



When a loved one is missing

Information for family and friends





Foreword

When a loved one goes missing, family, friends and others can be overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. The sense of loss impacts the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of family and friends. Each, however, copes in their own different ways.

Initially, while families are struggling to deal with a loved one gone missing, it might seem that the police and other tracing agencies are preoccupied with practical issues such as the taking and filing of a missing person report, less concerned about the family's search for answers to key questions, such as why is a loved one missing? How did a loved one become missing? Where did a loved one go missing? What has happened to the loved one?

Families and friends might also believe that police are not openly addressing their needs, desires and hopes. A police call or visit can suggest that a turning point has been reached. For most it is, but unfortunately for some it is not. This might make things seem a lot worse.

Grief is an emotion that accompanies loss. The longer a loved one is missing, the greater the sense of loss and anguish. This is coupled with the ambiguity of the memory of the person being here, when in reality they are not. The physical absence and/or the psychological absence of a loved one can lead to unresolved grief.

This booklet does not answer every question a person will have when a loved one goes missing. It does, however, cover essential information that has been guided by candid stories of people who have endured the journey of a loved one gone

missing. These stories thankfully enriched my knowledge of living with a glimmer of hope. I also thank the police, social workers and my staff who collaborated to expertly shape the content of this booklet to be revealing and hopefully comforting.

Commissioner for Victims' Rights

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Introduction

Throughout Australia thousands of people are reported missing each year to police and/or non-police agencies. Of those reported missing within South Australia, almost all are located. Many of these people are located within a week or at most, a month. Some however, remain missing for longer and sadly some may never be located.

No one expects a loved one to go missing. It is for most, a traumatic experience which is emotionally confusing, highly distressing and overwhelming. Most people are unprepared for the emotional turmoil and the practical issues they will face when a loved one goes missing.

This booklet is a guide to help families and friends who are living with the uncertainty of having a loved one missing. It provides information about why people go missing, how to make a missing person's report, what you can expect from police, and how to cope with not knowing the whereabouts of your loved one and whether they are safe.

The information contained in this booklet has been gathered from a number of sources, including police, health and welfare services, families and friends of missing persons as well as people who once were missing.

Every missing person is someone's loved one.

Information about missing persons

Who is a missing person?

A person is considered missing when their current whereabouts is unknown and there is concern for their safety and welfare. A person is considered missing until they are located and their welfare is established.

Why do people go missing?

There are many reasons why a person may go missing, so it is important not to make assumptions about the person or the reasons. Some of the reasons people might go missing include:

- Relationship breakdown or interpersonal conflict.
- Conflict over independence (especially for young adults).
- Mental health issues such as depression and/or anxiety.
- Escaping a crisis or stressful situation.
- Misadventure, such as becoming lost or involved in an accident.
- Medical disorders such as Alzheimer's Disease or dementia.
- Financial concerns.
- Job loss.
- Drug and alcohol abuse or misuse.
- Domestic violence or abuse.
- Homelessness.
- Leaving home to live somewhere else, sometimes under a new identity.
- Becoming a victim of crime.

How to find your loved one

When should I report a person missing?

You should report a person missing as soon as the whereabouts of that person is unknown and you hold genuine concerns for their safety and welfare.

In Australia, anyone can be reported missing regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or spirituality.

South Australia Police will investigate the disappearance of children if there are genuine concerns for the child's safety and wellbeing. Police, however, do not become involved in child custody matters. The role of police in family law matters is primarily to act on orders issued by a Court. For further information see the AFP's Family Law Kit at www.afp.gov.au

In South Australia you do not have to wait 24 hours to report a person missing. It is important to contact the police as soon as you become concerned about someone who is missing.

How should I report a person as missing?

If you are worried about someone's safety and welfare, you should immediately report them as missing at your nearest police station or by telephoning the police attendance line on 131 444.

What information should I provide to the police?

The police will encourage you to provide as much information as possible so they better understand the circumstances that may have contributed to your loved one going missing.

If family or friends of your loved one have any information that they think could be of assistance, they should not hesitate to contact the police. They can tell police about the person and provide information about their friends, places they visit, their lifestyle and routines.

