowledged that some people experience repeat missing person episodes, which utilise a substantial amount of police resources. Repeat missing persons are often young people in Out of Home Care (OOHC) who fail to come home before curfew. PAC/PDs are encouraged to work with Family and Community Services and service providers to address youth issues and reduce the rate at which young people go missing.

These SOPs reflect the responsibilities of NSWPF officers when dealing with missing persons, as well as explain the assistance that can be provided by the NSWPF Missing Persons

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Registry. The SOPs place a strong emphasis on supervision of missing person investigations at various levels and outline the role and responsibilities of the newly introduced Missing Persons Coordinators (MPC) within individual Commands (See [Chapter 8.2](#)).

## 2.0 Scope

These SOPs establish the minimum standards for NSWPF officers in their management of Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations. They support an agreed National and International approach which provides a consistent framework across police jurisdictions. The NSWPF adheres to the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) *Missing Persons Policy* (2020) and the Guiding Principles contained within it.

## 3.0 Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains Policy

The NSWPF accepts responsibility for ensuring community safety by appropriately responding to and investigating all Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains matters. It is the expectation of the NSWPF that when a person is reported missing and they fall within the definition of a missing person, our officers will investigate, and continue to conduct suitable enquiries as far as practicable until there is a resolution. Similarly, when an unidentified body or human remains are located, all necessary inquiries will be undertaken to identify them. In all missing person cases, police will show sensitivity and understanding to the involved family and friends, maintaining regular contact throughout the investigation, even if there is no new information.

## 4.0 Categories of Missing Persons

If a person meets the definition of a missing person, a Missing Person Incident **MUST** be created in COPS. Where a matter is initially recorded in COPS as another incident type (e.g. Occurrence Only, Abduction, Homicide), a Missing Person Incident **MUST** also be created if the whereabouts of a person/body remain unknown. Without a Missing Person Incident within COPS, cross referencing of relevant databases to reconcile missing persons with unidentified bodies and human remains will not occur. In order to accurately capture and record data relating to missing person events in NSW, Missing Person Incidents have been categorised into eight classifications.

### 4.1 Missing Person Categories

All 'Missing Person Incidents' must be created under one of three of the following age-related incident categories:

- Missing Child - Aged 0 to 10
- Missing Youth - Aged 11 to 17
- Missing Adult - Aged 18 & over

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Each age-related incident category requires the selections of one of the following further classifications:

- Abduction
- Immigration Related
- Lost, Victim of Accident/Misadventure
- Missing Interstate
- Missing Overseas
- Solved Homicide
- Suspected Unsolved Homicide
- Other

**NOTE:** For the further classification of 'Solved Homicide', there is no requirement for a Coronial brief to be compiled if the matter has been dealt with before a criminal court and a P79A or P79B has been submitted during that process.

## 4.2 Associated Factors

The following list includes all Associated Factors that should be considered and selected within the Missing Person Incident:

- Aged Care Facility Related
- Bias Motivated Crime Related
- Care and Protection Orders
- Domestic Violence Related
- Employment/Education Issues
- Financial Issues
- Health Related
- Mental Health (DOCS)
- Mental Health Facility Related
- No Associated Factor
- Organised Crime Related
- Other Vulnerability
- Overseas Tourist/Backpacker
- Pandemic Related
- Sex Worker Related
- Significant Family Conflict/Abuse
- Youth/Foster Care Related



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## 5.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions apply:

### **Amber Alert**

The process that involves the urgent broadcast of relevant information through the media and other means to the public to facilitate the search for, location and the safe recovery of an abducted child or high-risk missing child or young person aged 16 years and under (See [Chapter 21.3](#)).

### **Child**

A person aged between 0 and 10 years.

### **High-Risk Missing Person**

A person is classified a high-risk missing person upon completion of the Risk Assessment (See [Chapter 11.0](#)).

### **Homicide**

Homicide is the killing of one human being by another.

### **Immigration Case**

The person is deliberately avoiding law enforcement detection due to issues relating to their immigration including illegal immigration, visa overstay etc.

### **Involuntary Missing**

Involuntary missing includes a suspected crime such as abduction, suspicious and unusual circumstances, or someone who is missing against their will.

### **Long-term Missing Person**

A long-term missing person is someone who has been missing for more than three months.

### **Lost, Victim of Accident/Misadventure**

A person who is believed to be missing or deceased as a result of a misadventure or accident (e.g. bushwalking, drowning, light-aircraft crash).

### **Missing Person**

A missing person is anyone who is reported missing to police, whose whereabouts are unknown, and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person. This includes anyone missing from any institution, excluding escapees. For missing person reports to be taken, there must be a genuine concern held for the safety or wellbeing of the person.

### **Parental child abduction**

Parental child abduction is the hiding, taking or keeping of a child by his/her parent while defying the rights of the child's other parent or another member of the family.

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Risk Assessment**

A Risk Assessment is a process whereby risk factors, vulnerabilities and other situational factors are analysed and evaluated to measure and identify potential risks or hazards to the missing person and/or the public.

**NOTE:** Managing the risks associated with missing persons reports is a dynamic, and at times challenging process. The 'Risk Assessment Tool' used by the NSWPF for all missing person cases is contained within the COPS system. Risk assessment for missing person cases requires continual and ongoing review. Therefore, the police response to individual missing person cases may escalate or de-escalate depending upon ongoing risk assessments (See [Chapter 11](#)).

**Risk of Harm**

The assessment that the missing person is at risk of harm to themselves or the community. This includes suicide risk, mental illness, dementia, autism, physical disability, schizophrenia, bipolar, paranoia, drug/alcohol use or dependency, need for essential medication, depression etc.

**Senior Next of Kin (SNOK)**

The definition of a SNOK for missing persons matters is identical to Section 6A of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW).

**6A Meaning of "senior next of kin"**

- (1) *For the purposes of this Act, the senior next of kin of a deceased person [missing person] is:*
- (a) *the deceased person's [missing person's] spouse, or*
  - (b) *if the deceased person [missing person] did not have a spouse or a spouse is not available—any of the deceased person's [missing person's] children who are adults, or*
  - (c) *if the deceased person [missing person] did not have a spouse or child or a spouse or child is not available—either of the deceased person's parents, or*
  - (d) *if the deceased person [missing person] did not have a spouse, child or living parent or a spouse, child or parent is not available—any of the deceased person's [missing person's] brothers or sisters who are adults, or*
  - (e) *if the deceased person [missing person] did not have a spouse, child, living parent, brother or sister or a spouse, child, parent, brother or sister is not available:*
    - (i) *any person who is named as an executor in the deceased person's [missing person's] will, or*
    - (ii) *any person who was the deceased person's [missing person's] legal personal representative immediately before the deceased person's [missing person's] death.*
- (2) *A coroner may treat a person who was a deceased person's [missing person's] legal personal representative immediately before the deceased person's [missing person's] death as the deceased person's [missing person's] senior next of kin for the purposes of this Act if the coroner is satisfied that the person who is available to act as senior next of kin is unable to do so.*



**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Suspected Homicide**

The likely assessment that the missing person has been killed by a person or persons known or unknown.

**Suspicious Circumstances**

The possibility that the person is not voluntarily missing and may be detained and/or have come to harm by a person or persons known or unknown.

**Unidentified Bodies or Human Remains**

Unidentified bodies or human remains include all or part of a human body that have been discovered and where their identity is unknown.

**Unidentified Living Person**

An unidentified living person occurs when a person comes into the care or custody of police or another government service provider but has not been identified.

**Voluntary Missing**

Voluntary missing includes a person who has control over their actions and who has decided upon a course of action, for example a runaway child or a person whose absence is not suspicious.

**Vulnerable person**

The definition adopted for these SOPS is Section 306M *Criminal Procedure Act* 1986 No.209:

A vulnerable person means a child or a cognitively impaired person.

For the purposes of Part 6 (*Giving of evidence by vulnerable persons*) of the Act, a cognitive impairment includes any of the following—

- (a) an intellectual disability,
- (b) a developmental disorder (including an autistic spectrum disorder),
- (c) a neurological disorder,
- (d) dementia,
- (e) a severe mental illness,
- (f) a brain injury.

In addition, for the purposes of these SOPS, a vulnerable person also includes a person with sensory impairment or significant communication difficulty.

**Young Person**

A person aged between 11 and 17 years.

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## 6.0 Objectives

In responding to a missing person report, NSWPF officers will:

- Take reports immediately and submit them without delay, as the person may be the subject of a homicide, misadventure or be in potential danger;
- Accept reports at any police station;
- Ensure reports are taken in person by sworn officers only (reports must not be taken over the phone);
- Conduct a risk assessment to determine the appropriate level of investigative response;
- If there is suspicion the missing person may have been murdered, immediately notify the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group so that On-Call Homicide Squad personnel are notified of the circumstances of the disappearance;
- Show sensitivity and understanding to the involved family and/or friends, maintaining regular contact throughout the investigation, even if there is no new information;
- Continue with the enquiries, maintaining regular investigative activity to pursue resolution of the missing person matter;
- Make use of all possible identification methods, including visual, fingerprints, biometrics, dental and DNA, to confirm the identity of unidentified bodies and human remains;
- Ensure timeframes relating to missing persons reports and related actions, as agreed to between the NSWPF and the NSW State Coroner, are adhered to; and
- Ensure that detailed records are kept of all information gathered, inquiries conducted, and investigative functions undertaken.

## 7.0 Key Time Frames

Although missing person cases can vary enormously, there are always three major stages that apply:

- i. Initial report
- ii. Investigation
- iii. Finalisation

Throughout these stages, there are several mandatory time frames which have been agreed to between the NSWPF and the NSW State Coroner. It is important to note the following are maximum time frames, and oftentimes it will be appropriate to perform relevant functions much earlier than the stated maximum time frames. The functions described within the key time frames do not include all routine investigative functions that should be undertaken for each missing person investigation (See [Annexure A](#)).

If suspicious circumstances exist, a notification to the On-Call Homicide Inspector should be immediately made via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group. Irrespective of any On-Call Homicide Squad response, if suspicious circumstances exist, the PAC/PD should immediately allocate criminal investigators to take carriage of the investigation.

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In circumstances where suspicion of harm is not immediately apparent, the following key time frames apply:

**Immediately**

- Missing person reports should be taken immediately if the person falls within the definition. There is no 'waiting period' before a report can be taken.

**One Week**

- A Case should be created within the COPS Case Management System.
- DNA and potential fingerprint samples should be obtained and booked up as exhibits.

**Two Weeks**

- Ensure relevant iASK checks have been submitted that might show recent activity by the missing person such as banking transactions, mobile telephone activity etc and recorded on COPS (See [Chapter 23.0](#));
- Commence inquiries to identify relevant dentists/medical practitioners with a view to obtaining dental/medical records. When dental/medical records are correctly obtained, they should be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry to be uploaded onto National Missing Person Victim System (NMPVS) (See [Chapter 10.6](#)).

**Four Weeks**

- If it hasn't occurred sooner, the COPS Case should be transferred to an experienced investigator within the PAC/PD. In most circumstances, this should be a designated detective, however, there may be circumstances where this might not be necessary and/or appropriate.

**Six Weeks**

- The investigation is to be transferred to the e@gle.i Information Management System, together with an Investigation Plan (See [Annexure C](#)). A Microsoft Word version of the Investigation Plan can be found in the '[Toolkit](#)' within the Missing Persons Registry intranet site.

**Three Months**

- The three-month mark is a significant point in a missing person investigation and the point when a missing person is considered a long-term missing person;
- By three months, all evidence that might assist in the identification of a missing person should have been gathered, including DNA (e.g. medical samples/Guthrie card), fingerprints and medical records;
- Complete a 'Signs of Life' Check (see Chapter 23.1);
- Submit the completed [Disaster Victim Identification \(DVI\) Ante Mortem \(AM\) form](#) (found in the MPR [Toolkit](#)) to the Missing Persons Registry to be uploaded to NMPVS.

**NOTE: The DVI AM form is an internationally recognised form used to upload relevant information to NMPVS.**

- The Missing Persons Registry are required to supply the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre with photographs and other relevant details of long-term missing

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persons to upload onto their public facing website by the three-month mark. Authority for Publicity should be obtained from the SNOK by the OIC during the initial stages of an investigation. Once the Authority for Publicity has been obtained, forward this to the Missing Persons Registry who will provide that information to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC).

- A review of a missing person case is to be conducted with the Missing Persons Registry (See [Chapter 19.1](#)). A list of any outstanding actions will be agreed upon during this review.

**Six Months**

- Re-conduct 'Signs of Life' checks, particularly those concerning movements e.g. immigration and associated vehicles.
- A further review of a missing person case is to be conducted with the Missing Persons Registry where outstanding actions from the three-month review will be considered (See [Chapter 19.2](#)).

**Nine Months**

- A completed Coronial brief is to be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for checking. Any outstanding actions will be identified for further attention by the OIC (See [Chapter 19.3](#)).

**Twelve Months:**

- A completed brief of evidence is to be submitted to the State Coroner via the Coronial Law Unit (See [Chapter 20.0](#)).

## **8.0 Key Roles in Supervising Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies & Human Remains Investigations**

Missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains investigations remain the responsibility of PACs or PDs unless investigative responsibility is accepted by the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command. Reports can be taken at any Police Station, however, the PAC or PD where the missing person was last seen will be the Command responsible for the investigation. Missing person reports can be taken at any time and there is no "waiting time" necessary when a person is reported missing. As soon as a person reports the whereabouts of another are unknown, and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person, a report should be immediately taken.

### **8.1 Responsibility of the Missing Persons Registry**

The Missing Persons Registry is a Unit within State Crime Command that coordinates the NSWPF response to missing persons investigations. The Manager of the Missing Persons Registry reports to the Director, Crime Operations, State Crime Command. Although the Missing Persons Registry comprises a team of investigators and analysts, it does not assume responsibility for missing persons investigations.

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- Maintaining NSWPF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains investigations;
- Monitoring adherence to these SOPs;
- Reviewing risk assessment processes for all missing persons COPS Events;
- Monitoring missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains Events on COPS and providing support to the field by reviewing daily downloads and ensuring all available investigative tools are considered;
- Maintaining and collating information/data relating to missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains cases in NSW on the Missing Persons Database;
- Ensuring individual Commands collect relevant DNA samples for missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains cases;
- Coordinating the collection of dental records and providing them to forensic dentists for charting;
- Ensuring cross referencing of missing persons cases against unidentified bodies and human remains databases;
- Liaising with both internal and external stakeholders to facilitate timely investigations of missing persons cases;
- Coordinating inquiries for interstate and international missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains cases;
- Conducting reviews for all long-term missing persons cases at the three and six-month stages (See [Chapter 19.0](#));
- Reviewing all missing persons Coronial briefs prior to presentation to the Coroner;
- Submitting details of all missing persons to the national Public Register of Long-Term Missing Persons;
- Developing and delivering education and training packages, and other resources, including presentations at PAC/PD training days, specialist training days and the Constable Education Program;
- Coordinating various community awareness programs and initiatives including National Missing Persons Week, the Safely Home Program and the Family and Friends of Missing Persons Program;
- Participating in inter-agency forums and advisory groups at a state and national level;
- Providing initial and ongoing training to PAC/PD Missing Persons Coordinators (MPCs);
- Identifying trends, including repeat missing children and young people, and reporting these trends to individual PAC/PD's (including YAMS programs where applicable);
- Hosting an annual conference for Missing Person Coordinators.

**8.2 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Missing Persons Coordinator (MPC)**

It is acknowledged that missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains investigations have become more complex. Although the Missing Persons Registry maintains responsibility to review all missing persons investigations, there is a need to have a suitably trained and experienced person at the local level to provide early intervention and guidance for these matters. These SOPs include the introduction of a new role within each PAC/PD for a Missing Persons Coordinator (MPC). In most Commands, the most suitable person to perform the

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function of the MPC would be the Investigations Manager. It may also be appropriate for the MPC role to be delegated to a CI Team Leader (Detective Sergeant), or other suitably experienced criminal investigators within a Command.

**It is the responsibility of the MPC to:**

- Liaise with the Crime Coordinator and obtain details of all missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains cases;
- Monitor and review all missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains cases at the local level;
- Ensure all missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains cases are appropriately investigated, and sufficient resources allocated;
- Provide advice and guidance to OICs of these investigations at the local level;
- Check, and where required, assign a COPS Missing Persons Event task to an officer, or officer in charge of another station, for investigation or continuing inquiries;
- Act as a point of contact between the Missing Persons Registry and their Commands;
- Participate in case reviews (together with the OICs) conducted by the Missing Persons Registry for all long-term missing persons cases (See [Chapter 19](#));
- Assist in the development of local procedures with relevant stakeholders (i.e. Mental Health facilities and care facilities for young people);
- **If a homicide is suspected, you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command.**

**8.3 Responsibility of the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command**

If suspicious circumstances exist, the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command is to be notified immediately via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group. Consistent with the Homicide Squad On-Call policy, the On-Call Coordinator will conduct an assessment and determine an appropriate level of response from the Homicide Squad.

Continual risk assessment of all missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains cases should be conducted, and notification made to the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command when suspicion arises that a missing person may be the subject of a homicide. Long-term missing persons cases will only be transferred to the Homicide Squad Unsolved Homicide Unit by direct referral from a Coroner.

**8.4 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Crime Manager****It is the responsibility of the Crime Manager to:**

- Ensure that the officer who receives the missing persons, unidentified bodies and human remains report, complies with [Chapter 9.1](#);
- Ensure missing persons Events are finalised as soon as practicable after the missing person has been located and a Located Person Incident is created within the COPS Event;
- Ensure that if a major investigation is commenced into the missing person's disappearance, the investigation is to be the responsibility of the Command where the missing person was last sighted;

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- **If a homicide is suspected, you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command;**
- Maintain a register of services, agencies or organisations which are available to support missing people and families of missing people;
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure that at three months the missing person's details have been uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System and the National Public Register;
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure that any located people are removed from National Missing Persons Victim System and the AFP National Public Register if they have been placed on there;
- Ensure 'case reviews' are conducted with the Missing Persons Registry at the three- and six-month points of missing person investigations (See [Chapter 19](#));
- Ensure the P79B and Coronial Brief are submitted to the Missing Persons Registry at nine months for quality review, or earlier when there is reasonable suspicion the person is deceased, and all investigative avenues have been exhausted;
- Ensure the provisions of this document and the Missing Persons Policy are adhered to;
- Ensure that all long-term missing person cases are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that:
  - An OIC remains assigned to the case;
  - All outstanding actions and enquiries have been finalised (including any new information that may have been provided or come to light since the last review);
  - The OIC has made appropriate contact with the family and/or person who made the missing person report since the last annual review, and confirm current contact details;
  - That an intelligence review (including search of National Missing Persons Victim System – conducted by the Missing Persons Registry) has been conducted since the last review.

## 8.5 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Crime Coordinator

### It is the responsibility of the PAC/PD Crime Coordinator to:

- Within 1 week, create a Case on the Case Management System, allocating it to the Investigating Officer;
- If the missing person was last seen at a location outside of the PAC/PD where the initial report was made, transfer the Event/Case to the relevant PAC/PD immediately, notifying the Duty Officer and confirming its receipt at the receiving location;
- If suspicious circumstances exist, or at the four-week mark, transfer the Case to an experienced investigator for attention. In most circumstances, this should be a designated detective, however, there may be circumstances where this might not be necessary and/or appropriate.
- Liaise with the MPC, Investigations Manager and Crime Manager ensuring COPS and Case Management procedures are adhered to;
- Periodically monitor and review COPS to ensure Case Management procedures are adhered to.

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## 8.6 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor

It is essential proper supervision is given to all missing person cases. Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors **MUST** provide adequate supervision to ensure all missing person investigations are properly attended to.

**It is the responsibility of the PAC/PD Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor to:**

- Ensure all missing person cases are handed over at the end of each shift and are recorded on changeover/hand over sheets to alert the oncoming shift of outstanding tasks to be attended to;
- Ensure missing person matters remain on the changeover/hand over sheets at the end of each shift until the missing person is located or, until the matter has been allocated to an investigator;
- Where available, ensure a photo of all relevant missing persons are circulated to oncoming staff at the beginning of each shift;
- Consult with the Crime Manager to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to all fresh missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains investigations;
- Ensure the COPS Risk Assessment has been completed and police actions/response are appropriate to the circumstances (See [Chapter 11.0](#));
- Ensure dissemination of the information has been arranged (if appropriate);
- Ensure the case receives immediate and continued attention;
- Supervise the immediate investigation;
- **If a homicide is suspected, immediately contact the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command;**
- Ensure the case is brought to the attention of other Units where appropriate (e.g. State Crime Command - Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Squad, Robbery and Serious Crime Squad);
- Ensure the Crime Manager is advised of the missing persons Event;
- Ensure Authority for Publicity has been requested;
- Ensure that, where the missing person occurrence involves a known vulnerability (age, mental health, physical health etc), the local search and rescue coordinator or officer trained to coordinate search operations is advised (See [Chapter 17.0](#));
- Ensure the particulars of any missing person are brought to the attention of the relieving Shift Supervisor or Duty Officer, and the station Intelligence Officer;
- Consider the need for a search and rescue operation and take appropriate action.

## 8.7 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Shift Supervisor

It is essential proper supervision is given to all missing person cases. Shift Supervisors **MUST** provide adequate supervision to ensure all missing person investigations are properly attended to.

**It is the responsibility of the PAC/PD Shift Supervisor to:**

- Ensure all missing person cases are handed over at the end of each shift and are recorded on changeover/hand over sheets to alert the oncoming shift of outstanding tasks to be attended to;

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- Ensure missing person matters remain on the hand over/changeover sheets at the end of each shift until the missing person is located or, until the matter has been allocated to an investigator;
  - Where available, ensure a photo of all relevant missing persons are circulated to oncoming staff at the beginning of each shift;
  - Consult with the Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to all fresh missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains investigations;
  - Ensure particulars of the missing person and other relevant information resulting from inquiries, including any vehicles or vessels of interest, have been entered onto COPS, including the correct entry of the Missing Persons COPS 'category' and any relevant 'associated factors' (See [Chapter 4.0](#));
  - Ensure the COPS Risk Assessment has been completed and police actions/response are appropriate to the circumstances (See [Chapter 11.0](#));
  - Verify COPS Events before the conclusion of a shift;
  - Ensure dissemination of the information has been arranged (if appropriate);
  - Ensure the case receives immediate and continued attention;
  - Supervise the immediate investigation;
  - **If a homicide is suspected, immediately contact the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command;**
  - Ensure the case is brought to the attention of other Units where appropriate (e.g. State Crime Command - Child Abuse and Sex Crime Squad, Robbery and Serious Crime Squad);
  - Ensure the Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor is advised of the missing person Event;
  - Ensure that Authority for Publicity has been requested;
  - Ensure that if the missing person occurrence involves a known vulnerability (age, mental health, physical health etc), the local search and rescue coordinator or officer trained to coordinate search operations is advised (See [Chapter 17.0](#));
  - Ensure particulars of any missing persons, unidentified body and human remains are brought to the attention of the officer in charge of the station, the relieving Shift Supervisor or Duty Officer, and the station Intelligence Officer;
  - Consider the need for a search and rescue operation and take appropriate action; and
  - Ensure the COPS Event contains all required information. If not, resubmit the Event for the Investigating Officer to complete. This must be done before the end of the shift.
- Missing person Events are not to be left incomplete or in 'resubmit' at the end of a shift.

## 9.0 Responsibilities of Officers Taking Reports and OICs of Missing Person Investigations

### 9.1 Responsibility of the Officer who Receives a Report

The 'Missing Persons Checklist' should be used as a guide when obtaining details for a missing person report. This checklist can be found at [Annexure A](#) or within the '[Toolkit](#)' on the Missing Persons Registry intranet site.

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The following procedures should be undertaken by the police officer who receives a report for a missing person, except for when the missing person is:

- an Australia resident missing overseas (referred to DFAT) – (See [Chapter 9.2.11](#)); or
- a resident of another Australian state or territory missing from that state or territory (referred to the local police in that State/Territory) – (See [Chapter 9.2.12](#)).

**Note: If whilst taking the report of a missing person, suspicion develops that criminality may be involved, relevant crime scene(s) should be declared, the scene(s) preserved, and a Crime Scene Warrant sought. Crime Scene Officers should be called to the scene for appropriate forensic examinations to be undertaken.**

The officer is to immediately:

- Confirm the identity of the person making the report and record their name, address and phone number;
- Establish from the person all relevant details (See [Annexure A](#)). Missing person reports are not to be taken for family/friend reunion matters. Aim to establish why the missing persons may have gone missing;
- Determine if the missing person disappeared from a location outside of their PAC/PD. The initial response rests with the PAC/PD in which the missing person report was taken. If the missing person was last known to be in another PAC/PD, see Chapter 10.2 for information regarding transferring cases between NSWPF Commands;
- Conduct a COPS check to determine if any previous CNIs exist before creating a new CNI;
- Create a Missing Person Event in COPS (before end of shift) and enter all required information (See [Annexure A](#)). The reporting officer is to include sufficient details to substantiate the person being recorded as missing. COPS now contain four Corporate Templates narratives that can be selected from the relevant 'drop down' box. These four missing person narrative templates (General Missing Persons, Missing Child/Young Persons Related, Mental Health Related and Misadventure Related) provide guidance regarding the types of information to be included in the COPS narrative;
- Create the Missing Person Incident by selecting the correct age category and be sure to select any relevant 'associated factors' (See [Chapter 4.0](#));
- Complete the mandatory Missing Persons Risk Assessment within the COPS Event (See [Chapter 11.0](#));
- Initiate inquiries aimed at locating the missing person and enter the result of those inquiries and other relevant information in the COPS Event;
- Place a warning on the missing person's COPS Profile stating the person is missing;
- Obtain clear (high quality) and recent photographs of the missing person, including photographs of identifying features, relevant clothing etc (if hard copy photographs provided, take a digital copy of the photograph and return the original to the provider as soon as possible);
- Ensure any photographs obtained are stored on VIEW IMS and circulated to other police on shift, oncoming shifts and police in neighbouring Commands (if appropriate) using the hand-over process utilised within your Command;

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- Notify the Shift Supervisor or Duty Officer of the missing person, the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and any action taken;
- Where the officer cannot create the missing person report prior to the termination of the shift, provide the relevant details to their Shift Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor or Crime Manager. This person is to ensure the details are entered and all necessary action and inquiries are made as soon as possible;
- Advise the person reporting and family members of the counselling services available (See [Chapter 25.0](#));
- Provide the person reporting a copy of the 'Police Information Sheet' (See [Annexure L](#)).
- Refer to the 'Initial Response – Missing Persons Checklist' ([Annexure A](#)) for a list of inquiries to be undertaken/considered.

