
JURISDICTION : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
ACT : CORONERS ACT 1996
CORONER : SARAH HELEN LINTON, ACTING STATE CORONER
HEARD : 20 AUGUST 2025
DELIVERED : 24 OCTOBER 2025
FILE NO/S : CORC 999 of 2025
DECEASED : MICHEL, GUIDO

Catchwords:

Nil

Legislation:

Nil

Counsel Appearing:

Counsel Assisting : Senior Constable Craig ROBERTSON

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

Nil

Coroners Act 1996
(Section 26(1))

RECORD OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEATH

*I, Sarah Helen Linton, Acting State Coroner, having investigated the disappearance of **Guido MICHEL** with an inquest held at the Perth Coroner's Court, Central Law Courts, Court 85, 501 Hay Street, Perth on 20 August 2025 find that the death of **Guido MICHEL** has been established beyond all reasonable doubt and that the identity of the deceased person was **Guido MICHEL** and that death occurred on an unknown date between **30 January 2022 and 28 February 2022** in an **unknown place in the vicinity of the State Forest Amendment in Flint, Western Australia**, from an unascertained cause in the following circumstances:*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
BACKGROUND	4
EVENTS LEADING TO GUIDO'S DISAPPEARANCE	8
INITIAL POLICE ENQUIRIES.....	11
RECENT POLICE REVIEW	15
IS GUIDO DECEASED?	17
CONCLUSION	18

INTRODUCTION

1. Guido Michel¹ was last confirmed to be alive on Sunday, 30 January 2022 and his last known location was in State Forest in the area of Flint on 5 February 2022. He has not been seen or heard from since that time.
2. Guido worked as an electrician and lived in Fremantle. He was single after the breakdown of the relationship with the mother of his two children, Monica, and he lived alone. Mr Michel's children, Ishan and Eva, lived in Spain and he kept in contact with them by telephone and occasional international visits.²
3. Guido's employer reported him missing to WA Police on Wednesday, 2 February 2022, after he failed to attend work for three days straight. Police established Guido had a history of mental health issues and had been the subject of a previous missing person incident in 2010 when he had retreated to forest in Flint, Western Australia for a number of weeks.
4. After confirming Guido was not at home and his vehicle was missing, police used triangulation methods on Guido's mobile phone signal, which showed his phone was last active at 11.30 am on 5 February 2022 in the forest area near Flint. Given his history, it appeared to police that Guido had again retreated to the Flint forest.
5. Police officers initiated a search of the forest in the location where Guido's phone had last been active, but no sign of Guido or his vehicle was found. The potential search area was very large and it was noted that after the previous incident Guido had informed family members he had hidden from the police helicopters searching for him. Therefore, although he had not been found, police officers considered it was likely Guido was still in the forest area but was either unable/unwilling, to be found by police.
6. Guido has not made contact with any family members, friends or colleagues since the beginning of 2022. A recent review by police officers, including proof of life checks, has found no evidence to indicate that Guido is alive.
7. On the basis of information provided by the WA Police in relation to Mr Michel's disappearance, I determined that pursuant to s 23 of the *Coroners Act 1996* (WA) (the Act), there was reasonable cause to suspect that Guido has died and that his death was a reportable death under the Act. I therefore made a direction that a coroner hold an inquest into the circumstances of his suspected death.

¹ Guido was born Guido Michel De Vries and later changed his name as an adult to simply Guido Michel. I will refer to the deceased as Guido in this finding, following consultation with his family.

² Exhibit 1, Tab 1 - P100 and Tab 3 – Police Report and Tab 6.

8. I held an inquest on 20 August 2025. The documentary evidence tendered at the inquest comprised one volume. One witness, Senior Constable Ian Watkins from the Homicide Squad Missing Persons Team, was called to give evidence to speak to the police investigation into Mr Michel's disappearance. Guido's brother René also attended the inquest hearing to represent the family, noting a number of family members were actively involved in the missing person investigation.

