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**JURISDICTION** : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
**ACT** : CORONERS ACT 1996  
**CORONER** : SARAH TYLER, CORONER  
**HEARD** : 25 NOVEMBER 2025  
**DELIVERED** : 9 DECEMBER 2025  
**FILE NO/S** : CORC 2350 of 2025  
**DECEASED** : BRANDRICK, ERIC DONALD

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*Catchwords:*

Nil

*Legislation:*

Nil

**Counsel Appearing:**

Senior Constable C Robertson assisted the Coroner

**Case(s) referred to in decision(s):**

Nil

Coroners Act 1996  
(Section 26(1))

RECORD OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEATH

*I, Sarah Tyler, Coroner, having investigated the disappearance of Eric Donald BRANDRICK with an inquest held at Perth Coroner’s Court, Court 85, CLC Building, 501 Hay Street, Perth, on 25 November 2025, find that the death of Eric Donald BRANDRICK has been established beyond all reasonable doubt and that the identity of the deceased person was Eric Donald BRANDRICK and that death occurred on an unknown date after 31 December 1989 at an unknown place, from an unascertained cause in the following circumstances:*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Eric Donald Brandrick<sup>1</sup> was born in Dalby, Queensland. He was last known to be alive on 31 December 1989. He has not been seen or heard from since that time.
2. Eric had various medical conditions, including a severe disability due to a stroke he suffered in September 1988. He lived alone in HomesWest housing in North Fremantle. He was single, with no children, and he had few friends or relatives. All of the evidence before me suggests that Eric lived a relatively reclusive lifestyle.
3. A social worker at Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital became concerned for Eric's welfare when he stopped attending his medical appointments.
4. On 20 February 1990, the first formal report about Eric's disappearance was made to police by that social worker. The Missing Persons Bureau took carriage of the investigation into Eric's disappearance the next day, but relatively little information about his life or possible whereabouts was able to be confirmed.
5. Eric has not made any confirmed contact with any of his known associates from the time of his disappearance. A recent review by police officers, including proof of life checks, has found no evidence to indicate that Eric is alive.
6. On the basis of information provided by the WA Police in relation to Eric's disappearance, Acting State Coroner Linton determined that pursuant to section 23 of the *Coroners Act 1996* (WA) (the Act), there was reasonable cause to suspect that Eric has died and that his death was a reportable death under the Act. The Acting State Coroner therefore made a direction that a coroner hold an inquest into the circumstances of his suspected death.
7. I held an inquest on 25 November 2025. The inquest consisted of the tendering of documentary evidence compiled during the police investigation into Eric's disappearance, as well as hearing evidence from Detective Senior Constable Ellie Wold from the Western Australia Police Missing Person Unit.

## **BACKGROUND**

8. Eric was born in Dalby, Queensland on 29 September 1942. If he were alive today, he would be 83 years old.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric was born Eric Donald Kerr, but took his mother's surname of Brandrick at an unknown stage of his life. He had used aliases of Eric Donald Kerr and Andrew Michael McMillan in interactions with the Western Australia Police Force.

I have referred to the deceased as Eric throughout this finding. No disrespect is intended to Eric, or his memory, in so doing.

9. Relatively little is known about Eric's early life. He was born to his now deceased parents, James Charles Reuben Kerr and Florence Evelyn Kerr, nee Brandrick<sup>2</sup>. His father was a farmer.
10. Eric's parents separated when he was relatively young, and it appears that Eric experienced some hardship as a child.<sup>3</sup> From the limited information available, it seems that Eric primarily lived with his mother although he spent time with his father.<sup>4</sup>
11. Eric's mother and father died in the 1960s. They each died of natural causes.<sup>5</sup> Eric had an adopted sister, Denise Tziolis, who died in 2003, and from whom Eric had been estranged since the early 1970s.<sup>6</sup> It appears Eric was similarly estranged from other members of his extended family.<sup>7</sup>
12. In the 1970s<sup>8</sup> Eric moved to Western Australia. He worked for Australia Post as a parcel delivery van driver for a time. He reportedly enjoyed fishing and other outdoor activities.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, by the time of his disappearance, Eric had lost his employment and was living on a disability pension in HomesWest accommodation due to his health issues. Eric told doctors that he had been married, but divorced, although there is no record of any marriage registered anywhere in Australia<sup>10</sup>, and while there was some speculation he may have fathered a child while living in Perth,<sup>11</sup> there is no evidence before me to support such a finding.
13. There is evidence that Eric experienced significant health issues, which are expanded upon further below, including a stroke in late 1988 that left him partially paralysed on the left hand side.
14. The last time Eric was confirmed to have been seen alive was by staff at the Royal Perth Hospital on 31 December 1989.