### 9.1.1 What to Do If a Report Hasn't Been Made but a Person Fits the Definition of a Missing Person

There will be occasions where police become concerned for the safety or wellbeing of a person, their whereabouts are unknown, yet, no person has reported them as missing. Examples of this might include a person who rings '000' or a counselling service threatening self-harm. In these situations, the obvious priority should be directed to addressing the immediate risk to the person's safety. Matters of this type are initially attended to by the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group who attempt to triangulate the location of the telephone service used to make the call. Once the last known location has been established, the matter will be referred to the relevant PAC/PD for attention.

If the person cannot be located within a reasonable period, it is essential that a missing person report (Incident) be created within COPS, even though another person may not have presented themselves to police to make that report.

Once this missing person report has been created, the matter should be investigated in the usual manner.

## 9.2 Responsibility of the Officer in Charge (OIC) of an Investigation

It is possible and often appropriate for the officer who takes the report to be the OIC. Supervisors and Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors should assess all missing person cases and allocate appropriate resources to conduct investigations. The below times are maximum timeframes. Tasks should be completed before, not after, the indicated intervals. All actions undertaken by the OIC should be recorded in either COPS, Case Management or e@gle.i.

### 9.2.1 Immediate Responsibilities of the OIC for Adult Missing Person Cases

#### Immediately (within the first 24 hours):

- Refer to the Missing Persons Checklist (See [Annexure A](#)) for information to be gathered;
- Where a physical land or marine search is necessary, immediately notify the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit or Marine Area Command via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group (See [Chapter 17.0](#));

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- **Where a homicide is suspected, or suspicious circumstances exist, in accordance with the Homicide On-Call protocols, contact the Homicide Squad On-Call Team via the State Coordination Unit;**
- Initiate inquiries aimed at locating the missing person and enter the result of those inquiries and other relevant information in the COPS Event;
- Obtain Authority for Publicity to publicly release details of the case, including the photograph (See [Annexure E](#));
- When appropriate, obtain permission from the Supervisor to create a NEMESIS message, making sure to attach a photograph of the missing person;
- Identify and speak with any person who may be able to offer relevant information (e.g. family members, friends, schoolteacher, work colleagues). Record details of any person spoken to and information obtained to assist in obtaining statements at an appropriate time and if necessary;
- Maintain regular contact with the informant/legal guardian/SNOK (where appropriate), at least weekly for the first two months of the investigation and then maintain contact at least at the intervals indicated below. Record any contact in COPS as an Action Item;
- Ensure that all important details of the investigation are captured on the handover sheet and are appropriately disseminated to Shift Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor etc;
- If the missing person is aged 16 and under, an Amber Alert can be considered (See [Chapter 21.3](#)).

**9.2.2 Maximum Investigation Time Frames for OIC****One Week**

- Ensure that DNA and potential fingerprint reference samples are obtained from the missing person's residence/property and booked up as exhibits (See [Chapter 10](#));
- If a direct DNA sample (tooth brush, hair brush etc) cannot be obtained, ensure that a DNA reference sample is obtained from appropriate family members of the missing person (See [Annexure C](#));
- Obtain details of the missing person's current medical practitioner and dentist.

**Two Weeks**

- Ensure relevant iASK checks have been submitted that might show recent activity by the missing person such as banking transactions, mobile telephone activity etc, and record on COPS (See [Chapter 23.1](#));
- Commence inquiries to identify relevant dentists/medical practitioners with a view to obtaining dental/medical records. When dental/medical records are correctly obtained, they should be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry to be uploaded onto National Missing Person Victim System (NMPVS) (See [Chapter 10.6](#)).

**Four Weeks**

- If it hasn't occurred sooner, the COPS Case should be transferred to an experienced investigator within the PAC/PD. In most circumstances, this should be a designated detective, however, there may be circumstances where this might not be necessary.

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Six Weeks**

- The investigation is to be transferred to the e@gle.i information management system.

**Three Months**

- Conduct 'Signs of Life' Checks
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure that the missing person's details are uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS);
- If Authority for Publicity has been given, forward relevant documents to the Missing Persons Registry for upload to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre public facing website;
- If Authority for Publicity has not been given, re-request from family/guardian/SNOK;
- Ensure the DVI AM form is completed (See ['Toolkit'](#) on Missing Persons Registry intranet site);
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure a DNA review has taken place between the Missing Persons Registry and FASS Pathology, to confirm all relevant DNA samples have been obtained;
- Ensure dental records have been forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for charting (See [Chapter 10.6](#));
- Participate in formal case review with the Missing Persons Registry (See [Chapter 19](#)).

**Six Months**

- Re-conduct 'Signs of Life' Checks, particularly those concerning movements e.g. immigration and associated vehicles;
- Participate in further case review with the Missing Persons Registry following up on outstanding actions from the three-month review (See [Chapter 19](#)).

**Nine Months**

- Completed Coronial brief is to be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for checking;
- Any identified outstanding enquiries will be forwarded back to the OIC for completion.

**Twelve Months**

- The P79B/Coronial Brief should be submitted by the OIC to the Coroner by 12 months, however, it is expected that the P79B/Coronial brief will be submitted as soon as there is reasonable suspicion that the missing person is deceased. This is also the case if all inquiries that can be made to determine whether the person is living or not have been exhausted.

**Ongoing**

- Record in the Missing Persons Event narrative whether the family/reporting person wishes to have ongoing contact;
- Advise the Coronial Support Unit – who will update Justice Link – if there is a change in OIC;

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- If at any point in the investigation, suspicious circumstances come to light, the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command is to be advised;
- If, after an Open Finding from the Coroner, a belief is formed that the missing person is now deceased (based on new evidence etc.), the case is to be put back before the Coroner by submitting a new P79B;
- The OIC is to maintain contact with the SNOK at least once per year unless the SNOK specifically requests no further contact from the police. This request is to be recorded in the Missing Persons Event.

**Note:** If the missing person is deemed an immigration case at any point in the investigation, the Missing Person Incident Classification should be updated to “Transfer – Other LEA” and the case referred to the Department of Immigration (See [Chapter 9.2.13](#)).

### 9.2.3 Additional Responsibilities if the Missing Person is a Young Person or Child

In addition to the responsibilities mentioned at [Chapter 9.2.1](#), the OIC of matters relating to missing young people should:

#### Immediately

- Create a Child at Risk Incident within the Missing Persons Event;
- If the informant is not the parent, and if circumstances permit, endeavour to notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the incident;
- If a child is under the Parental Responsibility of the Minister or in the care of the Secretary for the Department of Communities and Justice, and if circumstances permit, endeavour to notify:
  - Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) through the Child Protection Helpline (132 111) by making an electronic eReport and indicate on the report that consent will be sought to release a photograph to the media for the child or young person
  - The service provider exercising primary case responsibility for the child or young person (contact information about the service provider is obtained from the Child Protection Helpline – 132 111)
  - The child’s authorised carer (if contact information is available);
- Where a physical search is necessary contact the appropriate Unit/Command (See [Chapter 17.0](#));
  - Land Search: Police Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit
  - Marine Search: Marine Area Command
- Obtain a clear, recent photo of the young person/child and make a digital copy, returning the original to the provider as soon as possible;
- Obtain consent from the SNOK, or for a child under the Parental Responsibility of the Minister or in the care of the Secretary, consent should be sought from Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) through the Child Protection Helpline (132 111), or by making an electronic eReport and indicating on the report that consent will be sought to publicly release details of the case, including the photograph;
- A child or young person must not be identified as a child or young person in Out of Home Care as per Section 105 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* No.105, if a media release is proceeding;

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- If the matter is occurring within business hours, Police should contact the local DCJ office (CSC) and speak to the allocated worker to obtain Authority for Publicity;
- Where appropriate, obtain permission from the Supervisor to create a NEMESIS message, making sure to attach a photo;
- Establish if the young person/child falls into one of the following categories;
  - is reasonably suspected of having been abducted or taken away by a person;
  - they appear to be at imminent risk of death or serious harm;
  - is missing in concerning or suspicious circumstances;
- If the young person/child falls under one or more of the above categories:
  - advise the Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor to immediately consider contacting the Police Media Unit to issue an Amber Alert (See [Chapter 21.3](#));
  - immediately inform the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group who will notify the appropriate Squad within the State Crime Command;
- If there are no suspicious circumstances, contact the young person/child's school and seek information regarding their attendance record, their networks and any other information which may assist the investigation.

In addition to the maximum investigation time frames listed in [Chapter 9.2.2](#), adhere to the following additional investigative time frames for young people/children:

**48 Hours**

- Identify and speak with any person who may be able to offer relevant information (e.g. parents, friends, schoolteacher). Record details of any person spoken to and information obtained to assist in obtaining statements at an appropriate time and if necessary;
- If there are growing concerns for the safety and wellbeing of the young person/child, and a search has not previously been conducted, coordinate an appropriate search.

**9.2.4 If it is Suspected the Missing Young Person or Child May Be Exposed to Harm if Returned to Parent/Carers**

In circumstances where police suspect a young person/child may be at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) or Immediate Risk of Significant Harm (IROSH), if returned to a parent, guardian or carer, a Child at Risk incident should be immediately created on COPS. The creation of this incident will facilitate an eReport to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

**Mandatory Reporting**

Section 23 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* defines when a child or young person is considered at risk of significant harm. Sections 27 and 27A of the Act define the mandatory reporting obligations of police (regardless of duty type) where there are grounds to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm.

When doing so:

- Use the **DCJ Child Protection Pocket Guide** to inform the collection and assessment of relevant information;
- Create an Event with a 'Child at Risk' Incident;

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- Add an additional Incident for any associated offence/s;
- Use the online 'Mandatory Reporter Guidance (MRG) Tool' to determine the suspected 'Risk of Significant Harm' and response as follows:
  - 'Imminent Risk of Significant Harm' (IROSH) – Electronically disseminated to the DCJ Child Protection Helpline, with the option in urgent cases of also making direct contact via 132 111, or via electronic eReport;
  - 'Risk of Significant Harm' (ROSH) - Electronically disseminated to the DCJ Child Protection Helpline;
  - 'Non-Risk of Significant Harm' (Non-ROSH) – Electronically disseminated to the NSWPF Child Wellbeing Unit (CWU). 'No further intervention required' – No other agency involvement or action.

**Emergency Removal**

Section 43 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* also provides that, where police are satisfied on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm, and the making of an apprehended violence order would not be sufficient to protect them from that risk, they may without warrant:

- Remove the child or young person from the place of risk;
- Enter any premises or place (or adjacent place, having just left the premises or place) in which they suspect the child or young person (or the person suspected on reasonable grounds of being the child or young person) may be; and
- Search for the child or young person in that premises or place (or any adjacent place).

In such cases police should consider:

- Immediate and ongoing safety, wellbeing and welfare of the child or young person, including whether they need care and protection;
- The least intrusive and most effective method of intervention;
- The rights of any non-offending parents, guardian or carer;
- The statutory definition of a child at risk of significant harm (ROSH) and necessary criteria for removal of children and young persons without warrant (as set out in sections 23 and 43 respectively of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*).

**Note: Section 43 only applies when removing a child from the place/care of the person where the child is at serious risk. If a child is at school or another place where in the interim, they are safe, police cannot remove that child from that place on the basis that they are not safe returning home. That would be considered an assumption of care and that cannot be delegated to Police as care can only be assumed by DCJ.**

**9.2.5 If the Missing Young Person or Child was in the Care of the State**

The Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) exercises parental responsibility for children and young people under the Parental Responsibility of the Minister or in the care of the Secretary. Therefore, police must make a referral to DCJ for all children and young people under the age of 18 who are reported missing and identified as being in Parental Responsibility of the Minister (PRM).

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Where the missing young person or child is in the Care of the State, create a Child at Risk Incident in the Missing Persons Event.

Section 122 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, states:

***“Mandatory reporting of child who lives away from home without parental permission.***

*A person who provides residential accommodation for another person who the person has reasonable grounds to suspect:*

- (a) is a child, and*
  - (b) is living away from home without parental permission,*
- must, as soon as practicable, inform the Secretary of the child’s whereabouts.”*

**Note: Informing the Secretary should occur via the Child Protection Helpline (132 111).**

Police must always notify the Secretary of Department of Communities and Justice when a young person/child is reported as missing to police. If the Secretary becomes aware that a young person/child reported as missing is safe, the Secretary is required to advise police that the young person/child is safe, but not of the whereabouts of the young person/child. The purpose of this provision is to avoid wasting resources in having the police search for missing children whose whereabouts are known to the Secretary.

The parents should be informed that the young person/child is safe, but nothing in this section requires any person to reveal the whereabouts of the young person/child to a person other than the Secretary.

The DCJ – Housing, have a Casework Practice document (See [Annexure L](#)) regarding reporting children/young persons in their care, to police as missing. That policy states:

*“Where the child is suspected to have been abducted or is missing and efforts to make contact have been exhausted or contact has been established and maintained but the child’s location is unknown:*

- *report this immediately to Police;*
- *make a critical incident report to the Helpline;*
- *provide a dot point a summary to Cross Cluster Issues Management;*
- *attempt to find the child.*

**Extra information:** *Information needed to file a missing person’s police report includes:*

- *a letter signed by the Manager Case Worker (MCW) stating the child’s current legal status or DCJ/FACS involvement and/or a copy of current court order;*
- *name, date of birth and address of the missing child;*
- *photograph, if available, and full description (weight, height, special features, eyes and hair colour etc.);*
- *details about where and when the child was last seen or heard from;*
- *details and contacts of friends, favourite haunts etc.*

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- *medicines or medical needs;*
- *safety concerns, especially any high-risk behaviours or suicidal risks;*
- *proposed placement details (where relevant) when the child is found.”*

When taking a report from a DCJ care facility, ensure a record is made of what information has been provided, including what *‘efforts to make contact [with the child/young person] have been exhausted’*.

Ongoing liaison between Police and the agency holding case management of the child or young person is paramount in the work to locate the child or young person and support their safety. The agency holding case management could be DCJ or a funded service provider.

A meeting should be established the following business day including DCJ, Police, Education and any other support services to share relevant information that may assist the child or young person being quickly located. This would be an efficient means of Police obtaining all relevant information about the potential location of the child or young person.

Where a child or young person who was living in a residential group home is missing and is suspected of being involved in criminal behaviour, the *Joint Protocol* to reduce contact for young people living in OOHC with the criminal justice system is in effect. Attending police officers can exercise discretion when attending an incident and refer to Annexure B within the *Joint Protocol* which outlines Police procedures.

The aim of the *Joint Protocol* is to reduce the contact of young people in OOHC with the criminal justice system. The Protocol applies to young people under 18 years of age living in residential OOHC settings which are part of the NSW Government’s Intensive Therapeutic Care services (ITC) in NSW.

The *Joint Protocol* can be located on the [NSWPF intranet](#).

Children or young people in out of home care, particularly living in residential group homes are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Increased risk is due to history of abuse and trauma that children in care may have experienced and a difficulty in maintaining healthy relationships. It is important to talk to the residential care staff who will be working with the child who may have insights that may assist.

### **9.2.6 Exchange of Information Between the NSWPF and Other Agencies Relating to Missing Children or Young People**

Chapter 16A of the *Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act, 1998* relates to the exchange of information and the coordination of services between agencies.



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Section 245A (Object and principles of the Chapter) of the Act states:

- (1) *The object of this Chapter is to facilitate the provision of services to children and young persons by agencies that have responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or well-being of children and young persons—*
  - (a) *by authorising or requiring those agencies to provide, and by authorising those agencies to receive, information that is relevant to the provision of those services, while protecting the confidentiality of the information, and*
  - (b) *by requiring those agencies to take reasonable steps to co-ordinate the provision of those services with other such agencies.*
- (2) *The principles underlying this Chapter are as follows—*
  - (a) *agencies that have responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or well-being of children or young persons should be able to provide and receive information that promotes the safety, welfare or well-being of children or young persons,*
  - (b) *those agencies should work collaboratively in a way that respects each other's functions and expertise,*
  - (c) *each such agency should be able to communicate with each other agency so as to facilitate the provision of services to children and young persons and their families (including, where applicable, prioritised access to services to children and young persons at risk of significant harm and to their families),*
  - (d) *because the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young persons are paramount—*
    - (i) *the need to provide services relating to the care and protection of children and young persons, and*
    - (ii) *the needs and interests of children and young persons, and of their families, in receiving those services, take precedence over the protection of confidentiality or of an individual's privacy.”*

Section 245C (Provision of information) of the Act states:

- (1) *A prescribed body (the provider) may provide information relating to the safety, welfare or well-being of a particular child or young person or class of children or young persons to another prescribed body (the recipient) if the provider reasonably believes that the provision of the information would assist the recipient—*
  - (a) *to make any decision, assessment or plan or to initiate or conduct any investigation, or to provide any service, relating to the safety, welfare or well-being of the child or young person or class of children or young persons (including, where applicable, to provide prioritised access to any service to a child or young person or class of children or young persons at risk of significant harm), or*
  - (b) *to manage any risk to the child or young person (or class of children or young persons) that might arise in the recipient's capacity as an employer or designated agency.*
- (2) *Information may be provided under this section regardless of whether the provider has been requested to provide the information.”*

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In summary, all NSW government agencies are required to exchange information if it will assist with an investigation relating to a missing child or young person.

**9.2.7 Repeat Missing Young People and Youth Action Meetings (YAMs)**

Youth Action Meetings (YAMs) have been designed to provide a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of young people who are considered at risk, particularly those who are at risk of becoming either a victim of or an offender of crime, including children or young people who are the subject of repeated missing persons reports.

YAMs are modelled on the Safety Action Meetings (SAMs) that were developed to provide help and support for victims of domestic and family violence from a range of government agencies. YAMs have been developed to address the needs of children and young people who are deemed to be over the age of criminal responsibility. This means that children and young people between the ages of 10 -17 are the most suitable for the YAM process.

YAMs are a regular meeting (chaired by police) of key government and non-government agencies coming together on a regular monthly basis to identify risks, develop action plans and put tangible outcome strategies in place to help identified young people and reduce the risks for them.

Young people can be referred into the YAMs by any of the agencies that sit in on the YAM, by internal police processes, or by anyone who has concerns about a child or young person. These referrals are forwarded to the police YAM coordinator. Each child or young person is then discussed at a police risk assessment meeting which is usually held two weeks before the YAM to determine the risks facing the child or young person. The child or young person is then placed on the YAM agenda to be discussed by all the stakeholders that sit at the meeting.

The meetings are an opportunity to ensure that there is a coordinated approach towards addressing the needs and reducing the risks for the identified young person. This will allow for better allocation of resources and a reduced risk of organisations and service providers duplicating responses to the needs of the young person.

The aim of YAMs is to reduce the likelihood of a young person becoming a victim or an offender of crime by ensuring that a coordinated approach is undertaken, by sharing information in relation to the risk indicators that are impacting on the young person and the strategies and services that can be implemented to address these indicators.

YAMs are currently facilitated under two models. The first is managed by internal police - this model is being trialled at Wollongong, the Hunter Valley, Mt Druitt, Nepean and Wagga Wagga. The second model is run by an NSW police-employed external coordinator - this model is being piloted in Campbelltown and Coffs Harbour. The aims and focus of YAMs remain the same, it is just the coordination model that differs. A six-month evaluation process is being conducted at Wagga Wagga and Campbelltown to determine the best practice of managing YAMs and once this has been ascertained the best practice model will be rolled out across NSW.

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Through YAMs, NSW Police are utilising a community-wide approach to support and engage vulnerable young people through a range of police, government and non-government agency actions to produce beneficial outcomes for this group of children and young people. YAMs enable a range of government agencies to work together with NSW Police to enable these benefits and support.

For Commands participating in the YAM pilot program, repeat missing children or young people within those commands should be brought to the attention of the YAM Coordinator for consideration of inclusion in the program. Police responsible for investigating missing young people, in commands where the YAM program is operating, should seek out the assistance of their YAM Coordinator as they are likely to be a valuable source of information through their ongoing contact with relevant resources in the general area.

MPR analysts identify repeat missing children and young people and report these to individual PAC/PD's (including YAMS programs where applicable).

### 9.2.8 Parental Abductions

Parental abduction is the hiding, taking or keeping hold of a young person/child by his/her parent while defying the rights of the young person/child's other parent or another member of the family. This type of abduction generally occurs when the parents separate. Children that are the subject of parental abductions fit the NSWPF definition of a missing person. Police should take missing person reports of these young people/children in all circumstances, irrespective of whether Family Law proceedings have been instituted or a Recovery Order exists. Where a parent fails to return a young person/child pursuant to a parenting plan or court order, and the young person/child cannot be sighted by police, they are to be treated as a missing person. Once a missing person report has been taken, the matter should be investigated in accordance with [Chapter 9.2.3](#).

All police should be aware that under Section 121 of the *Family Law Act 1975* it is an offence for any person to publish details of any party involved in family law proceedings. There is provision for a Judicial Officer to lift the restriction for a case if they feel that it is necessary. Photographs of these missing children can be obtained from the family, or for a child under the Parental Responsibility of the Minister or in the care of the Secretary, from DCJ, for police use only.

Investigating police should consider activating a PACE Alert for young people/children missing as a result of parental abduction. Under Section 65Z of the *Family Law Act 1975*, if proceedings for the making of a Parenting Order are pending, a person who is a party to the proceedings, or who is acting on behalf of, or at the request of, a party, must not take or send the young person/child concerned from Australia to a place outside Australia.

If police locate a missing young person/child and a Recovery Order is not in existence, they should ensure that they meet their obligations under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*. That does not necessarily require them to remove the young person/child from the 'abductor' parent.

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If police locate a missing young person/child who is subject to a current Recovery Order, they are obligated to comply with the conditions of the order under Sections 67Q-67Y of the *Family Law Act 1975*. The International Social Service, a non-government organisation funded by DCJ, traces family members separated by adoption or other legal intervention, international child abduction, and voluntary or forced migration (See [Chapter 27](#)).

If there is concern of international child abduction, young people/children can be placed on the Family Law Watchlist. Police can request any person be placed on the Watchlist where there are concerns for abduction by removal to a foreign jurisdiction. *The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1983* is an international treaty for children who are wrongfully removed or wrongfully retained by a parent. Participating countries are required to return children as quickly as possible to the country in which they reside, so that issues of custody can be resolved by the courts in that country.

**9.2.9 If the Missing Person is a Mental Health Patient**

In the case of a missing person from a mental health unit, the NSWPF is required to conduct certain inquiries in accordance with the [MOU](#) entered in 2018 with NSW Health. Chapter 3.4.7 (See [Annexure I](#)) of that MOU sets out the process to be followed when a mental health patient is reported missing:

- The hospital should first implement its AWOL Policy, contacting security, searching their grounds and conducting enquiries with next of kin, places frequented etc;
- If the patient is unable to be located, the hospital should ring the local PAC/PD Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor or Shift Supervisor and discuss circumstances;
- The hospital should complete an 'Absconded Patient' form (Appendix A to the MOU) and email same to local police.

The NSWPF/NSW Health MOU states:

*'If the risk is deemed to require an immediate police response, the hospital is to phone the Police Duty Officer or delegate at the Police Station nearest to the hospital. A request for police assistance is based on the risk the person poses and not solely on their legal status. However, as the legal status of the patient may affect the response, police must be informed of the patient's legal status. The hospital is to send the Absconded Patient Form (Appendix A) to the Police Station by fax or email as agreed. The Police Duty Officer is authorized to allocate resources to assist to locate the person...'*

Police should then:

- Create a CAD message and advise VKG;
- Duty Officer/Supervisor allocate the job to an appropriate officer to create a missing person COPS event;
- Conduct a Risk Assessment as part of the COPS event creation process;
- Investigating police to attend the mental health unit to re-assess risks and commence inquiries;
- Obtain a photo of the missing person from the hospital or the SNOK and circulate to searching police;

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- Establish locations the missing person is likely to attend and any history of previous missing person reports;
- If the missing person cannot be quickly located, immediately consider notifying the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group.

If NSW Health staff locate an absconded patient who has been reported to police, they must contact police to verbally update them and complete an Absconded Patient Outcome Form (Appendix B to the MOU) and forward it to police.

Section 79 of the *Firearms Act* 1996 (NSW) provides for the notification to the NSW Police Force Commissioner by certain health professionals if they believe a person to whom they have been providing professional services may pose a threat to their own, or public safety, if in possession of a firearm. In this instance, health professional refers to a Medical Practitioner, Registered/Enrolled Nurse, Registered Psychologist, Counsellor or Social Worker. If a person absconds from a mental health unit and they have access to firearms, appropriate action should be taken.

