

JURISDICTION : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
ACT : CORONERS ACT 1996
CORONER : SARAH HELEN LINTON, ACTING STATE CORONER
HEARD : 3 FEBRUARY 2026
DELIVERED : 13 FEBRUARY 2026
FILE NO/S : CORC 3716 of 2025
DECEASED : WINSLOW, FREDERICK RICHARD

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 Helen Linton, Acting State Coroner, having investigated the disappearance of **Frederick Richard WINSLOW** with an inquest held at Perth Coroners Court, Central Law Courts, Court 85, 501 Hay Street, Perth, on 3 February 2026, find that the death of **Frederick Richard WINSLOW** has been established beyond all reasonable doubt and that the identity of the deceased person was **Frederick Richard WINSLOW** and that death occurred on an unknown date **between 28 November 1974 and 1 December 1974** at **Golden Gate Cutting or elsewhere** as a result of an unknown cause in the following circumstances*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
BACKGROUND	4
DISCOVERY OF THE CRASHED HOLDEN.....	5
POSSIBLE FOUL PLAY	7
VIEWS OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.....	11
RECENT POLICE REVIEW	12
CONCLUSION	13

INTRODUCTION

1. On the evening of 1 December 1974 Kununurra Police were notified of a crashed Holden station wagon with a Northern Territory registration plate located at the Golden Gate Cutting on the Duncan Highway near the Western Australia/Northern Territory border. Police attended the scene and found the vehicle unattended. The damage suggested the occupant(s) would have been injured as a result of the impact. A search of the area and enquiries with local hospitals did not identify any injured person who might be associated with the car.
2. Police investigations revealed the car was registered to Frederick (Fred) Winslow, who usually resided in a boarding house in Darwin. Fred was up to date with his rent and had still had his personal belongings in his room. However, he had also advised people at the boarding house that he had left the boarding house on 28 November 1974 with the intention of driving to Wyndham to visit a friend and then return. He had not been seen since.
3. Information obtained during the investigation established Fred had been in poor health prior to his disappearance. He had been treated for pulmonary tuberculosis, undergone surgery on his right lung and had also recently had treatment for a benign tumour on his big toe. This information suggested to police that Fred may have suffered a health event.¹
4. However, the investigating police also obtained some evidence to suggest Fred may have been the victim of foul play. A young male was interviewed at an early stage of the investigation and provided information to police to the effect that he had been in the car with two other young men when it crashed and Fred had not been in the car at that time. The young man told the investigating officer that he had overheard the other men talking about taking the car from a white man and leaving him in the bush. Some people were interviewed in relation to these allegations, but the police doubted the veracity of the account and no one was ever charged. There was also a possible sighting of Fred in NSW in February 1975, near where Fred had operated an opal mine. When the active investigation ended towards the end of 1975, police were unable to determine the circumstances in which Fred had disappeared. Although it was generally believed he was deceased, the police were also unable to rule out the possibility Fred had deliberately disappeared, although there was no apparent reason he would not want to be found.
5. A recent review of the investigation was conducted by an officer from the WA Police Missing Person Team and some further investigative steps taken before the matter was referred to the State Coroner as a suspected reportable death. On the basis of the information provided by the WA Police in relation to Frederick Winslow's disappearance, I determined that pursuant to s 23 of the *Coroners Act 1996 (WA)*, there was reasonable cause to suspect that Fred had died and his death was a reportable death. I therefore made a direction that a coroner hold an inquest into the circumstances of the suspected death.²

¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 50.

² Section 23 *Coroners Act* Direction of Deputy State Coroner.

6. I held an inquest at the Perth Coroner's Court on 3 February 2026. The inquest consisted of the tendering of documentary evidence compiled during the police investigation conducted into Fred's disappearance, as well as hearing evidence from Detective Sergeant Jeremy Spivey from the Homicide Squad Missing Person Unit.
7. At the conclusion of the inquest, I indicated that given Fred would be 107 years of age if he were still alive today, and noting he had been in poor health prior to his disappearance, I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt Fred is deceased. As to what other findings I am able to reach on the limited evidence available, I have set out my conclusions below.