BACKGROUND

9. Guido was born in the Netherlands on 17 October 1967. He spent his early years with his parents and two brothers in the Netherlands. The family moved to New Zealand in 1971 and then later to Western Australia in 1981, where they moved between a few towns before Guido completed his schooling in Bunbury. He became an Australian citizen in 1988.³
10. Guido was described by his father as a healthy, happy boy while growing up and he made friends easily.⁴
11. Guido had a keen interest in motorcycles and he was involved in a serious motorcycle accident in the late 1980's. He suffered a significant injury to his left leg in the crash and, despite surgery, he was left with a shorter left leg, a permanent limp and a scar near his right eye. However, he continued to ride motorcycles.⁵
12. His parents separated in the early 1990's and around that time Guido spent a period of time travelling with his two brothers within Australia and overseas. He then undertook some university studies, but found it difficult to settle upon a career path and did not complete any of the courses he commenced. From 2000 to 2005, Guido worked as a postal delivery driver before he commenced an electrical apprenticeship. After completing his apprenticeship, Guido became a licenced electrician in 2009.⁶
13. Guido found work as an electrician with various employers until his disappearance. Of note, he was employed for a time as a maintenance electrician with a large mining company, but he was dismissed from the position in 2020. Guido commenced an unfair dismissal claim against the company with the Fair Work Commission, which was ultimately unsuccessful and he withdrew the claim. The loss of this job and the

³ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 4 – Statement of RDV.

⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 5 – Statement of ADV.

⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 4 – Statement of RDV.

⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 4 – Statement of RDV.

subsequent unfair dismissal proceedings appear to have had a significant negative impact on Guido's mental health.⁷

14. Guido's father, Arie De Vries, told police that Guido started having problems with his mental health around 1998, but things became significantly worse about ten years later when his relationship with the mother of his two children ended. The couple separated in 2008 and Guido was reportedly devastated that he could not be more involved with his children due to the separation. He had a documented suicide attempt the next year, following which he was diagnosed with adjustment disorder.⁸
15. Family Court proceedings commenced in April 2009 and they continued for approximately two years. In the course of the proceedings, in November 2010, the incident occurred where Guido was reported as a missing person. It was later referred to as a likely self-harm incident during a mental health crisis. Guido reportedly went into the native forest area in Flint and fasted for several weeks. He told his family that he consciously hid from police helicopters searching for him at the time. He was eventually located at his campsite, in a poor physical state. He was very dehydrated and required medical care. Guido reportedly lost 15 kilograms in weight during this short period.⁹
16. During the Family Court proceedings, Guido also broke into his former partner's home and assaulted her. Not surprisingly, his access to his children was limited from this time. He told his psychologist he was contemplating a hunger strike to draw attention to his plight, but was encouraged to think of his children. He was later charged and convicted of the offences of burglary and assault occasioning bodily harm and was sentenced to a suspended term of imprisonment. Guido's former partner was ultimately granted primary custody of their children in 2011, with permission to take them out of the country from 2012. In 2013, Guido's former partner returned permanently to her home country of Spain with the two children, with orders in place that the children travel for yearly holidays to Australia.¹⁰
17. Guido's mental health significantly deteriorated after his children moved overseas. His family and friends recalled he had generally been happy and friendly towards people prior to his relationship issues, but afterwards he experienced low confidence, low self-worth and anger issues. His general practitioner observed that the relocation of his children was the greatest stressor in Guido's life, as after they moved away the "thrust of his life has been to earn money and to travel there for visits."¹¹ He saw a

⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 3 – Background Information.

⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 5 – Statement of ADV.

⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 9 – Running Sheet, Tab 12 - Correspondence with POLAIR and Tab 16 – Letter from Clinical Psychologist to Frichot & Frichot Lawyers dated 3 January 2013.

¹⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 4 – Statement of RDV, Tab 16 – Letter from psychologist to GP 31.5.13 and Tab 19 – Court Documents.

¹¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – Letter from Fremantle Family Doctors to SCGH Mental Health Unit 22.12.20.

clinical psychologist, who considered Guido had an adjustment disorder with depressed mood. He was also noted to have serious impulsivity and developed a pattern of ‘running away’ from circumstances if they became too difficult and becoming estranged from those close to him if he felt they were not sufficiently supportive.¹²

18. Guido’s family had tried hard to support him through the court proceedings, including attending court with him and assisting him financially, but afterwards Guido apparently felt that his family and friends had not done enough to support him. There were also issues in relation to financial matters that caused friction. As a result, Guido cut all ties with his family and demonstrated his intent by changing his name - dropping his surname and substituting his middle name as his surname instead. He also moved house, changed jobs, cancelled his emails and social network platforms, so that his family were unable to contact him.¹³
19. Guido attempted suicide in 2014 by polypharmacy overdose in the context of work and family stressors. He received treatment through a three month intensive program of cognitive behavioural therapy with the Self Harm Clinic at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH).¹⁴
20. In 2019, Guido saw a psychiatrist and was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). His impulsivity, impaired frustration tolerance and risk taking behaviours were considered to be connected to this diagnosis. He was prescribed dexamphetamine medication to manage the condition and he was also encouraged to reduce his caffeine intake. Guido had also been earlier diagnosed with low testosterone in 2018, for which he was prescribed regular testosterone injections to good effect.¹⁵
21. Also in 2019, Guido managed to secure a rental property in Fremantle and he told a colleague, who he had known for many years, that he had also signed up to study psychology at university. Unfortunately, he was then asked to leave the course due to his mental health issues.¹⁶
22. Guido appeared to be doing reasonably well at this time at work, and he stayed in the same job until 2020. However, things change when a number of colleagues were offered extended employment contracts and Guido was not offered one. His friends noticed an immediate change in Guido’s behaviour, who appeared withdrawn and