### 9.2.10 If the Missing Person is Suspected of Being Lost or Involved in an Accident or Misadventure

In addition to the responsibilities detailed in [Chapter 9.2.1](#);

#### Immediately

- Coordinate Search (See [Chapter 17.0](#));

#### One Week

- Ensure that DNA and potential fingerprint reference samples are obtained from the missing person's residence/property (See [Chapter 10](#));
- If a direct DNA sample cannot be obtained, ensure that a DNA reference sample is obtained from appropriate family members of the missing person (See [Annexure C](#));
- Obtain details of the missing person's current medical practitioner and dentist.

#### Two Weeks

- Obtain the missing person's dental records using the Letter to Dentist/Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist (See [Annexure D](#)) and the Authority for Publicity/Release of Records consent form (See [Annexure E](#)). Submit to the Missing Persons Registry for referral to odontologists for charting as soon as practicable;
- Obtain the missing person's medical records.

#### Four Weeks

- If it hasn't occurred sooner, the COPS Case must be transferred to an experienced investigator within the PAC/PD. In most circumstances, this should be a designated detective, however, there may be circumstances where this might not be necessary and/or appropriate;

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- Ensure the DVI AM form is completed (See '[Toolkit](#)' in the Missing Persons Registry intranet site);

**Six Weeks**

- The investigation is to be transferred to the e@gle.i information management system.

**Three Months**

- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to have the case uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS);
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure a DNA review has taken place between the Missing Persons Registry and FASS Pathology to ensure all relevant DNA samples have been obtained;
- Participate in formal case review with the Missing Persons Registry (See [Chapter 19](#)).
- The OIC is responsible for submitting a P79B to the Coroner for determination. The investigator is to submit the Coronial brief and provide an OIC statement at the time of submission of the P79B. In an accident/misadventure incident, the P79B can be submitted earlier than three months but should be submitted following the three-month case review with the Missing Persons Registry;
- Submit the Coronial brief to the Missing Persons Registry for review prior to it being submitted to the Coroner.

**Ongoing**

- Monitor the case for possible unidentified bodies/human remains;
- Establish whether the family wishes to maintain contact (noting this in the COPS Event narrative); and if so, maintain periodic communication with the family.

**9.2.11 If the Missing Person is an Australian Resident Missing Overseas**

If the event relates to a resident of Australia missing overseas, the officer receiving the report is to make thorough inquiries with the informant to establish the person meets the criteria for a missing person. It must be established that the person's whereabouts are unknown and there are concerns for their safety and wellbeing. The matter should not simply be reported due to lack of contact.

If the reporting officer's inquiries establish the person is missing overseas and that there are concerns for their safety/welfare, they should:

- Complete a Missing Persons Event in COPS;
- Send the details of the investigation to DFAT at [Centre.Conops@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Centre.Conops@dfat.gov.au) who will become the lead agency. DFAT will advise Interpol of the matter;
- Maintain contact with the informant;
- If available, provide the informant with information about the web page '*What to do when someone is missing overseas*', issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) ([www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au));

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- Update the Event to reflect the missing person incident has the further classification of 'Missing Overseas' and has been reported to DFAT for referral to Interpol;
- The person is to remain a missing person on COPS until advised they have been located;
- At three months;
  - Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure that the missing person's details are uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS);
  - If Authority for Publicity has been granted, forward relevant documents to the Missing Persons Registry for upload to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre public facing website;

For further information, refer the flow chart for Australians missing overseas (See [Annexure G](#)).

### **9.2.12 If the Missing Person is a Resident of Another Australian State or Territory and is Reported Missing to NSW Police OR if the Person is an NSW Resident and is Reported as Missing in Another State or Territory**

If the event relates to a resident of another Australian State or Territory and the missing person is believed to be missing from that State or Territory, the reporting officer should:

1. Complete a Missing Persons Event in COPS;
2. The PAC/PD taking the report must conduct initial inquiries to confirm the missing person is a resident of the other state or territory (e.g. bank checks, Medicare, phone checks);
3. If the person is an NSW resident but is believed to be missing in another State or Territory, the case is to be transferred to that State/Territory via the Missing Persons Registry (See [Chapter 10.1](#));
4. Advise the Missing Persons Registry who will pass on the information to the Missing Persons Unit in the State/Territory where the missing person resides, including details of the Missing Persons Event (including reference number);
5. The MPR will update the COPS Event narrative that the relevant State/Territory has been advised;
6. Update the Missing Person Event category to "Missing Interstate" and update the Classification to "Transfer – Other LEA" to reflect the missing person is recorded as a missing person in the relevant State/Territory (including reference number from the home State/Territory in the narrative and/or action);
7. If the missing person is from another State/Territory but based on reasonable evidence, it is believed they are in NSW, the NSWPF has jurisdiction of the case. The Missing Persons Registry receive these files from interstate and allocate them to the appropriate PAC/PD for attention;
8. The Missing Persons Event will remain open until the person is located;
9. The Missing Persons Unit in the relevant jurisdiction responsible for the investigation is also responsible for uploading the case to National Missing Persons Victim System database.

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If the report relates to a person that is deemed an illegal immigrant, the Missing Persons Event is to be rejected and a Miscellaneous – Immigration Relates Incident is to be created. Illegal immigrants are not within the scope of these operating procedures unless there is evidence to suggest that the person is not missing because of their own free will.

**IMPORTANT:** The possibility of the person going missing under suspicious circumstances must be ruled out before the Missing Persons Event is rejected. Ensure that the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is advised.

**9.2.14 If the Person is a Resident of Another Country and is Reported Missing in NSW**

If a visiting person from another country is reported as missing in NSW, the report should be taken in accordance with these SOPs and the relevant Embassy should be notified.

If the missing person remains outstanding beyond 72 hours, contact should be established with the Missing Persons Registry to seek advice regarding inquiries that need to be conducted overseas (e.g. gathering dental records, DNA and medical records).

**9.2.15 Unidentified Persons Suffering Memory Loss**

Where you are unable to establish the identity of an injured person or someone that is suffering memory loss, obtain a complete description, including clothing worn, and enter details on COPS as a 'Located Person' event. Check if the person is wearing a Safely Home bracelet (See [Chapter 14.1](#)) or other forms of identification.

Then:

- Create a State-wide NEMESIS message (with a photo of the person) for all police to view;
- Conduct a COPS check on recent missing people reported in the surrounding areas;
- Check the NSWPF Missing Persons Database;
- Indicate in the COPS Event which institution or hospital the person has been placed, and the time and date of admission;
- If the person is wearing a Safely Home Identification bracelet, access the [Safely Home Database](#) on the NSWPF Intranet – Missing Persons Registry Homepage. Enter the Safely Home identification number and the details of the located person will be displayed. Alternatively, contact the Missing Persons Registry hotline number located on the bracelet, quote the identification number to obtain details of the person's identity.

**10.0 Key Investigative Functions****10.1 Transferring Cases Interstate or Overseas**

If a missing person report is taken for someone that was last seen at an interstate or overseas location, the case should usually be transferred to police in that interstate or overseas jurisdiction. In these circumstances:

- Create a Missing Persons COPS Event and have a Case created;

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- The PAC/PD taking the report must conduct initial inquiries to confirm the missing person is likely to be in the other state or territory (e.g. bank checks, Medicare, phone checks);
- Contact the MPR to activate an 'interstate flag' whilst awaiting any iASK results;
- Once initial inquiries confirm the missing person is likely to be interstate, transfer the Case to the MPR for attention;
- The MPR will then transfer the Case to the Missing Persons Unit in the relevant jurisdiction for their attention via the Missing Persons Interstate Referral form;
- The Case will be suspended and held at the MPR and routine follow up enquiries made with the receiving jurisdiction to establish if the missing person has been located;
- If it is later established the missing person has been located interstate, the Missing Persons Registry will create a Located Person Incident in COPS and finalise the Case.

**10.2 Transferring Cases between NSWPF Commands**

Often, missing person reports will be taken at one Command, while the missing person resides and was last seen in another Command. Similarly, after a person is reported missing, the last sighting of that person may later occur in a different Command. There are various reasons why responsibility for a missing person investigation should be transferred between Commands and in relevant circumstances this process should take place in a timely and efficient manner.

Generally, the Command where a missing person was last seen will assume responsibility for the investigation. It is acknowledged there will be occasions where responsibility for an investigation should stay with the originating Command however, this can only occur following consultation between relevant Crime Managers.

When a decision has been made to transfer a missing person investigation to a different Command, the COPS Case will usually be transferred by the originating Command's Crime Coordinator. The originating Command remains responsible for progressing the investigation until the receiving Command accepts responsibility for the investigation by accepting the COPS Case. A Crime Coordinator (or any other officer) who accepts a COPS Case at a receiving Command, should ensure it is immediately allocated to an appropriate officer for investigation.

In circumstances where there is urgency to transfer the COPS Case to another Command, and a Crime Coordinator is not available to complete the transfer within the COPS Case Management system, a Supervisor or Duty Officer from the originating Command should contact a Supervisor or Duty Officer from the receiving Command to ensure the appropriate transfer of relevant material and responsibility for the investigation. As mentioned previously, the originating Command remains responsible for the conduct of the investigation until an appropriate Supervisor, Duty Officer, Crime Manager or Crime Coordinator at the receiving Command accepts responsibility for the investigation. The transfer of responsibility of the investigation must be recorded within the Case Management system.

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### **10.3 Who is Responsible for Brief Preparation when a Missing Person is Located Deceased in a Different Command?**

There are various factors to be considered when deciding which Command has responsibility for reporting a death/suspected death to the Coroner in circumstances where a missing person investigation has been conducted in one Command and the body/human remains of that person are located in another Command.

In most instances, most of the investigative work is likely to have been undertaken by the Command with responsibility for the missing person investigation. Although it is also possible that a significant amount of investigative work may have been undertaken in relation to the discovery of an unidentified body or human remains, prior to those remains being identified as a known missing person.

In circumstances where two separate investigations have commenced, relating to a missing person report and the linked discovery of an unidentified body or human remains, any decision about who has overall responsibility for the report to the Coroner and preparation of a single Coronial brief should be made following consultation between the relevant Crime Managers. Where two separate reports to the Coroner have been made and briefs prepared, prior to an identification being made, Coronial Advocates from the Coronial Law Unit will provide advice on the appropriate way to progress the matter to Inquest.

### **10.4 Collecting Fingerprint Evidence for Missing Persons Investigations**

If whilst taking the report of a missing person, suspicion develops that criminality may be involved, relevant crime scene(s) should be declared, the scene(s) preserved, and a Crime Scene Warrant sought. Crime Scene Officers should be called to the scene for appropriate forensic examinations to be undertaken.

At the time of creating a missing person COPS Event, investigating police should conduct a National Search (NATFIND) via the WebCops PERFIND function. The National Search Inquiry will identify if the missing person has fingerprints recorded in the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) by displaying a 'NAFIS' number at the top of the search result screen.

If the missing person does not have their fingerprints recorded in NAFIS, consideration should be immediately given (or at least within the first week) to collecting reference sample fingerprints that may later be required to assist identification of a located body. Relevant items will include those only handled by the missing person such as personal diaries, personal papers, colouring books, drawings, electronic devices, glassware or other personal effects. Items collected are to be entered into Exhibit Forensic Evidence Information and Miscellaneous Property System (EFIMS) and forwarded for fingerprint examination as soon as practicable.

### **10.5 Collecting DNA for Missing Person Investigations**

For all missing persons investigations, consideration should be immediately given (or at least within the first week) to collecting DNA reference samples. The objective is for comparison of a

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missing person's DNA against the DNA of unidentified bodies and human remains within NSW, national and international databases. To make these DNA comparisons, the best form of DNA is direct DNA. That is, the actual DNA profile of the missing person. Direct DNA can be obtained from various sources including:

- hospital/pathology samples (pap smears, blood or tissue samples);
- new-born screening (Guthrie) cards;
- personal effects such as toothbrush, hairbrush, shoes, hat etc.

In the first instance, immediate consideration should be given to collecting personal effects (toothbrush, hairbrush etc) within 1 week (See [Chapter 9.2.2](#)), as these items may quickly become unavailable.

It is important to note, DNA samples obtained from *personal effects* can be *unreliable* as multiple people may have used the item (e.g. mixed DNA profiles). Multiple personal effects are recommended, if possible. If the direct reference DNA samples are from personal effects of the missing person, reference samples from the most closely biologically related family members should be obtained (See [Annexure C](#)). The DNA Collection Instructions outline the most suitable family members from whom to obtain a DNA sample. Where possible, reference samples from at least two family members should be sourced. When the appropriate family members have been identified, they should be provided with a '[Forensic Procedure Information Sheet Volunteer – Missing Person Index](#)' form. This form can be located on the DNA Management Unit intranet site under the '[Missing Persons](#)' tab. When the relevant family member is approached, they should be requested to sign a 'Forensic Procedure Consent Form' in the 'Volunteer – Missing Person Index' book which is on hand at all police stations.

Items collected are to be entered into Exhibit Forensic Evidence Information and Miscellaneous Property System (EFIMS) as an exhibit under the relevant Missing Persons Event. Contact Local Crime Scene Section and create an EFIMS job for analysis at FASS. Items collected should be forwarded to FASS for examination as soon as practicable. For guidance on using EFIMS, visit:

<http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/eguides/efims>

The collection of relevant DNA samples will be a standing item on the agenda for formal three-month reviews.

### 10.5.1 New-Born Screening (Guthrie) Cards

Advice from FASS Pathology states that new-born screening (Guthrie) cards are the best form of direct DNA reference samples. New-born screening (Guthrie) cards contain a blood spot taken from new-born children at the time of birth. All States and Territories in Australia have similar processes in place however the mechanisms to access these cards, and the timeframes for which they are kept, vary.

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In NSW, new-born screening (Guthrie) cards are generally kept with the New-born Screening Program at Westmead Children's Hospital until the child turns 18. In more recent times, parents have been able to elect that these samples will only be kept for 2 years. A 2002 MOU between the NSWPF and NSW Health facilitates access to these cards for certain uses including, *"for the purpose of identifying human remains"* and *"where there is no other reasonable means of matching the sample"*. The MOU requires the NSWPF to obtain the approval of the Assistant Commissioner, Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command (FETSC) prior to any application being made. Authority of a parent/guardian is also required.

Although new-born screening (Guthrie) cards are considered the gold standard by FASS Health Pathology, it is unrealistic to gather them immediately for every missing person report. Application should be made for access to new-born screening (Guthrie) cards when:

- the missing person is under the age of 18;
- a missing person becomes a long-term missing person (3 months);
- suspicion exists the missing person is deceased, or
- when a P79B is submitted to the Coroner and a direct DNA reference sample has not previously been obtained.

Template application forms are available in the Missing Persons Registry '[Toolkit](#)' on the Missing Persons Registry intranet site. Contact the Missing Persons Registry prior to making an application to access new-born screening (Guthrie) cards.

### 10.5.2 Hospital/Pathology/Medical Samples

Apart from new-born screening (Guthrie) cards, direct reference DNA samples may be obtained by seizing hospital/pathology samples (e.g. blood, tissue biopsy, Pap smear samples).

To identify if any of these samples exist, a MISSING PERSONS - Medicare/PBS Information iASK request should be submitted (See [Annexure K](#)) to identify doctors the missing person visited. This iASK check will only return results if the missing person utilised their Medicare card for the visit. Results for these requests will usually only identify the last doctor the person visited, and results may not be received in the short term.

If the missing person relied upon a private health fund for the visit to a doctor, Medicare will not have any record of the visit. In these circumstances, inquiries will need to be undertaken with each of the private health companies to establish if the missing person was a customer of theirs. Recent experience indicates however, private health insurers will be reluctant to provide information without a warrant or Coronial Order.

The Australian Federal government introduced the *My Health Records Act* in 2012. All Australian Medicare card holders had an option to engage in this initiative. *My Health Records Act 2012 (Cth)* does not have a provision for police to access records for missing person investigations.

Additionally, the next of kin or the person reporting may be able to identify relevant doctors.

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Once relevant doctors have been identified, and consent provided from parent/guardian/next of kin, application should be made to the relevant doctor for any medical/pathology samples using template application form (See [Annexure E](#)). In circumstances where a doctor/medical centre refuses to provide any samples, contact the Missing Persons Registry for further guidance.

Items collected are to be entered into Exhibit Forensic Evidence Information and Miscellaneous Property System (EFIMS) as an exhibit under the relevant Missing Persons Event. Contact the Local Crime Scene Section and create an EFIMS job for analysis at FASS. Items collected should be forwarded to FASS for examination as soon as practicable.

Prior to the three-month review for long-term missing persons, the Missing Persons Registry will consult with FASS Biology regarding the type of samples collected and additional samples required. These issues will then be discussed during the three-month case review to ensure all relevant samples are collected and included in relevant databases.

Direct reference DNA profiles will be uploaded and searched on the state, national and international databases against DNA collected from unidentified bodies and human remains. The DNA profiles from relatives will be used for familial searching against unidentified bodies and human remains on the state and national databases.

### **10.5.3 How do DNA Databases Work for Missing Person Investigations?**

There is various state, national and international DNA databases utilised for missing person, unidentified bodies and human remains investigations. Within those databases are numerous indexes where DNA profiles are stored, for different purposes. NSW Health operate the NSW DNA database. The National Criminal Investigation DNA Database (NCIDD) and NCIDD-Integrated Forensic Analysis (NIFA) database are national databases. Australia also have access to the INTERPOL DNA database via the AFP/INTERPOL DNA Gateway.

FASS Pathology are responsible for loading both direct and familial profiles to relevant databases. It is important to note, direct DNA profile searching is continuous and familial searching is performed periodically.

### **10.6 Collecting Dental Records for Missing Persons Investigations**

Inquiries should commence at the two-week mark to identify/locate any dentists visited by the missing person and the location of any dental records for the missing person. Generally, family members will be able to identify dentists, however, inquiries should be conducted to identify ALL dentists the missing person may have visited. Forensic Odontologists who chart these records on national databases for comparison purposes will be unable to perform that function unless all available records are obtained. If family members are unable to identify relevant dentists, iASK checks should be submitted to obtain details from Medicare and Health Funds regarding any dentists visited by the missing person (See [Chapter 23.0](#)).

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Once a dentist has been identified

- Have the SNOK sign the Authority for Publicity/Release of Records consent form (See [Annexure E](#)) to be provided to the dentist;
- Obtain a copy of the Letter to Dentist/Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist document (See [Annexure D](#));
- Attend the dentist and provide them with the Letter to Dentist/Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist and request all relevant dental records. These records should include x-rays, dental charts, referrals to specialists, billing information and any other relevant records of implants, dental procedures etc. If possible, obtain all records (including x-rays) in digital form on a USB, or via email;
- Complete the Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist with the assistance of the dentist;
- If a dentist refuses to supply relevant records, contact the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the need for a Coroner's Order;
- Any records obtained from a dentist should be treated as an exhibit and entered into EFIMS;
- All dental records and the Dental Records Checklist should then be transferred to the Missing Persons Registry who review the file before arranging for them to be delivered to the Forensic Odontologists and uploaded onto the National Missing Persons Victim System once the missing person becomes a Long-Term Missing Person (three months).

The collection of relevant dental records will be a standing item on the agenda for formal three-month reviews.

### 10.7 Collecting Medical Records for Missing Person Investigations

Apart from hospital/pathology/medical samples (see [Section 10.5.2](#)), inquiries should also be conducted to locate and seize relevant medical records that might assist in matching missing people to unidentified bodies and human remains. A person reporting, next of kin or other family member may have access to relevant medical records.

If medical records aren't available from family members, a MISSING PERSONS – Medicare/PBS Information iASK request should be submitted (see [Annexure K](#)) to identify doctors that the missing person has visited (see [Section 10.5.2](#)).

Once a doctor is identified and consent is provided by the parent/guardian/next of kin, an application should be made to the identified doctor(s) to obtain any relevant medical records by using the Authority for Publicity / Release of Records Consent Form (see Annexure F). In circumstances where a doctor/medical centre refuses to provide any records, contact the Missing Persons Registry for further guidance.

The following examples are types of medical records that may assist in identifying a missing person:

- Details of all medical procedures, including invasive surgery that resulted in surgical scars;
- Details of any broken or fractured bones;
- Details of any implant (e.g. hip/knee replacements, plates/screws), particularly implants that contain serial numbers;

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- X-rays;
- Any other medical records that could be used to link the missing person to an unidentified body or human remains.

Relevant medical information obtained from medical records should be recorded in the DVI Ante-Mortem form for inclusion on the National Missing Person and Victim System (NMPVS). The collection of relevant medical records will be a standing item on the agenda for formal three-month reviews.

## **10.8 Collecting and Reviewing CCTV for Missing Persons Investigations**

A primary objective of any missing person investigation is to establish the last known movements of the person reported missing. An effective tool to support this endeavour is the identification, collection and examination of CCTV images.

At the earliest opportunity, conduct a thorough CCTV canvass of areas surrounding the last known sighting of the missing person. Consideration should also be given to an extended canvass including railway stations, service stations, buses, commercial premises etc. It is important to remember that CCTV is often retained for only a short period of time and if not captured/seized in a timely fashion, it is likely to become unavailable.

It is acknowledged that considerable resources are required to undertake a thorough CCTV canvass however, proper capture and review of CCTV is likely to be crucial for complex and unresolved missing person investigations.

Quite often when CCTV is captured or seized, it can be difficult to view the images due to the myriad of proprietary software types that manage that process. If difficulty is encountered viewing CCTV, assistance can be sought from the Forensic Imaging Section by submitting an EFIMS request.

## **11.0 Risk Assessment Procedures**

A Risk Assessment is required for each missing person. Conducting an early assessment of a missing person report to determine the urgency of investigative functions is critical. This can be compared to the triage used in assessing casualties and the speed of response needed to save lives. Core to this process is assessment of the level of risk to the missing person and how immediate that risk is. The assessment and categorisation of risk and the circumstances of the case should shape the police response, informing the investigative and search strategies. Risk should also be regularly reviewed to consider new information and evolving circumstances. The first step in the process requires gathering all information that might impact upon the risk assessment. B60, Piora NSW 2470

### **11.1 Missing Person Risk Assessment Questions**

When taking the initial report of a missing person, police should ask all relevant questions, so that risk can be properly assessed. These questions are contained within the COPS 'Risk

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Assessment Tool' and all answers should be recorded. When verifying missing persons COPS events, Supervisors should review the initial risk assessment and record how identified risks will be addressed by the police response.

The COPS risk assessment tool is an automated process. Once responses to all questions have been recorded, a rating of 'High', 'Medium' or 'Limited' should be chosen (See [Chapter 11.2](#) for description of risk ratings). A free text box within COPS will then allow the person taking the report to record their rationale for the risk rating and a further free text box to record how they intend responding to the identified risks. Supervisors verifying Events are required to consider responses to risk assessment questions and rate the risk as either 'High', 'Medium' or 'Limited'. Supervisors are also required to complete a free text box within COPS to record the rationale for their risk rating and articulate how they intend to respond to the identified risks.

It is important to remember risk assessment is an ongoing process. The risk assessment process within the COPS and Case Management systems will prompt users to consider whether a new risk assessment should be conducted when new information is entered into those systems. If necessary, multiple risk assessments can be conducted and recorded within COPS.

### 11.1.1 High Risk 'Red Flag' Questions

If the answer to any of the following five questions is 'yes', this would indicate the need for an immediate high-level police response:

1. Is there evidence to suggest the missing person is suicidal? (Consider: reported stated intent, history of previous attempts, suicide note found etc)
2. Is there evidence of a homicide? Are the circumstances of the disappearance suspicious? (Consider: possible victim of crime e.g. abduction etc)
3. Did the missing person leave with a child in their care?
4. Is the missing person particularly vulnerable due to age / disability? (e.g. child, elderly, dementia, autistic)
5. Is the missing person missing in weather conditions or in geographical area that would seriously increase risk to health and/or safety? (e.g. missing in snow, dense bushland, the type of geography surrounding Lightning Ridge with opal mines, last seen in/near body of water etc)

### 11.1.2 Questions Regarding the Missing Persons Vulnerabilities

1. Does the missing person need essential medication or treatment that is not likely to be available to them? (e.g. mental health, diabetic etc)
2. Does the missing person have a mental health diagnosis? Are they currently unwell and/or taking medication?
3. Is there a history of addiction: drug/alcohol dependence, gambling? Were they intoxicated when last seen?
4. Was the missing person recently exhibiting behaviour that is considered out of character?
5. Is the person in youth/foster care, special accommodation, aged care facility, or other care facility?

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****11.1.3 Situational/Context Questions**

1. Did the missing person fail to complete their last known intended action/keep intended appointment?
2. Has the missing person left behind personal belongings/items required for a period of absence?
3. Is there a recent history of serious family conflict/abuse? (DV, child or elder abuse, victim or perpetrator)
4. Has there been any other recent issues of significance? (Prompt: education, relationship, employment, financial issues, bullying or harassment (physically/social media) issues?)
5. Has the missing person been involved in a recent confrontation? (consider violent, homophobic and/or racist incident)
6. Has the missing person been involved in a civil or criminal court matter as a witness/defendant/victim? (consider also current AVOs, child custody issues)
7. Is the missing person an overseas student/tourist who has disappeared without any notice?
8. Has the missing person been sighted at a point of departure?
9. Has the missing person acquired new friends or relationships recently? (Consider also online acquaintances)
10. Has the missing person been reported missing by a person other than someone they normally reside with/not the logical reporting person?
11. Is the missing person a sex worker?
12. Is the missing person likely to raise media/political interest? (overseas tourist etc)

**11.1.4 Other Relevant Questions**

1. What do you think may have happened?
2. Is there any other reason for the person to go missing or any other information you would like to give?
3. If we need to, who else could we approach that may be able to provide relevant and recent information about the missing person? (e.g. friends, co-workers etc).
4. Are there any other factors that the Officer or Supervisor believes should be taken into consideration? (including factors that may mitigate risk).