BACKGROUND

8. Fred was born on 29 April 1918 in London. He had some health issues and apparently immigrated to Australia in the hope the warmer climate would be better for his health. He travelled by boat, arriving at Fremantle Port on 20 October 1967. Fred was divorced and had left his wife in England when he immigrated. He had daughter, Mary, who also remained in England. Fred's closest relative in Australia was his nephew Clifford (Cliff) who lived in Victoria at that time.
9. In late December 1974, Fred was living in a boarding house at 10 Finnis Street, Darwin in the Northern Territory. He was 56 years old. Fred was described as a 'loner' who appeared to be well educated and was always well presented. He was a non-drinker. Fred had served in the British Army before moving to Australia and he received a pension while living in Australia. He also found work as a bookkeeper at a station in Western Australia and he later moved to Lightning Ridge, New South Wales, where he was a part owner in an opal mine.³
10. In April 1974 Fred moved to Port Hedland. He formed a friendship with Gregory Nicol while he was in the area. Mr Nicol was working at the Shell Roadhouse and he helped Fred repair his vehicle by placing a generator and second hand automatic gearbox in the vehicle. Fred appeared to have no money and was unwell at the time, so Mr Nicol invited him to stay with him at the Cooke Point caravan park. Mr Nicol recalled that Fred had a short admission at Port Hedland Hospital during this period for treatment to his lungs. Fred travelled to Darwin in June 1974 in company with Mr Nicol and another associate, Ian Bell. They travelled in convoy, with Mr Nicol driving his own vehicle and Mr Bell towing Fred's vehicle. They checked in together at a caravan park and stayed there for a few days. Mr Nicol and Mr Bell then left to travel on to South Australia, leaving Fred in Darwin. Fred left the caravan park and took up residence at a boarding house in Finnis Street, Darwin.⁴
11. Fred wrote to Mr Nicol shortly after he left Darwin. He thanked Mr Nicol for helping to fix his car and indicated he now felt like he had "a reliable vehicle."⁵

³ Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 31, p. 1.

12. Mr Nicol parted ways with Mr Bell in Adelaide. Mr Bell did not see Fred again. He later told police that he recalled Fred was not well and was taking medication when he was with him. He recalled Fred was a careful driver but he was English, with no mechanical knowledge and no sense of direction, so he may still have been unsafe on a remote regional road.⁶
13. Mr Nicol drove back through Darwin on his journey home to Western Australia. He stopped in Darwin on 2 October 1974 and tried to find Fred, but he was unsuccessful.⁷
14. The Missing Person Report that was prepared at Broome Police Station on 17 March 1975 recorded that Fred had a withered left shoulder, giving him a stooped appearance, and was in a poor state of health. He was noted to be receiving a 50% Repatriation Pension as a war veteran due to a diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis. While in Lightning Ridge he had been treated by a Dr Zito for his condition and it was noted he had previously undergone a right thoracoplasty, which diminished his right lung capacity.⁸ Fred had also been treated at Darwin Hospital approximately seven months before his disappearance for excision of exostoses (benign tumours) on his right big toe. It is documented that shortly before his disappearance, Fred had suffered a right-sided lung collapse on 13 November 1974 on a background of a chest infection.⁹
15. Fred was last confirmed to be alive on 28 November 1974 when he left the boarding house with the stated intention of driving to Wyndham, Western Australia, to visit a friend. The identity of the friend was never established. Wyndham is 928 kilometres from Darwin. Fred was said to usually wear khaki and he was reported to have been wearing a khaki shirt and trousers and brown sandals when last seen. He was driving his light blue and white Holden Station wagon registration number NT 110 418.¹⁰

DISCOVERY OF THE CRASHED HOLDEN

16. The original Missing Person Report indicates Fred's vehicle was reported abandoned at Golden Gate Cutting on Duncan Highway, 24 miles (approximately 38 kms) east of Kununurra and two miles (a little more than 3 kms) west of the Western Australia/Northern Territory border on 1 December 1974. Kununurra Police received a report from a motorist, Campell Copeland, at 9.30 pm that evening. Mr Copeland told police he had come across the crashed car at approximately 8.20 pm. There was no person in the vehicle when he discovered it. He conducted a brief search of the area to see if any injured person had been thrown from, or crawled away from, the vehicle before he drove to the police station to report the crash.¹¹
17. The police investigation established Fred's Holden was not at Golden Gate Cutting at 1.00 pm on 1 December 1974 when a taxi driver passed the area, but the crashed

⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 22 [30].

⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 and Tab 4.

⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 2 and Tab 50.

¹⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 2, Tab 4 and Tab 15.

