

Submission
No 93

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 5 July 2026

Partially
Confidential

I would like to request that my name and any other identifying information provided in the process of lodging this submission be kept confidential. Everything included in this document itself can be published.

While I have familial connection to an unsolved homicide unrelated to this inquiry I am nothing more than an interested member of the public. I have a special interest in investigating unidentified and missing individuals through resources available on the internet.

Despite a keen and deep interest in this area I was shocked to hear that there are somewhere in the range of 750 unidentified human remains in Australia.

Whilst it is easy to connect with missing person cases in Australia via public resources, there is no way to assist families in gaining closure by linking them to these remains. There are 750 families out there waiting to hear about their loved ones and a wealth of members of the public who are willing to use our time and resources to make those connections so these families are no longer in limbo.

I would like to make one recommendation to this inquiry

1. That those with the power at a national level create a database similar to NAMUS in the United States. This database should include all available identifying data related to all unidentified human remains throughout Australia. There should be public access to basic identifiers.

NAMUS in the United States is a database that is run at the national level, which includes all data on missing and unidentified individuals. In their own words The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) is a national centralized repository and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases across the United States.¹ At the time of writing this submission NAMUS publicly state that they have in their database 26,621 open missing person cases and 66,533 resolved missing person cases, plus 15,515 open unidentified persons cases and 9,333 resolved unidentified persons cases.² This data alone represents how such a database can lead to closure for families, which is further supported by Rodriguez et.al's³ study findings that demonstrate how NAMUS has allowed for national level interconnection and open communication across borders for local authorities who hold unidentified remains.

¹ <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>

² <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>

³ Rodriguez, A.L. *et al.* (2022) 'Understanding unidentified human remains investigations through the United States Census Data', *Forensic Science International*

NAMUS has two levels of access for members, public access for the general public and professional members for those with verified credentials that show their role as professional investigators. As per NAMUS' website

*Professional users of NamUs are personnel from law enforcement agencies, medical examiner offices, and coroner offices, as well as allied professionals such as forensic subject matter experts. Professional users must register, provide a sponsor who can verify criminal justice employment, and be vetted by NamUs Regional Program Specialists (RPSs) prior to activation in the NamUs system. Once activated, professional users can search/view case information to include dental records, fingerprint cards, and law enforcement sensitive information, and they can add, edit, and track cases per their authorized permissions in the system.*⁴

This system of professional access allows for a direct link to a full database of records for missing and unidentified individuals at a national levels, something that in reviewing statements from the inquiry so far is clearly missing in Australia.

The other key benefit to a database similar to NAMUS is the access for members of the public to access basic identifiers which can be followed up on and investigated further through connections to public resources. Examples of the benefits of this access include the case of Paula Davis, her sister recognized the description of two unique tattoos listed in the database case file—a unicorn and a red rose—and that led her to contact the law enforcement authorities and unlock the mystery. Davis was recently reburied near her mother in Missouri.⁵ In another case, a police officer in Omaha entered the name and data for Luis Fernandez, missing since July 2007, into the NamUs system in March 2009. A citizen sleuth noticed similarities with an unidentified case and tests concluded it was a match. Because a coroner in another state had also used the system, the agencies were able to identify Fernandez, who was murdered, and then close their cases and return his remains to his family.⁶

As stated, there are a wealth of members of the public much like myself who want to use or time and resources to bring closure to families. Online networks have significant reach, with forums such as Websleuths reaching 247,418 users⁷ and Reddit community r/GreatfulDoe reaching 83,000 weekly visitors⁸. As noted in the example of Fernandez above, members of the public can be the key to solve cases, but this is only possible if these unidentified remains are included on a public database.

⁴ <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

⁵ Charles Heurich and the Namus team • service to america medals (no date) Service To America Medals. Available at: <https://servicetoamericamedals.org/honorees/charles-heurich-and-the-namus-team/>

⁶ Charles Heurich and the Namus team • service to america medals (no date) Service To America Medals. Available at: <https://servicetoamericamedals.org/honorees/charles-heurich-and-the-namus-team/>

⁷ <https://websleuths.com/>

⁸ <https://www.reddit.com/r/gratefuldoe/>

Evidentially, there is a distinct need for a national database for unidentified human remains found in Australia. Such a resource would allow for national level interconnection for police and investigative agencies. Having public access to basic identifiers would also open up these cases to the resources of the public.

Therefore, I would like to restate that my recommendation for the inquiry

1. That those with the power at a national level create a database similar to NAMUS in the United States. This database should include all available identifying data related to all unidentified human remains throughout Australia. There should be public access to basic identifiers.