Once responses to all questions have been obtained, an informed decision can be made regarding the risks to the missing person and the appropriate police response required. All police conducting a risk assessment must document their reasoning for the risk determination and the determined level of police response.

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****11.2 Description of 'Risk Ratings' for Missing Persons**

Once all risk assessment questions have been addressed in the COPS risk assessment tool, a decision should be made as to the appropriate risk rating. Contained below is a relevant guide to consider when making that decision:

<b>High Risk</b>	
<p>The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing the missing person is in danger. They might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are suspicious circumstances</li> <li>• the behaviour is out of character</li> <li>• there are indications of a criminal offence</li> <li>• answers to any of the 'Red Flag' questions (See <a href="#">Chapter 11.1.1</a>) indicate a high risk</li> </ul>	<p>This category requires immediate notification to a Supervisor/Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor. Ensure appropriate crime scene/forensic response if it suspected criminality is involved. If the missing person is lost, an immediate search and rescue response is required. Immediate consideration should be given to utilising all investigative tools to locate the missing person.</p>
<b>Medium Risk</b>	
<p>Where the missing person potentially poses a risk to themselves or others.</p>	<p>This category requires an active and ongoing response by police and other agencies in order to locate the missing person. All investigative tools should be considered to locate the missing person.</p>
<b>Limited Risk</b>	
<p>There is no indication of a threat of danger to either the missing person or others.</p>	<p>This category requires an active and ongoing response until the missing person is located.</p>

**11.3 COPS Free Text Box****11.3.1 Responsibility of the Person Taking the Report**

A free text box appears below the risk rating selection for all missing persons incidents recorded in the COPS system. The person taking the report should complete the risk assessment process by answering all appropriate questions, selecting a risk rating and then recording their rationale for their decision in the first free text box, and in the second how they intend to address the police response to the incident. An Event cannot be submitted to a supervisor if the COPS risk assessment process has not been completed.

**11.3.2 Responsibility of the Supervisor**

When supervisors verify a missing person COPS Event, they must also undertake the risk assessment process by reviewing the answers to the risk assessment questions. Supervisors must also allocate a risk rating; however, they are not bound by the risk rating assigned by the person taking the report. The Supervisor verifying a missing person Event in COPS must also record their rationale for their decision in the first free text box and if relevant, why they rate the risk differently to the person who took the report. In the second free text box they must record how they intend to address the police response to the incident.

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## 12.0 Procedures for a Missing Person Located Alive

### 12.1 Missing Person Aged 18 or Above Located Alive (or Accident / Misadventure Victim)

**Important:** A missing person must be sighted to be located. Sighting authorities include Police, Customs Officer, Family and Community Services Officer, Department of Immigration and Border Protection Officer, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade official, Doctor, Nursing Unit Manager, Mental Health Practitioner, School Principal, other NSWPF employees including ACLO's, Police Chaplains and unsworn general support staff. Do not accept second-hand reports or over the telephone reports. In exceptional circumstances, locating a missing person without sighting them may be approved by the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry. To facilitate this process, a manuscript report must be submitted through the chain of command to the Manager, Missing Persons Registry.

1. When practical, ascertain the circumstances surrounding the missing person's disappearance;
2. Enter details regarding the location of the missing person and all relevant information into the COPS Event prior to the termination of the shift. This includes:
  - a. Create a new Incident - 'Located Person' with the further classification of 'Identified Person';
  - b. Update the Person of Interest status to 'Missing Now Located Person' (this is the only category that negates the Missing Person Incident Category);
3. Remove the 'Missing Person' warning from the COPS Profile;
4. Ensure removal of missing person from NMPVS and the AFP National Missing Persons Database if they have been located;
  - a. To remove from NMPVS, contact the Missing Persons Registry;
  - b. To remove from the AFP website, email [National-Missing-Persons-Unit@afp.alein](mailto:National-Missing-Persons-Unit@afp.alein);
5. Ensure that, if the missing person is from interstate, that the appropriate State/Territory Missing Persons Unit is informed via the Missing Persons Registry.

**Note:** If it is suspected a missing person has left the country, a 'Missing Person Request For Information' form (located in the MPR intranet toolkit) should be submitted to the Department of Home Affairs requesting relevant details including, 'Smart Gate' image.

### 12.2 If the Missing Person Located is Under the Age of 18

1. Follow all procedures as above except that in all cases a 'Located Interview' should take place (See [Chapter 12.2.1](#));
2. Use [Annexure H](#) – 'Located Interview for Missing Children and Young People' to ensure that all questions are asked;
3. Record all relevant answers in the missing person COPS Event;
4. If the child or young person indicates they were missing or absent due to harm or the threat of harm, immediately refer the case to FACS via an eReport submitted via COPS (follow the [mandatory reporting guidelines](#) as set out on the Intranet);
5. If the child or young person's answers indicate that returning them to their place of residence will put them at **immediate risk of harm** the OIC is to call the Child Protection Helpline (132 111) which will advise the Officer of subsequent action.

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- a. Create a Child at Risk Incident if appropriate (See MPR [Toolkit](#) for Child at Risk Flow Chart)
6. If the circumstances indicate the child or young person is at risk of harm and they refuse to return to their home or care facility, contact the Child Protection Helpline (132 111) which will advise the Officer of subsequent action.

**12.2.1 Located Interviews for Children and Young People**

There are many reasons why children or young people go missing. For some, it might be the result of an argument with a parent or sibling however, there may be much more troubling reasons based upon what the child or young person is experiencing at the time. To address these underlying issues, and to help reduce the rate at which some of these young people go missing, it is important to conduct a Located Interview.

For repeat missing young people, Missing Persons Coordinators should utilise the services of the PAC/PD Youth Liaison Officer (or another suitably trained person) to conduct these interviews. An interview template has been prepared to assist in this process (See [Annexure H](#)).

The responses to the interview questions should be recorded in a COPS narrative. To assist in this regard, a Corporate Template COPS narrative can be selected which contains the located interview questions. The child or young person's responses should be recorded in this narrative template and if required, a Child at Risk COPS Incident completed.

**12.3 Missing People Avoiding Location**

It is acknowledged there will be occasions when people reported missing actively avoid location. An example of this might include a person reported missing, who has outstanding arrest warrants. Regardless of the reason why a person might not want to be located, if the person reporting doesn't know the whereabouts of the missing person and they have fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person, a report must be taken.

In these circumstances, all necessary actions (as described in [Chapter 8](#)) should be commenced. If, however, evidence can be gathered to clearly demonstrate the person is safe and well, in consultation with the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry, it might be appropriate for that person to be recorded as 'Located'. Suitable evidence to establish that a person is safe and well might include:

- Evidence the missing person regularly withdraws money from a bank account; and
- CCTV footage or images showing the missing person withdrawing money from an ATM machine

If circumstances exist where an OIC believes a missing person is actively avoiding being located by police, contact should be established with the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the matter. A manuscript report will then be required, through the chain of command, requesting the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry to approve the person being recorded as 'Located' on COPS.

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## 13.0 Responsibilities when Finalising a Missing Person Investigation

### 13.1 Responsibility of the OIC

Upon locating a missing person alive:

1. Ensure the located person is safe and well and provide any assistance that may be necessary (e.g. medical attention);
2. Keep the whereabouts of the located person confidential unless they consent to their whereabouts being disclosed;
3. If the located person is under 16 years of age and does not wish to return home, refer to [Chapter 12.2](#) (Located interview) and [Chapter 9.2.4](#) (Exposed to Harm if Returned to Parent/Carers);
4. If located alive, create a Located Person Incident (See [Chapter 12.1](#));
5. Ensure both the COPS Event and COPS Case are finalised correctly;
6. Return or appropriately have destroyed any exhibits or forensic material gathered during the investigation.

### 13.2 Responsibility of the Supervisor/Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor

Upon locating a missing person alive:

1. Ensure the COPS Event is updated correctly with a new Incident created – ‘Located Person’, a further classification of ‘Identified Person’ and Person Involvement Status updated to ‘Missing Now Located Person’ (See [Chapter 12.1](#));
2. Ensure any outstanding issues are finalised and no further police action is required so that the COPS Event can be appropriately updated to ‘Cleared’;
3. Consult with the Crime Manager and Missing Persons Coordinator to ensure all missing persons COPS Events and Cases are finalised appropriately;
4. Ensure all exhibits or forensic material gathered during the investigation have been returned or destroyed.

**Note:** Ensure that missing person investigations are never ‘Rejected’, ‘Suspended’ or marked ‘No further Investigation’, whilst a person reported missing fits the NSWPF definition of a missing person. If a determination is made there are no longer any fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of the missing person, clear evidence must be recorded as to who made that decision and what evidence was relied upon to come to that determination.

### 13.3 Responsibility of the Missing Persons Coordinator

Upon locating a missing person alive:

- Liaise with OICs, Supervisors and Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors to ensure COPS Events are updated correctly with a new Incident created – ‘Located Person’, a further classification of ‘Identified Person’ and Person Involvement Status updated to ‘Missing Now Located Person’ (See [Chapter 12.0](#));

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- Liaise with OICs, Supervisors and Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors to ensure the SOPs are adhered to;
- If the Missing Person was a child or young person, ensure the Located Interview is conducted by the PAC/PD YLO or other suitable trained person;
- Ensure that Cases are finalised appropriately.

**Note:** Ensure that missing person investigations are never 'Rejected', 'Suspended' or marked 'No further Investigation', whilst a person reported missing fits the NSWPF definition of a missing person. If a determination is made there are no longer any fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of the missing person, clear evidence must be recorded as to who made that decision and what evidence was relied upon to come to that determination.

### 13.4 Missing Person Exhibits

All material gathered during a missing person investigation should be managed as an exhibit and recorded in EFIMS. It is important to consider that any missing person investigation has the potential to become a homicide investigation and exhibits treated accordingly. As a result, if a missing person is unable to be located, all exhibits must be retained.

Constant advances in DNA technology often mean DNA profiles can be developed from exhibits where previous technologies failed. Exhibits seized for the purposes of obtaining a DNA profile (including buccal swabs) should also be retained, even after a DNA profile has been developed from the exhibit.

## 14.0 Missing People from Vulnerable Communities

There are vulnerable groups within our community, such as those with dementia, autism, cognitive impairment or other medical related impairments. These groups are overrepresented in missing person statistics. Quite often, people with dementia, autism and associated conditions, are inclined to wander from their homes or care facilities. These people are at significant risk of harm and should immediately be classified as 'high-risk' missing people and responded to with urgency.

When a vulnerable person is reported missing, all usual details should be obtained (See [Annexure A](#)) from the person reporting. In addition, several other questions should be asked to better focus the police response to the incident, including the search effort:

- Is the vulnerable person registered in the safely Home Program?
- Does the vulnerable person have an interest or fascination with anything in particular (e.g. trains, water, bushland etc)?
- Did the vulnerable person go missing with anything that might be used to track or better target the search for the person (e.g. mobile telephone/tablet, GPS or another locating device)?
- Has the vulnerable person gone missing previously? If so, where were they found on those occasions?
- When located, is there a topic/subject or manner to better facilitate engagement with the vulnerable person?

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****14.1 What is the Safely Home Program?**

The Safely Home Program (<https://www.dementia.org.au/support/in-your-region/nsw/safely-home>) was a joint initiative between Dementia Australia (NSW) and the NSWPF. The original program was launched in 2003 and concluded in 2020. The Safely Home Program was designed to provide a rapid and accurate identification of an unidentified/wandering person to allow them to be returned home.

Safely Home provided a stainless-steel bracelet, designed to be worn at all times by the registered person that featured an engraved toll-free telephone number and personal identification number linked to the NSW Police Missing Persons Registry database. The confidential database includes a detailed description of the registered person, including a photograph, contact information, previous residential addresses and locations the person may visit. The database is always accessible by Police from the Missing Persons Registry intranet site.

Although the original Safely Home Program ceased taking new registrations, the database still exists for those people previously registered. It is important to note that a working party, including representatives from autism and dementia groups, has been formed to create an updated Safely Home Program that will provide significantly expanded functions, incorporating new technologies. The form of this new program will be announced in the near future.

**15.0 Located Deceased Where Identity Becomes Known**

There are often circumstances where deceased people are located, and it becomes known that they are a missing person.

**15.1 Responsibility of the Officer in Charge when Circumstances Are Not Suspicious**

1. Confirm identification (visual, dental, fingerprints, DNA etc) as per [Chapter 10.0](#);
2. **Immediately** inform family members (if viable) when identification is made;
3. Update the Missing Persons Event;
  - a. Create a Deceased Incident;
    - i. When located with flesh the further classification is '**Identified Body**'
    - ii. When bones are located, the further classification is '**Identified Remains**';
    - iii. Record in the narrative, details of the body/remains found e.g. if it was a partial body located such as an arm etc;
4. If a Deceased Event is created separate to the Missing Person Event, ensure the Events are linked. Also ensure the Missing Person Event has been updated as per Point 3;
5. Record the details in the Event including;
  - a. Time and place of death;
  - b. Circumstances of death;
  - c. How the body was identified;
  - d. Any other relevant information;

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6. Contact the Missing Persons Registry to have the missing person removed from NMPVS and the AFP National Missing Persons Database if they were uploaded;
7. Complete and submit a P79A to the Coroner;
8. Advise any interstate parties if required;

**If the person is located due to being matched to unidentified bodies and human remains**

1. Ensure the family/SNOK is made aware of the match;
2. Ensure the family/SNOK is made aware of the location of the remains;
3. Work with the family/SNOK to arrange for the pick-up/burial/disposal of the remains. NSW Health Social Workers (FMCCC) can assist families with this process;
4. Complete and submit a P79A to the Coroner;
5. Make enquiries into whether the person constitutes a 'Destitute Burial' case. If the deceased meets these criteria, complete the P372 for referral to the Coronial Support Unit.

**16.0 Procedures for Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains**

When an unidentified deceased person, skeletal or other suspected human remains are located, ensure that a crime scene is immediately established and secured to preserve evidence. Where necessary, a Crime Scene Warrant is to be obtained in accordance with the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002*. Notify the Crime Scene Services Branch FETS to attend and examine the scene. Police MUST ensure that all evidence that might assist in determining identity and cause of death is preserved and collected.

If suspicious circumstances exist, the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command is to be notified immediately via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group. Consistent with the Homicide Squad On-Call policy, the On-Call Coordinator will conduct an assessment and determine an appropriate level of response from the Homicide Squad.

The OIC of a deceased matter is responsible for ensuring a deceased body is identified as soon as possible using the most appropriate method. Advice and assistance can be sought from the Coronial Law Unit for matters which have been reported to the State Coroners Court at Lidcombe, the local Coroner in other areas, or the local pathologist. The Missing Persons Registry holds records for all unidentified deceased persons in the state and is also available to give advice and to assist with identifying unidentified body or human remains.

**NOTE: Human remains (including bones) should never be retained by police as exhibits. All bones and human remains should be transferred to the relevant morgue and NEVER returned to police custody.**

**16.1 Responsibility of Initial Attending Police**

PAC/PD police provide the initial response to the discovery of unidentified body or human remains. The responsibilities of PAC/PD police include:

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- Preserve incident scene and record relevant particulars, including names and accounts of witnesses;
- Ensure a Crime Scene Officer from FETS attends to examine the scene. Police MUST ensure that all evidence that might assist in determining identity and cause of death is preserved and collected;
- Ensure photographs are taken of the deceased in situ;
- Search COPS and the NSWPF Missing Persons Database for possible matches to reported Missing Persons;
- Record the particulars of the deceased person on COPS by creating a 'Deceased' incident using the status as 'Unidentified Body' or 'Unidentified Remains' (See [Chapter 16.2.2](#));
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry for assistance;
- Ensure a police officer attends the post-mortem examination;
- Ensure optimal biological samples are obtained by the pathologist during the post-mortem examination, in consultation with appropriately trained forensic specialists (e.g. Forensic Anthropologist, DNA specialist);
- At least two biological samples should be obtained by the pathologist performing the post-mortem examinations and forwarded to FASS for DNA testing;
- If Crime Scene Officers are NOT in attendance at the post-mortem examinations, take numerous photographs of the deceased person prior to the examination including full-length photos of the body, close up photos of the head, from directly above (full face) and one of the sides of the head (profile) and photograph any distinctive features such as scars, tattoos and/or marks, as well as items such as spectacles, jewellery, clothing and other property;
- Following the post-mortem examination, take a close-up photograph of the face (after the face has been cleaned by morgue staff);
- Record details of any distinctive features, clothing and personal effects etc;
- Arrange collection of fingerprints for comparison on National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS). Contact Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command for assistance;
- Request Forensic Odontological charting – this is an examination of the unidentified persons' teeth and jaw by a Forensic Dentist (the Forensic Pathologist and/or FETS can assist to arrange this). These records can be matched against dental charts for all long-term missing persons on the National Missing Persons Victim System.

**Note: If partial body/human remains are located, and positively identified using an alternative (non-genetic) scientific method of identification (e.g. dental comparison), an optimal biological sample should still be collected, entered into EFIMS and sent to FASS so that it is routinely subjected to autosomal and mitochondrial DNA testing, and Y chromosome DNA testing (if male), in the event further body parts/remains are recovered.**

## 16.2 Responsibilities of the Officer in Charge (OIC)

When body or skeletal remains cannot be immediately identified, the investigation should be transferred to an officer within the Criminal Investigation Unit at the PAC/PD. That officer should:

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- Review results of post-mortem samples collected and sent to FASS Biology;
- Confirm identification (visual, dental, fingerprints, DNA etc);
- Ensure dental samples are charted and uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System;
- Ensure DNA profiles are loaded onto relevant databases. All NSW DNA profiles for unidentified bodies and human remains are recorded on both the state database and the National Criminal Investigation DNA Database (NCIDD) – Integrated Forensic Analysis (NCIDD-IFA) system. This system automates a process to match DNA profiles from missing persons against unidentified bodies and human remains.

**16.2.1 When an Identification is Made**

When automated systems establish any DNA link relevant to a missing person/unidentified body or human remains case, the OIC of the investigation will receive notification via EFIMS. The Missing Persons Registry (and other units) will also receive notification.

When an OIC receives notification of a DNA link:

- **Do not notify the family of the missing person until consultation has taken place with the Coronial Support Unit/or until a Coroner has made a formal identification;**
- Engage with the Missing Persons Registry as soon as notification is received;
- Update the Deceased Incident:
  - When located with flesh the further classification is '**Identified Body**';
  - When bones are located, the further classification is '**Identified Remains**';
  - Record in the narrative, details of the body/remains found e.g. if it was a partial body (arm, leg) located.
- If the body/remains are identified to a missing person, link the Deceased Event to the Missing Person Event:
- Record the details in the Event including:
  - Time and place of death;
  - Circumstances of death;
  - How the body was identified;
  - Any other relevant information.
- Notify the Missing Persons Registry to ensure the missing person is removed from the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS) if they were uploaded;
- Complete and forward a P79A to the Coroner;
- Advise any interstate parties if required.
- Notify FASS (Forensic Biology/DNA Laboratory) when an identification has been made using an alternative means of identification, so that DNA profiles from unknown deceased persons, missing persons and missing persons relatives can be removed from DNA databases or change indexes if required.

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When all avenues of inquiry have been exhausted and the body/skeletal remains cannot be formally identified, a P79A is to be completed and forwarded to the Coroner. This must be completed within two months of locating the body.

When results are obtained from FASS and an identity is still unable to be confirmed, liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to have the case uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System. This is to be completed a maximum of three months from locating the body/remains.

**16.3 Responsibilities of the Missing Persons Registry**

It is the Role of the Missing Persons Registry to cross-check all available data sources in order to identify possible matched for unidentified bodies or human remains. The MPR will also request the pathology report and post-mortem from NSW Health Pathology in order to upload the unidentified body or human remains case into the National Missing Person Victim System (NMPVS).

**16.4 Suspected Aboriginal Remains**

If apparent ancient Aboriginal remains are uncovered:

- Secure the site;
- Contact the regional office of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and advise the location, features of the site, your name and phone number;
- Arrange via the Crime Scene Officer for an archaeological expert to examine the site;
- Advise the ACLO, attached to the PAC/PD in which the remains were found;
- Consult with the NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage and the area's Local Aboriginal Land Council regarding known burial sites and repatriation of remains in the case that they are identified as being of ancient aboriginal origin;
- If the expert certifies the remains are of ancient Aboriginal origin (by issuing a certificate);
  - enter details as a 'Deceased' incident (unidentified remains/body) on COPS. Include details on the 'Station Summary';
  - complete a P79A form;
  - attach the certificate;
  - send all documents to the Coroner, filing a copy in VIEW.
- Do not send the ancient remains to the Division of Forensic Medicine;
- If the remains are not of ancient origin, investigate in the usual way (See [Chapter 16](#)).

**16.5 Collecting Fingerprint Evidence for Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains**

When unidentified bodies or human remains are located, a crime scene should be declared, and the scene preserved for forensic examination. Crime scene personnel should immediately be called to the scene together with a notification to the On-call Homicide Squad Inspector via the Crime Operations Support Unit, State Crime Command Coordination, or State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group (after hours) if suspicious circumstances exist.

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It is acknowledged there will be occasions where remains or bones are located, and it is uncertain at the time if they are human. Where this uncertainty exists, the located bones will be examined by FETS personnel and transported to a morgue for examination/classification.

## 17.0 Land and Marine Searches

For missing person cases, consideration should immediately be given to conducting searches in relevant circumstances. It is important to note that land searches do not only relate to bushland areas, they also include urban areas or large buildings/structures that require a coordinated response. The NSWPF has substantial resources available to assist with land searches that do not incur significant expenses to the requesting PAC/PD. These resources generally include:

- Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit (LandSAR coordinators);
- Marine Area Command (MarineSAR coordinators);
- Polair; and
- Police Dog Unit.

There are additional external resources may be called upon including:

- State Emergency Service personnel;
- Rural Fire Service personnel;
- Marine Rescue NSW; and
- Surf Life Saving NSW

Apart from providing and coordinating specialist resources, LandSAR/MarineSAR Coordinators will properly record details of the search conducted for later presentation, if required.

### 17.1 Land Searches

If relevant to the circumstances, a land search should be considered as a priority. Where a physical land search is necessary, immediately notify the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group. The Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit provide accredited Land Search and Rescue (LandSAR) coordinators and experienced search team leaders to support police commanders in relation to search and rescue operations for missing or overdue persons, vehicles, unregistered aircraft and physical evidence in a land environment.

A qualified Land Search Coordinator must be nominated to undertake the actual search operation planning and coordination function. Search Advisors attached to the Operational Support Group (OSG) and/or Public Order and Riot Squad (PORS) are not accredited Land Search Coordinators for the purpose of missing person incidents. In the first instance a Land Search Coordinator must be utilised from within the Region. Should such a person not be available in the Region, the Police Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit can provide expert advice and/or a qualified Land Search Coordinator.

All requests for Land Search Coordinator deployments should be directed through the Region Operations Manager within the area of operations. Once a Land Search Coordinator is

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appointed, they will be responsible for managing the actual search operation, planning and coordination function. The Land Search Coordinator will record details of the search and complete an Urgency (Risk) Assessment Form.

A search coordinator from either the Police Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit or Region Police Rescue Squad will attend if:

- Urgency Assessment Score results in an 'Emergency Response';
- LANDSAR Operation extends beyond 6 hours;
- High Risk Category (young child, self-harm, dementia, intellectual disability etc);
- High Profile Searches.

Searching of land that has water in the search area (i.e. lakes, dams, creeks, rivers of coastal waters) needs to be considered as part of the search area. If the water areas are unable to be searched, a request for assistance to the Marine Area Command should be sought.

## 17.2 Marine Searches

Searches in the Marine environment are the responsibility of the NSWPF. The Marine Area Command will coordinate and control all marine search and rescue incidents along the NSW Coastline and will task appropriate assets depending on the circumstances.

### 17.2.1 Marine Search and Rescue Operations

**Note:** Read this in conjunction with the Incident/ Emergency General Action Check Sheet and IESOPS at the first available opportunity.

Police are responsible for arranging and coordinating marine search and rescue (SAR) operations in respect of pleasure craft and fishing vessels at sea, charter vessels under jurisdiction of the state, unregistered aircraft e.g. hang gliders, missing people in a land or coastal environment, persons and vessels on inland waters and all non-military vessels within port limits. [National Search and Rescue Manual](#).

Marine search and rescue include locating of vessels and/or persons in distress at sea or in sheltered waters and bringing the vessel and its occupants to safety or, if not feasible, recovering the occupants and bringing them to safety.

Section 50 of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* sets out: *'The senior police officer present at the scene of a rescue operation is responsible for coordinating and determining the priorities of action of the agencies engaged in the rescue operation'*. When related to marine search and rescue, *'present at the scene'* refers to the senior Police officer present in the Search and Rescue Coordination Centre from which the operation is being controlled (IESOPS).

In the case of a person or vessel missing, overdue, or in distress in enclosed waters, Police Area Command/Police District police are the coordinating authority. Where the incident is beyond the capacity of local police facilities and resources, or is offshore, action should be

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taken to seek the assistance of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, who assumes the SAR coordination role (1800 MACSAR).