### **MISSING PERSON REPORT**

15. Christine O'Hara, a social worker at the Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital, contacted Western Australia Police to report Eric as a missing person on 20 February 1990. She spoke with Officer Stephen Reilly from the Subiaco Police

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<sup>2</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 21, p 1.

<sup>3</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 26, p 2.

<sup>4</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 26, p 2.

<sup>5</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 23.

<sup>6</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 5.

<sup>8</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 24.

<sup>9</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 83.

<sup>10</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 83. Ts p 13.

<sup>11</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 2. Exhibit 1, Tab 6, p 3. Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 14. Ts p 13.

Station, who took down the missing person's report. It appears Eric had missed some appointments, including a neurological medical appointment on 19 February 1990, which escalated already existing concerns for Eric's welfare.

16. At the time of his disappearance, Eric was 47 years of age. He was a Caucasian man with a fair complexion, with green eyes and brown/grey hair. He was known to wear glasses. He was noted to have a severe disability in his left hand side due to a stroke. He was also described to be of poor personal hygiene and to be a recluse, noting that Eric would generally only really communicate with hospital staff.<sup>12</sup>
17. Based upon the information provided by Christine O'Hara, a missing person investigation commenced, and the Missing Persons Bureau took carriage of the investigation on 21 February 1990, the day after he was reported missing.

### **INFORMATION RELATING TO ERIC'S DISAPPEARANCE**

18. From the limited information available about Eric's early life, it appears he moved to Western Australia at some point in the 1970s, after the death of both of his parents and an apparent breakdown in his extended family relationships.
19. Despite significant efforts, police were unable to locate any surviving family members that had maintained a relationship with Eric, and who could provide any meaningful information about Eric's life.
20. Medical records suggest that Eric was in generally good health until 1976, where he had an appendectomy.<sup>13</sup> He had been experiencing abdominal pain for some time, and was experiencing lower back pain that was made worse by physical activity.
21. In November 1978 and April 1979 Eric had two episodes of arthritis in both his right and left ankle. His ankle joint became painful, swollen and red on each occasion, and he was treated for gout. At around that time, Eric disclosed to treating doctors that he consumed alcohol fairly heavily<sup>14</sup>, and alcohol intake is a known risk factor for gout. Eric was given medications to control his gout and to try to prevent kidney stones which are a known complication of gout. He was also referred for further investigations.
22. Between 1979 and 1981, Eric was extensively seen by the Renal Clinic at Royal Perth Hospital for health issues including high blood pressure, and kidney stones.<sup>15</sup>
23. Investigations showed that Eric had a small right kidney, and normal sized left kidney, which caused his treating doctors to suspect he had a possible renal artery

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<sup>12</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 24, p 1. Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 1.

<sup>13</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 16.

<sup>14</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 16.

<sup>15</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 71.

stenosis (narrowing of the arteries leading to his right kidney). However, investigations undertaken in November 1988, after Eric's stroke and re-referral for kidney investigations, suggested that the degree of narrowing of the arteries for Eric were not "clinically or physiologically significant."<sup>16</sup>

24. On 12 September 1988, Eric was living in a unit on Herdsman Parade in Wembley, which he shared with a friend, who appears to have also been a work colleague. He was working with Australia Post as a parcel delivery van driver. He went to bed well, and woke in the morning on 13 September 1988 feeling "drunk" and "unsteady" on his feet. He got out of bed collapsed, and was unable to get back up. A friend found him that day, and assisted him back to bed. Eric tried to get up again later that day, and again collapsed, and couldn't move. Eric was again discovered by his friend, and an ambulance was called.<sup>17</sup>
25. Eric was taken to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital on 13 September 1988, and a hospital CT scan showed that he had suffered a right thalamic intracerebral haemorrhage, which is a type of stroke.<sup>18</sup>
26. The stroke had a catastrophic impact upon Eric's health and functioning. He experienced severe left sided paralysis, a loss of half of his usual field of vision, and a condition known as "unilateral neglect" in which he was unable to perceive stimuli on the left side of his body due to his stroke.<sup>19</sup>
27. Eric was also diagnosed with anosognosia following his stroke.<sup>20</sup> This is a neurological condition in which the sufferer is unaware of their own disability or deficit. This lack of awareness makes it difficult for individuals to recognise that they have a medical problem, recognise the signs and symptoms of their medical problem, and to understand and agree to the treatment they require.
28. Eric was admitted to the Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital after his discharge from Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital on 18 October 1988, and he remained there until his discharge on 4 November 1988. By the time of his discharge, Eric was mobile, but unable to use his left upper arm, and he was unable to drive given his ongoing visual impairment. His speech was reportedly still slurred given his stroke, but he had made a relatively good recovery.<sup>21</sup>
29. However, the reality of the ongoing health complications Eric suffered due to his stroke meant that Eric lost his employment as a parcel delivery van driver,<sup>22</sup> and lost much of the independence of his former life.