Family and friends are the essential link to the missing person. When you report a person missing, it will help if you can provide as much information as possible such as:

- Your reasons for your concern about their safety or welfare.
- A full description of the missing person.
- A recent photograph, if available.
- When and where your loved one was last seen or spoken to.
- Details of places your loved one likes to visit.
- Address, phone numbers, email accounts, social network accounts (e.g. Facebook).
- Any information about medical problems and personal or medical needs.
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of friends, associates, employer, work colleagues and school (if a young person).
- Bank, credit card or other financial accounts.
- Car registration number, make, model or any other transport the person may be using (e.g. bicycle).
- Licence and passport details.
- Description of previous missing episodes, the circumstances and where they were found.
- Any behavioural changes or emotional problems you noticed.

You or other family or friends (indeed anyone) can contact the police at any time for the purpose of providing information.

What can I expect during the police investigation?

Once you report a person missing, the police will give you a missing person's report number. This is a reference number for you to use whenever dealing with the police. It is recommended that you keep a record of the police report number and contact details. This can be done at the back of this booklet.

The police Local Service Area is responsible for the investigation of the report for the first 30 days. While most people reported missing are located within a week, if your loved one is not found within 30 days the report may be referred to the Missing Persons Investigation Section, South Australia Police (phone 8172 5467).

If your loved one is not located (found) within 60 days, the police will deem that person to be a long-term missing person. The Missing Persons Investigation Section, will be responsible for all non-suspicious long-term missing persons investigations and a Victim Contact Officer (VCO) will be allocated to families of long-term missing people.

Remember, being a missing person is not a crime. The role of police is to determine that your loved one has not come to any harm.

If, however, at any stage the circumstances of the disappearance appear to be suspicious, the report will be referred to the local Criminal Investigation Branch or the Major Crime Investigation Branch.

When a VCO is allocated they will contact you, briefly explain their role and make a time to meet you in person. The VCO will check that you have support and ask about your feelings and other things. They might suggest services that could help you cope. They may, for example, suggest that you visit your doctor, a social worker or other helping professional. The VCO will give the family their contact details and encourage you and your family to contact them at any time.

Each state and territory has police who deal with missing persons. State and territory police often work together and with other government and non-government agencies to investigate a missing person's report.

You can contact the police at any time and obtain an update of the investigation. You do not need to wait for the police to contact you.

Who can others contact with information?

The police welcome any information from the public that might assist them in a missing person's investigation.

If you know something about a missing person, you should contact the police by calling the station handling the investigation. If you do not know which station is handling the investigation, you can contact your local police station.

If you wish to remain anonymous, you can contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. This is a simple, effective and secure way for you to provide information to the police.

Who conducts searches for my missing loved one?

Any searches (and rescues) are conducted, coordinated and managed by the police. Strong communication and cooperation with family and friends of your loved one is of great assistance to the police and increases the likelihood that your loved one will be located quickly.

Should I employ a private investigator?

You should not employ a private investigator without first talking to the police. The police do not encourage the use of private investigators during a missing person enquiry. Private investigators may jeopardise the police investigation. It is important to remember that only a very small number of missing person's cases are a result of a crime, but it is also crucial that any potential evidence is gathered and preserved for any resulting criminal proceedings.

Police have access to resources and information not available to private investigators, so it is better to work with police.

What can I do?

Before you attempt to search for your loved one, you should talk with the police investigating officer (or contact person who might be assigned by the tracing service). They will advise you on the best way to keep in contact with them.

You might also talk about:

- Any information you believe might help to locate your loved one.
- Any steps you or your family are planning to take to find your loved one, including plans to contact friends and others who knew your loved one or might know their whereabouts.
- Any ideas you have about involving the media, using social media (such as Facebook) or publishing posters urging people to help.

You might, in addition, check with hospitals and other medical facilities, as your loved one might be unable to make contact with family. For this purpose, you should ask about your loved one by name but also, if no-one is recorded by their name, you should ask if they have any unidentified people in their care who resemble your loved one.

You might also check social media sites. For example, you might check your loved one's Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram or other accounts. You should look in particular for recent activity that might give clues to your loved one's reason for going missing or their whereabouts. Print any information that you feel might help the police or other tracing agency, and share it with them.