**17.2.2 Marine Area Command Mandatory Incident Notification**

Notify the Marine Area Command on 1800 622 727 wherever:

- A MAYDAY is received; or
- A request for assistance is received from Australian Search and Rescue (AusSAR); or
- A person involved in an incident has died or sustained a serious/life threatening injury; or
- Advice is received that a person is in a life-threatening situation; or
- Advice is received that a vessel is seriously disabled and is in danger of sinking; or
- A vessel requires assistance in the offshore/open waters environment.

In addition to the above criteria, the Search and Rescue Coordination Centre or Marine Rescue Base must also notify the MAC on phone No 1800 622 727 as soon as possible when there is no immediate threat to life or property, but where the incident may involve collateral damage which has been sustained, or is likely to be sustained to a vessel, facility or the environment.

**17.2.3 Suspension of Search**

Suspension of a Marine Area Command Mandatory Incident Notification is at the approval of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Commander or his delegate. Approval for suspension must be requested through NSW Police Force Marine Area Command Coordination Centre.

**17.2.4 Police Divers**

Should you need divers to assist in an operation, contact the Supervisor, Police Diving Unit on (02) 9320 7430 or E/N 57340 during business hours. If unattended, or outside business hours contact the Supervisor, Sydney Water Police on (02) 9320 7499 or E/N 57499 who will contact the On-Call Dive Supervisor.

Police Divers are available 24hrs a day to provide a range of underwater services to any area of the state, including Missing Persons searches and body recoveries. There is no cost to the requesting Command for the provision of Police Diving Unit services.

**17.2.5 Requests for Assistance**

Forms are located on the [Marine Area Command Intranet site](#) or via the BluePortal. Completed Request for Assistance Form for the Police Divers needs to be sent to [divers@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:divers@police.nsw.gov.au)

**18.0 Using Mobile Phones to Urgently Locate Someone at Risk**

In circumstances where urgency exists to identify the approximate location of a mobile phone handset (i.e. triangulation), contact the State Coordinator, State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group on 02 9265 4408 / E/N 54408. In all instances contact should be made by telephone. Investigating police should record a narrative in COPS detailing any request for

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triangulation, including whether the application was approved, and reasons given if the application was declined.

**18.1 Telecommunications Act 1997 (Commonwealth) – Sect 287**

Section 287 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997 (Cth)* provides for access to private telecommunications data in instances where a person believes on reasonable grounds that access to that data is reasonably necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a person.

**18.2 Police Actions Prior to a Request**

It is expected that police conduct at least a basic investigation into the circumstances of an incident prior to requesting a triangulation. Police should have conducted the following prior to contacting the State Coordination Unit.

- Have you attended the person's last known address?
- Have you called the person's mobile phone?
- Have you sent a text message to the person?
- Have you made inquiries with next-of-kin and friends?
- Have you confirmed the person has the mobile phone with them?
- Have you confirmed this phone number is correct? (If you have obtained this phone number from the missing person's COPs record then you MUST advise the State Coordinator of this fact to ensure the handset is still registered in the missing person's name prior to any triangulation being commenced).

**18.3 When to Use a s287 Request**

A request for a triangulation to locate a missing person should only be made in those instances where there is a reasonable belief that there is a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health. If a person is reported missing and no other risk factors are identified, then it is unlikely that the request would meet the threshold for a Section 287 request. The following list may provide some guidance on instances that may justify approval of a triangulation to assist in locating a missing person;

- The missing person has made actual or implied threats of self-harm;
- The missing person has a history of self-harm although has not made threats in this instance;
- The missing person has not made threats of self-harm and has no history of self-harm but is known to have serious mental health issues or mental health issues that have escalated in recent times resulting in serious concerns for their safety;
- The missing person is a vulnerable person who suffers from a significantly reduced capacity to care for themselves that may lead to danger (e.g. dementia, children, etc);
- The missing person has gone missing in circumstances that lead you to believe they may be in danger, (e.g. a motorist known to be travelling in a remote area has not arrived at their destination and is now uncontactable leading you to suspect they may have had an accident).

The above list should not be considered exhaustive and each request will be judged on its merits. The primary consideration is that the risk is serious and imminent. Investigating police

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should record a narrative in COPS detailing any request for triangulation, including whether the application was approved, and reasons given if the application was declined.

Investigations into the whereabouts of a missing person where there is no information suggesting a person is at serious and imminent risk should utilise iASK to determine the last cell tower the handset was connected to.

**18.4 Triangulation Updates**

The State Coordination Unit will provide an initial map of the triangulation footprint to the initiating Command when the triangulation is commenced. It is the responsibility of the initiating Command to contact the State Coordination Unit and request further updates after the initial map has been provided.

**18.5 Inactive Handsets**

If a handset appears to be switched off, a request can be made to determine the last cell tower a handset was attached to. Optus and Vodafone can supply this information provided the handset was on the network in the last 48 hours. They will only provide the coordinates of the cell tower and not the triangulation footprint at that time. Telstra can supply this information if the handset was attached to the network in the last 6 days. A triangulation footprint map can be supplied.

The State Coordination Unit will not 'monitor' inactive handsets to determine when they are switched back on. The initiating Command should ring the handset periodically to determine if it has been switched on.

**18.6 Discontinuation of Triangulations**

Triangulations to locate a missing person are not permitted to be run indefinitely. The risk must be considered imminent and the triangulation must show value in locating the missing person. The term 'imminent' is given the ordinary meaning of the word, i.e. about to happen. In general, it means a person is at risk now or in the next few hours. Each request will be assessed on its merits.

The triangulation must show value in assisting to locate a person. The following list is not exhaustive but may provide guidance on when a triangulation may be discontinued;

- If a triangulation footprint covers an area so large as to be unsearchable.
- If the handset signal is so erratic that it is not possible to assess a handset's approximate location.
- If a handset signal has been stationary for hours.
- If a triangulation footprint has been searched by Police without the missing person being located.

The initiating Command will be contacted by the State Coordination Unit to discuss the merits of continuing the triangulation.



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## 18.7 Other Considerations

It should be noted that triangulations do not use GPS technology. A triangulation uses one or more cell towers to provide an approximate area where the handset may be located.

Triangulations assist in locating missing persons in about 20% of occasions. This is primarily in the Greater Sydney area where triangulation footprints cover a minimum of about 1km across. In regional areas triangulation footprints will generally cover from 50 square kilometres to over 1000 square kilometres. Triangulations will generally only assist in locating a person if there is a known 'link' within the triangulation area. That is, if there is a known location within the triangulation footprint that the missing person may attend. If the missing person has no known links within the triangulation area then the chances of locating them, even in small triangulation areas, is likely to be zero.

## 18.8 Use of Live 'CAD' via s287 in Missing Persons Investigations

'CAD' is near to real time telecommunications call records. Section 287 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997 (Cth)* also allows for the use of 'Live CAD' to assist in the location of Missing Persons if there is an imminent risk to the life or health of a person.

The data obtained from the use of 'CAD' can include the time and date of activation of the telecommunications device, whether those activations consist of incoming or outgoing calls, and cell tower location information. The data can also include the type of activation (e.g. phone call A and B Party, SMS and internet access). The data does not include the content of those communications.

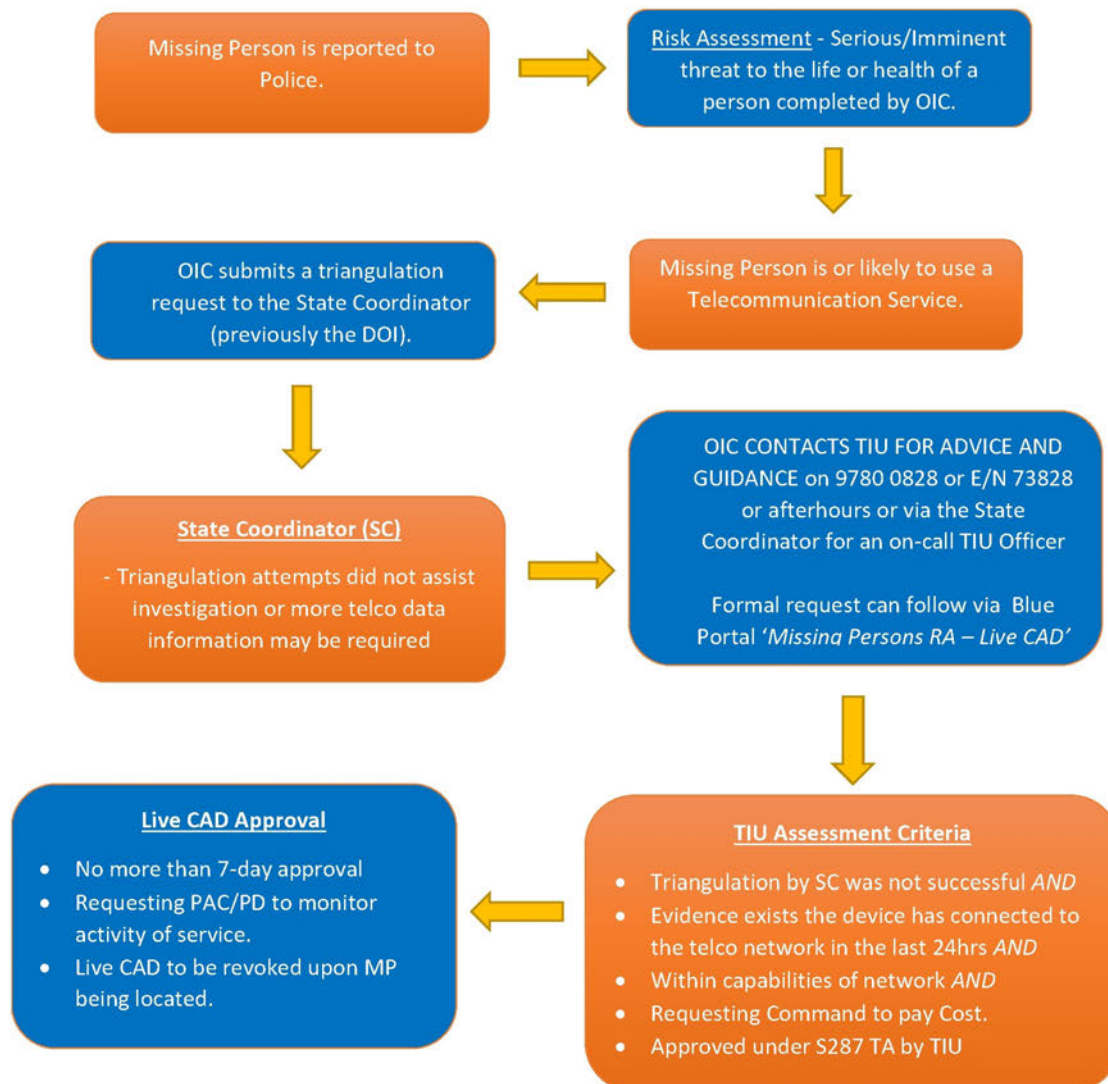
The Telecommunications Interception Unit may facilitate the use of 'CAD' via the Travertine system, to assist in locating missing/at risk persons in limited circumstances. The intended use of this service is only to be used where all reasonable attempts have been made to locate the missing/at risk person have been unsuccessful and it is believed the use of this service will benefit the investigation.

## 18.9 Application Flow Chart for Live CAD Applications

If you as the OIC of the investigation believe there is a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a missing person (following the risk assessment process), an application for triangulation should firstly be considered and attempted (See [Chapter 18.0](#)). If the triangulation did not assist the investigation, or more telecommunications data is required to resolve the investigation (i.e. near to real time CAD data detailing who the missing person is calling or communicating with via SMS), application should be made to access Live CAD.

The Telecommunications Interception Unit can be contacted on (02) 9780 0802 during business hours and after hours on (02) 9780 0828 E/N 73828. After 10.30pm, contact can be established via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group.

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In certain circumstances, Facebook can provide information to law enforcement agencies responding to emergencies. Where there are reasonable grounds to believe a person is threatening self-harm and communication via Facebook might assist preventing “imminent bodily harm to oneself or to others”, an ‘Emergency Disclosure Form’ should be emailed to [subpoena@facebook.com](mailto:subpoena@facebook.com) and include “**Emergency Request**” in the subject header. If Facebook believe in good faith that the matter involves imminent bodily harm to oneself or to others, the Facebook Security Team will respond within a timely manner. 24/7 Hotline: 0011-1-650-543-4938 (for law enforcement only).

Requests to Facebook to assist with the emergency disclosure of information can be submitted via the following link:

[http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/organisational\\_units/investigations\\_and\\_counter\\_terrorism/state\\_intelligence\\_command/strategic\\_intelligence\\_and\\_capability/information\\_services/oia\\_service\\_centre/urgent\\_requests](http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/organisational_units/investigations_and_counter_terrorism/state_intelligence_command/strategic_intelligence_and_capability/information_services/oia_service_centre/urgent_requests)

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### **18.11 Use of Mobile Phone iASK Requests to Help Locate a Missing Person**

There are several mobile telephone related iASK requests (See [Annexure K](#)) that might provide valuable information to assist with missing person investigations. Examples of this include Call Charge Records (CCRs) or Reverse Call Charge Records (RCCRs), and Mobile Internet Records (MIR).

In urgent circumstances, triangulation (See [Chapter 18.1](#)) or the use of 'Live CAD' (See [Chapter 18.8](#)) should be considered in the first instance. In less urgent circumstances, CCR, RCCR and MIR data can provide investigators with cell tower locations which can be used to progress investigations. If for example, a missing person's mobile telephone is in regular contact with a particular cell tower, intelligence sources might be able to identify associates or associated premises within that geographic area where the missing person might be located.

## **19.0 Review Processes for Long-Term Missing Person Investigations**

To ensure consistency and to add value to the management of missing person investigations across NSW, the Missing Persons Registry will conduct 'Case Reviews' with OICs, MPCs and Crime Managers associated with these investigations, at regular intervals. The reviews will be conducted at the three- and six-month mark, with Coronial Briefs of Evidence required to be submitted to the Missing Persons Registry at nine months for review prior to being submitted to the Coroner at 12 months. For unidentified bodies and human remains matters, briefs of evidence should be submitted to the Missing Persons Registry prior to being provided to the Coroner within two months of them being located.

### **19.1 Three-Month Review of Missing Persons Investigations**

Three months after a report has been received for a missing person, and they have not been located, they are referred to as a 'Long-Term Missing Person'. At this time, the Missing Persons Registry will forward a file via the RMS (TRIM) system notifying the responsible PAC/PD that a three-month review is scheduled. The invitation to the review will include a 'checklist' of tasks that need to be completed prior to the review.

Reviews will generally be conducted via video conference however, for some matters it may be more appropriate they are conducted in person. The review should include the OIC of the investigation, the Command's MPC, their Crime Manager, the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry (or their delegate) and other specialist Registry personnel. Prior to the formal review, the OIC, the Command's MPC, Crime Manager and Registry personnel will review all holdings.

The objective of the review is to ensure all avenues of inquiry have been considered and appropriately attended to. The outcomes of the reviews will be documented, including further tasks/avenues of inquiry that may be identified during the review. The three-month review will also include discussion regarding relevant DNA samples required for presentation to FASS Pathology. Prior to the three-month review, MPR personnel will consult with FASS Pathology

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regarding samples already obtained and what additional samples are required. Additional standing items on the three-month review agenda will include the collection and examination of fingerprint evidence, medical/biological samples, dental and medical records.

### **19.2 Six-Month Review of Missing Persons Investigations**

Six months after a report has been received for a missing person, and they have not been located, the Missing Persons Registry will forward a file via the RMS (TRIM) system notifying the responsible PAC/PD that a second formal review of the case has been scheduled. The invitation to the review will include the review report completed at the three-month review identifying tasks that need to have been conducted prior to the second review.

Six-month reviews will generally be conducted via video conference however, for some matters it may be more appropriate they are conducted in person. The review should include the OIC of the investigation, the Command's MPC, their Crime Manager, the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry (or their delegate) and other specialist Registry personnel.

The objective of the review is to ensure all avenues of inquiry have been considered and appropriately attended to, including the outstanding actions agreed upon at the three-month review. The outcomes of the reviews will be documented, including further tasks/avenues of inquiry that may be identified during the review. Discussion will also take place during this review regarding the need to have a Coronial Brief of Evidence submitted by nine months.

### **19.3 Submission of Coronial Brief of Evidence to the MPR at Nine Months**

Nine months after the initial report of the missing person, the Missing Persons Registry will forward a file via the RMS (TRIM) system notifying the responsible PAC/PD that a Coronial brief of evidence should be prepared and forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for checking. The brief should be prepared and submitted electronically within the e@gle.i information management system. The electronic e@gle.i brief will be reviewed by the Missing Persons Registry with a view to identifying any outstanding material that may be required by the Coroner. At this time, if required, a statement will also be provided by the Missing Persons Registry regarding any inquiries or actions they may have undertaken relevant to the investigation. If outstanding tasks are identified, the OIC, the Command's MPC and Crime Manager will be notified so they can be attended to and the brief completed within 12 months. At that point, it will be the responsibility of the OIC to submit the brief to the relevant Coroner.

### **19.4 Ongoing Review of Long-Term Missing Person Investigations**

All long-term missing persons matters should be reported to the Coroner within 12 months of the initial report being made. At Inquest, a Coroner may recommend a long-term missing person case be referred to the Unsolved Homicide Unit within the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command. If that recommendation is made, responsibility for long term management of the investigation will transfer to the Homicide Squad. If no such recommendation is made by the Coroner, the long-term missing person case remains the responsibility of the PAC/PD. For these matters, the Missing Persons Registry will liaise with the relevant PAC/PD each year to conduct further reviews. OICs will be responsible for updating any SNOK of reviews conducted and outcome (if any).

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## 20.0 Placing Matters Before the Coroner

For many people, having a missing persons investigation reported to the Coroner can be distressing. Families may have difficulty understanding the process and hold different views about whether a death has occurred. It can help to:

- Inform the family when a report is made to the Coroner, why it has been reported, and what this means (the process, role of the coroner, any expected timeframes);
- Identify where families can access support through this process e.g. CISP (court-based counsellors who can help explain coronial procedures) and FFMPU (offers counselling, support, and information before, during and after coronial investigations);
- Provide families with "A guide to coronial services in NSW for families and friends of missing people" (a plain language guide produced by the NSW Department of Justice) available from the court, FFMPU or online:  
<http://www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Missing%20persons%20guide%20updated%20Feb%202018.pdf>.
- Seek advice from the Sergeants Assisting/Missing Persons Registry about your role in keeping the family informed about the progress of the coronial investigation.

### 20.1 Coroner's Act

The *Coroner's Act* 2009 ('the Act') is the legislation which outlines the role and function of the Coroner. It outlines the types of matters that are 'reportable' to the Coroner and gives Coroners the jurisdiction to conduct inquests (a formal court hearing in relation to a reportable death/suspected death). The Act confers additional powers on the Coroner, for example the power to establish 'coronial investigation scenes' (Chapter 5 of the Act) or to compel the production of documents for the purpose of a coronial investigation (Section 53 of the Act).

### 20.2 Why Are Missing Persons Matters Reported to the Coroner?

Section 35 of the Act confers an obligation on police to report a death or **suspected death** to the Coroner 'as soon as possible after the report is made', i.e. as soon as possible after police receive notification or become aware of a death or suspected death.

The reporting of missing persons matters therefore depends on police forming the view that the missing person is a '**suspected death**'. Forming this view can be difficult depending on the unique circumstances of a missing persons case.

The current protocol is that missing persons matters should be reported to the Coroner within **12 months** of the report having been received by police in circumstances where no signs of life have been identified. This does not prevent police from making a report before 12 months has elapsed if they have formed the view that the missing person is likely to be deceased ('a suspected death'). An example of this would be where a person has gone missing in suspicious circumstances, or a misadventure where a vessel is lost at sea and the occupants are presumed drowned.

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For missing persons investigations, when in doubt if to report a matter to the Coroner, it is expected that police seek advice from the Missing Persons Registry (and the Coronial Law Unit if needed).

### 20.3 How Do I Report a Missing Person to the Coroner?

A missing person is reported to the Coroner by completing a [P79B Report of Suspected Death to the Coroner](#). Once completed, this form is submitted to the Coroner via #coronerP79B. The Coroners Support Team (Coronial Case Management Unit) monitor this SMAC box and the completed P79B will be put before the Coroner for consideration and an order will be made to the police OIC for a full coronial brief. The police OIC will receive the brief order electronically. This brief order will show the **due date**.

### 20.4 What Does the Coroner Have to Consider in a Missing Persons Matter?

Section 81 of the *Coroners Act 2009* outlines the Coroner's 'primary duty' which is '*...to determine and record if a death has occurred and, if so, the **identity** of the deceased, the **date** and **place** of the death and the **manner** and **cause** of such death*'.

These five criteria can be summarised into six questions that the Coroner is required to answer:

1. Has the person died? And if so;
2. Who died? **Identity**
3. When did they die? **Date**
4. Where did they die? **Place**
5. What caused their death? **Cause**
6. What were the circumstances of their death? **Manner**

Police should keep these questions in mind when compiling their coronial brief and attempt to cover aspects in their OIC statement to enable the Coroner (where possible) to make a finding as to whether the missing person is deceased and any of the additional criteria of section 81 of the Act outlined above.

### 20.5 How Do I Get Help with My Coronial Brief?

Police should have obtained a significant number of relevant statements and documents from witnesses in the initial response phase to a missing person case, all of which should be included in the coronial brief (See [Annexure A](#)). Once a brief order is received, police should consider the attached checklist (See [Annexure F](#)) to assist in identifying additional items that may be needed.

Police are encouraged to seek advice from the Coronial Law Unit (Police Prosecutors who assist in coronial matters) for more specific advice on additional evidence that may be required for their individual coronial brief. Police will need to access iASK to assist in obtaining 'signs of life checks' and seek the assistance of the Missing Persons Registry who will prepare a statement outlining any additional enquiries made.



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If an extension to the due date for the brief is required, a **Coronial Brief Extension Request** can be completed and submitted to the Coroner's Court registry ([lidcombe.coroners@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lidcombe.coroners@justice.nsw.gov.au)) for the Coroner to consider.

## 20.6 Relevant Powers Under the Coroners Act.

There are two sections of the *Coroners Act* 2009 that police should be aware of when investigating missing persons matters.

The first is the power under Section 53 of the Act for the Coroner to compel the production of documents or other things for the purpose of a coronial investigation. When investigating a missing persons case, police can request the Coroner to exercise this power to obtain documents required for their investigation. This can be helpful in circumstances where there are no alternate means to obtain the information (via iASK or otherwise).

Section 40 of the Act gives the Coroner the power to establish a 'coronial investigation scene' at a specified place (a coronial scene order). Sections 42 and 43 of the Act authorises police officers and other persons to enter the specified place and exercise several functions including photographing the scene and seizing evidence (refer to [Section 43](#)). This power can be helpful in missing persons investigations where a location of interest is identified during the investigation that needs to be forensically examined.

For these powers to be exercised by the Coroner, a report to the Coroner (P79B) must have already been submitted. If you are investigating a missing persons matter and believe these sections of the Act may assist you, please contact the Coronial Law Unit for advice.

## 20.7 Missing Person Inquests

There are certain categories of deaths where it is mandatory for a Coroner to hold an inquest under Section 27 of the *Coroners Act* 2009. This includes missing persons matters as in those matters, it may not have been 'sufficiently disclosed' whether a person has died. This is the central question in inquests relating to missing persons matters.

In missing persons matters an inquest is often also required as the date, place and manner and cause of the person's death have not been 'sufficiently disclosed'.

Once police have submitted a coronial brief of evidence, this will be considered by the Coroner. Following this, the matter is allocated to a Coronial Advocate (Coronial Law Unit – Police Prosecutors – (02) 9563 9405 / E/N 56905) who will then liaise with the OIC in relation to any follow up required in the matter. The allocated advocate can answer any questions about the Inquest process.

## 21.0 Release of Information to the Public/Media

The media and general public can be extremely useful to assist in the management of missing persons investigations. From issuing Amber Alerts to reaching out through social media, it is

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encouraged that all police involved in the investigation of Missing Persons matters, seek advice from the Police Media Unit on (02) 8263 6101 / E/N 45101.

## **21.1 Releasing Photographs of a Missing Person**

Releasing a photograph of a missing person via social media or traditional media outlets can be a very useful tool to quickly locate someone. Photographs can be obtained from various sources including, the missing persons family and NSWPF databases. Endeavour to obtain the highest quality digital photograph of the missing person as the quality of the photograph will significantly impact upon its effectiveness. The use of new technologies, such as facial recognition, will be highly dependent upon the quality of photographs used in the process.

### **21.1.1 Authority to Publish Photographs**

When obtaining a photograph of a missing person from a family member, or next of kin, also obtain an 'Authority for Publicity' to release the photograph by having the next of kin sign the Authority for Publicity/Release of Records consent form (Annexure F).

### **21.1.2 What to Do if a SNOK Refuses to Sign an Authority for Publicity**

If a senior next of kin refuses to sign an Authority for Publicity, or to provide a photograph to assist the investigation, establish contact with the Missing Persons Registry for advice. Photographs can still be released to the media without a signed Authority for Publicity; however, associated risks need to be considered before a decision is made. The Manager of the Missing Persons Registry will seek legal advice based upon the individual circumstances of each case.

## **21.2 Geographic Targeting of SMS Messages**

The NSWPF has partnered with Telstra to utilise their Emergency Alert System to allow SMS messages to be sent to all mobile telecommunications devices (phones, tablets, etc) within a defined geographical area, in certain circumstances, to assist high-risk missing person investigations.