¹² Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 4 – Statement of RDV and Tab 16 – Medical Records.

¹³ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 4 – Statement of RDV.

¹⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – Medical Records.

¹⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 16 – Medical Records.

¹⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 16 – Medical Records.

depressed. Soon after, Guido stopped attending work and his friends were advised Guido had attempted suicide by hanging.¹⁷

23. Guido was admitted to Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH) for psychiatric treatment following his suicide attempt on 4 December 2020. He had researched suicide methods on the internet and decided to take a lethal dose of his dexamphetamine medication. He took the tablets with alcohol on the night of 3 December 2020, and the following morning attempted to hang himself in a closet before he decided to seek help and presented to the FSH ED. He spoke of his complicated family history and financial issues connected with maintaining permanent employment in the context for his self-harm attempt. He was considered to be at chronic risk of suicide due to poor distress tolerance and impulsivity, but his love for his children was noted to be a protective factor. A long term admission was not considered desirable as it would severely harm his financial situation and put his accommodation at risk. It was also noted that his chronic risks were in the context of personality structure combined with family and financial stressors, that were difficult to modify within a psychiatric ward. Therefore, the decision was made that he could be discharged.¹⁸
24. One of Guido's colleagues, Tony O'Brien, who was also a close friend, received a call from Guido advising he was being discharged from hospital after receiving psychiatric treatment for his attempted suicide. Mr O'Brien collected Guido from hospital and took him back to his house. Guido stayed with Mr O'Brien and his wife for several days and during this time Guido hinted that his reason for harming himself related to the fact he did not receive an extended contract.¹⁹
25. Guido left this employer after this incident and Mr O'Brien helped him to secure work as an electrician with another employer, Spotless Linen. Mr O'Brien considered Guido to have a good work ethic and he was happy to recommend him for the new job.²⁰
26. Guido was seen at FSH ED again on 5 March 2021 for a psychiatric assessment. He had been advised to go to the ED after seeking help from counselling services at his university after disclosing some information suggesting an increased risk to himself during his professional development group work. The mental health assessment notes record that Guido stated he had been doing alright since his suicide attempt and denied feeling suicidal. He accepted he still had some stressors in his life but indicated he was future focussed, planning to finish his degree and also expressing hope his children might return to Australia to attend university in the future. His unfair dismissal claim was still ongoing at that time and he expressed concern that if

¹⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information.

¹⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – FSH Discharge Summary 7.12.20.

¹⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information.

²⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information.

he lost he might incur legal costs that would lead him to bankruptcy. It was noted at the end of the assessment that Guido's risk to himself might increase if his court case didn't go well, but he indicated he would seek help again if he was feeling unsafe.²¹

27. Mr O'Brien last saw Guido in person around the time Guido started with Spotless, which was about six months prior to Guido's disappearance. However, they did speak on the telephone just a few days before Guido went missing. Mr O'Brien recalled Guido mentioned he had drunk a couple of beers, which was very unusual as Guido rarely drank alcohol. Guido did not, however, give any indication he was thinking of harming himself.²²

EVENTS LEADING TO GUIDO'S DISAPPEARANCE

28. The evidence before me suggests Guido suffered a number of significant personal stressors in 2021. He made the decision to have his case dismissed by the Fair Work Commission on 16 June 2021, apparently accepting that he was unlikely to succeed in his claim due to a jurisdictional issue, given he was a contractor and was never formally an employee of the company. He was also concerned he might be required to pay significant legal costs if he preserved and lost his claim. The claim had started with Guido lodging a bullying claim and ultimately led to him losing his job, so it is clear it was a difficult decision for him to make to discontinue.²³
29. In August 2021, he then withdrew from the Notre Dame University counselling course following some allegations about his possibly making derogatory remarks to others within his group. Guido had indicated to his tutor he felt unsupported and he therefore chose to withdraw before there was a financial penalty for later withdrawal. Guido's journals from this time also show he was struggling with the sense that no one liked him and he was increasingly feeling dissatisfied with the direction his course was taking, likely complicated by COVID-19 restrictions meaning that a lot of the sessions were done by tele-link.²⁴
30. In October 2021, there is evidence Guido was struggling to refinance a large credit card debt with his bank and had become worried that he would have to declare bankruptcy. This would likely have prevented him from travelling overseas to see his children.²⁵

²¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – FSH Mental Health Assessment 5.3.21.

²² Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information.

²³ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 22 – Email correspondence re unfair dismissal claim and Tab 23 – *Guido Michel v BHP Group Ltd* [2021] FWC 3282.

²⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 18 – Emails with Notre Dame University tutor.

²⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 17 – email to anz.com 6.10.2021.

31. Guido had still been seeing his clinical psychologist regularly up to that time. He attended his last session in mid-December 2021, at which time he was still struggling with the possibility he would have to declare bankruptcy. He indicated he was disenchanted with Australia but the psychologist considered his options for getting out of the country seemed unrealistic. Guido also told his psychologist he felt he currently had no friends due to being disenchanted with people in general and he “also was questioning the nature of his relationship with his children and if they would indeed ever come to Australia.”²⁶
32. Guido’s brother René told police that from the time he ceased contact with the rest of his family, Guido cared only for his two children and they became the central focus of his life. Initially, there had been an arrangement for alternating visits, so the children would fly to Australia one year and then Guido would travel to Spain to see them the next time. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this arrangement became complicated due to travel restrictions. Monica later told police that Guido had seemed angry prior to his disappearance as the children were unable to come to Australia due to the pandemic travel restrictions. Monica had encouraged Guido to come to Spain instead to visit the children, like he had done previously, but he had responded angrily and stopped talking to Ishan and Eva.²⁷
33. Ishan told police he remembered the last time he spoke to his father on the phone he had suggested his father come to Spain to visit that year, due to the restrictions in place in Australia. Guido said he wouldn’t be able to travel as he was going back to university to complete his writing degree, so he persisted with wanting Ishan and Eva to come to him. Ishan reiterated to his father that he didn’t think they would be able to come before the call ended. Afterwards, Guido sent Ishan a long text in which he complained that he didn’t think his children cared enough for him and stated he was tired of having to deal with his children from a distance, especially since it had been so long since they had seen each other. Significantly, Guido also mentioned in the text that he would “disappear into the woods”²⁸ and then the children would not be able to find him, just as Guido had cut off all communication with his family.
34. After sending the text to Ishan, Guido blocked both his children on all media platforms. They were unable to call their father and none of their messages or emails would go through, despite many attempts by them to contact him and let him know that they missed him very much. It appears Guido stopped communicating with his children in early 2022.²⁹

²⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – Letter from psychologist to GP 16.2.22.

²⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 4 – Statement of RVD and Tab 7 – Action Register Report.

²⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.1 – Action Register Report.

²⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.1 – Action Register Report.

35. Colleen Killen worked with Guido at Spotless and they had become good work friends. She was aware his children lived with their mother in Spain, which was hard for him, and that he spent a lot of his spare time with a Men's Mental Health group. Ms Killeen recalled Guido as a gentle guy who was always happy to have a chat and to help others at work. Towards the end of 2021, Ms Killeen had noted Guido was in high spirits. He told her that he had recently enrolled in a 'Men's Mental Health' course at Murdoch University, which he said was due to start in early 2022. He was also excited as his children were due to come and visit him from Spain at around the same time.³⁰
36. Later police inquiries with Murdoch University established Guido had enrolled in a 'Literature, writing and performance' course and a 'Developing research skills and methods' course, which were due to commence on 28 February 2022. Guido never commenced either course.³¹
37. Towards the end of January 2022, Ms Killeen saw a noticeable change in Guido's personality. He told her that his children were no longer coming to visit due to an issue with the COVID-19 jabs. When she suggested that he should go and visit them in Spain instead, he said that he couldn't because his university course was about to start and he didn't want to miss it. I note his credit card debt would also have made that difficult, although there is evidence Guido got an up to date COVID-19 immunisation himself a couple of days before his disappearance.³²
38. Guido also became upset around this time as his position with Spotless had not been made permanent. He had originally been employed on a casual contract, but had been led to believe that he would be made permanent in due course. However, due to a change in management since that time, Guido had come to understand that he was unlikely to be offered permanency.
39. Three or four days before his disappearance, Ms Killeen noticed that Guido stopped interacting as much as he normally would. He stopped chatting and did not seem to be in a good frame of mind.³³
40. Guido visited a chiropractor on 25 January 2022 and he seemed upset in relation to his children. The chiropractor was concerned about Guido's mental state at the end of the appointment, but he didn't think Guido appeared suicidal.³⁴

³⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 6 – Statement of CK.

³¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information.

³² Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 6 – Statement of CK.

³³ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 6 – Statement of CK.

³⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

41. Ms Killeen last saw Guido at 11.30 pm on Friday, 28 January 2022, when she finished her afternoon shift. At no point did Guido mention that he would be going away or resigning.³⁵
42. Guido did not attend work again and he did not answer calls from his colleagues. After Guido had failed to attend work for three days, his colleagues were sufficiently concerned for his welfare to contact police and report that they held welfare concerns for Guido.³⁶

INITIAL POLICE ENQUIRIES

43. The call from Guido's supervisor was received by WA Police at 2.19 pm on 2 February 2022. The information provided was to the effect that Guido had not turned up for the past three days and he was not answering his phone. They had attempted to contact the next of kin Guido had provided, Tony O'Brien, to ask him to go to Guido's home to check on him, but had been unsuccessful.³⁷
44. Initial searches of the police databases found that Guido had a significant history of mental health issues since at least 2009. It was noted he had at least two documented suicide attempts by hanging and overdose and had been admitted to a Mental Health Unit for treatment on a number of occasions, most recently for four days in December 2021. He had been followed up in the community by the community mental health service, but the last contact had been in January 2022.³⁸
45. A police car was sent to Guido's home in South Street, Fremantle. The officers arrived at his home approximately one hour after the report was received. It was noted the home was locked up and the blinds were all drawn. A motorbike registered to Guido was parked in his parking bay but information was obtained that confirmed Guido also owned a car that was missing from the carpark. Neighbours told the police officers they could not confirm when they had last seen Guido at his home, but one of his neighbours believed she had not seen him in at least a week, which she considered unusual.³⁹
46. WA Police sent a text message to Guido, asking him to contact them, but no response was received. Calls to his phone went through to voicemail.⁴⁰
47. Police continued their enquiries over the following hours. Guido's good friend Tony O'Brien advised he had not been in recent contact with Guido and was concerned for his welfare. Tony had contacted all of Guido's friends that he knew

³⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information and Tab 6 – Statement of CK.

³⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

³⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report and Tab 9 – Homicide Squad Incident Report.

³⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

³⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

⁴⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

and none of them had heard from him. Tony provided information to the police about Guido's previous self-harm attempts and the incident when he went bush. Police also eventually made contact with Guido's brother and mother, who had not had any contact with him for a long time, but were understandably concerned to hear that Guido was missing.⁴¹

48. A request for triangulation of Guido's phone was made on the morning of 4 February 2022, when all attempts to locate Guido had been unsuccessful and his car had not returned to the unit, suggesting he was out somewhere in his vehicle. The request was approved as the State Command Inspector was satisfied there was a serious imminent threat to Guido's life or health. The triangulation was done and found that Guido's mobile phone was no longer active. The last ping at that time was at 4.06 pm on 30 January 2022, near the intersection of Russell Rd and Kwinana Freeway, Success. Tony O'Brien was contacted and he advised police he did not know anyone that Guido would have visited in that area.⁴²
49. After reviewing Guido's banking records, police were able to track Guido's movements on 30 January 2022. A receipt was obtained for a transaction made at Woolworths South Fremantle at 2.42 pm on 30 January 2022, which was near Guido's home address. No CCTV existed of the transaction as the cameras were not operating but police were able to establish Guido purchased a number of items all seemingly related to camping (firelighters, torches, etc) and seven bottles of Biotene Mouthwash, which were thought to be possibly intended to alleviate dry mouth if he intended to fast again. Shortly after, CCTV footage captured Guido at Coles Express in Hampton Road, Fremantle, where he purchased diesel fuel for his vehicle at 2.51 pm.⁴³
50. Police enquiries established that after purchasing fuel, Guido drove to his storage unit at KeepSafe Storage in O'Connor at 3.39 pm. Police obtained CCTV footage from the premises, which showed Guido took out various personal items from his storage unit, that appeared to be camping related, such as a tent, tarpaulin and mattress.⁴⁴ Police obtained information that Guido was an experienced camper with good bush skills.⁴⁵
51. Police officers gained access to Guido's unit through the property manager on the afternoon of 4 February 2022. The unit was neat and tidy inside and it was noted some valuable electronics (a desktop computer and laptop) were inside. The computers and a notebook containing passwords were seized from Guido's home in South Street, Fremantle. A forensic download of the computers showed Guido's last

⁴¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

⁴² Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

⁴³ T 9; Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 24 – Banking records.

