



On the move – NMPCC finds a new home!

In order to build upon the current education and awareness raising work being undertaken for the Australian community within other areas of the AFP, the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) has moved into the High Tech Crime Operations (HTCO) portfolio alongside the Crime Prevention unit.

The Crime Prevention Unit has developed strong links with the Australian community, young and old, in its efforts to raise awareness and educate Australians on how to have a safe online experience. It has also

been instrumental in developing collateral to deliver key messages to the Australian community.

The integration of the NMPCC into HTCO enhances the synergies between the two areas, and this is

an ample opportunity to augment collaboration and cooperation between common stakeholders, and contribute to international efforts to drive and respond to the issues of missing persons.

The AFP goes red for Daniel

Schools, businesses and individuals around Australia got involved in this year's Day for Daniel, held on Friday October 29.

Now in its 6th year, Day for Daniel began following the tragic abduction and suspected murder of 13 year old Daniel Morcombe on the Sunshine Coast in December 2003.

In AFP offices across the country, staff hosted morning tea and lunch events to help raise money for the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, while staff were

encouraged to dress in red (Daniel was wearing a red shirt when he was last seen).

Speaking at a morning tea at the AFP's Canberra headquarters, the National Manager of High Tech Crime Operations, Neil Gaughan, said the day raised important messages about the safety of children. "Day for Daniel is about educating people about child

safety and missing persons," he said.

AFP events raised in excess of \$2700 dollars. The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre is collecting all donations and drawing a bank cheque to be presented to Bruce and Denise Morcombe on behalf of all AFP staff.



Left: It was a sea of red at this AFP Canberra morning tea.

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A timely reminder about missing persons

National Missing Persons Week (NMPW) is a significant annual campaign coordinated by the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC). The aim of the week is to raise awareness of the issues associated with missing persons in Australia.

This year, the theme of the NMPW campaign - 'A day spent waiting is a day lost' - was to dispel the myth that you need to wait 24 hours before reporting someone missing. This is not the case, and people were urged to make a report to police as soon as they have concerns for the safety and whereabouts of a loved one.

Market testing of previous campaigns has also identified that people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds were less likely to be aware of the issues and the risks associated with missing persons. The reasons for this may be:

- Language differences
- Some cultures may feel shamed if a family member chooses to go missing
- Some communities may not feel comfortable speaking to police due to their cultural history/background.
- Families and friends of CALD missing persons often feel that they would rather not report the incident to police and use their own networks to find them.

The Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, officially launched NMPW in Melbourne on 2 August,

with Anton Enus from SBS World News as master of ceremonies. Also present were AFP Commissioner Tony Negus, members of the AFP Executive, Ms Megan Layton Director of The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia, Assistant Commissioner Ross Barnet of Queensland Police, Superintendent Murray Fraser of Victoria Police and members of Missing Persons Units from across Australia. There were also representatives from a diverse range of multicultural groups and non-government agencies, and families and friends of missing persons.



Left: A television commercial featuring the theme of "A day spent waiting is a day lost" was screened at the Melbourne launch.

NMPW 2010 was supported by a national advertising campaign which included television, print and radio community service announcements. There was a concerted effort to provide people from CALD communities with targeted information, and to this end a Myths & Facts publication has been translated into 14 different languages.

Support was also provided by SBS in communicating key messages to people from diverse backgrounds across its radio and television networks.



Top: The Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, speaks at the launch.

Middle: AFP Commissioner Tony Negus with Eugene Luba and Nick Milograd, whose sister and daughter Tamara Milograd disappeared in 1971.

Bottom: Families of missing persons from across Australia attended the launch.



'Mountains don't meet, but humans can'

'I am your daughter, we have been separated for a long time. I would like to hear from you. If you are alive, please let me know ...'

Melania Tumaini wasn't sure if these words, sent in a letter to her mother, would reach their destination. She hadn't seen her family since they were separated when civil war tore through Burundi in 1993. 'It was night and it was dark,' Melania remembers from Shepparton, where she lives today. 'We had to flee. I didn't know where my family was.'

She is one of the fortunate ones who has found her missing family with the help of Australian Red Cross' International Tracing Service. Tracing works across international borders to restore contact between families who have been separated by armed conflict, war and disaster.