A high-risk missing person is determined by undertaking the integrated missing person risk assessment process which is contained within COPS. If that risk assessment process concludes the incident is 'high risk', consideration should be given to utilising the geo targeting tool.

### **What does the geo targeting tool do?**

When the geo targeting tool is used, a brief SMS message can be sent to all devices (irrespective of the Carrier they are subscribed to) within a defined area, as well as other mobile telecommunications devices that are normally registered to that defined geographic area. The message would generally include a brief description of the missing person and details of how to report any sighting. It is also possible to include a 'bitlink' to a photograph of the missing person if it is available, Authority for Publicity has been obtained and it is appropriate in the circumstances to include a photograph in the release.



**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****When can the tool be used?**

The circumstances in which people go missing are varied, as are the associated risks. The use of geo targeted SMS messages will only be used in high-risk circumstances. An assessment of all available and relevant information will be made before this investigative tool is used.

Examples of when geographic targeting of SMS messages could be used include:

- Dementia patients who wander from their homes and where serious concerns are held for their safety if not located quickly;
- Children with developmental issues who are separated from their carers/family and serious concerns are held for their safety if not located quickly;
- Young children who go missing in large crowds.

Conversely, there are occasions where the use of this tool may have a detrimental impact upon the outcome. For example, it could potentially be entirely inappropriate to use this tool in circumstances where the missing person is threatening self-harm.

**What are the criteria to be met?**

Prior to the submission of an application to utilise the geo targeting tool, certain conditions must be met:

- authority to use the tool (and publish photographs) has been granted by the Senior Next of Kin;
- there is a reasonable belief the missing person is at risk of serious harm;
- there is a reasonable belief that use of this tool will not increase the risk of harm to the missing person;
- investigating police believe the use of the tool will lead to a better outcome;
- risks associated with the use of the tool have been considered and weighed against the risks of not using the tool;
- the circumstances warrant use of the tool;
- authority to use the tool has been approved by a Duty Officer.

**How do I send a geo targeted SMS message?**

To make use of the geographic targeting of SMS tool, contact should be established with the Police Media Unit, Public Affairs Branch on Ph: (02) 8263 6101 or E/N 45101 who facilitate its use.

**21.3 Amber Alerts**

Amber Alerts involve the urgent broadcast of relevant information through the media and other means to the public to facilitate the search for, location and the safe recovery of an abducted child, high-risk missing child or young person 16 years and under. If an Amber Alert is appropriate, Duty Officers should contact the Police Media Unit for assistance (See Public Affairs - [SOPS for issuing Amber Alerts](#)).

Amber Alerts require the following criteria to be met:

- the child is 16 years of age or younger;
- the child is abducted by either a stranger or by a person known to the child;

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- there are no known issues with kidnapping and/or ransom associated with the abduction;
- there is a reasonable belief that the child is at risk of serious harm and/or death;
- there is a reasonable belief that activating an alert will not increase the risk of harm to the child by alerting the offender to police activity;
- there is sufficient descriptive information available to make an alert effective in assisting the location and safe recovery of the child; and
- circumstances warrant activation.

Amber Alerts can be issued regardless of whether the incident is or is not child custody related or a Family Court matter.

An Amber Alert **cannot** be activated:

- if there is a reasonable likelihood that kidnapping and/or ransom is associated with the abduction. State Crime Command will assume responsibility for the case and proceed in accordance with appropriate investigative processes;
- if the person is over 16 years of age;
- if there is a reasonable likelihood that activating the alert will increase the risk of harm to the child.

When an Amber Alert cannot be issued, other means of seeking community assistance may be implemented. For example, general media releases and appeals for assistance may be used. Contact the Police Media Unit, Public Affairs Branch on Ph: (02) 8263 6101 or E/N 45101 for assistance. The Local Area Command could also make application to the Telecommunications Interception Unit, Special Services Group, for a telephone interception on the child's or suspect's telephone to obtain a general location of the child.

## 21.4 Restrictions on Releasing Information to the Media

Officers are to comply with section 121 of the *Family Law Act* (Cth) - 'Restriction on publication of court proceedings', which places restrictions on the publication of identifying information under the Act. When considering the release of information to the media, care is to be taken not to infringe the legislation. Particulars of Family Law proceedings are to be included in the COPS Missing Person's report.

## 21.5 Family Law Matters

If the missing person is the subject of a court order under the *Family Law Act* (Cth), advise the guardian a warrant must be obtained from a Family Court by the guardian who has custody. The warrant authorises police to remove the child if there is a need to use any force. This function is usually performed by officers of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and is attended to by an officer of the NSWPF when an officer of the AFP is unavailable.

## 21.6 Use of Facebook and Other Social Media Releases

**For Emergency Facebook access applications, See [Chapter 18.10](#)**

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Social media platforms are increasing in popularity and as a result, they are an effective tool for the timely release of information when seeking the public's help to locate a missing person. Ensure all missing person media releases are placed on social media – particularly Facebook and Twitter.

It is important to secure a good quality photo of the missing person from the family/NOK and to ensure any medical condition that increase a missing person's vulnerability is emphasised in the media release.

All media releases need to include a sentence that provides correct channels to contact police, such as:

***'Please report information relating to this matter to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at <https://www1.police.nsw.gov.au/> Do not report matters through social media.'***

A recent development has been the use of the Multicultural Liaison Officers (MCLOs) to assist the drafting of in-language media releases (via Multicultural NSW) and utilising their community networks to increase reach for media releases where a multicultural community is involved. This has included MCLO presence at media conferences and direct contact with multicultural media.

### **21.6.1 Use of Facebook for the Release of Information**

It is the responsibility of each PAC/PD to share a missing person post as they see appropriate, however Public Affairs is able to publish to these pages on an 'as needs' basis via a social media management tool. Contact Public Affairs for further information. Training on social media best practice and the use of the social media management tool is being rolled out across the state.

### **21.6.2 Use of Twitter for the Release of Information**

Given the limitation in wording, tweets need to be short, sharp and engaging. Working on providing essential information upfront in the case of missing people, particularly those people who are vulnerable, is crucial.

A proposed format is:

- Name, age, last seen, any reason for concern.

E.g. Have you seen Brian Smith, 89? He was last seen in Commonwealth St, Surry Hills on 1 Jan 2020. Police have concerns for welfare due to Mr Smith's age and a medical condition. Please call 1800 333 000 if you see him. Link to media release.

### **21.6.3 Use of Instagram for the Release of Information**

Along with Facebook and Twitter, the NSWPF has used Instagram to promote the recent State Crime Command podcast series that features long-term missing people cases. The Instagram audience has been responsive to missing person content relating to events i.e. Missing Persons Week, as opposed to individual missing people.

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#### **21.6.4 Use of Weibo for the Release of Information**

Missing people of Chinese background, and those with relevance to the Chinese community, are posted to Weibo by the MCLO in relevant language. With the expected increase in using MCLOs for in language media liaison, this medium will continue to be used.

#### **21.6.5 Use of NSWPF Website**

The NSWPF is adding several features to its official website that will enhance how information is displayed and allow the public the ability to interact with the website more effectively, particularly from a mobile device i.e. to run searches, make payments etc. These new features will include improvements to the Missing Persons Enquiry System (the System). Proposed enhancement to the System will include a better display of missing people – particularly from a mobile device.

#### **21.7 Use of the ‘State Crime Command’ Podcast Series**

The NSWPF has partnered with a professional journalist and production company to create podcasts to be used as an investigative tool to help progress missing person investigations. The series, ‘State Crime Command’ can be located via the NSWPF internet site or via other Podcast sites such as Apple Podcasts. If the OIC of a missing person investigation would like to use the podcast investigative tool, contact should be established with the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the process.

#### **21.8 Officers Should Liaise with Missing Person’s Parents/Relatives/Carer**

When authorising the release of particulars of a missing person, the Supervisor or Duty Officer should liaise or direct another officer to liaise with the missing person’s parents, relatives or inquirer with a view to minimising any misunderstandings. If an OIC of a missing persons investigation is unable to obtain Authority for Publicity, contact should be established with the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the matter.

### **22.0 Managing the Financial Affairs of a Missing Person**

#### **22.1 NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009**

When a person is missing there can be difficulties in managing the person's financial and property affairs. Section 54 of the [NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009](#) enables an application to be made to the Supreme Court, after a person has been missing for at least 90 days, to declare the person missing and appoint a financial manager.

The court can appoint a person (such as a family member) or the [NSW Trustee and Guardian](#) as manager of the missing person's estate. The NSW Supreme Court can only make a declaration that the person is missing and make a financial management order when satisfied that:

- the person is a missing person;
- the person's usual place of residence is in NSW; and
- it is in the person's best interests to do so.

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## 22.2 Assisting Families Considering an Application to Manage the Financial Affairs of a Missing Person

It is suggested that families:

- Access the [NSW Trustee and Guardian](https://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/missingpersons/ffmpu_financial.aspx) website for information relating to missing persons  
[https://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/missingpersons/ffmpu\\_financial.aspx](https://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/missingpersons/ffmpu_financial.aspx).
- Engage a legal representative to assist with the application. LawAccess NSW may be able to assist with referral information.
- Contact the Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU) within the NSW Department of Communities and Justice on 1800 227 772 or (02)8688 8173 to discuss support and referral needs.
- Further information about procedures in other jurisdictions can be obtained by visiting <https://missingpersons.gov.au/support/practical-matters>.

## 23.0 iASK Requests for Missing Person Investigations

There are numerous iASK requests that can be submitted to assist with missing person investigations (See [Annexure K](#)). Although many iASK Requests will be routine and not necessarily urgent, consideration should be given to conducting urgent or priority requests when appropriate.

If you have any enquiries regarding the priority iASK process during business hours, contact the State Intelligence Command, Information Services on 02 8835 7766 / EN 27766 / #IASKPRI. #IASKPRI, will only be monitored during business hours. For any afterhours enquiries about the priority iASK process contact the State Coordinator.

The Client Liaison Unit (and after hours, the State Coordinator, Radio Operations Group) of State Intelligence Command, Information Services, is the appropriate point of contact for officers to follow up and progress outstanding Priority iASK requests after they have been made and where urgent response to the request is properly justified in the circumstances.

If urgent inquiries need to be made to ascertain what, if any, iASK checks have been submitted for a missing person investigation, contact iASK during business hours. If urgent inquiries need to be made after hours, contact the Real Time Intelligence Centre (RTIC) on (02) 88358964 / 28964 or 28963 email: #RTIC. The RTIC can conduct a 'back office' search of the iASK system using only the Missing Persons Event number. That search will reveal all iASK requests submitted under that Event number and any results that have been returned.

### 23.1 Signs of Life Checks

The iASK system contains a specific request for a 'Signs of Life' check. When an iASK 'Signs of Life' check is sent to an interstate law enforcement agency, those agencies only check databases for which they have direct access (e.g. their version of COPS and RMS). Prior to the submission of a brief to the Coroner, a new 'Signs of Life' check should be submitted via iASK.

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## 23.2 Obtaining Opal Card Information

Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) is responsible for operating the Opal electronic ticketing system, which can be used by cardholders to pay for travel on eligible public transport services across the greater Sydney region.

An MOU exists between TfNSW and the NSWPF which stipulates the NSWPF will not have direct access to the Opal electronic ticketing system. TfNSW will however provide information from that system, “for the purposes of ascertaining the whereabouts of an individual who has been reported missing to the NSWPF as a missing person”.

For long-term missing persons matters where urgency is not required, an iASK request should be submitted (See Annexure I).

For new missing persons reports where there are concerns for the safety of wellbeing of a missing person:

- Within business hours, submit the iASK request and have an Inspector email iASK reference numbers to #IASKPRI advising the requests are related to a recent missing person. Information Services (iASK) business hours are 6am-4pm, Monday – Friday. Contact Information Services to ensure your request is progressed as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Information Services, State Intelligence – Ph: 02 8835 7766 / EN: 27766 / #iASK.
- Outside of business hours, contact the State Coordinator. Consider a Section 287, if applicable. Do not contact Opal or Cubic directly.

## 23.3 Obtaining Information from Service NSW

Service NSW is the primary NSW government entity for access to services such as drivers’ licences, car registrations, senior’s cards, Working with Children Checks, Proof of Age cards, fishing and boating licences etc. Service NSW can supply police with information ‘for the purposes of investigating the whereabouts of a reported missing person’. To access this information, investigating police need to submit a [‘Request for Customer Personal Information’](#) form. The completed form needs to be authorised by a commissioned officer before being emailed to the address contained on the form.

## 23.4 Other Potential Sources of Information

There are numerous sources of potential information that might help establish the whereabouts of a missing person. Although most can be accessed through the iASK system, consideration should be given to other sources that might be relevant to a particular person. Most government and commercial entities have databases that contain a significant amount of personal information relating to their customers. If a missing person was known to be a regular user of a particular product prior to going missing, they may continue to use that product after being reported missing. Examples of this might include fast food chains, food delivery services, gambling service providers etc.

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## **24.0 Intelligence Support for Missing Persons Investigations**

If a missing persons investigation requires intelligence support, police should initially approach their local intelligence office. Like NSWPF investigators, intelligence analysts all receive the same intelligence training and have the same abilities to access general intelligence systems and holdings. Local intelligence analysts can assist you by conducting background inquiries such as associates, locations frequented, social media monitoring etc. Your analyst should also be able to assist you with looking into the circumstances surrounding the missing persons disappearance.

Local intelligence analysts should be used to maintain an intelligence log for all local missing person cases. They can submit and maintain all your iASK requests, monitor and maintain incoming information reports (IRs) as well and monitor and maintain media articles relating to local missing person cases. They can also provide you with appropriate analysis such as people and/or location profiling as well as charting. The type of charting your analyst should be able to provide you include; association charts, timeline charts as well as analysis of telecommunication records.

### **24.1 Real Time Intelligence Centre**

If local police require intelligence assistance after normal business hours, police should contact the Real Time Intelligence Centre (RTIC) on (02) 8835 8964 / 28964 or 28963 email: #RTIC. The RTIC is staffed seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The RTIC is staffed by qualified intelligence analysts who have access to a vast range of intelligence systems, products and tools and has been set up to provide intelligence support to the field. On top of the usual intelligence support provided at a Command level, the RTIC is able to conduct Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (MANPR) checks on vehicle plates as well as remotely upload vehicle plates onto the MANPR system (conditions apply), conduct urgent IPND subscriber checks, conduct open source and social media inquiries, immigration checks, submit urgent iASK requests, view classified IRs etc. They are also able to liaise with interstate police if required.

Also sitting inside the RTIC is the Intelligence Coordination Centre (ICC). This unit is staffed seven days a week between the hours of 6am and 4pm. The ICC collect and receive intelligence information from internal collection processes as well as external agencies. They can search and collect from the intelligence holdings of the NSWPF as well as coordinate the exchange of information between the NSWPF and external agencies.

If urgent inquiries need to be made to ascertain what, if any, iASK checks have been submitted for a missing person investigation, contact iASK during business hours. If urgent inquiries need to be made after hours, contact the RTIC. The RTIC can conduct a 'back office' search of the iASK system using only the Missing Person Event number. That search will reveal all iASK requests submitted under that Event number and any results that have been returned.

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## **24.2 Missing Persons Registry Intelligence Support**

The Missing Persons Registry (MPR) has four intelligence analysts. The primary roles of the MPR analysts are to provide intelligence support to the business requirements of the Registry as well as the MPR investigators. However, the MPR analysts also are available to provide intelligence advice to the field, if required.

MPR analysts are assigned to a missing person case when a missing person has been missing for fourteen days. The assigned MPR analyst will provide intelligence support to the MPR investigator who has already been assigned to oversight the missing person investigation. MPR analysts can also provide immediate advice/assistance to high risk and/or high-profile missing person cases. MPR analysts also have full access to the NSW Missing Persons Database as well as the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS). MPR analysts can interrogate and conduct analysis of these databases to assist the field, should they require that type of assistance, as part of a missing persons investigation, or with unidentified bodies or human remains.

MPR analysts provide intelligence advice and assist MPR investigators in conducting the three-, six- and nine-month case reviews. MPR analysts will review these cases to ensure that all possible intelligence avenues have been explored to locate the missing person which may lead to further investigation avenues.

MPR analysts will create a profile of all long-term missing persons and forward this profile to the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre for inclusion on the AFP - National Missing Persons Public Register.

## **24.3 Inquiries to Establish if the Missing Person is 'On Shore'**

In relevant circumstances, it will be necessary to make inquiries to establish if a missing person has travelled from Australia to an overseas location. To ascertain if a missing person is 'on shore' or 'off shore', an email should be sent to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) at [lelnsw@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:lelnsw@homeaffairs.gov.au).

Urgent or after-hours requests (24/7) should in the first instance be directed to the DHA NSW Intelligence On-Call service on (02) 8339 6662 (and as a follow up an email request sent to [lelnsw@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:lelnsw@homeaffairs.gov.au)). Requests can also be made via this process for photographs or video images to confirm the identity of any person travelling using the passport of a missing person.

## **24.4 Facial Ageing (Age Progression) Tool for Missing Persons Investigations**

The imaging technique of age progression is used within missing persons cases to provide an insight into a person's appearance many years after their disappearance.

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Utilising family photos both past and present as well as a knowledge of the effects of aging, Image Technicians within the NSWPF Facial Recognition Unit (FRU) can provide an 'artists impression' of:

- Youth (who have been missing for two years or more)
- Adults (who have been missing five years or more)

The image created approximates what the person would look like today. This insight not only provides the family and police vital information, it also provides a new avenue in which to seek public attention and publicity. Image Technicians (trained in age progressions) work with supplied information to create an image that best depicts the missing person's likely appearance.

Where available, photographs should be supplied to the FRU for this work to be carried out, including:

- Images of the missing person prior to their disappearance;
- Images of parents from both past and present, especially any images taken around the age the missing person would now be;
- Images of any siblings from both past and current, to demonstrate how the missing person's siblings have aged.

For the best results these images should be high-quality digital images or original prints or negatives that can be scanned at high resolution. Keep in mind that an age progression is an educated artistic impression of what a person might look like and may not look identical to the person in all regards. Variables that may alter a person's appearance may include hairstyle, hair colour, make-up, facial hair, weight gain, weight loss and so on.

For further information on age progression, please contact the Facial Recognition Unit on (02) 8835 7617, E/N 27617 or #FRUNIT.

## 25.0 Counselling and External Services for Families

### 25.1 Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU)

FFMPU is unique in Australia. It is the only unit that provides counselling and support from trained professionals to families and friends of missing people. FFMPU is part of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

Services provided by FFMPU include:

- Free and confidential [counselling, information and referrals](#) for families and friends affected by the loss of a missing person;
- [Support group meetings](#) and events to help bring families together;
- Help understanding missing persons' issues, agencies and search options;
- A [Facebook](#) page and other missing persons' [publications](#);
- Policy development;
- [Research](#) into missing persons' issues;

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- Clinical support and information for service providers;
- Liaison with agencies across the missing persons' sector.

FFMPU does not search for people, they work collaboratively with search agencies to support those left behind. If the family require assistance from a tracing agency, FFMPU may be able to assist with a referral to one of the listed [search agencies](#).

The FFMPU can be contacted Monday to Friday on 1800 227 772 or via [ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au)

## 26.0 Associated Policies and Standard Operating Procedures

- Australia and New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) – Missing Persons, A Policy for Australian Policing 2015;
- [Amber Alerts: SOPs for Issuing](#);
- Child Wellbeing and Child Protection – [NSW Interagency Guidelines](#) – NSW Government – Family and Community Services;
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act, 1998 - Providing Information under Chapter 16A](#) – SCC Child Abuse Squad;
- [Evidence Act – Procedures](#) – Performance Improvement and Planning;
- [Exhibit Procedures Manual](#) – Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command;
- [Forensic Procedures SOPs](#) – Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command;
- [Incident and Emergency SOPs](#) (IESOPS) – Emergency Management Unit;
- Leadership of Homicide and Suspicious Death Investigations – SCC Homicide Squad;
- Sexual Servitude and People Trafficking Offences: Investigation Of – SCC Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Squad;
- [Guide to the Privacy \(Person Reported as Missing\) Rule 2014](#) – Australian Government Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- 2017 Mental Health Emergency Response MOU – NSW Health – Ambulance Service NSW – NSWPF;
- Facebook Law Enforcement Guidelines.

## 27.0 Contact List

### Missing Persons Registry (MPR) – New South Wales Police Force

Address: State Crime Command, Level 2B, Police Headquarters  
1 Charles Street, Parramatta NSW 2150

Phone: (02) 8835 7658 / E/N 27658

Fax: (02) 8835 7665 / E/N 27665

Email: [missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au)

SMAC: #SCCMPR



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Normal hours of operation are 0600 hours to 1700 hours, Monday to Friday. After hours, calls to the above number are diverted to the Police Assistance Line (PAL) which can notify MPR staff if required.

**Australian Federal Police**

Address: National Missing Persons Coordination Centre  
 Postal Address: PO Box 401 Canberra City ACT 2601  
 Phone: 1800 000 634  
 Website: [www.missingpersons.gov.au](http://www.missingpersons.gov.au)

**The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC), Australian Federal Police**  
 NMPCC was established in 2006 to drive national coordination in response to Missing Persons in Australia, and to complement the investigative role of State and Territory police. Its mandate is to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons in Australia.

Phone: 1800 000 634.  
 Email: [missing@afp.gov.au](mailto:missing@afp.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.missingpersons.gov.au](http://www.missingpersons.gov.au) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/missingpersons).

**Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit, NSW Department of Communities and Justice**

Address: Level 3, 160 Marsden Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 or  
 Locked Bag 5118, FFMPU, Victim Services, Parramatta NSW 2124  
 Phone numbers: 1800 227 772 (Counsellor Toll Free)  
 (02) 8688 8173 (FFMPU Counsellors)  
 (02) 8688 8178 (FFMPU Coordinator)  
 Email: [ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au)

**Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)**

Phone 131 450  
 Website: <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

**International Social Service**

The International Social Service traces immediate family members in conjunction with its social work across 150 countries. It requests a contribution towards costs.

Phone: 1300 657 843  
 Email: [iss@iss.org.au](mailto:iss@iss.org.au)  
 Website: [www.iss.org.au](http://www.iss.org.au)

**Australian Red Cross, Restoring Family Links Service**

The International Red Cross/Red Crescent global Restoring Family Links network reaches out to more than 190 countries to re-establish contact between people who are separated by war,

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conflict, disaster or migration. The service is free of charge, confidential and available to anyone in Australia.

Phone: 1800 875 199

Website: <https://www.redcross.org.au/tracing-restoring-family-links>

**Link-Up (NSW)**

Link-Up (NSW) provides a range of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including [Reunification](#) and [Family-Link](#) programs. To find out more see their [website](#). Other state and territory Link-Up services are listed at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/link>.

**Missing Persons Advocacy Network (MPAN)**

MPAN creates awareness for missing people, as well as providing practical support to their families and friends. MPAN have an [online guide](#) of what to do when someone disappears. Email: [info@mpan.com.au](mailto:info@mpan.com.au); Website: [www.mpan.com.au](http://www.mpan.com.au); and [Facebook](#).

**Forensic Analytical Science Service (FASS)**

NSW Health Pathology, Forensic & Analytical Science Service, Forensic DNA

Address: PO Box 162, Lidcombe NSW 1825

Phone: (02) 9646 0222

Fax: (02) 9646 0333

Email: NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.com.au



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## 28.0 Attachments

<a href="#">Annexure A:</a>	Initial Response - Missing Persons Checklist
<a href="#">Annexure B:</a>	Initial Response to Unidentified Bodies & Human Remains Checklist
<a href="#">Annexure C:</a>	DNA Collection Instructions
<a href="#">Annexure D:</a>	Letter to Dentist / Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist
<a href="#">Annexure E:</a>	Authority for Publicity / Release of Records Consent Form
<a href="#">Annexure F:</a>	Coronial Briefs – Missing Persons - Checklist
<a href="#">Annexure G:</a>	Australians Missing Overseas
<a href="#">Annexure H:</a>	Located Interview
<a href="#">Annexure I:</a>	NSWPF/NSW Health MOU – Chapter 3.4.7
<a href="#">Annexure J:</a>	Police Information Sheet
<a href="#">Annexure K:</a>	iASK checklist
<a href="#">Annexure L:</a>	DCJ Casework Practice Policy
<a href="#">Annexure M:</a>	Absconded Patient – Report to Police

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## Annexure A

### Initial Response – Missing Persons Checklist

- Record in official police notebook details, including:
  - Establish the facts and keep accurate records of what was said and by whom;
  - Missing persons details, including name (alias and nicknames), age, description of person, description of clothing, current residential address, contact details of immediate family members, names and contact details of friends and/or associates, employment details, vehicle details or other transport used;
  - The circumstances surrounding how the missing person went missing;
  - Details of the computer/device used by the missing person, including its whereabouts (these items should be seized as exhibits and if appropriate, referred to the State Electronic Evidence Branch for forensic examination);
  - Details of the missing person's mobile telephone and its whereabouts;
  - Identify and obtain any details of any bank accounts, passport details (does the missing person have the passport with them), diaries, financial records, notes, social networking sites or other platforms used by the missing person;
  - Name, address and telephone number of person reporting. If the missing person is in a care facility obtain alternative and out of hours contact details.
  
- Notify a supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor.
  - The Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor should review the risk assessment and record their own assessment. This should happen immediately in high-risk/ at-risk incidents, and as soon as practicable in all other cases.
  
