

# New technology to help find missing persons

**When somebody is missing for a long time it's hard to imagine what they might look like today, but the AFP has found a way to assist in the location and resolution of long-term missing persons cases.**

The AFP's National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) is using forensic imaging techniques to create photographs which depict how long-term missing persons might look today. It is hoped that these photographs will provide new opportunities to identify those who have been missing for several years.

Around 35,000 people are reported missing each year in Australia. While 95 per cent of people are found within a short period of time, there are approximately 1,600 Australians who have been missing for more than a year.

In 2009, the NMPCC organised and funded a global partner agency, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the United States, to provide training in forensic imaging techniques to the NMPCC, other members of the Australian Federal Police, and State and Territory policing agencies.

The need for such capability was identified through the Police Consultative Group on Missing Persons which the NMPCC convenes. The group is comprised of representatives

of all State and Territory police missing persons units or equivalent.

The first age-progressed poster featuring multiple profiles was launched at Sydney Airport in March 2010 by Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor.

The poster features profiles of six long-term missing persons from five Australian jurisdictions. It shows their original photographs and a forensically altered image depicting what the missing person might look like today.

"This is the first time a poster featuring age-enhancement has been produced in Australia for this purpose," Mr O'Connor said.

"The images aim to spark recognition by providing realistic images of what the missing people may look like today. Uncertainty about the whereabouts and safety of a loved one can be a traumatic experience that can last for weeks, months and, sadly, in the case of these families, years."

Two billboards in Terminal 3 of Sydney Airport (Qantas Gates 1-3) will display the six age-progressed images of the missing persons. Terminal 3 is

the busiest terminal in Australia with approximately 800,000 passenger movements a month.

"The current national missing persons posters generate a number of sighting reports and it is envisaged that these new age-progression images will help in the search for these long-term missing persons in the same way," Mr O'Connor said.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Operations Mandy Newton hosted the launch and said that the US had been successful in using age-enhancing technology to find missing persons, and there were hopes this campaign would produce similar results in Australia.

Thirty years ago, 16 year old Ronya Livoni disappeared from Darwin. Her mother, Elsa Pantarotto, has often wondered what she would have been like as an adult, but said she was stunned by the photo representing her daughter at 46, because the image is so like her own at that age.

Ms Pantarotto said it was hard to see the photo, but it was harder to live with the fact that she does not know what happened to her daughter.



"Most of all I miss Ronya's presence and her love," Ms Pantarotto said.

Norm Stanton is the father of Ian Stanton, who has been missing from Bundanoon in NSW since 2003. At the launch, he spoke about the way his son's disappearance affected the family.

"The impact of having a loved one go missing has in a positive sense brought our family closer together," he said.

"We all share a common bond, that is, we are all missing Ian. We value each other more, and our time together."

While the age-progression images are designed to help find the missing persons, there is also some sadness when

family members realise just how much they have missed over the years.

Karen Skinner went missing from Western Australia in 1995. Her mother Valerie said that she wants to know her daughter is well.

"You are always a mum, and it is a horrible feeling not knowing," Ms Skinner said.

"Having the age progression done on Karen has made me realise that I actually don't know what my daughter looks like."

Mr Stanton said his family all thought Ian looked wonderful and handsome as a more mature young man.

"In that regard, it was both a joy and a sadness seeing the photo for the first time," Mr Stanton said.

More than 2,000 hard copies of the age-progression poster will be provided to State and Territory police services for distribution to local police stations. The poster will also be distributed to agencies in the missing persons sector and to strategic locations for display, including universities and other tertiary institutions, hospitals, libraries and airports in States and Territories, and displayed on the NMPCC website: [www.missingpersons.gov.au](http://www.missingpersons.gov.au).

The new age progression posters will be produced twice a year and will complement the AFP's existing missing persons posters which feature 16 profiles and are produced every six months.



01: Acting Deputy Commissioner Operations, Mandy Newton 02: Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor. 03: A member of the public views the age-progressed poster.



# MISSING

## AGE PROGRESSED

March 2010



**Amelia Hausia**  
Last seen: Canberra, ACT in 1992  
Age at time of disappearance: 18 years  
Age now: 35 years



**Karen Skinner**  
Last seen: Kardinya, WA in 1995  
Age at time of disappearance: 20 years  
Age now: 35 years



**Lydia Notz**  
Last seen: Brisbane, QLD in 1976  
Age at time of disappearance: 21 years  
Age now: 54 years



**Ian Stanton**  
Last seen: Bundanoon, NSW in 2003  
Age at time of disappearance: 23 years  
Age now: 29 years



**Ronya Livoni**  
Last seen: Darwin, NT in 1980  
Age at time of disappearance: 16 years  
Age now: 46 years



**Ursula Barwick**  
Last seen: Long Jetty, NSW in 1987  
Age at time of disappearance: 17 years  
Age now: 39 years

If you have information regarding the whereabouts of a missing person, please contact the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre. Images of long-term missing persons have been modified to represent the effect of aging on their appearance.

1800 000 634  
[missingpersons.gov.au](http://missingpersons.gov.au)