Answers can take years to find, but about 60 to 70% of Australian Red Cross' cases are resolved – sometimes its good news and sometimes bad. Over the last 12 months it has re-established precious contact for 198 separated families.

Melania was just 13 when she became one of hundreds of thousands of people displaced by Burundi's civil war and made her way alone to a refugee camp in Tanzania where she lived for 11 years with no news of her family. 'I was an orphan, living by myself. I was frightened and I was lonely. I thought every day, 'what happened to them?' I didn't think about the future because there was no peace and I didn't imagine that one day I would get a good life in Australia.'

In 2005, Melania became eligible to migrate from Tanzania to Australia through the United Nations as a refugee from the Burundi civil war – a journey that would take her from the fear and uncertainty of the camp, but one filled with mixed emotions.

'When I got the news I was coming to Australia I was very excited. I didn't think that this would happen because 11 years is a long time to be

alone,' she says. 'I could get clothes and food – things in Australia were good. But I always wondered what happened to my family and where my mother was.'

Melania was finally put in touch with Australian Red Cross' International Tracing Service, and through them sent a letter and a photo of herself as part of a Red Cross Message. That letter made the long trip to the family's last known address in Burundi.

While in the village, Burundi Red Cross staff found out new information and sent the letter to Tanzania in the hope that it would find Melania's family. It did. Melania received a reply from her mother with a phone number and in 2006, after 13 years 'of separation, she was finally able to speak with the mum and four siblings she lost sight of in the dark and terror of that night.



Left: Melania Tumaini is finally reunited with her family.

Her mother, Esariya, wrote in a letter to Melania that: 'Mountains don't meet but humans can. We are thankful that even though we parted ways, we will meet again.'

Along with the phone calls and letters though came the growing wish that her family – who still lived in a Tanzanian refugee camp – would be reunited safely in Australia. This wish became a driving force and Melania worked hard to sponsor their migration.

An interest-free loan from the International Organisation for Migration and a gift from

Melania's Lutheran Church in Shepparton helped with the visa, and finally earlier this year the family was reunited in Australia. After more than a decade alone in the camp Melania is at last surrounded by her family again.

'It was strange,' Melania smiles, 'I hadn't seen them for 17 years. But I was very, very happy.'

Sitting next to Melania in their Shepparton home, sister Helena listens to her older sister's story. 'It's sad at first to hear her talk,' she says, 'but I'm happy because we're all back together.'

Twenty-seven year-old Helena's

greatest hope now is to study. Melania echoes this hope, adding that everything will be alright now. 'I want to thank everyone who helped me to bring my family back together.' Australian Red Cross is currently searching for almost 4,000 missing people scattered around the world, including countries like Sri Lanka, Kenya, Afghanistan and Hungary.

Help support work reconnecting families separated by war, conflict or disaster by making a donation. For more information visit www.redcross.org.au.

Global Missing Children's Network Conference

For the past two years, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) has developed and delivered an international Global Missing Children's Network (GMCN) conference.

In September 2010, the third GMCN member conference was held in Sydney, co-sponsored by the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) within the Australian Federal Police.

This year's conference raised the bar of performance and delivery to a new and higher level due to the brilliant coordination of the event by the members of the NMPCC and the great attendance by 12 member countries from around the world, with Albania and New Zealand as two future members. The discussions focused on:

- Bringing together law enforcement and nongovernmental organisations;

- Better coordination and communication among the countries;
- The difficulty of investigating long-term missing cases; and
- Lack of research into the phenomenon of missing and abducted children around the world.

This is an extract from a letter of thanks sent to all GMCN member countries by Caroline Humer, Senior Program Manager, ICMEC.

Below: Attendees of the GMCN conference in Sydney.



International Missing Children's Day

On the 25th of May 2010, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) launched a global campaign aimed at bringing home missing children.

The Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, officially launched the campaign to mark International Missing Children's Day.

This year's campaign focused on an issue of growing concern: the impact that parental child abduction has on the child who is removed from almost everything familiar to them by someone they trust.

"It's a tragedy that two to three children are abducted from Australia each week and about 650 parental child abductions happen in Australia each year," Mr O'Connor said at the launch.

"As a parent, I can only imagine the torture of not knowing where your child is and if they are safe and well. I really feel for families in this situation. We can all do our part to ease their pain."