- Assess the safety of the missing person by answering 'Risk Assessment' questions:
 

High Risk 'Red Flag' questions:

  - Is there evidence to suggest the missing person is suicidal? (Consider: reported stated intent, history of previous attempts, suicide note found etc);
  - Is there evidence of a homicide or are the circumstances of the disappearance suspicious? (Consider: possible victim of crime e.g. abduction etc);
  - Did the missing person leave with a child in their care?
  - Is the missing person particularly vulnerable due to age / disability? (e.g. child, elderly, autism);
  - Is the missing person missing in weather conditions or in geographical area that would seriously increase risk to health and / or safety? (e.g. missing in snow, dense bushland, the type of geography surrounding Lightning Ridge with opal mines, last seen in / near body of water etc).

Questions regarding the missing person's vulnerabilities:

  - Does the missing person need essential medication or treatment that is not likely to be available to them? (e.g. mental health, diabetic etc);
  - Does the missing person have a mental health diagnosis? (Are they currently unwell? Are they currently taking medication?);
  - Is there a history of addiction? (e.g. drug / alcohol dependence, gambling);

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- Was the missing person intoxicated when last seen;
- Were they recently exhibiting behaviour that is considered out of character?
- Is the person in youth/foster care, special accommodation, aged care facility, or other care facility?

Situational/Context questions:

- Did the missing person not complete their last known intended action/keep intended appointment?
- Have they left behind personal belongings/items required for a period of absence?
- Is there a recent history of serious family conflict/abuse? (e.g. DV, child or elder abuse; victim or perpetrator)
- Has there been any other recent issues of significance? (e.g. education, relationship, employment, financial issues, bullying or harassment (physically/social media) issues?)
- Have they been involved in a recent confrontation? (consider violent, homophobic and /or racist incident)
- Are they involved in a civil or criminal court matter as a witness/defendant/victim? (consider also current AVOs, child custody issues)
- Are they an overseas student/tourist who has disappeared without any notice?
- Are they known to have been sighted at a point of departure?
- Have they acquired new friends or relationships recently? (Consider also online acquaintances)
- Have they been reported missing by a person other than someone they normally reside with/not the logical reporting person?
- Is the missing person a sex worker?
- Is the missing person likely to raise media/political interest? (overseas tourist etc);

Other relevant questions to be asked:

- What do you think may have happened?
- Is there any other reason for the person to go missing or any other information you would like to give?
- If we need to, who else could we approach that may be able to provide relevant and recent information about the missing person? (e.g. friends, co-workers etc);
- Are there any other factors that the Officer or Supervisor believes should be taken into consideration? (including factors that may mitigate risk);

- Take action to identify, secure and preserve crime scenes;
- Assess the need for specialist resources, such as the aviation unit, Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit for LandSAR/MarineSAR coordination, police divers, Dog unit, specialist investigators;
- If a search is required, commence search operations as soon as practicable;
- Notify Crime Scene Services Branch (where required) for attendance;
- Request Supervisor assistance if necessary. Brief Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor regarding circumstances.
- Search COPS records for previous reports/criminal activity relating to the missing person;
- Broadcast known details on relevant police radio channels;
- Obtain and record permission to search where the incident occurred (e.g. bedroom);

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- Evaluate appearance of missing person's room and take photographs;
- Obtain a photo of the missing person (current digital image preferred), and photo of missing person smiling (teeth showing) for possible dental comparisons;
- Obtain a signed Authority for Publicity for both police and public use;
- Assess the need to obtain DNA sample of the missing person. Check COPS to see if DNA sample already retained. If not, see [Annexure D – DNA Collection Instructions](#)
- Assess the need to obtain reference fingerprints of the missing person. Check COPS to see if fingerprints already retained. If not, see [Chapter 10.4](#) of SOPs.
- Identify relevant biological family members for obtaining voluntary DNA samples from (see Annexure D)
- Obtain contact details of the missing person's Dentist;
- Obtain details of the missing person's treating Doctor;
- Obtain a full statement from the person reporting as well as details of any key persons, including the last person to see the missing person. If a statement isn't appropriate, collect information to help guide future statements if need be;
- Where evidence may be deleted or lost, consider preservation orders for international social networking accounts such as Facebook (this can be done through iASK);
- Make immediate relevant inquiries and actions to locate the missing person including sings of activity checks, Opal Card inquiries etc (see Annexure I)
- Circulate details of the missing person with relevant organisations, such as hospitals, NSW Ambulance Services, taxi/rideshare services etc
- Canvass area for CCTV footage. See [Chapter 10.8](#)
- Create a COPS event. For High-Risk missing persons, generate a SITREP
- Create Warnings on the missing person and VOIs, and consider a NEMESIS
- Keep the next of kin/person reporting informed
- Arrange for support person to be present if necessary
- Provide an interpreter if required
- Consider using the media to appeal for public assistance
- Consider activating a PACE alert for missing person matters relating to parental abductions or if the missing person has links to overseas countries.
- For high-risk situations – consideration for utilisation of Live CAD (via the Telecommunications Interception Unit) see [Chapter 18.8](#). Note: An application for triangulation via the State Coordination Unit, Radio Operations Group must have been conducted first.

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Annexure B****Initial Response - Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains Checklist**

- Police called to the scene;
- Immediately establish, secure and preserve the crime scene;
- Immediately notify a supervisor/DO to attend;
- Designated Criminal Investigators to attend and take carriage;
- Assess the need for a Crime Scene Warrant in accordance with LEPR;
- Notify Crime Scene Services Branch for attendance at scene;
- Notify On-Call Homicide Squad Team;
- Body is to be transported to the accredited facility/morgue;
- Notify the Missing Persons Registry;
- Search COPS and the Missing Persons Database, and contact the Missing Persons Registry to assist with national searches for potential matches to missing persons;
- Create COPS event. Where bodies or remains cannot be immediately identified, details are to be entered into COPS creating a 'Deceased' Incident, with a Further Classification of either 'Unidentified Body' or 'Unidentified Remains';
- Request that the deceased's fingerprints are searched against the national fingerprint database. Create an Analysis Job on EFIMS – Service Type: 'Deceased Fingerprint Analysis', Service Provider: 'Fingerprint Operations'. If the deceased does not have any fingerprints on file, Crime Scene Services Branch will be notified to attend the mortuary and collect a full set of fingerprints;
- If an unidentified remain (jaw) is located, Forensic Odontological charting is to occur as soon as practicable. This examination is to be completed by a Forensic Odontologist via a request from the Forensic Pathologist and/or Coroners Support Unit;
- Assess items located with the body/remains for fingerprinting;
- Collection of biological samples including bone for future DNA testing – collected by the Forensic Pathologist at time of Post Mortem Examination;
- Complete a P79A as normal and attach the dental chart (if available/applicable) and photographs of the unidentified body/remains (with approval of the Coroner) to the Coroner;
- Copy of the P79A and attachments including all photographs are to be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry as soon as practicable.

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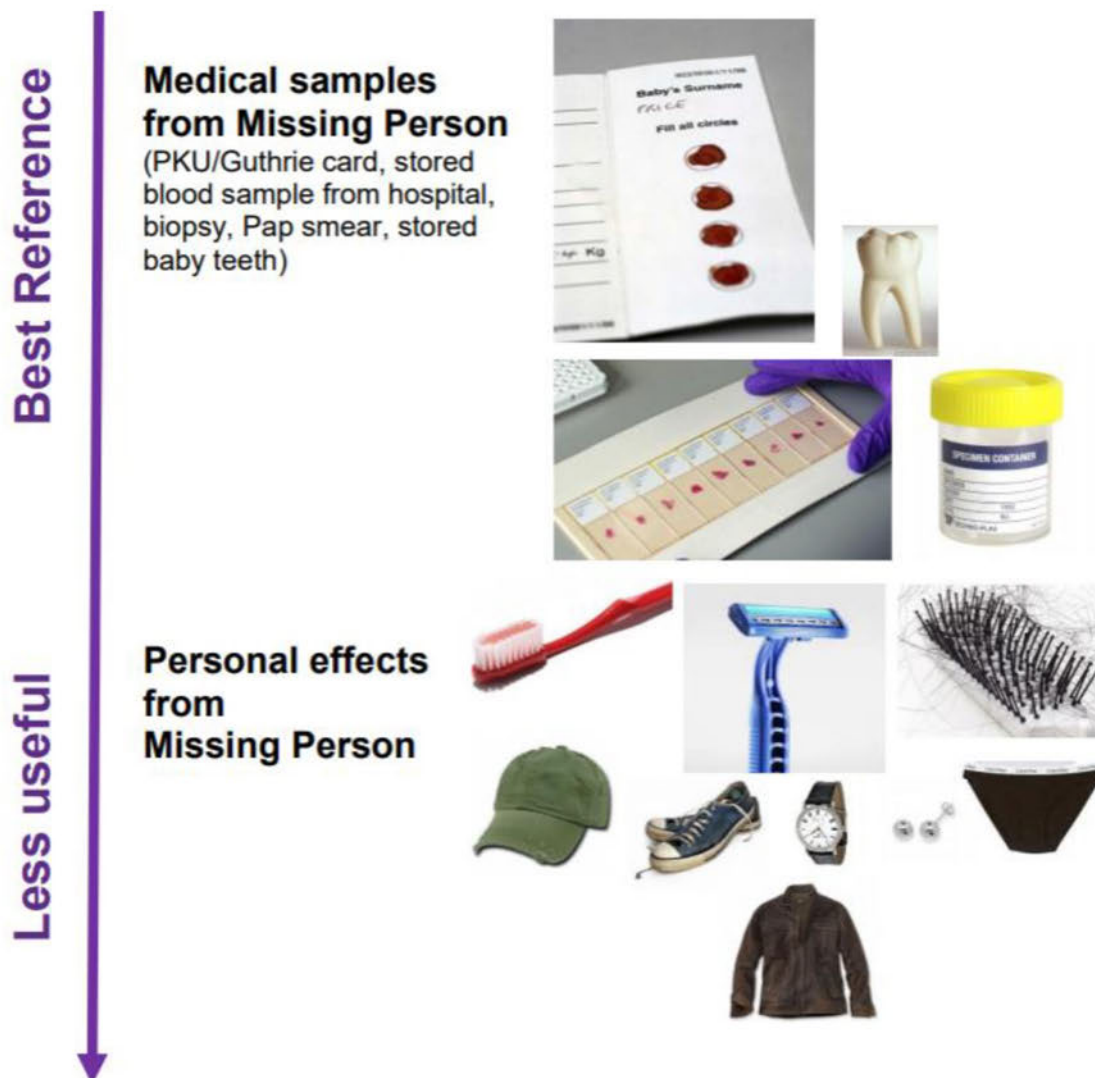
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## Annexure C

### DNA Collection Instructions

#### Direct DNA Reference Samples

1. Obtain direct reference sample for the missing person (see images below or contact FASS for assistance when selecting suitable direct reference samples – [NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.gov.au))
2. Collected items/subsamples are to be entered into EFIMS as exhibits under the relevant Missing Persons Event. A DNA analysis job will need to be created in EFIMS prior to sending the samples to FASS.



Contact [NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.gov.au) if none of the above are available.

If you have any additional enquiries, please call the **DNA Results Management** on (02) 8835 8527 / EN: 28527.

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## Reference DNA Samples from Relatives of Missing Persons – Buccal Swabs

1. Identify biological relatives (see 'Missing Person Family Tree' or contact FASS for assistance when selecting suitable Relative Samples – [NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSWPATH-FASSDNA@health.nsw.gov.au))
2. Collect Buccal Swab as per FETSC SOPs
3. Create Forensic Procedure Incident within the Missing Person Event in COPS. (The volunteer must be listed on the 'Missing Persons' Index by answering 'YES' to "*Is this on behalf of the Missing Persons Unit?*")
4. After completing the swab details, record in the comments section the relationship of the volunteer's sample to the missing person (e.g. mother, son, brother, sister, maternal grandmother, maternal aunt, paternal grandfather, paternal uncle etc.). Circle the gender of the missing person and their relatives on the attached 'Missing Person Family Tree'.
5. Reference samples from multiple relatives should be obtained where possible. Reference samples from parents or children (with spouse) are preferred. Include a maternal relative, and if the missing person is male, a paternal relative.
6. Samples should be delivered to FASS as soon as possible.

**NOTE:** If the relative/reference sample resides interstate or overseas, a sample request must be made through the DNA Results Management Unit (DMU). The 'Interstate & International DNA Requests' form can be found in the MPR Toolkit. The form must be returned to the NCIDD Team at #NCIDD, or via fax to 88358845.

If you have any enquiries, please call the **DNA Results Management** on (02)8835 8527 / EN: 28527.

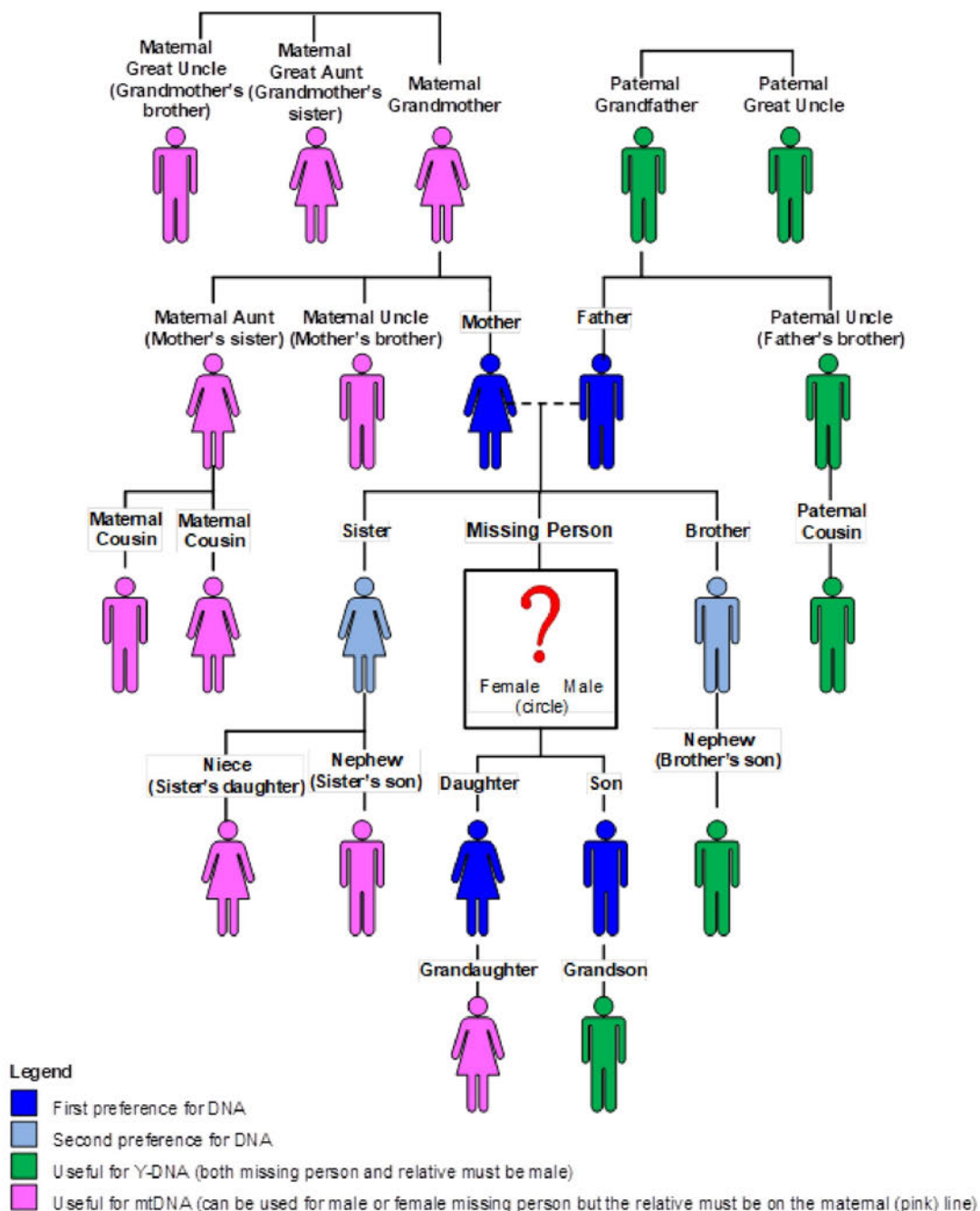
The Missing Persons Registry regularly receive spreadsheets detailing all DNA collected for missing persons investigations. That information is cross referenced against COPS to determine where missing people have been located. That information is then passed on to the NSWPF DNA Management Unit for DNA reference samples for located missing people to be removed from the relevant DNA indexes.

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# Missing Person Family Tree



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NSW Police Force

**DENTAL RECORDS REQUEST FORM**

COPS Reference:

NMPVS Reference No:

Family Consent Provided: YES / NO

To: (Insert dentist name)

The NSW Police Force – Missing Persons Registry are requesting dental records for the following person who has been reported missing:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Please release these records into the custody of the requesting police officer.

(Requesting Police Officer)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR DENTAL PRACTICE USE ONLY**

Collected by	Practice Information
Name:	Name:
Position:	Address:
Date:	Phone:
Signature:	Email:

**REQUESTED DOCUMENTS:** (Indicate whether requested documents have been provided)

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO	N/A
Treatment Records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinical Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dental Charts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plaster Casts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial/Billing Records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Impressions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dental X Rays (Digital)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mouthguard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referral Letters/ Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dentures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dental Appliances/ Prosthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Notes:

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# Annexure E

## Authority for Publicity / Release of Records Consent Form



### AUTHORITY FOR PUBLICITY / FAMILY CONSENT FORM

I am the Senior Next of Kin and of missing person

..... DOB: .....

#### AUTHORITY FOR PUBLICITY

I/We the undersigned request and give permission to the Commissioner of Police, or his representative, to collect/release/publicise information in relation to the above-mentioned missing person, under the following circumstances:

For the purposes of being publicised by the media (including internet and social media)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
For the inclusion in official Police publications which will be displayed for public viewing (including AFP publications and campaigns)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
For the use of geo-targeted SMS messages	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I/We are willing to actively participate in media opportunities.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

#### INFORMATION COLLECTION CONSENT FORM

I/We the undersigned request and give permission to the Commissioner of Police, or his representative, to collect the following records for the purposes of attempting to locate the missing person

Dental Records	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Records	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Samples (blood tests, biopsies etc)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Newborn Screening Records (Guthrie Card)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

(Police Officer)

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rank:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Station:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Senior Next of Kin/Person Reporting)

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Relationship:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Annexure F

## Coronial Briefs – Missing Persons – Checklist

See Missing Persons Registry '[Toolkit](#)' for printable documentCORONIAL  
LAW UNITMISSING  
PERSONS

*This checklist has been prepared to assist operational police with the completion of coronial briefs of evidence for Missing Persons matters that have been reported to the NSW State Coroner.*

*This form does not need to be included with your brief and has been prepared as a tool to guide you. This list is not exhaustive and is a guide only. If you would like specific advice on preparing the coronial brief for your Missing Persons matter, please call the Coronial Law Unit on 02 9563 9400.*

*The Australasian Coroner's Manual (2015, Federation Press, 153) by former Deputy State Coroner Hugh Dillon and Marie Hadley provides a detailed list of possible brief inclusions and has been used as a reference in the development of this checklist.*

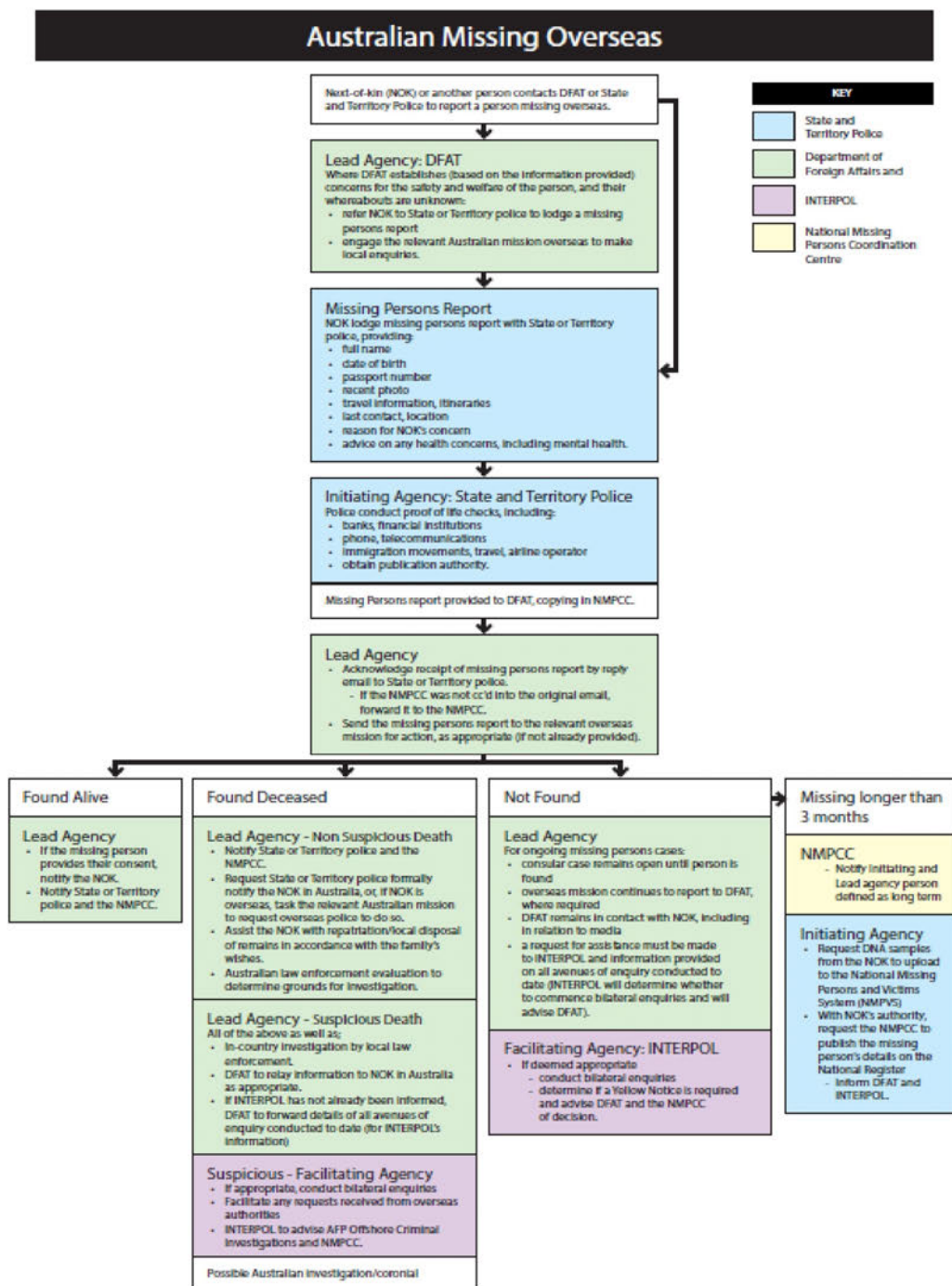
CORONIAL BRIEFS – MISSING PERSONS – CHECKLIST		
Details of Missing Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Name <input type="checkbox"/> Date/Place of Birth <input type="checkbox"/> Age at time of disappearance, age at time of report to Coroner	
Personal History of Missing Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Background (relationships, family, children) <input type="checkbox"/> Medical History <input type="checkbox"/> Employment History <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook/Social media searches	Obtain statements from relatives, carers, friends, colleagues and medical practitioners where relevant and include evidence about these details
Circumstances of Disappearance	<input type="checkbox"/> The MP's activities at the time of their disappearance (and any evidence on their normal routine/travel pattern) <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence on the MP's state of mind and appearance (including any evidence of possibly suicidal ideation) <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant evidence (e.g. swipe card records, CCTV, photographs of scene)	Consider including SMS messages/social media interactions where relevant
Details of Police MP Investigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Police search for the missing person <input type="checkbox"/> Details of searches of places frequented by the MP <input type="checkbox"/> Details of searches of relevant locations for MP (national parks) <input type="checkbox"/> Details of collection of identifying material (DNA, fingerprint records, dental records) and any comparisons undertaken	Include any attempts to match material with unidentified remains
Evidence Post Disappearance	<input type="checkbox"/> Details of any relevant intelligence since the MP's disappearance <input type="checkbox"/> Statements from any witnesses who claim to have sighted the MP since their disappearance	Include details of intelligence reports/Crime Stoppers
'Signs of Life' and Additional Records	<input type="checkbox"/> Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Passport check/Immigration check <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Accounts – details and activity <input type="checkbox"/> Centrelink/Medicare/PBS/Government records <input type="checkbox"/> Police holdings (criminal history)	Refer to 'Missing Persons' Tab on iAsk and Signs of Life Statement Proforma
Relevant Media Documents	<input type="checkbox"/> Press clippings or articles relating to the MP <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant media releases or publicity measures taken by police and family of MP	
CORONIAL BRIEFS – MISSING PERSONS – OIC STATEMENT		
<input type="checkbox"/> Chronological order – include headings <input type="checkbox"/> Provides an overview of the MP's history, background and circumstances of disappearance <input type="checkbox"/> The circumstances of the report to police and police actions following report <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits seized <input type="checkbox"/> You should express at the end of your OIC statement <b>YOUR OPINION</b> as to whether you think the MP is deceased and the reasons why <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Signs of Life Statement</b> (use <a href="#">Signs of Life Statement Template</a> )		
You can (and should) include in your OIC statement (and statements from witnesses), <b>HEARSAY evidence</b> (including first person conversations with witnesses) and <b>OPINION evidence</b> (including lay opinion).		

