

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

Name: Mr Robert Knight

Date Received: 25 May 2026

25th May 2026
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To whom it may concern

My name is Robert Knight.

On the 21st of July 2005, Simon Robert Knight, our son and brother to Frances and Paul, went missing and was last sighted at a hotel on Crown Street in Sydney. I am sending this submission to you on what would have been Simon's 53rd birthday (25/05/73), he has been missing for 21 years.

The last 21 years have been hard, navigating the issues involving police, Coroners Court, media and ongoing correspondence. I have been very fortunate to have the support of Mr. Peter Rolfe the President of 'Support After Murder Inc', who assisted me with all the correspondence required. Unfortunately, Peter passed away last year, and I often wonder where we would be today if it wasn't for the help he gave us and many others. We will miss him greatly for the amazing person he was and the deep and professional support he offered all the grieving families he worked with.

We believe that there have been many missed opportunities and we would have benefited from greater professionalism, care and support, particularly at the beginning of the investigation. I have detailed some key dates of Simon's case below:

- Simon's mother, Robyn, was very distressed to be told in those first few days of contact with the police (following his disappearance) that, due to him being gay, she shouldn't worry 'as he was likely partying' and would return home in a few days. We feel valuable time was lost in these false assumptions.
- In the weeks following, 'the person of most concern' (who also raised the alarm regarding Simon's disappearance) has unrestricted access to Simon's flat and is identified on the phone by a police officer at Simon's flat going through his computer on the 23rd of July.
- 30th July 2005, 'the person of most concern' to the family tells us he has sold his bike to buy a jeep. Simon's bike, along with his camera and wallet are also missing since his disappearance.
- We had also questioned the jealous relationship that 'the person of most concern' had with Simon, which we considered very unhealthy. As did the Officer in Charge in his statement in August 2005.
- August 17th & 18th 2005, it takes nearly a month for police working on Simon's case to request S25 Luminol and scientific examinations. Both requests were respectively blocked by a Sergeant and, by a Superintendent based on a \$1200.00 cost. A survey of the hotel room was never carried out.
- We did not receive our inquest brief until 5 days before the inquest, which meant we arrived very poorly prepared and uninformed for the hearing.
- After the inquest in July 2008, we asked the police to search La Perouse, a place Simon loved to visit. 'The person of most concern' informed the coroner at the inquest that there was, "no point in looking at La Perouse". Accordingly, we believe that a search of La Perouse was not entertained and did not occur.
- Simon's last known night was spent at a hotel on Crown St in Sydney. It is known that there were at least two people also present that night at the hotel. After these two people leave the hotel, there was an unusual or extremely large amount of text messages and phone

calls between them. We thought, as did the Officer in Charge (at the time of the inquest), it warranted further investigation. This idea was dismissed. We believe these two people have an insight or direct knowledge into the circumstances of Simon's disappearance and the actions, involvement and or movements of 'the person of most concern.'

- In July 2015, we requested a new inquest to issue a death certificate, to formally attend to Simon's estate.
- In October 2015, we received a reply, informing us they would let us know when.
- On 23rd December 2015 to our dismay, we were notified that the coroner inquest had already taken place with no family present.
- 10th March 2016, first death certificate is issued to Simon's mother Robyn with many missing details. No age, no place of birth, no place of residence, no profession, no marital status and neither of his parents listed. The only information listed was Simon's name, presumed date of death and sex. It was very offensive and distressing to receive this document and a new document had to be requested to include all the missing details.
- In September 2019, following another meeting with police in Sydney, they admitted their initial investigation was very poor.
- In July 2021, I made a submission to the Special Board of Enquiry into LGBTQI hate crimes, regarding Simon's disappearance. Although we understood that Simon's case did not fall into the main remit of that inquest. We had been advised by QC's working on the submission's that their hope was that this inquest would lead to a future inquest looking into institutional discrimination, which Simon's case and lack of initial activity could benefit from. Unfortunately, we have not heard further about this.
- In August 2022, I engaged Sydney Search Dogs to look around La Perouse. As they are a charity, they operate via donations and I gave them all I could afford at the time. They attended on a crowded Sunday which was also rain affected and called the search off short. I believe that they didn't search any of the main areas of interest. They advised us they would return. We have not been informed of a second visit, and to our knowledge believe there has not been one. Incidentally, I have been to La Perouse looking at beaches, tunnels and old gun bunkers, looking for any evidence relating to Simon. We would be so appreciative for a proper and formal police dog search of the area to take place.

Above are only some of the milestones of Simon's case, there are many and more critical dates and events over the last 21 years. The family of Simon live in hope that information will come forward and that the people present or involved in his disappearance will face justice. Although for his mother Robyn, who is now in a care home with Alzheimer's, it is possibly too late.

There have been police officers who have been great to work with and have done a lot to try and bring information to the fore. We are also grateful for the media release and the reward offered, held with South Sydney PAC Mascot on the 20th anniversary of Simon's disappearance with the Police Minister Yasmin Catley in attendance. Unfortunately to date no new information has been forthcoming.

We believe that the main three people who submitted statements to the police know what happened to Simon and where to find his body. We are desperate for help to bring information forward and to know what happened to Simon, so that we can show him the respect he deserves. We hope this new inquiry can assist us.

Yours sincerely,
Robert and Sue Knight