

# Going missing is not a crime—but there are alternatives



NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS COORDINATION CENTRE

FACT SHEET

## The PLEASE policy principles

The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) is funded by the Australian Government and is hosted by the Australian Federal Police. Its mission is to coordinate and promote a national integrated approach to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons and to educate the broader community on the significance of the missing persons' phenomena.

All work conducted by the NMPCC falls under the national missing persons **PLEASE** policy framework: **Prevention, Location, Education Awareness, Support and Evaluation**. The framework provides a common goal and approach for those affected by missing persons' issues and the agencies that work within this sector.

**Prevention:** identifying measures to prevent people from going missing and presenting options for people in crisis

Preventing Australians going missing avoids the significant trauma and cost to individuals, families, governments and the community.

The key to prevention lies in enhancing the resilience and resourcefulness of individuals, providing alternatives to going missing, strengthening family and community networks, and building the capacity of organisations to contribute effectively to prevention efforts.

**Location:** promoting and facilitating a national coordinated approach to the location of missing persons

Early location of a missing person is important as it reduces the emotional impact on family and friends, the cost to governments, and the likelihood that the missing person will be vulnerable to becoming either a victim of crime or an offender.

Early location is best achieved through a coordinated approach by Police, non-government search agencies, and community organisations.

**Education:** improving agency responsiveness to missing persons and their families

Developing appropriate services requires an understanding of why people go missing and the role of service providers in the provision of effective services.

Education incorporates developing the knowledge base and standards of professional practice in those services and agencies used by missing persons and their families.

**Awareness:** heightening the profile of missing persons and associated issues and impacts

Heightening awareness of missing persons is multi-faceted and works alongside all of the PLEASE policy principles.

Awareness works to prevent at-risk groups from going missing, increase the location of missing persons, educate the Australian community, and support families and friends of missing persons.

**Support:** addressing the impact on families and friends and providing access to appropriate support

The impacts on families and friends of missing persons may include poor physical and mental health, compromised quality of life, unstable emotional wellbeing, strain on significant relationships, and financial difficulties.

Evidence based and professional support—both practical and emotional—may help minimise the impact of a disappearance.

**Evaluation:** ensuring value is added

Evaluating programs and agency responses assists in identifying valued service responses, policy directions required in the sector, strategic initiatives needed to improve service provision, and facilitates the review of operational processes in relevant agencies.