

**INQUIRY INTO UNSOLVED MURDERS AND LONG-TERM
MISSING PERSONS CASES IN NEW SOUTH WALES
BETWEEN 1965 AND 2010**

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Our son Théo Hayez disappeared on June 1, 2019, in Byron Bay (NSW). His disappearance was reported to the Byron Bay police and by ourselves (in Belgium on June 6, 2019). The local police were notified by the manager of the Wake Up hotel where our son Théo was staying, as Théo was supposed to leave the hotel on June 3, 2019. Very quickly, significant resources were deployed by the authorities (police and SIS) to search for Théo in and around Byron Bay. At the same time, Théo's godfather and cousin, who live in Australia, traveled to the area to help with the search, assisted by a large mobilization of the Byron Bay community. His father also arrived on June 13, followed by his mother. Three Belgian federal police officers also came to support their Australian colleagues.

Despite these intensive efforts, we were disappointed by the Australian police's decision to end the search on July 3, concluding that Théo had fallen to his death from the cliff at the foot of Byron Bay lighthouse. Although we were able to find the exact path he took to the end of Tallow Beach, we regret that more effective means were not put in place to search the cliff more methodically in order to find his phone, which would have confirmed or refuted the theory of a fatal fall. We deplore the fact that the police were too quick to conclude that it was an accident, neglecting the possibility that Theo was accompanied on the way by a third party who may have been involved in or witnessed his disappearance.

We cannot help but believe that the police favored the accident theory by denying the existence of malicious individuals (under the influence of substances) in order to preserve the good reputation of the town of Byron Bay. Our feelings are strongly shared by the Byron Bay community.