¹¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 2, Tab 6 and Tab 7.

vehicle was seen there by a passing motorist at 2.00 pm, so the crash must have occurred in the hour in-between. No one who saw the crashed vehicle in the early hours of the afternoon or saw any person in the area who might have been associated with the vehicle, including not seeing any person walking along the highway when they left the scene. One motorist who arrived at the cutting at about 2.00 pm, close in time to when it must have crashed, did pass a vehicle travelling east with three persons in it shortly before coming across the crash scene, so it was possible Fred (or another person who had been driving the car) could have been a passenger in that vehicle, but it could not be traced.¹²

18. The Holden had crashed into the side of the cutting, causing considerable damage to the vehicle. Marks on the ground indicated the vehicle had been driven in an easterly direction and had then veered off Duncan Highway onto the incorrect side of the road then left the roadway. The right side of the vehicle had climbed the embankment and the vehicle had become airborne for a distance of about 35 feet. On hitting the ground, it had sustained heavy damage to the front of the vehicle and come to rest up against the side of the cutting, facing east.
19. The police officers who attended and examined the vehicle noted papers in the vehicle belonged to Fred, who was later established to be the owner of the vehicle. There was no blood on the front seat of the vehicle but based on the level of damage, it was thought any person who had been in the vehicle would likely have suffered serious injury. In particular, the steering wheel had been bent and the front seat had been forced from its mountings and was pushed up against the steering wheel, leading to the conclusion the driver would likely have suffered abdominal injuries. Further, the rear seat had broken away from its mountings and been squashed flat by heavy items in the rear of the station wagon, so it was believed it would not have been possible for any person to have been seated in the rear of the vehicle and escaped serious injury. The vehicle was an automatic and was found jammed in low gear.¹³
20. The attending police officers conducted an initial foot search of the area in an attempt to locate the driver and any passengers, but no one was found nearby. The incident was treated as a traffic crash and the vehicle was towed to Kununurra as it was a traffic hazard and police were also concerned it would be stripped if left unattended.¹⁴
21. Local police officers made inquiries with local hospitals, caravan parks, hotels and garages and Darwin police were sent to Fred's home address but Fred was not located. A more extensive foot search of the area around the crash location was conducted by three police officers assisted by three Aboriginal trackers and an aerial search was conducted by helicopter but nothing of interest was found. The weather conditions during the search were described as "trying conditions,"¹⁵ noting it was hot and humid given the time of year. Extensive media coverage and inquiries with relatives and friends of Fred did not elicit any further relevant information to assist in

¹² Exhibit 1, Tab 3, Tab 4, Tab 22 and Tab 23.

¹³ Exhibit 1, Tab 3, Tab 4, Tab 6, Tab 7 and Tab 15.

¹⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 3, Tab 4, Tab 6 and Tab 7.

¹⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 20 [16].

locating him. Wyndham police made inquiries with all the local stations, but no one knew of Fred other than Moola-Bulla Station, where he had previously worked.¹⁶

22. As well as the paperwork, the car was found to contain camping equipment and some significant personal items belonging to Fred, including his army medals and ribbons and a small quantity of cash in the pocket of a shirt. Unusually, there were also four pairs of spectacles on the front passenger seat. It appears the car keys were also found in the vehicle, still in the ignition. A forensic examination was later conducted of the vehicle without any result.¹⁷

POSSIBLE FOUL PLAY

23. During the initial investigation, three possibilities had been identified, namely that Fred:¹⁸
- Faked the accident and disappeared.
 - Is still in Australia and because of medical reasons failed to report the theft of his vehicle.
 - Was murdered at a different spot from where the vehicle was found, and the vehicle was dumped at the spot indicated on the Duncan Highway, near the West Australia – Northern Territory border.
24. There is a statement from Sgt Corker, who was the Officer in Charge of Kununurra Police Station at the time. Sergeant Corker advised the Acting Superintendent of CIB in Perth on 13 December 1974 that he had initially assumed the crashed vehicle had been involved in an accident and had identified no suspicious circumstances on 1 December 1974 when the vehicle was first reported. However, on 2 December 1974, Sgt Corker's suspicions were aroused when police could not locate Fred in any of the local hospitals. By that time, the vehicle had been towed and the dust made it impossible to conduct a fingerprint examination.¹⁹
25. Sgt Corker indicated in his statement he was now treating the matter as suspicious and theorised a number of possibilities, but believing that it was most likely Fred was murdered and his vehicle taken. Sgt Corker observed that it would be "a matter of luck"²⁰ to find his body if that were the case. Sgt Corker also acknowledged it was possible Fred had disappeared on purpose, for reasons known only to himself (possibly to escape a debt or attempt to leave his wife) but this was a matter of conjecture as at that stage they had not been able to trace his wife and knew very

¹⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 3 and Tab 20.

¹⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 4, Tab 5, Tab 20 and Tab 22.