⁴⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report.

⁴⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

apparent activity was in the early hours of 30 January 2022. In the days leading up to that time, he had searched “bankruptcy Australia consequences,” which was consistent with emails he had previously sent to ANZ bank concerning his credit card debt that suggested Guido was afraid that bankruptcy would restrict his ability to fly to Spain to see his children. In one email to ANZ bank sent by Guido on 6 October 2021, he had threatened that he would have to declare bankruptcy if he could not renegotiate his debt, and he would then take his own life.⁴⁶

52. Guido’s father and brother René also later went through his personal belongings and René found a letter that is relevant to these proceedings. In the letter (that is undated), Guido appeared to suggest that he was intending to engage in a similar experience to 2010, fasting in the wilderness with the intent to bring him closer to God. Paraphrasing the letter, it seems Guido planned to fast to the point he was ‘close enough to get some answers’ but still conserving enough energy to rehydrate and survive. However, he also wrote that he understood that it ‘might cost his life trying to reach God’. Guido wrote in the letter that if he failed and died, he wanted his children to “know that they are loved, and not to blame themselves.”⁴⁷ Guido left a list of people to contact if he died, including Monica and Tony O’Brien.⁴⁸
53. Further triangulation of Guido’s mobile telephone showed its last activity was on the morning of Saturday, 5 February 2022, in an area known as Christmas Tree Well in State Forest near Flint, approximately 60 kilometres east by road from Armadale. The locations was of note as it was in the vicinity of the same forest where Guido went missing in 2010.⁴⁹
54. A formal LANDSAR search was not performed as there was no relevant last known position for Guido. However police officers from York Police Station and Armadale Police Station did conduct foot searches in the area. The York police officers advised that the area is a known ‘dead spot’ for communications and the bush vegetation is dense and very difficult to traverse. They did a limited foot search on 6 February 2022, but it had to be curtailed due to poor weather. Police Air Wing were unable to assist that night due to the weather conditions, but the following day a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) plane was going up and they pilots and crew were requested to keep an eye out for any sign of Guido or his car. DBCA reported back that a car had been spotted, but later enquiries that day by Police Airwing eliminated this car as being related to Guido.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

⁴⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 20 – Letter written by Guido Michel, undated.

⁴⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 20 – Letter written by Guido Michel, undated.

⁴⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report and Tab 8 – POC Incident Report.

⁵⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 – Police Investigation Report.

55. Further ground and aerial searching was conducted on 8 February 2022 and on intermittent days afterwards, but nothing related to Guido was found.⁵¹ Guido's mother provided a map to police on 18 February 2022 indicating the area where he camped when he went missing in 2010, and it was noted the area was the same as the last known location of his phone, indicating it was very likely he had gone camping in the same area again. Local police were sent to the location to search a gravel track for any sign of Guido and/or his vehicle, but nothing was found.⁵²
56. Following a police media release on 18 February 2022, a number of calls were made by members of the public to Crimestoppers indicating possible sightings of Guido's white Ford Territory near Brookton Highway. These were investigated but no confirmed sighting of Guido was able to be established.⁵³
57. Police officers continued to search the area and one of them noticed a number of apiaries in the relevant area. As a result, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development facilitated a request to local beekeepers to ask them to keep an eye out for Guido or his vehicle.⁵⁴
58. Police contacted Guido's son in Spain by email and his mother Monica contacted police in response. She was informed of the circumstances of Guido's disappearance, so that she could inform their children. Monica later told police she initially thought he had just gone voluntarily into bushland for a period, like he had in the past, and he would return in due course. Monica advise that he had been angry prior to his disappearance as the children were unable to come to Australia due to the pandemic travel restrictions. Monica had encouraged Guido to come to Spain instead to visit the children, like he had done previously, but he had responded angrily and stopped communicating with Ishan and Eva after January 2022.⁵⁵
59. Guido had not attended his final booked appointment with his psychologist on 3 February 2022 and did not respond to the psychologist's telephone call or message. The psychologist had written to Guido's GP on 16 February 2022, apparently unaware that Guido had gone missing around the date of his missed appointment. The psychologist observed that Guido's feelings he had no friends and issues with seeing his children had led to evident frustration and anger on Guido's part, and although he did not admit any current suicidal ideation, the psychologist thought there remained a risk of Guido acting impulsively in the future.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁵² Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁵³ Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet and Tab 25 – Media Release.

