

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

Name: Steven Smith
Date Received: 11 March 2026

In the mid to late 70's I was a volunteer Leader at the YMCA Camp at Crangan Bay. The camp was located in bushland on Lake Macquarie approx 11km south of Swansea NSW. The Campsite was set on approx 6 acres and surrounded by extensive bushland.

The camp was accessed by a dirt track approx 1.6 km long from the Pacific Highway. The area was reasonably remote.

In the 70's, the campsite was primarily used by the YMCA for School Holiday Camps' with the occasional private hire group using it.

I will attach a map showing the location of the campsite.

In 1979, during the May School Holidays, I was the Leader in charge of a group of teenage boys. We were on a bush hike in bushland between the campsite and the Pacific Hwy on the North side of the camp track. We were hiking in an area that was not usually accessed by us. During the hike we came across a large palm tree in thick bushland. Upon approach, we discovered a very large knife embedded in the tree. A trenching shovel was also found at the base of the tree and a large area of the soil/gravel at the base of the tree has been recently disturbed. The boys found this very disturbing so I took the knife and shovel and we left the area.

We reported our find to the Camp Director and he indicated that he was going to report it to Police.

During the same holidays we also found a brown school case in bushland on the South side of the track approx. 800mts from the initial find. The case contained a 'floral' type dress and a pair of 'clunky' style woman's shoes. We also handed these items to the Camp Director.

In the days prior to this, while leading an early morning hike of the entire group up the track prior to breakfast, we came across 2 men camped on the side of the track. They had a small fire going and they were close to an access track which led to the area of the Palm Tree. That track had been cut by the adjacent mine for drilling purposes some years prior.

The men were not happy to see us and were very guarded when I asked why they were there. They were driving a dark brown XA model Ford Falcon Station Wagon.

I also reported this to the Camp Director. Just for the sake of clarity, The Camp Director at that time was later exposed as a child sex offender and subsequently took his own life.

During the next couple of years, we frequently found girls/women's underwear items in the surrounding bushland.

I have reported this to Police on a number of occasions over the years, as recently as 2025. My younger brother, who was on the hike with me, has also reported it.

With the exception of once in approx. 1999, I have never received any acknowledgement or reply. Officers from Strike Force Fenwick conducted a cursory search in 1999/2000 but didn't seem overly interested

In 1998, I was the Manager of Newcastle YMCA and I was living at the Campsite with my family. One night 2 very distressed young girls appeared at our door and complained that they had been raped by a man who had offered them a lift. He had raped one of the girls while parked on the Camp Track and it appears they escaped and fled down the track and found us. They described the attacker and his vehicle (Red Ford Falcon, Possibly XE Model). My (then) wife took the Girls to Charlestown Police Station and their families were contacted. My wife and the girls made Statements. Nothing more was ever heard of it. Police never contacted us. At the time, I made several enquiries to Police and have never received a response.

My concern is, and has always been, that the Site of the Camp, and its track, were extremely isolated, but readily accessible.

My other concern is that Police have never really bothered to check the place out.

Regards

Steven Smith