If you make posters, include a picture and description of your loved one, as well as asking people who feel they can help to contact the police. Do not include your personal telephone

number. Hang your posters in prominent places in the area where your loved one lived before going missing and around places they spent time.

What role might the media play?

In pursuing relevant avenues of enquiry to locate your loved one, the police may consider the use of media. This may help to raise community awareness about your loved one and could encourage people to come forward with information. Media coverage may include television, radio, newspaper, internet and social media.

Police will seek the consent of the next-of-kin or the reporting person to release information to the media. All details about your loved one are kept confidential and not made available to the public unless permission has been granted by the family and the police.

The police may ask you to provide a photo. You should give them a photo that is recent and a good likeness of your loved one. It is preferable that the photo is a clear portrait shot showing most of the face, including teeth. The police may also decide to use a photo from another source such as Facebook or other media as part of their investigation.

Can I contact the media?

If you are thinking about giving any information to the media, please consult with the police first as media coverage could negatively affect the police investigation.

If you are thinking of giving any information to the media, bear in mind the following:

- The media report may be different from what you expect. The media will gather information from many sources. Yours and the missing person's personal circumstances may be presented in a way you do not agree with, and this can be upsetting.

- Once the matter becomes public through the media, you or your family may encounter unwanted attention. Be aware, for example, that media publicity might mean that your children are the subject of comment or gossip at school. Be careful about exposing children to the media. It is important that you or your family suffer no adverse effects by talking to the media, so consider carefully the possible impacts on everyone beforehand.
- Remember that you do not have to speak to the media, even if they are very persistent. It is best not to speak to the media when you are feeling confused, grief-stricken or disoriented.

You are entitled to:

- Say “no” to an interview.
- Require anyone who visits your home uninvited to leave, and call the police if they refuse to do so.
- Refuse an interview with a specific reporter, even though you may have granted interviews to other reporters.
- Say “no” to an interview, even though you have previously granted interviews.
- Choose the time and place for an interview; children find it hard to make an informed decision about public exposure, so it is better to let adults handle this.
- Refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.
- Speak with one reporter at a time.
- Request a correction if a report is inaccurate.
- Insist that offensive photographs or visuals not be used.
- Set conditions to protect your privacy or safety.

Remember the media may compile and report a story regardless of your wishes or cooperation. Providing the media with the correct information and details is often better than journalists and reporters speculating or trying to obtain further information through other sources. Even when the correct information is provided to journalists there are no guarantees

that what appears in print or on television will be correct, due to editing processes.

If you are having difficulties dealing or coping with media attention, please talk to the police or Victim Contact Officer involved in your case. They will be able to advise you, or suggest with whom you should talk.

The Australian Federal Police National Missing Persons Coordination Centre also provides information to help families and friends of missing persons work in cooperation with media. Information can be found at www.missingpersons.gov.au

How long will it take to find my loved one?

Unfortunately no one can say when your loved one will be found. The length of time it takes to locate missing persons varies from case to case.

Please know that police recognise the importance of locating your loved one as quickly as possible to ensure their safety and to minimise the trauma and anxiety for you and other family and friends.

When a loved one has been missing for a long time you, may wonder and question whether police have done everything possible to locate them. At times it may seem like nothing is happening. Please know the police will pursue every opportunity to investigate the disappearance of your loved one and the matter will remain under investigation until they are located.

It is important to remember that the main role of police is to ascertain if the missing person is safe and well. Police will need to sight the person before their missing person's report can be closed. If you make contact with the missing person and you are unsure if the police are still looking for them, you should let the police know.

What do I do if my loved one is missing overseas?

If you have concerns for the safety and welfare of a loved one who is overseas, there are some initial steps you can take before reporting them as missing to police:

- Attempt to phone, text, email or mail the person and their travelling companions.
- Establish contact with family, friends and travelling companions to ascertain if others may have heard from or had contact with the person.
- Check social media sites for information and recent updates.
- Find out from the families of the travelling companions if they have heard from their loved ones.
- Contact their financial institutions to report your concern and to check details of their latest credit/debit card transactions.
- Contact their last known address or employer to seek information about their possible movements.
- Contact their travel agent or airline to report your concern and to seek details of their travel arrangements. You may also be able to place an alert on their airline reservation for the person to make contact should they access their reservation.
- Contact their mobile phone provider to check if there has been any activity on their account.