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<sup>16</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 96.

<sup>17</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 82.

<sup>18</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 79.

<sup>19</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 2.

<sup>20</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 2.

<sup>21</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 87.

<sup>22</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 69.

30. Eric was keen to regain employment, and in December 1988 was referred to Dr Merrick, a specialist in rehabilitation medicine, to be assessed for a work programme.<sup>23</sup>
31. In the meantime, Eric also began receiving the disability pension, and he moved into HomesWest accommodation in North Fremantle, where he lived alone.
32. Sadly, Eric's health deteriorated over 1989. In May 1989, Dr Merrick noted that Eric's speech was completely normal and his intellect appeared to have been completely unaffected by the stroke. However, Eric's vision remained impaired, he was still paralysed on the left hand side of his body, and he still suffered anosognosia. Eric was neglecting his personal hygiene on the left side of his body. As a result, Dr Merrick made arrangements for domestic services and nursing services from Silver Chain to assist Eric with his hygiene.<sup>24</sup>
33. Once Eric's hygiene issues were under control, Dr Merrick planned for Eric to undergo an induction to start work in a sheltered workshop, which was an organisation that would employ people with disabilities.<sup>25</sup>
34. The evidence suggests that in around June 1989, Eric made his way to Kalgoorlie, possibly in search of work, or simply for vacation<sup>26</sup>, as there is some evidence he had a medical appointment with a Kalgoorlie doctor. However, given the passage of time, any medical records from that time are no longer available.<sup>27</sup>
35. In September 1989, Eric saw Dr Maguire, another specialist in rehabilitation medicine at the Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital. Eric had been offered a work trial with FCB industries, but there was a waitlist for his commencement date. Dr Maguire noted that Eric continued to be assisted with his home care and general hygiene by Silver Chain, however he still looked "somewhat dishevelled" and Dr Maguire requested that Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital's social worker review the issue of further assistance for Eric with his home care.
36. Dr Maguire noted that Eric seemed quite bored at home, and encouraged the social worker to also discuss with Eric whether any avocational activities could be offered to him.<sup>28</sup>
37. Eric missed a number of medical appointments from November 1989, and the medical professionals involved in Eric's care had growing concerns about Eric's ability to live independently.

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<sup>23</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 69.

<sup>24</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 8.

<sup>25</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 8.

<sup>26</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 61.

<sup>27</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 2.

<sup>28</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 7.

38. On 21 November 1989, the Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital's social worker Christine O'Hara wrote to Dr Merrick raising concerns for Eric's future. Dr Merrick responded, advising he would be happy to see Eric again, and try to encourage him to move towards hostel care, but that Eric would likely need assistance to book and attend the appointment, given he did "not have the cognitive apparatus to ensure his own attendance."<sup>29</sup> At that time, Dr Merrick confirmed that it would be necessary to continue with maximum support through Silver Chain in relation to nursing and domestic services, and acknowledged that he had no ability to compel Eric to accept hostel accommodation placement, even though they were both concerned for him.
39. On 25 December 1989, Eric went to a Christmas Day lunch with his former housemate and that housemate's family.<sup>30</sup> That evening, Eric attended the Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department. He said he'd caught the train to the hospital because he felt like his blood pressure was high, he had a headache and was feeling nauseous and dizzy.
40. Eric was assessed by a doctor, who noted Eric's history of a stroke, and after an assessment the doctor found no serious pathology. Eric was discharged home. Given it was Christmas, the doctor arranged for Eric to be given a taxi voucher, instead of leaving him to travel by train.<sup>31</sup>
41. On 31 December 1989, Eric again attended the Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department. He said that for the past week, he'd been feeling "not so good" and that he was feeling how he felt when he had his stroke in 1988.<sup>32</sup> He said he had been unable to sleep, was tired, lacked an appetite, and that he'd had a headache for the last two days.
42. At 12.40 pm, he was reviewed by Dr Kennedy.
43. Eric told Dr Kennedy that he'd been not sleeping well since he had the stroke. He said he woke up at about 3.00 am every morning, and can not get back to sleep, so he watches television instead. He said he does "absolutely nothing" and spent his time looking "at the bloody ceiling all day".
44. Eric said was worried he was going to suffer another stroke, and told Dr Kennedy that he "sometimes feels he wants to die." He explained that he only feels this for about an hour at a time, and denied prior attempts at suicide. Eric also said he was hoping to start work in a sheltered workshop in January 1990, and said he was sick of living on his own, expressing an interest in moving into a hostel or a lodge.