Commissioner Tony Negus, Attorney-General Robert McClelland, stakeholders and families of missing children attended the launch at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. Balloons were released displaying photos of children missing from countries around the world in the hope that someone, somewhere, would recognise them.

Under the auspices of the Global Missing Children's Network, nine countries from four continents have joined in the campaign to raise awareness of missing children and to emphasise the issues surrounding parental child abduction. An interactive web portal and an international community service announcement, both developed by the AFP, were key elements of the campaign.

"We are very proud to be leading this global movement together with the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children," Commissioner Negus said.

25 May marks the anniversary of when six year old Etan Patz disappeared from a New York street corner on his way to school in 1979.

Etan's father's efforts to inform the public led to a nationwide recognition of the need for new initiatives and a commitment to reunite missing children with their families. Nearly thirty years have passed and the search for Etan continues.

25 May, is a day where people around the world commemorate the missing children who have found their way home, remember those who have been victims of crime, and continue efforts to find those who are still missing.



Above: Bruce and Denise Morcombe, Raphael Battistessa and Lauchie Leishman attended the International Missing Children's Day launch in Canberra.

“We are particularly excited to be launching a virtual balloon release micro site so that anyone around the world with access to the internet can view the profiles of missing children online and release a balloon with us to commemorate the day.”

Mr Raphael Battistessa, father of abducted children Eli and Faith, spoke at the event.

Everyone can release a virtual balloon by going to the AFP-developed interactive portal www.helpbringthemhome.org.au.

A 30 second community service announcement produced by the AFP was also distributed throughout participating countries to encourage people to visit the website.

Australian Missing Children

Missing child: Andrew Thompson
Missing since: April 2008
Missing from: New South Wales, Australia

Ken Thompson, father of Andrew, was finally reunited with his son in Amsterdam on Monday 13 September 2010. Mr Thompson's son was found after Amsterdam police received a tip-off earlier this month, paving the way for their reunion. It was a euphoric ending to a two-and-a-half-year search that saw Mr Thompson cycle 6500km across Europe in search of the son he last saw in April 2008, when his mother took him to Europe.



The parents of Daniel Morcombe, presumed abducted and murdered on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in 2003, kindly provided support through the Morcombe Foundation by funding aspects of Mr Thompson's European search.

Missing child: Eli Battistessa
Missing since: January 2006
Missing from: South Australia, Australia



Missing child: Faith Battistessa
Missing since: January 2006
Missing from: South Australia, Australia



Both Eli and Faith remain missing

Missing child: Cameron Leishman
Missing since: September 2008
Missing from: New South Wales, Australia

Cameron remains missing.



MISSING

October 2010



Warren MEYER
Last seen: Yarra Ranges Nat Park, VIC
Missing since: March 2008



Daniel ROSEWALL
Last seen: North of Silverton, NSW
Missing since: January 2010



Gunther PALATIN
Last seen: Lidcombe, NSW
Missing since: September 2009



Glen STEWART
Last seen: Henley Beach, SA
Missing since: February 1977



Karsten WETZAL
Last seen: Newnham, TAS
Missing since: June 2010



Randolph LITTLE
Last seen: Girrawheen, WA
Missing since: July 2008



Lynette NOTT
Last seen: Korumburra, VIC
Missing since: December 2009



Benjamin WELLS
Last seen: Canberra, ACT
Missing since: September 2004



Michael ISLES
Last seen: Ayr, NTH QLD
Missing since: September 2009



Melissa BROWN
Last seen: Adelaide, SA
Missing since: May 2000



Robert NEVILLE
Last seen: Wollongong, NSW
Missing since: September 2008



Michael DEVITT
Last seen: Cannonvale, QLD
Missing since: February 2010



Steven LOCKEY
Last seen: Elizabeth Field, SA
Missing since: August 1994



Jon BUCHECKER
Last seen: Slacks Creek, QLD
Missing since: May 2010



Thawatchai (Ben) JAROENNET-LEWIS
Last seen: Leeman, WA
Missing since: June 2010



Hildegard FALKENBERG
Last seen: Talga, QLD
Missing since: September 2010



If you have information regarding the whereabouts of a missing person, please contact the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre.

1800 000 634
missingpersons.gov.au