
JURISDICTION : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
ACT : CORONERS ACT 1996
CORONER : ROBYN MARY HARTLEY, CORONER
HEARD : 3 JULY 2025
DELIVERED : 27 OCTOBER 2025
FILE NO/S : CORC 3324 of 2023
DECEASED : GURRIER-JONES, SIMON

Catchwords:

Nil

Legislation:

Nil

Counsel Appearing:

Senior Constable C Robertson appeared to assist the coroner

Coroners Act 1996
(Section 26(1))

RECORD OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEATH

*I, Robyn Mary Hartley, Coroner, having investigated the disappearance of **Simon GURRIER-JONES** with an inquest held at Perth Corponers Court, Central Law Courts, Court 85, 501 Hay Street, PERTH, on 3 July 2025, find that the death of **Simon GURRIER-JONES** has been established beyond all reasonable doubt and that the identity of the deceased person was **Simon GURRIER-JONES** and that death occurred on or about 20 June 2003 in the south eastern part of Western Australia or the adjoining ocean, as a result of an unknown cause in the following circumstances:*

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INTRODUCTION

1. Simon Gurrier-Jones (Simon) was 25 years old when he disappeared in 2003.
2. Simon was last seen in person by someone known to him at his home address in Riverton in the early afternoon on 19 June 2003. When Simon failed to attend a planned social event the next day, his family and friends became concerned for his well-being. A Missing Person report was made and, despite an extensive search by his loved ones and the Western Australia Police Force (WAPF), Simon and the car he left home in have never been located.
3. Based on information gathered by the WAPF, Acting State Coroner Linton determined pursuant to section 23 of the *Coroners Act 1996* (WA) that there was reasonable cause to suspect that Simon had died and that his death was a reportable death. A direction was made that an inquest be held to investigate the circumstances of Simon's suspected death.¹
4. I held an inquest into Simon's suspected death at the Perth Coroner's Court on 3 July 2025. The inquest involved the tendering of documentary evidence compiled during the WAPF investigation into Simon disappearance, supplemented by oral evidence delivered by Detective Sergeant Jeremy Spivey from the WAPF Missing Persons Unit.
5. Simon's mother, Anne, attended the inquest and provided a valuable contribution to the process.

BACKGROUND

6. Simon was born in Derby on 19 October 1977 and had three brothers, David, Andrew and Daniel.

¹ Letter dated 30 August 2023 from Acting State Coroner to Commissioner of Police.

7. Simon went to Melville Primary School and then on to Thornlie Christian College. He struggled with academic work due to having dyslexia. Simon left school before finishing year 12 and worked as a plasterer.
8. It is evident that Simon enjoyed a loving relationship with his mother. He was also very close with his brothers. Sadly, his brother David passed away in 2017.
9. Family members describe Simon as quick witted but reserved. He had a small circle of close friends who meant a lot to him. Simon had a talent with computers and liked playing computer games. He also enjoyed swimming in the ocean and playing his guitar.
10. At the time of his disappearance Simon was living with a couple he knew through his sister-in-law and the church.

SIMON'S DISAPPEARANCE

11. On 19 June 2003 Simon behaved inappropriately towards his female housemate. The details do not need to be set out in this finding. Suffice to say, Simon likely felt ashamed as a result of the interaction.
12. His housemate left for work shortly after the interaction and walked past Simon sitting on the couch on her way out. Simon asked his housemate where she was going, and she told him she was going to work.²
13. Simon's female housemate told her boyfriend, who also lived at the Riverton address, what had happened. When the couple got home later that day neither Simon nor his car, a 1991 white Ford Falcon station wagon registration 8OL948, were there. The housemates assumed he had gone to stay with his parents overnight to avoid an awkward conversation about the earlier interaction.
14. Simon had arranged to meet a group of friends, including his housemates and his brother Daniel, at the movies on 20 June 2003 but never arrived at the cinema.

² Exhibit 1, Tab 6 Email exchange between Detective Senior Constable Ayton and female housemate January 2025.

15. After the movie the group went to the Riverton house that Simon shared with his housemates.
16. A member of the group went to check the football scores on Simon's computer. He returned to the group with a startled look on his face and asked Daniel to go with him to look at the computer.
17. When Daniel got to Simon's computer he saw a note on the screen which read
"Sory family and friends but i chose to end my life
there is so much pain in me
and in this world for me cope with
i have tryed for years to live
but it just isn t working
and i am tied of trying
,simon".³
18. Simon's family made a Missing Person report at Palmyra Police Station at 9.00 pm on Friday 20 June 2003. In the report his family described Simon as being in an "emotionally upset or depressed state".⁴

THE SEARCH FOR SIMON

19. At 8.40 am on Monday 23 June 2003 the WAPF Missing Persons Unit (MPU) created Operation "MPU 2003 GURRIER-JON" and spoke to Simon's mother.
20. A fax was sent to Western Australian border checkpoints with a LOTBKF (Look Out To Be Kept For) alert for Simon.
21. Police contacted Simon's bank and by 1.00 pm that day they were alerted to transactions dated 19 June 2003 at fuel stations in Langford and Southern Cross and transactions dated 20 June 2003 at fuel stations in Norseman and Cocklebidy.⁵

³ Exhibit 1, Tab 18 email from Simon's father David GURRIER-JONES to WAPF dated 23 June 2003 setting out the note found on Simon's computer.

⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 WA Police Missing Person Report for Simon GURRIER-JONES dated 20 June 2003.

⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 20 Statement for Challenge Bank Classic Account of Mr S Gurrier-Jones for period 28 May to 27 June 2003.

22. The final fuel purchase in Cocklebiddy was recorded at the BP Service Station on the Eyre Highway at 8.02 am on 20 June 2003. The distance from Simon's home address in Riverton to the BP Service Station in Cocklebiddy is approximately 1050kms.
23. CCTV footage from the Norseman service station dated 20 June 2003 was reviewed by police and the officers were satisfied that the person captured in the footage was very likely Simon.
24. Shortly after receiving the information about Simon's fuel purchases, the MPU contacted Eucla police requesting their assistance in the search for Simon.
25. Eucla police put out a broadcast about Simon to all roadhouses along the Eyre Highway and the South Australian Police Station near the border with Western Australia.
26. The Quarantine checkpoint in Ceduna where vehicles cross from Western Australia into South Australia was alerted to Simon's disappearance and details of his vehicle.
27. On 24 June 2003 Eucla police conducted patrols east and west of the Eucla townsite with particular attention given to truck bays and tracks leading off either side of Eyre Highway.
28. Also on 24 June 2003, Norseman police searched for Simon from Norseman to Cocklebiddy and back.
29. While these police searches took place, locals and even those travelling through the area assisted in the efforts to locate Simon. The Manager of the Cocklebiddy Roadhouse traversed the tracks and caves in the area surrounding the roadhouse and a cycling group travelling along the Eyre Highway spread the word about the search for Simon.
30. On 25 June 2003 photographs of Simon were faxed to roadhouses and a patrol was conducted in the Wilson Bluff area on the border between Western and South Australia.

31. The next day Eucla police conducted extensive patrols in the area from Eucla to the Cocklebiddy Roadhouse, again checking truck bays and any tracks leading off Eyre Highway. Police also called into a number of the pastoral stations adjacent to the Eyre Highway and requested that pastoralists keep an eye out for Simon and his vehicle.
32. On 27 June 2003 police officers from Eucla travelled 120km into South Australia searching for Simon. At the same time, South Australian police officers from Yalata (located 290 kilometres east of Eucla) conducted patrols from their station in a westerly direction to the eastern edge of the search area covered by Eucla police.
33. Police chartered a fixed wing aircraft which conducted an air search on 27 June 2003 in the area south of the Eyre Highway, covering ground from the roadside to the coast between Cocklebiddy and South Australia.
34. Simon's father also chartered planes to do further aerial searches for Simon and his vehicle. His family continued to search tirelessly for Simon long after his disappearance.
35. Throughout the search for Simon, and in the years and decades following his disappearance, WAPF and his family have been assisted by the media who published newspaper articles, did radio broadcasts, ran TV news stories and featured Simon in three episodes of Without A Trace.⁶
36. The online Australian Missing Persons Register has a lengthy post about Simon including six photographs of him, two photographs of the make and model of car he was driving when he left home on 19 June 2003 and heartfelt words from his now late father, his mother and one of his brothers, Andy.⁷

INFORMATION FROM SIMON'S COMPUTER

37. Simon's brother Daniel explained to police that the way Simon dragged the suicide note into the Start Up menu meant that it popped up the next time someone accessed his computer. Given how technologically savvy

⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 22 newspaper articles regarding Simon's disappearance; Tab 23 list of WA cases shown on Without a Trace 2004 – 2006; Tab 27 DVD of TV interview with Anne GURRIER-JONES.

⁷ Exhibit 2 print out of Australian Missing Persons Register entry for Simon GURRIER-JONES.

he was, it seems highly likely that Simon did this intentionally to ensure the note was found.