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<sup>29</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 57.

<sup>30</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 5.

<sup>31</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 30.

<sup>32</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 44.



45. Dr Kennedy noted that Eric was anxious about the possibility of another stroke, and that he seemed “generally miserable about life since” his stroke. However, he indicated Eric seemed to have hopes for the future, and was able to smile and joke, and therefore didn’t appear to be severely depressed.<sup>33</sup>
46. Eric was discharged from the hospital at 2.40 pm, with Panadol for his tension headaches, and with a plan that the doctor would write to his GP about Eric’s possible depression, and Eric would contact the Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital social workers regarding his desire for new accommodation, and work through the sheltered workshop position.<sup>34</sup>
47. This is the last confirmed occasion on which Eric was seen alive.

### **UNIDENTIFIED HUMAN REMAINS**

48. In the afternoon of 28 June 1990, six months after Eric disappeared, workers at Pier 21 Marina in North Fremantle located a decomposed human foot submerged in about 10 feet of water.<sup>35</sup> Pier 21 Marina in North Fremantle was less than one kilometre from the Harvest Road North Fremantle unit where Eric lived.
49. The recovered remains were examined on the same day by a Forensic Pathologist, Dr Cadden. Dr Cadden observed that the foot was a right foot, encased in a green coloured sock. Within the upper part of the sock was an intact right fibula and tibia (lower leg bones).<sup>36</sup>
50. The remains were measured and x-rayed, and bone marrow and soft tissue samples,<sup>37</sup> alongside hair samples, were taken for Forensic Biology examination in the hope that the remains could be identified through DNA. Dr Cadden noted that there was no evidence of injury to the partial limb examined.
51. On 29 June 1990, Police Divers had searched the area at Pier 21 Marina in North Fremantle, and located a right radius bone (one of the bones in the forearm) near to where the lower leg bones had been discovered.
52. Dr Cadden examined these remains, and identified the forearm bone belonged to a right arm.
53. In a report dated 9 July 1990, Dr Cadden expressed the opinion that the remains were consistent with longstanding immersion in water. He noted the remains were decomposed, and were of human origin.

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<sup>33</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 24 – 27.

<sup>34</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 24 – 27. Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 44.

<sup>35</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 7.

<sup>36</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8, p 1.

<sup>37</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8, p 1.

54. He explained that the appearance of the bone structure, including its weight and configuration, were consistent with being from an adult female, or a slightly built male.<sup>38</sup>
55. Despite the best efforts of investigators, DNA testing attempted in July 1990 was unsuccessful. Given technology limitations at the time, it was not possible to extract DNA material from the samples taken from the unidentified human remains to establish a DNA profile for testing.<sup>39</sup>
56. In 2020, with developments in DNA testing technology, Forensic Biology were able to develop a partial DNA profile from the soft tissue sample taken from the unidentified human remains. That DNA profile was checked against available DNA databases, with no matching DNA profiles being identified.<sup>40</sup>
57. Given a DNA profile had been developed that could be tested against comparative samples, there were renewed efforts by the Western Australia Police Force to identify any living members of Eric's extended biological family that may be willing to provide a DNA sample for that purpose.<sup>41</sup>
58. On 15 June 2021, the DNA profile from the unidentified human remains was compared against a DNA sample taken from Noel Brandrick, a maternal cousin of Eric's. This testing returned inconclusive results.<sup>42</sup>
59. On 21 April 2022, the DNA profile from the unidentified human remains was compared against a DNA sample taken from Peter Andrew Kerr, the son of a deceased cousin from the paternal side of Eric's family.
60. The results of that testing supported the proposition that Peter Andrew Kerr was paternally related to the unidentified human remains believed to be Eric.
61. The Forensic Scientist who reported upon these results explained that the Y chromosome from the DNA profile recovered from the unidentified human remains matched the reference Y chromosome DNA profile of Peter Andrew Kerr. This finding adds support to the proposition that the two are paternally related.
62. However, the Forensic Scientist explained that due to the genetic distance between second cousins, these results must be treated with caution, and there is a possibility the findings were mere coincidence.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8, p 1.

