

PLEaS HELP

National Missing Persons Week
5 – 11 August 2007

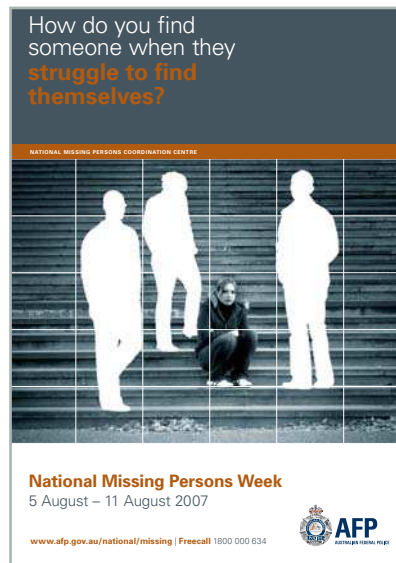
Each year an estimated 30,000 people are reported missing in Australia – that's one every 18 minutes. Of these 30,000 many suffer from, or have a history of, mental illness.

National Missing Persons Week 2007 (Sunday 5 August to Saturday 11 August) is an annual event organised by the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC), with the support of state and territory police services, non-government search agencies and other organisations.

This year's focus for National Missing Persons Week is mental health: *How do you find someone, when they struggle to find themselves?*

National Missing Persons Week has two primary aims:

1. To assist in the resolution of missing persons cases through heightened awareness and increased sightings reports.
2. To raise community awareness regarding issues facing missing persons and their families and friends.



While 99.5 per cent of people reported missing to police are located within a short period of time, the impact on families, friends and the missing persons themselves can be devastating.

People go missing for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the person may be escaping from real or perceived family or personal conflict. Others may be trying to assert their independence or taking time out. Some simply forget to make contact. Some people are victims of foul play or are missing

involuntarily due to mental health issues.

The NMPCC is hosted by the Australian Federal Police and aims to coordinate and promote a national integrated approach to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons – targeting at risk groups such as mental health, youth and the elderly in particular.

All work undertaken by the NMPCC falls under one of four component parts of the PLEaS policy framework (Prevention, Location, Education and Support).

In recognition of missing persons, a church service will be held at 10.30am, Sunday 5 August at All Saints Anglican Church – Ainslie in Canberra. An official launch of National Missing Persons Week will also take place on Monday 6 August at the National Museum of Australia – Canberra.

Television commercials and outdoor advertising during National Missing Persons Week will be asking Australians to PLEaS help.