There are some important things to remember when you begin trying to locate a person overseas:

- Remain calm; most Australians are found safe and well.
- Gather as much information as possible from your enquiries.
- Maintain a record of all the information you gather so you can provide comprehensive details, if required, to others assisting to locate the person.

If, after making initial enquiries, you are still unable to locate your loved one and you have serious concerns for their safety and welfare, you should make a missing person's report at your local police station, which will then be forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

You should provide the police with the following in relation to your loved one:

- Full name.
- Place and date of birth.
- Passport number (if known).
- Details of any other citizenship or passports held (if known).
- Photographs, preferably recent.
- Known travel details and plans, including itineraries.
- Contact details overseas (including the names and contact details of employers and people they have been travelling with).
- Details about the last contact they made.

You should be aware however, that assistance can only be provided where there is a well-founded concern. There are also legal and practical limits to what can be done, and you should have realistic expectations about this.

If your missing loved one contacts you after you have commenced formal enquiries, please inform police immediately.

Who else can help me?

Depending on the circumstances, there are several other organisations that may be able to help you search for a missing person overseas.

The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) is located with the Australian Federal Police in Canberra. The centre works with state and territory police services and government and non-government organisations to provide a coordinated approach to locating missing people in Australia and overseas. The centre's role is to facilitate the dissemination and distribution of information to the public via the NMPCC website. Further information is available from the NMPCC website or by calling 1800 000 634 (toll free).

On request of police, the centre will profile an Australian missing overseas on the national register at www.missingpersons.gov.au and via additional public means.

The International Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the International Social Service offer family tracing services and might provide further information and assistance regarding your loved one missing overseas. Further details can be found in the, 'where can i get help?' section of this booklet.

Taking care of yourself

How will I feel?

Nothing can truly prepare you for the news that someone you love and care for is missing. The emotions that you experience may be powerful; you may feel frightened and overwhelmed.

You may feel total shock. You may think 'this isn't real', 'it can't be true' or 'I'll wake up in the morning and everything will be normal again'. You may feel disconnected from your environment or those around you. Shock is a normal initial response to hearing the news that your loved one is missing.

When a loved one first goes missing you may also experience a feeling of numbness - not being able to feel anything. This is the body's way of protecting you from the full physical and emotional pain. Later you may experience feelings of anger, guilt, despair, sadness, frustration, hope, anxiety, panic and even a sense of rejection. Some people have reported feeling completely helpless or like time has stopped. These are all normal reactions to an unexpected traumatic event such as having a loved one go missing.

Many of the emotional and physical reactions you may experience are similar to those experienced by people following any traumatic event. There are, however, some unique aspects to having a loved one go missing.

Not knowing

Not knowing where your loved one is or whether they are safe is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects you will confront. You may be preoccupied and constantly asking yourself questions for which there may be no answers. You may feel as though you are living in limbo - stuck between a longing for answers and a fear of receiving bad news. Living with 'not knowing' is particularly difficult as most people are programmed to solve problems and find answers.

Not knowing may mean you are constantly searching for them wherever you go, or on high alert waiting for the phone to ring. This state of hypervigilance is emotionally and physically exhausting and it is likely very few people will understand what you are experiencing.

Unresolved loss

When a loved one goes missing, it is likely you will experience a sense of loss. This is a different type of loss to others, such as when someone dies. When a loved one goes missing there is no resolution, no ability to grieve and move on, no opportunity to say goodbye, no closure. For this reason, the grief associated with having a loved one go missing is sometimes referred to as unresolved or ambiguous loss.

Physical symptoms

You may also experience a range of physical responses including sleeplessness, loss of memory, palpitations, difficulty or rapid breathing, headaches, dry mouth, nausea and chest tightness, to name just a few.

It helps to understand that these symptoms may be associated with having a loved one go missing. However, it is advisable to talk to your doctor should you notice any physical changes to ensure there is not another cause for the symptom.

Some people experience emotional and physical reactions constantly, for others they may come and go. Your own reactions may vary from one day to the next.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to feel. Everyone is different and so are their emotional and physical responses.

What can I do?

