

# Focus on those who are missing but not forgotten

**JESSICA BROWN**

"IT'S never a good thing to see a past classmate on a poster."

Alice Springs resident Adrian Patten took to social media last week with a heartfelt message asking old friends to share any information they may have about missing person Damian Cauchi with police.

"Anyone who went to Anzac Hill High School in the Early 90s may remember Damian," he wrote on Facebook.

Just 21 years of age when he went missing in Adelaide in August 1998, Mr Patten said he recognised Damian instantly when he saw his photo on a missing persons poster.

He said he had not changed a bit from high school.

"It's like a blast from the past but for all the wrong reasons," he said. "I was shocked and surprised."

Mr Patten first came across Damian's missing person profile a few years ago.

He decided to share it on Facebook to see if anyone had any valuable information that may lead to his whereabouts after stumbling across another missing person profile this week.

Damian Cauchi is just one of 35,000 people reported missing in Australia each year.

While 95 per cent are found within a short period of time, the Australian Federal Police reveal that there remains about 1,600 long-term missing persons.

The Northern Territory currently accounts for 72 long standing missing person cases – the oldest dating back to 1972.

With August 3 to 9 marking National Missing Persons Week, the public are reminded of all the missing people in their region in the hope of valuable information being revealed while also raising awareness of the issues and impacts surrounding missing persons.

Thirteen of the NT's 72 missing people disappeared in Central Australia.

Some of these include:

**Simon Doolan** was last seen by friends and family on May 16, 2000 in Alice Springs.

All efforts to locate him have been unsuccessful and police hold grave concerns for his welfare.

**Peter Johnson** was last seen at Davenport Aboriginal Reserve in January, 1996.

He was supposed to have returned to the Santa Teresa Community but has not contacted his friends or family since then.

He has a defective right eye



**Simon Wandie Doolan**



**Jamie Herdman**



**Andrew Robert Johnson**



**Peter Johnson**



**David James Keighran**



**Jennifer Helen Lane**



**Poe Lay**



**Ronya Livoni**



**Bryan Maxted**



**Nathan McLaughlin**



**Michael John O'Reilly**



**Oswald Orman**



**Dean Anthony Pollard**



**David Lee Robinson**



**Peter John Rumbel**



**Claus Clemens Schmahl**



**Carlie Sinclair**



**Ivica Paul Sinozic**



**Christine Somogyi**



**Barry Ross Wood**

and suffers post-traumatic epilepsy due to a head injury.

**Jennifer Lane**, who flew from Adelaide to Alice Springs on March 30, 2004, where she booked accommodation for one night.

She was last seen on March 31 and has not made contact with friends or family.

**Oswald Orman**, who was reported missing on January 22, 2007.

Originally from Queensland, Mr Orman drove his white Datsun ute onto the Barkly Homestead on or around January 16 to conduct repairs.

He was last seen by truck drivers on Saturday January 24, 2007 attempting to hitchhike in a westerly direction on the Barkly Highway.

All his personal belongings were left in his vehicle and he has not been seen since.

**Ivica Sinozic** who was last seen in 1982.

A white Datsun I20Y station sedan was located about 400km east of Alice Springs on April 10, 1983.

Both registration plates and the vehicle compliance plate had been removed but later inquiries revealed that the vehicle belonged to Mr Sinozic.

He had left his parents' home in Victoria in June, 1982 seeking employment in the mining industry outside the state.

He appears to have travelled through New South Wales and Queensland until he arrived in Alice Springs in July 1982.

All inquiries have failed to locate any trace of Mr Sinozic. And **Christine Somogyi**, who moved from Adelaide to Alice Springs between 1997 and 1998.

She gave birth to her child in Alice Springs in early 1999 and frequented Aboriginal camps, where she made close

friendships with Aboriginal people.

She was last seen at one of the camps and has made no contact with her family since her disappearance.

Detective Acting Superintendent Lee Morgan said considering our population size, the Northern Territory has about the same percentage of people go missing as the rest of Australia.

"Most of our missing people go missing from the Darwin area due to the large population base," he said.

Despite Central Australia's expansive desert, Detective Acting Superintendent Morgan said the flat area makes it much easier to locate missing people.

"It is much harder to find someone in a high density location," he said.

"That is unless the person has decided to actively avoid being found by hiding in a re-

mote place. All states and territories across Australia have remote places that would make it difficult to find someone."

Unfortunately, there are no definitive signs friends and family can look for that may suggest a person could go missing.

However, mental health issues and this year's Missing Persons Week theme, dementia are conditions to be wary of.

"Almost half of the persons that go missing in Australia have a history of mental illness or are being treated by a mental health service," Detective Acting Superintendent Morgan said.

This year's campaign will focus on elderly people and those with memory loss who go missing.

Thousands of others, though, disappear without the slightest hint of any reasons that may explain why.

It is the uncharacteristic disappearances that baffle both loved ones and police.

Detective Acting Superintendent Morgan said there is no black and white answer as to when a person is considered officially "missing" – the 24 hour rule is a myth – and when police stop looking.

"Each case is assessed using all available information such as the age and intellect of the individual – is it out of character for the person and what is the risk to the person (such as weather, climate etc.," he said.

One of the most devastating and confronting consequences of missing people – and the one most often forgotten – is the heartbroken family members left to grieve a person they aren't sure is dead or alive.

If you or someone you know have any information about a missing person, contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.