38. Daniel searched Simon's computer and found the internet browsing history from the time shortly after Simon's female housemate left for work in the early afternoon on 19 June 2003. It included "ways to kill yourself", "3 ways to kill yourself", "good suaside notes" and "dirctions great Australian byte map". Daniel confirmed that the spelling mistakes in the search history accord with the way Simon wrote as he was known to struggle with spelling.⁸
39. Further investigation of Simon's computer by WAPF revealed that he sent a letter to ING on 19 June 2003 cancelling his income protection insurance with immediate effect.⁹

INSIGHTS FROM SIMON'S FAMILY

40. Given how close Simon was with his family, particularly his brothers, I am greatly assisted by their insights into Simon's mindset at the time of his disappearance and their thoughts on the reason he headed in the direction that he did after leaving home.
41. Daniel advised that the interaction with his female housemate on the day he disappeared would have left Simon feeling highly embarrassed. He thinks Simon would have worried he had lost everything in terms of friends and family.
42. Daniel also explained that it made sense to him that Simon would head to the Nullarbor to jump or drive off the cliffs there. The brothers used to go to those cliffs as children with their father when he worked as a truck driver and took them with him on interstate jobs.¹⁰
43. Simon's mother participated in the inquest and was candid in her acknowledgement that deep down she knows Simon is no longer alive.

⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 5 Statement of Daniel GURRIER-JONES dated 13 January 2025.

⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 19 fax from WAPF Computer Crime to MPU dated 23 June 2003 providing letter from Simon dated 19 June 2003 cancelling ING Income Protection policy.

¹⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 5 Statement of Daniel GURRIER-JONES dated 13 January 2025; Exhibit 2 Exhibit 2 print out of Australian Missing Persons Register entry for Simon GURRIER-JONES.

Understandably, in the absence of any physical evidence, she held out hope for some time that Simon had a change of heart after driving more than 1000 kilometres from home. However, as time has passed and there has been no trace of Simon living somewhere else, his mother has had to accept the heartbreaking inevitability that he is deceased.¹¹

‘PROOF OF LIFE’ CHECKS

44. As part of the police investigation, enquiries were made with a number of government agencies and other institutions across Australia to see whether there was any record which would suggest that Simon is still alive.
45. Ongoing searches of the following databases have revealed no new records for Simon after 19 June 2003:

WAPF
Electoral Roll
Telecommunication companies
Hospitals in Western Australia
Centrelink
Medicare
Immigration
Births, Deaths and Marriages for all states and territories¹²

46. The last time Simon is known to have spent any money was when he purchased fuel at the service station in Cocklebidy at 8.02 am on 20 June 2003. Repeated checks of Simon’s banking records have not revealed any further access by him.
47. Simon’s 1991 white Ford Falcon registration 8OL948 has never been located. Checks of the WAPF database, National Criminal Intelligence System and Department of Transport records have returned no results from the time since his disappearance.¹³

¹¹ T 22 – 23.

¹² Exhibit 1, Tab 4 Report of Detective Senior Constable Paul AYTON dated 28 March 2025; Exhibit 1, Tab 26 Long Term Missing Person checklist; T 12.

¹³ Exhibit 1, Tab 4 Report of Detective Senior Constable Paul AYTON dated 28 March 2025; Exhibit 1, Tab 26 Long Term Missing Person checklist; T 12 refers to TRELIS system check for vehicle 8OL948.

48. Detective Sergeant Spivey explained during his evidence that it was somewhat unusual, but certainly not unheard of, for extensive searching to fail to locate a missing person's vehicle.¹⁴

WAPF ANALYSIS

49. Having thoroughly investigated Simon's disappearance and conducted extensive searches in a bid to locate him and his vehicle, police have ruled out the involvement of any criminality or suspicious circumstances contributing to him going missing.
50. Given wide ranging, ongoing proof of life enquiries have revealed no trace of Simon and there have been no credible sightings of him since 20 June 2003 the possibility of him having started a new life for himself away from his family and friends can be ruled out.
51. WAPF spoke to Simon's family as they wound up their investigation for the State Coroner and the family agreed that he is deceased.
52. The WAPF report concludes with the opinion that Simon "...is deceased, having died on or soon after 20 June 2003, at an unknown location".¹⁵

CONCLUSION

53. Having considered the evidence on the coronial brief, listened carefully to the evidence of Detective Sergeant Spivey and taken into account the input from Simon's family, including the view his mother shared at the inquest, I am satisfied that Simon's death has been established beyond all reasonable doubt.
54. Given the interaction with his female housemate not long before he was last seen, the suicide note located on his computer, the action he took to cancel his income protection insurance and the search history on his computer from 19 June 2003, I suspect Simon died by suicide.

¹⁴ T 10.

¹⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 4 Report of Detective Senior Constable Paul AYTON dated 28 March 2025.

55. However, given Simon's body has never been located and, therefore, no post mortem examination could be performed, I cannot rule out the possibility he got lost or had an accident and perished in the remote part of south eastern Western Australia that adjoins the border with South Australia.
56. On the evidence before me, I am unable to reach a conclusion as to exactly how Simon died. The only finding I am able to reach at this stage is that Simon is deceased. His cause of death must remain unascertained and I make an open finding as to the manner of death.
57. I wish to convey to Simon's family and friends, on behalf of the Court, sincere condolences for your loss.

R M Hartley

Coroner

27 October 2025