What helps one person will not necessarily help you. However, here are some things that might help you:

- Take one day at a time, or half a day, or one hour at a time.
- Prioritise daily tasks and do only what is essential.
- Allow people to help you with everyday tasks like preparing meals or doing the washing.
- Spend time with people who care about you, understand you and will listen to you.
- Find someone to talk to, a friend or a professional, about how you are feeling and what you are going through.
- Take care of your physical and mental health as much as possible. Rest, sleep, exercise, eat regular healthy meals.
- Avoid misusing prescription or illegal drugs and alcohol as they will likely make stress reactions worse.
- Undertake daily tasks with care; accidents are more likely to happen in times of severe stress.
- Try to maintain a regular routine as much as possible.
- Speak to others who have experienced the trauma of having a loved one go missing.

There are a number of counselling resources and options listed at the end of this booklet.

If at any stage you become concerned or overwhelmed by the way you are feeling, you should consult your doctor, a counsellor or someone you trust.

How do I tell people?

Only you can decide what to tell people. You may wish to tell only the people closest to you, and others who need to know.

You may be faced with uncomfortable questions from outsiders. It may help you to anticipate some of these questions and write yourself a “script” of answers that you can mentally keep at the ready. The more you fear enquiries from others, the more useful you will find a prepared “script” of answers.

Although you will probably find that most people will be supportive, you may be disappointed by the way that others react. Some people may be afraid or feel helpless; they might not know what to say to you or be worried that they will upset you, or they might avoid talking about it at all. Try to accept that this might happen and focus on coping with your own feelings without dwelling on what others think or say.

How do I explain what has happened to children and young people?

One of the most difficult situations adults face is telling children that someone they love is missing. Adults often worry that children will not understand. Whilst it is natural to want to protect children, they should be told as soon as possible that a person they care about is missing, preferably by a parent/guardian or someone close to them.

When talking to children:

- Provide age appropriate information.
- Provide honest, clear and simple information.
- Tell the child what you and others are doing to find the missing person.
- Provide information about who is available for support.
- Encourage the child to ask questions.
- Encourage the child to express their emotions.
- Keep young people informed of information as you become aware of it.

The amount of information that should be given to a child can often be gauged by the questions they ask.

It also assists children and young people if you can keep to daily routines as much as possible.

How will I cope with anniversaries and other significant days?

You may have to deal with Christmas, birthdays, holidays, religious celebrations and other special occasions that you and your loved one shared. These will obviously be difficult times that emphasise the absence of your loved one.

Some people find the anticipation is often more difficult than the actual occasion. You may find it helpful to make plans well in advance and discuss the occasion with family and friends who may also be anticipating the event. You may wish to do something special to remember your missing loved one on these days. In this way you acknowledge their ongoing importance in your life.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way of doing things. It is entirely up to you and your decision should be based on what is best for you and your immediate family and closest friends.

Whatever plans you make, you may feel like changing your mind at the last minute. It is okay to change your mind. However, you may find it helpful to warn your family and friends that this may happen. It is good to listen to yourself and what you need to do to take care of yourself physically and emotionally.

What are the possible outcomes to consider?

My loved one is found alive and we are reunited.

When a loved one is found alive, you will naturally feel relieved and excited. It is important to understand that you may not be able to see them immediately. They may need medical attention or they may need to prepare themselves mentally for any reunion.

You will likely have lots of questions about why your loved one went missing and what happened while they were away. Try to be patient and avoid overwhelming your loved one with too many questions too soon. Try to understand that your loved one may not want to tell you everything.

If your loved one has been missing for a long time, it is likely that you have both changed. It helps to be open and realistic about this when you reunite. Remember also that significant things may have happen whilst your loved one was away, such as marriages, divorces, babies etc. It may take your loved one time to adjust to these changes.

Remember, reconnecting and re-establishing your relationship with your loved one may take time.

My loved one is found but reuniting is not possible.

Reuniting with your loved one is not always possible. This can cause great distress.

Occasionally, a missing person feels they should not return home. They may feel this way because of ongoing conflict or some other circumstance in their family. They may have a mental health issue that affects their decision-making.

There may also be safety issues or legal reasons that inhibit or prohibit the missing person being reunited with you or other family members.