<sup>39</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 10, p 1.

<sup>40</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 11, p 1.

<sup>41</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 5.

<sup>42</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 9.

<sup>43</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 9.

63. The unidentified human remains were further examined by Forensic Anthropologist Dr Alanah Buck in October 2025, in anticipation of the coronial inquest.
64. Dr Buck explained that the remains belonged to an adult person, although she could not establish the age of the person, or the gender. She confirmed that there were no arthritic changes, or aging changes, observed on the bones. Dr Buck was unable to provide an estimate of the timing of the death based upon the remains, other than to say that the remains were in an advanced state of decomposition.<sup>44</sup>
65. Based upon forensic measurements of the bones, Dr Buck estimated that the remains belonged to a person standing within a range of between 166.6 and 169.6 cm tall.<sup>45</sup> I note that according to police and medical records, Eric was 167 cm tall.<sup>46</sup>
66. In light of Eric's history of arthritic gout, which flared up in his left and right ankle in 1978 and 1979, Dr Buck was asked to comment on whether there was any evidence on the remains that could indicate the deceased had a medical history of gout. Dr Buck was unable to detect any bony changes to the remains that could be attributed to gout. However, Dr Buck advised that the plain film x-rays of the ankle region were of limited resolution, and that there is a prospect that episodes of gout may not leave any evidence of gout on the bones.<sup>47</sup> As a result, these investigations were unable to confirm or refute the possibility that the unidentified human remains belong to Eric.
67. It is therefore entirely possible on the available evidence that the unidentified human remains belong to Eric. The following factors lend credence to the possibility that the remains belong to Eric:
- a. The remains were discovered around six months after Eric was last known to be alive, and at the time of their discovery, it was considered that the remains had been submerged in the ocean for months, given their appearance.<sup>48</sup>
  - b. The remains belonged to an adult person, though the gender of the person could not be definitively determined.<sup>49</sup>
  - c. Based upon measurements of the bones recovered, the bones belonged to a person who was 166.6 to 169.6 cm tall, which is consistent with Eric's reported height of 167 cm.<sup>50</sup>
  - d. The genetic testing of the unidentified human remains supports the proposition that the deceased connected with the unidentified human remains, and Peter Andrew Kerr are biologically related. However these results must be treated with caution and may be mere coincidence.

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<sup>44</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25.

<sup>45</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25.1.

<sup>46</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 24.4. Ts p 9-10.

<sup>47</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 28.

<sup>48</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 6, p 6. Exhibit 1, Tab 8, p 1.

<sup>49</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, p 2. Exhibit 1, Tab 8, p 1.

<sup>50</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, Ts p 9-10.

- e. The Fremantle dock, specifically Pier 21 Marina which is where the remains were discovered, was very close (approximately 650 metres) to Eric's home in North Fremantle.<sup>51</sup>
68. While this combination of circumstantial evidence is compelling, given the inconclusive results of the DNA testing undertaken in relation to these unidentified human remains, and the caution urged upon me by the Forensic Scientist in reporting these results, I am not able to be satisfied to the requisite standard that the remains are, in fact, Eric's remains.
69. As an aside, I note that within the records held by the police in relation to the investigation into these remains, a handwritten note dated 7 September 1995 was identified. In that note, the unknown author expressed their belief that the unidentified human remains located on 28 and 29 June 1990 were limbs that had been surgically removed (amputated) and then incorrectly disposed of by contractors at the local hospital. The note indicated that the author would raise this with the Western Australia Police Force.<sup>52</sup>
70. Detective Senior Constable Wold confirmed in her evidence at the inquest that the Western Australia Police Force found no evidence to support the conjecture outlined in this note. Further, investigations have been unable to identify exactly where this note came from, or who authored this note.
71. The examination of the unidentified human remains by Dr Buck in 2025 explain that there was no evidence of previous pathology or trauma on the remains.<sup>53</sup> It therefore appears that this note represented an idle possibility only, not supported by any evidence, and in the absence of any evidence in support of this theory, I reject it.

### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE FORCE INVESTIGATIONS**

72. Eric was formally reported as a missing person to the police on 20 February 1990, after Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Hospital staff, particularly the social worker Christine O'Hara, became increasingly concerned for Eric's welfare. The Missing Persons Bureau took carriage of the investigation the following day.
73. By that time, Eric's home at Harvest Road, North Fremantle, had been vacant for a long period of time (estimated as around six weeks), and that HomesWest officers had to arrange fumigation of the property due to the presence of rats and cockroaches.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 7.

<sup>52</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 8, p 2.

<sup>53</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 25, p 2.

<sup>54</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 27, p 2. Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 3.

74. On 1 March 1990, police searched Eric's home. They found no signs of any disturbance, or foul play. Police seized some bank cards and other documents belonging to Eric, and contacted by telephone various people whose numbers were amongst Eric's belongings. None of these inquiries yielded any significant findings.<sup>55</sup>
75. An associate of Eric's who lived in the same unit block in North Fremantle as Eric told police that he spoke with Eric just before Christmas, in 1989. He said that Eric had plans to possibly move to City Beach, but also mentioned that Eric had previously talked of dying by suicide, by taking pills, when Eric was drunk.<sup>56</sup>
76. There was some suggestion that Eric may have been treated by a Dr Gregory in Hay Street in Perth on 3 January 1990, but that could not be confirmed by investigators, and no records were available. There were also suggestions that Eric had been at the City Hotel, a local establishment where he was a regular, on or around 28 January 1990. A cleaner at the City Hotel said that Eric had mentioned to them around that time that he was "sick of living".<sup>57</sup> However again, these sightings could not be confirmed.
77. Investigators were told that Eric had mentioned possibly relocating to Kalgoorlie, possibly with a woman, but despite enquiries with all doctors surgeries in Kalgoorlie, given Eric's ongoing medical needs, and a Kalgoorlie based radio campaign in 2008 seeking information about Eric's whereabouts, no evidence was found that suggested Eric had travelled to Kalgoorlie after 31 December 1989.<sup>58</sup>
78. Investigators were also told that Eric had mentioned possibly travelling to Egypt, to multiple people. Inquiries suggest that Eric did not own a passport, and did not have the financial means to travel outside of Australia. As a result, no evidence was found to support this possibility.<sup>59</sup>
79. As outlined above, unidentified human remains were discovered in the Swan River near Eric's home on 28 and 29 June 1990.
80. Police made considerable enquiries trying to locate members of Eric's family, both to better understand the circumstances of Eric's life, and his disappearance, but also so that DNA testing of the unidentified human remains could take place, when a DNA profile could be recovered.
81. The Missing Persons Bureau undertook further investigations into Eric's disappearance, with reviews taking place in 1999, 2008 and 2019. These reviews did not identify any new leads in relation to Eric's disappearance.

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<sup>55</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 3.

<sup>56</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 9.

<sup>57</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 8.

<sup>58</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 12.

<sup>59</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 13, p 39.

82. From 2021, the Homicide Squad, Missing Persons Team investigation into Eric's disappearance and suspected death focused on efforts to identify the unidentified human remains discovered on 28 and 29 June 1990. The current status of those investigations is outlined above.

### **PROOF OF LIFE CHECKS**

83. As part of the police investigation, enquiries were made with a number of governmental agencies and other institutions across Australia to see whether there was any record of contact with Eric after he was last known to be alive in December 1989.
84. These enquiries have been conducted on multiple occasions throughout the police investigation into Eric's disappearance and suspected death, and were repeated in 2025.
85. Enquiries with the Department of Home Affairs have indicated that they have no new records for Eric, confirming that he has not travelled on an Australian passport overseas at any time.<sup>60</sup> In fact, it appears that Eric had never held an Australian passport.<sup>61</sup>
86. Enquiries also confirmed that there are no new Medicare and/or Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme<sup>62</sup> records for Eric, nor any records held by Centrelink.<sup>63</sup> This is significant, given Eric's significant health issues, and financial dependence on a pension at the time of his disappearance.
87. Enquiries also found no record of any bank activity by Eric since his final bank transaction on 27 December 1989<sup>64</sup>, and no record of Eric on any electoral rolls or on any police databases, and no record of his death with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in any Australian jurisdiction.<sup>65</sup>
88. Each of these enquiries encompassed enquiries of all three of Eric's known aliases. These enquiries establish that Eric has had no contact with any of the government agencies one would expect a person to make contact with in their lifetime, since his appearance on or after 31 December 1989.