⁵⁴ T 12; Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁵⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 7 – Action Register Report and Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁵⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – Letter from psychologist to GP 16.2.22.

RECENT POLICE REVIEW

60. On 15 July 2022, after Guido had been missing for 90 days, his case file was transferred to the Homicide Squad Missing Persons Team. In May 2024, after Guido had not returned home or made any contact with family friends for over two years, the case was allocated to Senior Constable Isaac Watkins to review and consider what further steps could be taken to locate Guido and, if he could not be found, whether the matter should be referred to the State Coroner for consideration for inquest.⁵⁷
61. Senior Constable Watkins made some enquiries to see whether it was possible to conduct further aerial searching of the Flint State forest area, possibly including the use of a geothermal camera to try to detect Guido's vehicle, but he was told the chances of success were considered low so it was not attempted.⁵⁸
62. In December 2024, Guido's brother René provided a statement to police in which he offered several possibilities for what he thought may have happened to Guido, in order of the most likely to least likely:⁵⁹
- i. He has gone deep into the bush/forest to a remote location and has taken his life.
 - ii. He has travelled to a remote desert like area and walked into the desert whilst fasting himself looking for answers from God.
 - iii. He is working somewhere remote on a farm or similar possibly under a false name for cash and board.
 - iv. He has joined a commune somewhere, also likely under a false name.
 - v. He went camping and had a fatal mishap.
63. Senior Constable Watkins also made contact with Guido's former partner, Monica, who was able to speak to the thoughts of their children. Monica indicated that Ishan and Eva still hold out hope that their father might appear some day. Ishan also contacted Senior Constable Watkins directly and confirmed his last contact with his father was prior to his father's disappearance.⁶⁰
64. In response to a request from Senior Constable Watkins, Guido's psychologist also provided a very helpful report indicating that in the course of their contact from June 2012 to December 2021, Guido had stated "my children are my life" and "if they go I go."⁶¹ He had always held out hope that his children would return to Australia when they reached adulthood, but in their last session together Guido had acknowledged

⁵⁷ T 4 - 5; Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁵⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁵⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 4 – Statement of RDV

⁶⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 7 – Action Register Report and Tab 9 – Running Sheet.

⁶¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 – Letter from psychologist to SC Watkins 5.11.24, p. 1.

that he was now accepting this would not occur and he would need to move to Europe to be closer to his children. He had formulated a plan to go back to Holland and live there to regain his citizenship, noting he could not work in Spain due to his criminal record. However, he seemed to understand that this was going to take significant effort on his part with an uncertain result. Although at the time he told the psychologist he had no suicidal intent or plan, the psychologist told SC Watkins that given the length of time that Guido had now been missing, he sadly believed Guido may well have suicided.⁶²

65. In support of that statement, the psychologist noted Guido had a number of risk factors for suicide in late 2021/early 2022, namely:⁶³
- i. Having no friends or family support.\
 - ii. Being disenchanted with Australia and the possibility of its legal system helping him.
 - iii. Being around \$30,000 in debt and facing bankruptcy.
 - iv. Having a previous history of impulsive behaviour including going bush and attempting to starve himself for a four week period.
 - v. Having had at least two previous suicide attempts.
 - vi. Most importantly losing hope that he would ever be able to have a relationship with his children, with a particular focus on the unlikelihood his children would be coming back to Australia.
66. A review of the Bureau of Meteorology data for the time period around 30 January 2022 to early February 2022 showed there was a heatwave, with daily temperatures in the high 30's and reaching a maximum temperature of 40.9 degrees Celsius on 5 February 2022, the date of the last mobile phone activity. This was notable given it is believed Guido went into the forest without food or water as he intended to fast.⁶⁴
67. The last record of Guido's car on WA Police Automatic Number Plate Recognition was on Stirling Highway, Peppermint Grove, on 28 January 2022. Police believe this was likely around the time Guido attended the COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic that was operating at Claremont Showgrounds at the relevant time. Senior Constable Watkins made some enquiries, which established that Guido could very easily have driven to the Flint area without being recorded by any ANPR cameras at that time.⁶⁵
68. Proof of Life checks indicated Guido had not been in any known contact with any government agency and had not used his bank accounts. It was confirmed he had not left the country using his passport at any time since the date of his disappearance and

⁶² Exhibit 1, Tab 16 - Letter from psychologist to SC Watkins 5.11.24, p. 2.