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# Annexure G

## Australian Missing Overseas





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## Annexure H

### Located Interview

**MP Name:****CNI:****E:****Date Missing:****Date Returned:****Date interview conducted:**

**Q1.** Can you share what prompted you to go missing? (Specific trigger event, was it planned, just to get away, or some don't even think they are missing etc)

 **DECLINE**

**Q2.** Where did you go when you went missing, were you alone or with others?

 **DECLINE**

**Q3.** How did you feel while you were missing? (Safe/unsafe, anxious, normal, health deteriorated etc).

 **DECLINE****OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

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**Q4.** How can we help you, to prevent you from going missing again?

**DECLINE**

**Q5.** Are there any support services you feel like you would benefit from that we could connect you with?

**DECLINE**

**Q7.** Do you have any concerns for your safety in general?

**DECLINE**

If the child or young person expresses concern for their safety related to the place that they are required to be returned to, you must take appropriate action in ensuring that the child/young person is not at risk of harm should they be returned to the residence/facility. If there is credible risk to the safety of the child/young person by returning them to their residence, they are not to be returned and appropriate measures are to be taken e.g. contacting FACS.

**OIC Info**

Rank:

Name:

Any notable concerns/issues raised:

Any follow up required:

**Referral options:**

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Kids Help Line – 1800 55 1800

Mensline – 1300 789 978

Domestic Violence line – 1800 65 64 63

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## **Annexure I**

### **NSWPF/NSW Health MOU – Chapter 3.4.7**

#### **Absconded patients**

This section applies to a patient detained under the MHA or MHFPA who leaves the hospital (including ED), without permission or fails to return to an inpatient unit in accordance with approved conditions for leave; or a voluntary patient who has not negotiated leave who is considered at risk.

#### **Patients detained under the MHA who abscond while on escorted and unescorted leave**

While the MHA allows for patients to be involuntarily detained for treatment, every effort is made to provide care in the least restrictive manner as part of recovery-oriented practice to ensure a successful return to the community. Recovery-oriented practice is how workers and services support people in their individual recovery journey. It is respectful of the person's autonomy and engages the person in a therapeutic relationship which makes space for self-agency in all areas of a person's life (Mental Health Coordinating Council and Living Well- Putting People at The Centre of Mental Health Reform in NSW - A Rep or t). This means that patients should be given the opportunity to take periods of leave away from the inpatient setting when appropriate. Unnecessary restrictions on leave for inpatients recovering from illness delays recovery, prolongs hospitalisation and contributes to a perception that their illness requires a custodial rather than a therapeutic response. The decision to grant leave is always informed by careful, regular clinical review by senior clinicians.

#### **Inter-agency response to absconding patients**

Patients who abscond from care may represent significant risk to themselves or others. Hospital staff will complete a risk assessment of the person and the hospital's subsequent actions will be guided by that risk assessment. Use of Health resources to locate the person is preferable in the first instance and should include the following actions:

- Searching the hospital grounds;
- Notifying health security staff who may conduct a further search of hospital grounds;
- Instigating the hospital's absconded patient policy;
- Calling the person's mobile phone;
- Contacting carers, family or the substitute decision-maker;
- Seeking assistance from the community mental health team to visit the address of the person and places the person frequents;
- For patients under the MHFPA, making necessary notifications.

If the risk is deemed to require an immediate police response, the hospital is to phone the Police Duty Officer or delegate at the Police Station nearest to the hospital. A request for police assistance is based on the risk the person poses and not solely on their legal status. However, as the legal status of the patient may affect the response, police must be informed of the patient's legal status. The hospital is to send the Absconded Patient Form (Appendix A) to the Police Station by fax or email as agreed. The Police Duty Officer is authorised to allocate resources to assist to locate the person. A discussion will occur between the hospital and police regarding

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the role of each agency and any need for other agency involvement, in searching for the person. When involving the police, the hospital should:

- Provide the most recent risk assessment conducted on the person
- For an involuntary patient, legal paperwork confirming the person is being lawfully detained under the MHA e.g. a Schedule 1 or Form 1. Attention should be paid to the expiry date of legal documentation as a person cannot be legally detained under section 48 and section 49 of the MHA if legal documentation has expired.
- A recent photograph or other material that will assist in locating the person.

If a person is detained in a mental health facility under the MHA and they subsequently abscond, section 48 of the MHA provides for authorised persons to locate and return the person to the hospital from which the person absented themselves. While NSW Ambulance will not be involved in locating the person there may be occasions when they are involved in transporting the person to the hospital from which they absconded. Requests for Ambulance transport will be subject to NSW Ambulance prioritising processes.

Section 49 of the MHA allows for the authorised medical officer to request police assistance in locating and returning the person. The hospital remains the lead agency in locating and returning the patient, with police, or others, providing assistance. Wherever possible in the first instance, the patient should be returned to the hospital from which they absconded. Under this MOU, police may take the person to the nearest DMHF. If this is not the hospital from which the person absented themselves, police are to notify the hospital of their imminent presentation. All parties should liaise with each other to facilitate the safe and timely transport of the person to the hospital from which they absented themselves. This includes the conduct of a joint risk assessment to determine appropriate agency involvement in the transport.

It is the hospital's decision to initiate a search for a voluntary patient who is considered at risk who absconds from care. If the person does not agree to return to hospital, attending agency staff should consider exercising powers under the MHA (section 19, 20 or 22) in order to facilitate the person's transport and detention in a DMHF.

Health staff are to maintain ongoing liaison and communication with police throughout the process of searching for the absconded or missing person. Standard principles of information sharing apply in this circumstance. For patients under the MHFPA, communications should include the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

In all circumstances where the person's absconding status changes, i.e. Health staff locate the person, the person returns, or health staff decide on new information to discharge the person, Health staff must contact police to verbally update them as well as forward police a completed Absconded Patient Outcome form (Appendix B). Following the verbal update and the acknowledged receipt of Appendix B, police will cease their search for the person and update their state-wide database accordingly.

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## Annexure J

### Police Information Sheet



#### Making a Missing Person's Report: What you need to know

##### NSW Police Force Factsheet

##### What is a missing person?

The NSW Police Force (NSWPF) definition of a missing person is:

*Anyone who is reported to Police, whose whereabouts are unknown and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person.*

##### What to do if someone is missing

If you have concerns for the safety or welfare of a person who is missing you can make a report at any local Police station. Reports cannot be accepted by email or over the phone.

If you are unable to get to a Police station, Police may be able to travel to you. Call your nearest Police station for advice.

##### Important facts

- ✓ You can make a report as soon you have concerns for the safety of a person who is missing. **You do not have to wait 24 hours.** There is no waiting period.
- ✓ Reports can be taken at any Police station. You do not have to make the report where the person went missing or where they usually live.
- ✓ You do not have to be a family member to make a report.
- ✓ People of any age can be reported missing.
- ✓ A person can be reported missing more than once in their life.
- ✓ It is not a crime to go missing – Police seek to find out if the person is safe and well.
- ✓ **Far less than 1% of missing people remain missing after 12 months.**
- ✓ Police cannot search for someone if there are no concerns for their safety, including searches for debt collection, family reunion, or post-adoption. In some cases, non-police search agencies may be able to provide advice or search assistance: <https://bit.ly/2RotB6T>

##### Information to provide Police

Police will require as much relevant information as you are able to provide about the missing person, including:

- Full name, any other names they use (nicknames, aliases), age, and date of birth.
- **Any factors that give you concern for their welfare**, such as: recent changes in behaviour; relationship difficulties; conflict; risk due to age, disability, medical or mental health condition; suicidal intent or history; financial stressors; memory loss/dementia; injury; access to important medications; hazardous weather conditions.
- A detailed description of what they look like (height; build; hair style/colour; eye colour; complexion; distinguishing features such as tattoos, birthmarks, facial hair, scars, piercings, typical jewellery, clothing, or glasses).
- A recent, clear photograph.
- Contact details (home, work, school/university, and people they are likely to contact).
- Email and social network accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat).
- Medical details: medications, medical issues, treating professionals, missed appointments.
- Bank, credit card, Centrelink, Medicare, license and passport details.
- Vehicle type/registration, or other transport information e.g. transport card.
- Details of when they were last seen: time, place, clothing, who they were with, how and where they were travelling, any significant items they took with them or left behind (e.g. phone, wallet, travel card).
- Description of any times they have been missing before: how, where, and when they were found and places they might go (e.g. favourite places).

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****After making a report:**

Keep a record of the:

- ✓ Event number and Police station
- ✓ Rank, name and contact details of the Officer in Charge (OIC).

**What to expect from Police**

You can expect to be provided regular updates throughout the investigation. The OIC is your first point of contact. Discuss with the OIC: when they will contact you, how you can contact them, who to speak to if they are unavailable.

Police may ask the next of kin to sign an '**Authority for Publicity**' form to permit a photo of the missing person and relevant details to be published in social media and news outlets. Consult the OIC if you have questions or concerns about media, or if you wish to add a missing person's details to the [Missing Persons Enquiry System](#)

**What can you do?**

It is critical to take immediate action, especially when a person is in danger. To assist the investigation, you can also:

- Search their home/belongings/where they were last seen (remember children can hide in very small places).
- Check your phone for voicemails/emails.
- Look for notes or clues regarding their whereabouts.
- Secure anything that might be evidence that could help police.

It might help to keep a journal to record information, events (e.g. names, dates, places), and questions to discuss with police. It can be overwhelming to remember every conversation.

Always discuss with the OIC any plans to make your own enquiries or publicise the case (e.g. social media or posters). Discuss what to avoid, best approaches, and safety measures.

**DNA preservation and collection**

It is routine for Police to gather forensic evidence that might assist in the investigation. Police might ask you for the missing person's items (which can be returned to you later), including:

- ✓ clothing, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, computers.
- ✓ items that might contain their fingerprints or handwriting e.g. (letters, diaries).
- ✓ dental or medical records.

**Sightings and locations**

- ✓ Notify the OIC immediately if the missing person returns home or makes contact.
- ✓ The public can report sightings to Crime Stoppers: **1800 333 000** or [www.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.crimestoppers.com.au)
- ✓ A missing person must be sighted by an authorised person (e.g. NSW Police Force Officer; Customs Officer; Doctor; School Principal or Family and Community Services Officer) to be 'located' and removed from the missing persons list, for Police to stop searching for them.
- ✓ If a missing adult is located safe and well, Police cannot reveal their whereabouts without their permission, and in some cases may only be able to inform you that the person has been located safe and well. Police may involve social or health services if the located missing person is vulnerable or at risk due to age, or other health reasons.

**Key Agencies and Links****NSW Police Force**

Attend your local Police station to make a missing person's report. NSW Police Station Search: <https://bit.ly/2uPnwZA>

To find Police stations in other states or territories: [ACT](#) | [VIC](#) | [Qld](#) | [SA](#) | [WA](#) | [NT](#)

**NSW Police Force Missing Persons Registry (MPR)**

A unit that co-ordinates the NSWPF response to missing persons investigations and provides operational support to Police in the field.  
Email: [missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.police.nsw.gov.au/can\\_you\\_help\\_us/missing\\_persons](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/can_you_help_us/missing_persons)

**Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit, Victims Services (FFMPU)**

Provides information, support, referrals, and counselling to families and friends of missing people in NSW (does not search for people).

Phone: 1800 633 063

Email: [ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au)

Web: [www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au)

**Managing the financial affairs of a missing person:**

For more information:  
[www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/fs\\_managing-estate.pdf](http://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/fs_managing-estate.pdf)



**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Annexure K****Missing Person iASK Checklist****Immediate Requests (12-24 hours, location based)**

*Within business hours, an Inspector must email iASK reference numbers to #IASKPRI advising the requests are related to a recent missing person. Outside of business hours, contact the State Coordinator for priorities.*

**Telcos**

If the carrier is unknown, submit iASK *Who is the CARRIER for this telephone number? (CLS)* before submitting any other iASK requests. This will only take 15-20 minutes to be returned and will prevent delays in returned iASK results.

The below iASK requests will be returned within the hour and should be considered while waiting for results of other requests:

During Business Hours: *What details are on the IPND database for this telephone number?*

After Hours: *State Coordinator (DOI) Urgent IPND Search - AFTER-HOURS ONLY*

**Optus**

- Optus Call Records Request: CCR +RCCR (*Submit in UTC*)
- What numbers has this Mobile sent SMS to and received SMS from? (Optus Only) (*Submit in UTC*)
- Mobile Internet Records (MIR) (*Submit in UTC*)
- Optus Roaming Location Records (VLR) – (*If no find from MIR*)
- Where is the Cell Tower located? (Cell ID Location)
- What phone numbers do they own?

**VHA**

- Vodafone (VHA) Call Records Request: CCR + RCCR
- Mobile Internet Records (MIR)
- Where is the Cell Tower located? (Cell ID Location)
- What phone numbers do they own?

**Telstra**

- Telstra Call Records Request: Select CCR + RCCR
- Mobile Internet Records (MIR)
- What phone numbers do they own?

**International Numbers:**

*If the roaming carrier is unknown, the below requests must be sent to all three carriers:*

- Vodafone (VHA) Call Records Request: CCR + RCCR
- Optus Call Records Request: CCR +RCCR (*Submit in UTC*)
- Telstra Call Records Request: Select CCR + RCCR
- Telstra IMEI/IMSI Request
- What phone numbers have been used in this IMEI? (*Optus/VHA*)
- Mobile Internet Request (*Optus/VHA/Telstra*)

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Transport****Road:**

- MISSING PERSON- Request for Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition Records(MANPR)
- MISSING PERSON- Inquiries with Toll/eTag information Request
- MISSING PERSON- RMS Compliance Operations Branch request for images and camera/image related information
- Tolling Images and CCTV (M2, M5, SW, M7, Lane Cove Tunnel, Eastern Distributer, Cross City Tunnel)

**Public Transport:**

- Metro Trains Sydney CCTV Request
- Opal Card Information Request
- NSW/Sydney Trains CCTV and Person Safety Camera Request (Formerly RailCorp)
- Sydney State Transit Authority (STA) and B-Line Bus Information
- Newcastle Transport CCTV Request (Bus/Ferry/Light Rail)
- Transit Systems Australia Region 6 (TSA) Buses Request for Information (Depot's: Burwood, Kingsgrove, Leichhardt and Tempe)
- Transit Systems Australia Region 3 (TSA) Buses Request for Information (Liverpool, Hoxton Park, Blacktown, Parramatta)
- Sydney Light Rail (Tram) Request for CCTV

**Outside of iASK**

- Social media/ International companies will accept emergency requests outside of the iASK system.  
[http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/organisational\\_units/investigations\\_and\\_counter\\_terrorism/state\\_intelligence\\_command/strategic\\_intelligence\\_and\\_capability/information\\_services/oia\\_service\\_centre/urgent\\_requests](http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/organisational_units/investigations_and_counter_terrorism/state_intelligence_command/strategic_intelligence_and_capability/information_services/oia_service_centre/urgent_requests)

**Intermediate Requests (3-14 days, activity based)**

*Within business hours, an Inspector must email iASK reference numbers to #iASKPRI advising the requests are related to a recent missing person.*

*Outside of business hours, contact the State Coordinator for priorities. Consider a section 287, if applicable.*

**Activity**

- MISSING PERSON Bank Information – Recent Activity
- MISSING PERSONS Airline information (Virgin and Tiger)
- Rental Car customer information
- MISSING PERSON Centrelink Information
- MISSING PERSON Medicare / PBS Information
- Create a new PACE Alert (*If there are sufficient details to identify the MP in terms of travel, including passport details*)
- Corrective Services NSW Information on Inmate (PCIU)
- Government School Information
- Do they have an Internet Connection/Subscription?

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****International**

*If emergency requests were not submitted for international companies within the first two days, they will need to be processed via iASK. Keep in mind, they do not need to comply with Australian Law and usually require extensive details as to why the information is needed.*

- Uber Request for Information – Step 1
- Who is the subscriber for this INTERNATIONAL Email address or social network user ID? (Facebook, Instagram, Google, Microsoft, Skype)
- Apple Information Request (*If they use Apple products and the details are known*)
- What information is available from AirBNB?
- PayPal request for Information
- eBay Request for Information
- Who owns this Australian based Email or I.P Address (Subscriber) (*Although not an International iASK this will be needed when I.P results are returned from the international iASKs*)

**Ongoing or Long-Term Missing Persons Requests**

*Unless there are extenuating circumstances, iASK requests relating to Ongoing or Long-Term Missing Persons will not meet priority criteria.*

**Travel**

- MISSING PERSONS Request for Australian Passport Facial Recognition
- Toll/eTag information
- Request for Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition Records (MANPR)
- ABF/Dept. Home Affairs – Offshore/Onshore Status, Movement Records, Passenger Cards

**BDM**

*Typing 'BDM' into the iASK search bar will show the below requests:*

- MISSING PERSONS Are they deceased? (BDM)
- Has this person changed their name? (BDM)
- What are their parent's details? (BDM)
- Who is their Next Of Kin / Emergency Contact? (BDM)
- Has this person changed their name? (BDM)
- Are they Married? (BDM)
- What are the partner details? (Personal Relationship) (BDM)
- What children do they have? (BDM)

**Interstate**

*Typing 'interstate' into the iASK search bar will show the below requests:*

- Do they have any INTERSTATE Police or Corrective Services Information/Intelligence available? (Restraining Order, Self Harm and Warnings)
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Motor Vehicle Details?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Criminal History?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Warrants?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Traffic Records and Licence Details?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Address Records?
- What are their parent's details (Interstate enquiry)

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- What children do they have? (Interstate enquiry)
- Has this person changed their name? (Interstate enquiry)
- Are they married? (Interstate enquiry)
- Do they own any property INTERSTATE?
- Are they deceased? (Interstate enquiry)

**Habitation**

- Rental Bond Information - Residential (NSW Fair Trading and RBB)
- Rental Bond Information - Commercial (NSW Small Business Commissioner)
- What mortgages do they currently have?
- What mortgages have they had?
- Australia Post Request
- Do they own any property in NSW?

**Financial**

- Are they bankrupt?
- Banking information release/ Intention for a Notice to Produce (NTP) (STEP 1)
- Have they conducted and financial transactions? (Austrac)
- Centrelink Information

**Other**

- Medicare/PBS information
- MISSING PERSONS Request for RMS Photo from NSW Drivers Licence/Photo Card/Mobility Parking
- MISSING PERSONS Signs of Life Check for a Coroners Brief p79B
- What calls and SMS were made by this mobile phone number? (CCR) (VHA/OPTUS)
- What are their NSW electoral roll details?
- Juvenile Justice NSW Information

**Other possible inquiries apart from iASK:**

- If there is a VOI being used by the MP and the vehicle is relatively new, contact the manufacturer to enquire whether the vehicle has a GPS locator
- Interstate public transport enquiry
- Enquire if there are any fines from revenue [fines.compliance@revenue.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fines.compliance@revenue.nsw.gov.au)



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## Annexure L

### Department of Community and Justice – Casework Practice

#### If a child is in Out of Home Care (OOHC)

If the missing child is in OOHC and parental responsibility is allocated solely to the Minister, or to the Minister for the aspect of residency, this is considered a critical event and further action is needed. Where the child is suspected to have been abducted; or is missing and efforts to make contact have been exhausted; or contact has been established and maintained but the child's location is unknown:

- report this immediately to Police;
- make a critical incident report to the Helpline;
- provide a dot point a summary to Cross Cluster Issues Management;
- attempt to find the child.

**Extra information:** Information needed to file a missing person's police report includes:

- a letter signed by the Manger Case Work (MCW) stating the child's current legal status or FACS involvement and/or a copy of current court order;
- name, date of birth and address of the missing child;
- photograph, if available, and full description (weight, height, special features, eyes and hair colour etc.);
- details about where and when the child was last seen or heard from;
- details and contacts of friends, favourite haunts etc.
- medicines or medical needs;
- safety concerns, especially any high-risk behaviours or suicidal risks;
- proposed placement details (where relevant) when the child is found.

If after 7 days of sustained efforts to find the child following the police media release (where that is determined to be the most appropriate course of action), send updated dot points to CCIM: [DeputySecretaryClusterIssuesManagement@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:DeputySecretaryClusterIssuesManagement@facs.nsw.gov.au) opens in new window.

**Extra information:** CCIM will alert FACS Media and the Deputy Secretary Northern Cluster. If the child is suspected to have been abducted, they will also alert the Office of the Secretary and Ministers Office staff. CCIM will work to ensure the appropriate approvals are granted should a police media release be required.

If the child has not been found after 7 days of sustained efforts, CCIM will alter those above and issue a formal allocation for a short notice briefing note if needed. Recording Create a whereabouts record in ChildStory, choose drop down of "Placement type: Absent-location unknown".

Add a Person Alert in ChildStory – see [ChildStory knowledge article opens in new window](#).

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Offer support to help deal with the distress of not knowing where the child is and worry about their safety and well-being, and the impact of any media attention.

**When a child is found**

Talk to the parents/carers to let them know that the child is safe.

Completed by: **Case Worker**

If there are risks to the child where they have returned to or currently staying, or there are risks for them at home or in placement, consider if legal action is needed.

If a police report was made, contact Police to let them know that the child has been found and returned. Confirm it in writing using the **Missing person withdraw advice letter** (DOC, 53 KB) [opens in new window](#) form so Police can close-off their missing person's report.

Review the child's case plan to make sure it is still meeting their needs.

Completed by: **Case Worker**

Approval by: **Manager Case Worker (MCW)**

**Practice Advice**

Talk to the child and give them lots of opportunities to discuss what happened, why they went missing and what you, and others, can do to help change the situation so they feel safer, happier and more secure.

**Recording**

- If the child returns to their placement, end date and close the whereabouts record in ChildStory.
- If the child self-places elsewhere or is placed with a new carer or new arrangement, with or without authority to do so, create a new placement record in ChildStory – see [ChildStory knowledge article opens in new window](#).
- End date the Person Alert in ChildStory – see [ChildStory knowledge article opens in new window](#).



**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****Annexure M****Abscinded Patient – Report to Police**See Missing Persons Registry '[Toolkit](#)' for printable document**Appendix A: Absconded Patient – Report to Police**

Facility \_\_\_\_\_

**Abscinded Patient –  
Report to Police**

DMHS67 A

FAMILY NAME		MRN
GIVEN NAMES		<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
D.O.B. ____/____/____	M.O.	
ADDRESS		
LOCATION		
COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE		

Worksheet

Patient Information					
Surname		Other Names		Gender	
DOB	Admission date	MRN	Photo available	Yes	No
Residential address			Mobile Ph:		
Language used:			Cultural Considerations:		
Patient Description (Circle appropriate option)					
Height (cm)			Weight (kg)		
<b>Build:</b>	Medium	Muscular	Obese	Solid	Thin
<b>Hair:</b>	Blonde/white	Brown	Black	Fair	Bald
	Grey	Red/ginger	Light/brown	Coloured (Specify)	
<b>Eyes:</b>	Black	Blue	Blue/Grey	Brown	Green
	Green/hazel	Grey	Glasses? Yes No	Other (Specify)	
<b>Facial Hair:</b>	Moustache	Beard	Sideburns	Goatee	Shaven
<b>Complexion:</b>	Fair	Medium	Dark	Pale	Olive
	Tanned	Freckled	Ruddy	Acne/spotted	
<b>Racial Appearance:</b>	Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander	African	Asian	Caucasian	Indian/Subcontinent
	Mediterranean	Middle Eastern	Pacific Islander	South American	
	<b>Distinguishing features:</b>				
Tattoo	Scar	Disability	Piercing	Impairment (e.g. limp)	
Other Features:					
Next of Kin/Carer					
Name:			Relationship:		
Address:			Phone:		
GP / Doctor: <i>Print name</i>			Phone:		
Incident Information					
Date:	Time:	Ward:	Facility:		
Possible Destination/s:					
Clothes when last seen:					
Circumstances of Disappearance:					

Absconded Patient – Report to Police

Worksheet

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NSW Health NSW Police Force Memorandum of Understanding

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**Absconded Patient -  
Report to Police (cont'd)**

FAMILY NAME	MRN
GIVEN NAMES	<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
D.O.B. ____/____/____	M.O.
ADDRESS	
LOCATION	
COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE	

Risk Assessment (Circle appropriate response)						
Absconded on leave	Yes	No	Current Risk Assessment			
Absconded from care	Yes	No	Assessed Risk level	High	Med	Low
Access to firearms	Yes	No	Risk to Self	High	Med	Low
Current client of CMHT Team Name:	Yes	No	Risk to Others	High	Med	Low
Current CTO: Expiry date:	Yes	No	Risk to specific person/s: Name:			
Current MH Act Legal Status is:	Vol	Invol	Contact/location details:			
Copy of Legal Status paperwork attached					Yes	No
Other relevant information/reasons for concern (e.g. medical issues, medication etc):						
Response/Actions (Circle appropriate response)						
PECC / CMHT/ Mental Health Service response	Primary Carer/Family informed	Yes	No	Home address visited	Yes	No
	GP informed	Yes	No	Search facility & surrounds	Yes	No
	Search LHD PAS	Yes	No	Alert created on PAS	Yes	No
	Mental Health Duty NM informed?	NM Name:				
Other actions taken:						
Client to be returned to Unit?	Yes		No			
Suggested Police Response:	Routine		Prompt		Immediate	
Reporting details						
Police Officer Reported to: (Print name)	Station & Phone number:		Date:	Time:		
Staff name: (Print name)	Designation		Signature		Phone:	
Police Use Only: COPs entry no. <b>E:</b>			Uploaded to iVIEW:		Yes	No
Health staff are to use DHMS67B Absconded Patient Outcome form to record progress of search and outcomes.						

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