Sometimes, the missing person may not want to return home for reasons that may be difficult to understand or accept. They also may not want to reveal their whereabouts or may want to limit contact with you and others.

If the missing person is a child, a decision to release address details of that child or return that child to their family will be determined by the circumstances surrounding the reasons the child went missing.

If the police locate your loved one who has been reported missing and they do not want to return to their family, or have their location made known, police are obliged to abide by their wishes. Police will only return a person, including a child, if there is a legal requirement to do so. Police and tracing agencies can, however act as intermediaries in reassuring a missing person's family that they are safe and well.

My loved one is not found alive.

Unfortunately, sometimes a missing person is not found alive. This will naturally bring about a whole new range of emotional and physical reactions, and your sense of grief and loss will be intensified. You may also feel a sense of relief that you no longer have to live with the sense of 'not knowing'. This can be confusing, but again is a normal reaction and does not diminish the love you felt.

The police will be involved and are legally required to investigate the cause of death of your loved one and report this to the coroner. This does not necessarily mean that the police suspect a crime. Rather, police have been directed by the coroner to collect all the evidence surrounding the death, so that a conclusion can be drawn as to how the death occurred.

Where can I get help?

Useful contacts and resources

POLICE TRACING AGENCIES

Police

South Australia Police Missing Persons Investigation Section.

Phone: (08) 8172 5467

Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers is a program in which the community and the media help police solve crime. It is a simple, effective and secure way for you to provide information to South Australia Police.

Phone: 1800 333 000

Website: www.crimestopperssa.com.au

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre

The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) is located with the Australian Federal Police in Canberra. The centre works with state and territory police services and government and non-government organisations, to provide a coordinated approach to locating missing people in Australia and overseas. The centre's role is to facilitate the dissemination and distribution of information to the public via the NMPCC website. Only cases of missing persons that have a signed authority from the next of kin for the use of images and information are provided by state and territory police to the NMPCC.

The NMPCC operates Monday to Friday 9.00am-5.00pm.

Phone (freecall): 1800 000 634

Email: missing@afp.gov.au

Website: www.missingpersons.gov.au

The NMPCC is a client of the Translating and Interpreting Service (www.tisnational.gov.au). If you do not speak English and/or require the assistance of an interpreter, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) on 13 14 50 and inform them what language you speak. They will provide an interpreter and phone the NMPCC for you, with you on the line.

The Safe Return Program

The Safe Return Program is a joint initiative between Alzheimer's Australia and the South Australia Police to help ensure the safety of people at risk of becoming lost. The program enables the rapid identification and return home of people who become lost by using a unique ID code engraved on a bracelet. The details of the person at risk of becoming lost are accessible only by you and the South Australia Police.

Phone: (08) 8372 2100

Website: www.safereturn.org.au

NON-POLICE TRACING AGENCIES

Please see below for information about non-police tracing agencies. Remember, if there is an active police investigation, you should tell the officer in charge that you are using or intend to use these services.

Australian Red Cross International Tracing Service

The Tracing Service in Australia is part of the International Red Cross Red Crescent global tracing network. The International Tracing Service assists families to regain contact when they have become separated as a result of war, conflict, disaster or migration.

The Australian Red Cross International Tracing Services are free. For more information about how these services can assist you, contact your local office.

Phone: (08) 8100 4500

Postal Address: 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide SA 5000

Website: www.redcross.org.au
(under migration support and services)

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provides assistance to Australians who find themselves in trouble overseas. This support is referred to as consular assistance. There are, however, legal and practical limits to what can be done to assist travellers in other countries.

Consular services are provided through DFAT's headquarters in Canberra and through Australian embassies, high commissions and consulates.

The 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre in Canberra can also be contacted for assistance from anywhere in the world. Australians overseas in need of counselling services can contact the Consular Emergency Centre to be transferred to a Lifeline telephone crisis supporter.

Phone (within Australia): 1300 555 135

Phone (outside Australia): +61 2 6261 3305

SMS: +61 421 269 080

International Social Services

International Social Service (ISS) Australia provides social work and legal services to families, children and adults across international borders. Services include family tracing and reunification, international family mediation, kinship care and other child welfare matters, and assistance for families experiencing international parental child abduction.