⁶³ Exhibit 1, Tab 16 - Letter from psychologist to SC Watkins 5.11.24, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet and Tab 15 – BOM records.

⁶⁵ T 7; Exhibit 1, Tab 9 – Running Sheet and Tab 10 – ANPR records.

there was no record of any interaction with police in any state or territory. Births, deaths and marriages records across the country also showed no recent record of Guido; The last record was in Western Australia when he changed his name on 3 May 2016. He also became an Australia citizen under his new name on 8 June 2016.⁶⁶

IS GUIDO DECEASED?

69. A number of Guido's friends told police that Guido had been quite open with them about his family issues and they had formed the impression he loved his children very much and their relocation to Spain had been very difficult for him. They were aware he spent all of his money on things related to his children, and had incurred a significant credit card debt as a result. He had discussed a desire to study psychology and find work as a counsellor, but it appears that these plans had not been progressing well. Guido's good friend, Mr O'Brien, told police that Guido knew he could ring Mr O'Brien if he needed a roof over his head, but it seems that in this last period of his life he had chosen not to confide in Mr O'Brien about his constrained financial circumstances and their contact had been mainly limited to phone conversations.⁶⁷
70. Not long before his disappearance, Guido had told his psychologist that he felt he had no good friends. Guido had consciously ceased all contact with his parents and brothers when he changed his name and blocked them from all means of contacting him, many years before his disappearance. His only real connection was with his children, so I consider it is significant that not long before he disappeared Guido ceased all communication with his children. Ishan told police he initially thought it was a temporary thing, as his father had disappeared temporarily before, but eventually after about a year had elapsed he realised this time was different.⁶⁸
71. I am satisfied from the evidence before me that Guido made a deliberate decision to leave most of his possessions behind and go on his own into the bush near Flint, with the intention to fast without food or water for a lengthy period. He took various camping equipment for this purpose and drove there in his vehicle. He appears to have driven far enough in to the forest to successfully conceal his presence from searchers, which I believe was his plan. Based upon the note that Guido left behind (which is undated but is consistent with having been written not long before he disappeared) I am satisfied he intended to return home eventually, but he also accepted that he was consciously placing his life at risk and there was a significant likelihood he would die while out in the forest.

⁶⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 26 – Proof of Life checks.

⁶⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 – Background Information.

⁶⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.1 – Action Register Report.

72. After careful consideration of the available evidence, I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Guido Michel is deceased. I am unable to determine the exact date on which Guido died, but given the extreme temperatures at the time and the fact he appears to have taken no water with him, only mouthwash, he would likely have died within days, but certainly would have died within a month of his disappearance.
73. As I do not know the exact circumstances of how Guido died, I find he died as a result of an unascertained cause.
74. In terms of manner of death, I make an open finding as the evidence before me leaves open the possibility that Guido may have died from a natural cause, an accidental cause or as a result of a deliberate act with the intention of ending his life.

CONCLUSION

75. Guido had been through a lot of challenges in the last years of his life and he had poor coping skills to manage those challenges. He was known to act impulsively, likely associated with his ADHD and other mental health issues, and he would often regret the consequences of his impulsive actions. The mainstay in his life, and his chief protective factor, had always been his children.
76. Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, his children were limited in their ability to travel to Australia to see Guido, and he did not have the financial means to go and visit them. He was also concerned that due to his debts, he might have to declare bankruptcy, which would also limit his ability to travel overseas in the future.
77. At the time of his disappearance, Guido had also ceased some psychological studies that he had initially been excited about completing, and although he had plans to study a new course, he never commenced those studies.
78. From the start of 2022, Guido ceased contact with his GP and psychologist, whom he had previously seen regularly. Further, and of most significance, he voluntarily ceased all contact with his son and daughter. I am satisfied he made an impulsive decision in his deteriorating mental state to go into the forest for a prolonged period of fasting, as he had done before. Sadly, unlike on the previous occasion when he was found in time to save his life, this time Guido was not located despite a concerted effort by police to find him.
79. The WA Police investigation remains open and DNA samples have been retained that can be tested if any unidentified remains are found in the future that may be connected to Guido, noting that it is very likely that someone will come across

Guido's campground in the State forest in the future by chance.⁶⁹ In the meantime, I regret that I cannot provide Guido's children and other family members with any more clarity than that I am satisfied he died in the Flint area around the time he disappeared in late January or early February 2022.

S H LINTON

Acting State Coroner

24 October 2025

⁶⁹ T 12.