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<sup>60</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 5.

<sup>61</sup> Ts p 9.

<sup>62</sup> Ts p 12.

<sup>63</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 5.

<sup>64</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 4, p 3.

<sup>65</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 5.

### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE FORCE CONCLUSION**

89. Having thoroughly investigated Eric's disappearance, and conducted extensive enquiries in an effort to locate him, police identified no evidence of suspicious circumstances relating to Eric's disappearance and suspected death.
90. The wide ranging, ongoing proof of life enquiries undertaken revealed no trace of Eric. There has been no known contact with any of Eric's known professional or personal associates in the over 30 years Eric has been missing, and there have been no credible sightings of him since he was last seen alive on 31 December 1989. There is no evidence to suggest that Eric simply packed up his life and started a new life elsewhere.
91. The Western Australia Police Force report to the coroner concludes with the opinion of the coronial investigators that Eric "... *is deceased, having died on or soon after 31 December 1989 at an unknown location.*"<sup>66</sup>
92. Detective Senior Constable Wold agreed with that conclusion in her oral evidence at the coronial inquest into Eric's suspected death.<sup>67</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

93. Having carefully considered the evidence on the coronial brief, and having listened to the evidence of Detective Senior Constable Wold at the inquest, I am satisfied, beyond reasonable doubt, that Eric Donald Brandrick, otherwise known as Eric Donald Kerr and Andrew Michael McMillan, is deceased.
94. Eric has been missing for more than 30 years. There has been no confirmed evidence of Eric's existence within Australia since his disappearance sometime after 31 December 1989, and there is no evidence that Eric had the means to leave Australia at that time.
95. I am satisfied that if Eric were still alive today, there would be some record to corroborate that, particularly given he was not a man of means and would need to either be working or receiving a government payment, as he was at the time of his disappearance. Further, given Eric's significant health issues, he would be expected to have required some medical care, and to have had contact with Medicare or the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, at the very least to manage his existing health issues, particularly as he aged.

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<sup>66</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 7.

<sup>67</sup> Ts p 12 – 13.

96. As to how or when Eric died, I am unable to reach a conclusion to the requisite standard. Eric lived a reclusive and relatively isolated life, and the evidence available to me regarding his movements is unfortunately limited as a result.
97. I note the discovery of unidentified human remains on 28 June 1990 and 29 June 1990, and the investigations undertaken into those remains which is outlined above.
98. Given the above circumstances, I do suspect that the human remains discovered in June 1990 are Eric's remains, and that he died shortly after his disappearance. It is possible that Eric made his way to the North Fremantle dock area, and died by way of accident or natural causes. His comments to associates indicative of self-harm or suicidal thoughts also leave open the possibility that Eric ended his own life. These possibilities, and other myriad possibilities, remain open in this case.
99. However, given genetic testing in relation to these unidentified human remains is at this time inconclusive, I am unable to be satisfied to the requisite standard that the human remains are in fact Eric's remains. Therefore, the possibilities outlined above remain mere speculation.
100. As technology advances in relation to genetic testing, I am hopeful that future genetic testing of the unidentified human remains found in North Fremantle may lead to certainty, one way or the other, as to whether it was Eric's remains that were discovered in June 1990.
101. The Western Australia Police Force have confirmed that they will continue their efforts to identify the unidentified human remains, as advances in technology make possible that which could not be achieved before.<sup>68</sup>
102. On the evidence before me, I am sadly unable to reach a conclusion as to exactly when, where, or how, Eric died. The only finding I am able to reach with any certainty at this stage is that Eric is now deceased.
103. His cause of death must therefore remain unascertained and I make an open finding as to the manner of death.

S. Tyler  
Coroner  
9 December 2025

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<sup>68</sup> Exhibit 1, Tab 3, p 7. Ts p 15.