Phone: 1300 657 843

From anywhere in Australia, for the cost of a local call, Monday to Friday from 9.00am-5.00pm (AEST).

Email: iss@iss.org.au

Website: www.iss.org.au

Salvation Army Family Tracing Service

The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service aims to locate family members whose current whereabouts are unknown and who are being sought for the purpose of family reunion. The Family Tracing Service can also assist with mediation where needed. The Salvation Army has networks in more than 100 countries and can help reunite family members even across national boundaries.

If you've lost contact with a family member, the Salvation Army Family Tracing Service may be able to help locate them through their networks in more than 100 countries. A donation is usually accepted for this work. Further information and contact details are available on the Salvation Army website.

Phone: (08) 8408 6950

Postal Address: PO Box 300, Fullarton SA 5063

Website: www.salvos.org.au/familytracing

SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER WEBSITES

Australian Missing Persons Register

The Australian Missing Persons Register website and Facebook page are designed to raise awareness about missing persons from every state and territory in Australia, regardless of how long a person has been missing.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/austmissingpersons

Website: www.australianmissingpersonregister.com

Leave a light on

Leave a light on is a national organisation focused on raising awareness of all missing persons in Australia and to show support to families and friends of missing loved ones.

Phone: 0409 122 509 or 0439 572 290

Email: enquiries.lalo@gmail.com
leavealighton@internode.on.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Leavealighton

Missing Persons Advocacy Network

Missing Persons Advocacy Network (MPAN) creates awareness for missing persons and provides practical support for those left behind. MPAN has developed an online guide of what to do when someone goes missing and tries to establish corporate partnerships in order to increase the visibility of the issue whilst lessening the financial impact on those searching.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MPANaus

Website: www.mpan.com.au

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

Anglicare SA Loss and Grief Services

Anglicare SA provides a specialised loss and grief counselling service for people of all ages who are bereaved or experiencing other types of loss. Fees are structured to ensure everyone is able to access counselling support.

Phone: (08) 8131 3400

Website: www.anglicaresa.com.au

Beyondblue

Beyondblue is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related disorders in Australia.

Beyondblue is a bipartisan initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments with a key goal of raising community awareness about depression and anxiety, and reducing stigma associated with the illness.

Phone: 1300 114 636

Website: www.beyondblue.org.au

Centacare

Centacare is a community organisation that supports people in the community who have been marginalised and who are experiencing hardship and challenges in their lives. Centacare provides counselling help in a number of areas ranging in age from children, individuals, couples and families. They may be able to assist you with issues related to homelessness, family breakdown, mental health, alcohol and drug problems amongst others.

Phone (Adelaide Client Services): (08) 8210 8200

Email: enquiries@centacare.org.au

Website: www.centacare.org.au

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is a free community-based mental health service provided through SA Health's Women's and Children's Health Network. Services include family and individual therapy, group programs for children and for parents/carers, and information for parents/carers. CAMHS specialises in dealing with emotional issues including sadness and depression and grief and loss as well as social issues such as family conflict amongst other issues.

Phone: (08) 8161 7198

Website: www.wch.sa.gov.au/camhs

Counselling Association of South Australia

Through the Counselling Association of South Australia (CASA) you can access a counsellor or psychotherapist who has a high standard of training and ethical practice.

Phone: (08) 8331 6255

Website: www.casa.asn.au

Crisis Care

For assistance with after-hours emergencies call the Crisis Care telephone service. The service operates from 4.00pm-9.00am on weekdays and 24 hours on weekends and public holidays.

Crisis Care can assist people in crisis as a result of personal trauma, suicidal behaviour, child abuse or neglect and homelessness among other things.

Phone: 13 16 11

Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU)

The FFMPU was established in 2000 to provide counselling and support to those affected by a missing person. It is a unique unit that provides information, counselling and support groups from trained professionals for families and friends of missing people. FFMPU is funded by the NSW Government and is part of the Department of Justice.

Whilst this service is located in New South Wales, their counselling services are available to anyone, anywhere in Australia. They do not search for missing people, but work with those left behind.

They can provide support and information by phone 9:00am-5:00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). They also offer a range of information and publications on missing people and those left behind. They can be accessed on the 'Families and Friends of Missing Persons - FFMPU' Facebook page.

