



## Louise and Charmian Foundation for Missing Persons

---

# MISSING PERSON STATISTICS FOR AUSTRALIA

- Over 30,000 people are reported missing in Australia each year.
- This averages to a person being reported missing every 18 minutes and over 70 people every day.
- Police throughout all states spend approximately 120,000 hours every year in relation to missing person cases.
- This averages to 4 hours of police work spent on each missing person.
- Of the 30,000 persons reported missing;
  - > 8,000 are from NSW
  - > 7,000 are from VIC
  - > 5,000 are from QLD
  - > 5,000 are from SA
  - > 3,000 are from WA
  - > 1,000 are from ACT
  - > 800 are from NT
  - < 500 are from TAS
- Over 99% of missing persons are located with;
  - 86 % being located within one week
  - 7% being located between 8 and 31 days
  - 6% being located after one month
- Under 1% of missing persons are not located.
- In NSW there are over 500 long term missing persons cases.
- In VIC there are over 500 long term missing person cases.
- In the remaining states there are over 600 long term missing person cases.
- The majority of long term missing person cases are deemed undetected or unsolved homicides.

- There is a very low incidence of rewards offered by police or government to assist in solving long term missing person or missing children cases.
- In regard to general homicide in Australia, where bodies are not concealed, males represent 85 percent of offenders and 67 percent of victims of homicide.
- In regard to general homicide, 74% of victims are known to the offender, 26% are unknown.
- In regard to victims of general homicide;
  - 32% died from stab wounds
  - 27% died from blunt force trauma
  - 17% died from gunshot wounds
  - 12% died from strangulation or suffocation
  - 12% died from a variety of other causes
- Of the 30,000 people who are reported missing each year, 49% are female, 51% are male.
- 55% of missing persons are young people and children, 45% are adults.
- 23 % of missing persons are recorded as having mental health issues.
- A significant proportion of persons are reported missing from institutions such as psychiatric hospitals, general hospitals, aged care hostels, intellectually disabled care hostels, youth supervised hostels and detention centres.
- When excluding people missing from institutions almost two thirds of missing persons are under the age of 18.
- The vast majority of missing persons are recorded as being single.
- Significant proportions of persons reported missing have undergone or will undergo repeat incidents.
- Compared to the general population, missing persons are more likely to be born in Australia and living in a metropolitan area.
- Missing adults are more likely to be unemployed.
- With the exception of homicide, the most common reasons for people going missing are physical health problems, mental illness including dementia and Alzheimer's disease, communication breakdown, economic reasons, family and social difficulties.
- The national rate of missing persons reported to police is 1.55 per thousand individuals.
- South Australia and the ACT have double the national average rate of missing persons.

- For every missing person an average of at least 12 other people are affected.
- This amounts to over 360,000 affected persons per year.
- Family and friends of missing persons have reported a range of physical, emotional, financial and psychological impacts.
- For relatives and friends of long term missing persons the impact is ongoing for years and even decades.
- Each missing person is estimated to cost the community about \$2,360 in search costs.
- The cost of searching for missing persons amounts to over \$72 million annually.
- Although there are over 1,600 long term missing persons in Australia, the Australian Federal Police website lists only 172 of these persons.
- Victoria Police and Tasmania Police do not have missing person websites.
- Victoria Police do not have cadaver search dogs.
- There is no government national database for missing persons and unidentified remains in Australia.
- There is only one memorial dedicated to missing persons in Australia – the Mandurah Missing Persons Memorial in WA.
- 30,000 missing persons exceeds the total number of victims reported to police for homicide, sexual assault and unarmed robbery combined over the same 12 months.
- The incidence of missing persons is at least as high as that of other issues that generate greater media interest.

References;

Missing Persons: Incidence, Issues and Impacts

[http://www.afp.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/17175/TrendsandIssuesPaper.pdf](http://www.afp.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/17175/TrendsandIssuesPaper.pdf)

Missing Persons Week 2007 – Help us to find someone

<http://www.nt.gov.au/pfes/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewMediaRelease&pID=7124&y=2007&mo=8>

No. 108: Homicides in Australia 2003-04 : cause of death

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/cfi/cfi108.pdf>

Missing Persons

<http://www.afp.gov.au/national/missing/index.html>

Talk Please Don't Walk – Launch of National Missing Persons Week 2005

[http://www.afp.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/1925/mr050729missingpersonsweek05.pdf](http://www.afp.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/1925/mr050729missingpersonsweek05.pdf)

© 2007

**Louise and Charmian Foundation for Missing Persons**

PO Box 6164 Karingal LPO VIC 3199 AUSTRALIA

Registered Charity No 7979

[www.louiseandcharmian.com](http://www.louiseandcharmian.com)