Phone (freecall): 1800 227 772

Email: ffmpu@agd.nsw.gov.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/missing.persons.501

Website: www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au

Headspace

Headspace is a community based youth mental health service for young people aged 12-25 years. Headspace offers young people and their families help with issues or questions relating to mental health, alcohol and other drug use, work or education, general physical health, sexual health and relationships.

Phone: 1800 650 890

Website: www.headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline

The Kids Helpline is a free 24 hour counselling service for Australian kids and young people aged 5-25 years. You can get help over the phone or online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone: 1800 551 800

Website: www.kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour support services. Volunteer telephone counsellors will listen, support and assist you to clarify options and choices for yourself. Counsellors may also provide you with information about community services.

Phone: 13 11 14

Website: www.lifeline.org.au

MensLine Australia

MensLine Australia is a professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men. Support and information can be provided in relation to a wide range of issues including relationship issues and wellbeing including depression.

Phone: 1300 789 978

Website: www.mensline.org.au

National Demetia Helpline

The National Dementia Helpline is a telephone information and support service available across Australia. The helpline is for people with dementia, their carers, families and friends, as well as people concerned about memory loss.

The National Dementia Helpline is available 9.00am-5.00pm across Australia, Monday to Friday excluding national public holidays.

Phone: 1800 100 500

Website: www.fightdementia.org.au

Users who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can phone the National Relay Service.

Phone: 13 36 77

Nunkuwarrin Yunti

Nunkuwarrin Yunti provides a diverse range of services and programs within the Adelaide metropolitan region of South Australia, dedicated to improving the physical, social and emotional wellbeing, as well as the spiritual, cultural and mental health of traditional, rural and urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Nunkuwarrin Yunti offers free and confidential counselling as well as psychological services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, adolescents, adults and families.

Phone: (08) 8406 1600

Website: www.nunku.org.au

Relationships Australia

Relationships Australia is a leading provider of relationship support services for individuals, families and communities. They aim to support all people in Australia to achieve positive and respectful relationships. Services include counselling, family dispute resolution (mediation) and a range of family and community support and education programs.

Phone: 1300 364 277

Website: www.relationships.org.au

Feedback or complaints

Giving feedback on this booklet

Your feedback is important to us, and we want to ensure that this booklet is a valuable and up-to-date resource for family and friends of missing persons. If you would like to provide any feedback or lodge a complaint in relation to this booklet please contact:

Commissioner for Victims' Rights

GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Phone: 8204 9635

Email: victimsofcrime@sa.gov.au

Media

If you are not happy with the way a person from the media treats you or any of your friends or family, you can complain to:

- the media organisation concerned (i.e. the newspaper or television station)
- the Australian Press Council (for print media)
- the Australian Communications and Media Authority (for broadcasting-related enquiries).

Keep your complaint specific.

Check the online White Pages or the phone book for specific publishers or broadcasters.

The Australian Press Council

Phone: (02) 9261 1930 or 1800 025 712

Website: www.presscouncil.org.au

The Australian Communications and Media Authority

Phone: 1800 226 667

Website: www.acma.gov.au

Police

If you are dissatisfied with how a missing persons investigation is progressing, then you should ask for a meeting with the police and discuss your concerns with them.

If you are not satisfied with the response that you receive, or if you have a grievance, you should contact:

Commissioner of Police

GPO Box 1539, Adelaide SA 5001

Your opinion is important to the South Australia Police. As part of the South Australia Police service excellence process you are invited to provide general feedback by visiting the South Australian Police website: www.police.sa.gov.au

Your police report number and contact details

Please keep this information. It will enable you to contact the police should you require information about the missing person report.

For any enquiry please contact:

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Phone:.....

Your report number is:

Name:

Signed:

Rank and No:

Station:

Date:

See also the South Australia Police website: www.police.sa.gov.au

Track my crime

To track the status of your crime report online:

- Download South Australia Police's portal app from Google Play Store or Apple App Store by searching for SAPOL. Once installed, select the Track My Crime icon.
- Go to SAPOL's website www.police.sa.gov.au and search for Track My Crime.

Enter your police report number and report date to see the status of your crime.

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