¹⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 15, pp. 6 - 7.

¹⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.

²⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 7 [6].

little about his other personal circumstances.²¹ His friend, Mr Nicol, later told police he did not believe Fred would have any reason to choose to disappear.²²

26. Sgt Corker noted that the search for Fred had been carried out thoroughly by police and trackers that he trusted to do a good job. He noted that in two previous searches the trackers had performed very well in difficult conditions and a successful outcome. In this case, the trackers could not find a track to follow. The search had continued for five days, ultimately using five trackers and four police officers, with nothing of relevance found. Sgt Corker believed if Fred had gone into the bush from the crashed car his tracks would have been found. The search was eventually called off on 6 December 1974.²³
27. After information was obtained that Fred previously worked at Mulla-Bulla Station, out of Halls Creek, the police made enquiries there but it was confirmed he had not been seen at the station for around three years.²⁴
28. As well as the personal belongings found in Fred's vehicle, Darwin police officers had found Fred's passport in his room and an address book, which provided details of his relative Cliff Winslow and Cliff's wife Natalie. They had been contacted in Victoria and had confirmed they had not had any contact with Fred for the past three months.²⁵
29. Sgt Corker had confirmed that Fred's vehicle had not been reported stolen in either Western Australia nor the Northern Territory and media publicity had not led to any new information. It was noted he had an opal mine at Coober Pedy and he may have been carrying opals. All enquiries had been exhausted without any sightings of Fred or information as to his whereabouts.²⁶
30. A few days later, on 17 December 1974, Detective Chilvers from CIB Wyndham and Sgt Corker interviewed an Aboriginal man named Stan Brumby who had admitted to being in Fred's vehicle at the time of the crash with two other persons. He alleged he had heard the other two men talking about taking the car from a white man and leaving him in the bush. It was unclear from his account whether it was suggested they had murdered the man or simply left him in the bush to perish. Mr Brumby told police that after the crash he hitchhiked a ride back to Kununurra and his companions planned to hitch-hike to the Northern Territory. Mr Brumby could accurately describe the spectacles on the front passenger seat and when he was taken to the caryard where the crashed Holden was stored, he readily identified the vehicle amongst thirty other wrecks. Sgt Corker wrote in a report "no doubt he does know something,"²⁷ but the police required further evidence to either corroborate or discount his evidence. The police officers who had spoken to Mr Brumby were not

²¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.

²² Exhibit 1, Tab 41.

²³ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.

²⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 7.

²⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 7 and Tab 8.

²⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 8.

²⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 20 [27].

convinced Mr Brumby's account was reliable as they felt his version of events "did not add up."²⁸

31. Mr Brumby had nominated another young Aboriginal male and a young white male as being in the car at the same time. He identified the other Aboriginal male, who was a juvenile in custody at Longmore Reception Centre at the time of the report and it was requested that he be interviewed about this matter to try to verify Mr Brumby's account. However, it was known that Mr Brumby was usually in the company of two other Aboriginal men, so they were also interviewed. They did not provide any information to assist the investigation.²⁹
32. A later report prepared by Sgt Corker on 6 January 1975 noted that two men had been interviewed in relation to the possible theft of Fred's vehicle but the interviews had a "negative result."³⁰ No notes of the interviews have been located on the police file so it seems the records no longer exist. In a report Sgt Corker noted that enquiries had been made with other members of the local Aboriginal community in and around Kununurra and the names of the three men interviewed came up on more than one occasion, but no charges were ever laid. A newspaper report from 1981 indicated three suspects had been cleared.³¹ In a report prepared by a Detective on 5 August 1975, it was recorded that Mr Brumby had been intoxicated and police thought he saw the vehicle in Kununurra. They did not believe his story of the crash was true.³²
33. By that time, Sgt Corker had spoken to Fred's relative, Natalie Winslow, twice and had elicited the information that Fred usually travelled with around \$300 in cash on his person, which may have been a motive for robbery.³³
34. On 7 January 1975, a further note was made that Cliff and Natalie Winslow had been interviewed and they had confirmed they had last heard from him in August 1974 when he was still residing at Cooke Point Caravan Park in Port Hedland. He had indicated he intended to eventually return to his mine at Lightning Ridge. They had not heard from him since and could not assist police with his whereabouts. It was also noted Fred had a daughter living in England who it appears had not had recent contact with him. Fred's nominated next of kin with the Repatriation Department was his sister Margaret Turner, who lived in England. She was contacted by police and advised she had not heard from her brother since March 1974 and was unaware of his current whereabouts.³⁴
35. Sgt Corker noted that despite significant publicity, no inquiry or new piece of information had come forward. Sgt Corker expressed his considered opinion that Fred had died, although not necessarily at the scene of the crash, or else he had engineered his disappearance for an unknown reason.³⁵

²⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 10 and Tab 36.

²⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 10 and Tab 22.

³⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 11.

³¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 49.

³² Exhibit 1, Tab 4, Tab 11 and Tab 22.

³³ Exhibit 1, Tab 11.

³⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 12 and Tab 13.

³⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 11.

36. In terms of finances, information was obtained from the Commonwealth Police on 10 January 1975 confirming that Fred had been in receipt of a repatriation pension but his pension payments had been withheld due to Fred's constant changing of addresses and because he had not had a further medical examination as directed. He had last cashed a cheque at the Commonwealth Bank in Darwin on 18 October 1974 and the last correspondence from him was dated 22 November 1974, when he was still residing at the boarding house in Finnis Street, Darwin.³⁶
37. On 31 January 1975, Mr Nicol was interviewed by police again as he had advised he had more information he wished to pass on. He told police that at the time he had been friendly with Fred, they were both also associating with Mr Bell. Mr Nicol told police on this second occasion that Fred and Mr Bell did not get on and Mr Nicol had been forced to intervene on several occasions to prevent trouble between them. Mr Nicol and Mr Bell had left Darwin together and they had parted company in Adelaide on or about 28 June 1974. He had understood Mr Bell intended to continue on to Melbourne and get a Jeep set up for outback travel. Mr Nicol suspected Mr Bell may then have returned to Darwin prior to Fred's departure for Wyndham. A check with local criminal records established that Mr Bell had a prior conviction for false pretences in 1969 relating to cheque fraud and he was noted to be a former member of an interstate Police Force. Mr Nicol mentioned to police that he had loaned a considerable amount of money to Mr Bell, which had not been repaid, although the interviewing police officer did not believe this was the reason for Mr Nicol nominating Mr Bell as a person of interest.³⁷
38. Further enquiries established that Mr Bell had returned to Port Hedland around the time of Fred's disappearance and his last known address was in Adelaide. Police located Mr Bell in South Australia and interviewed him on 11 February 1975. Mr Bell told police that after towing Fred's car to Darwin and spending a few days together at the caravan park, he and Mr Nicol left Darwin and travelled to Adelaide. Interestingly, Mr Bell believed Fred had stayed on in Darwin as he was expecting a large amount of money from the UK. Fred had also talked of trying to obtain work as a cook on a station and said he would attempt to obtain work through stock agents in Darwin, although he understood Fred also had friends or relatives on a station north of Darby (likely Derby), which is in Western Australia. Mr Bell told police he had no more recent information in relation to Fred's whereabouts and said he had not seen Fred since travelling to Adelaide in July 1974. Police had no evidence to suggest Mr Bell had made contact with Fred after leaving Darwin, so this line of enquiry ended.³⁸
39. An officer in Lightning Ridge, where Fred was believed to part-own an opal mine, found a witness who had been told by another person that they had seen Fred on 22 February 1975 at the opening of the new Lightning Ridge Post Office. However, he was not known to any of the post office staff so they could not confirm this report. The officer had made further enquiries in town but had not been able to locate Fred.³⁹

³⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 14, Tab 15 and Tab 22.

³⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 15.

³⁸ Exhibit 1, Tab 17, Tab 18 and Tab 22.

³⁹ Exhibit 1, Tab 19 and Tab 22.

40. On 17 March 1975, Sgt Corker prepared a detailed report setting out all inquiries that had been conducted into Fred's disappearance. Sgt Corker concluded that at about 2.00 pm on 1 December 1974 the Holden Station wagon was involved in a traffic accident at the Golden Gate Cutting, in which the vehicle was badly damaged. The driver did not walk away from the car into the bush at the scene of the accident as Sgt Corker was sure the person would have been found if they had. Sgt Corker concluded the driver of the vehicle did leave the scene by an unknown means, but Sgt Corker concluded it had become increasingly obvious that Fred was not in the vehicle at the time it crashed. Despite significant publicity, Fred had never come forward and had not reported his vehicle stolen.⁴⁰
41. Although it was a matter of conjecture, Sgt Corker had based his later inquiries on the assumption Fred did come to Western Australia and he was then either murdered or he died and his vehicle was taken by whoever found him dead or murdered him. Sgt Corker speculated that person was driving back to the Northern Territory when the vehicle crashed. The driver then made off from the scene by unknown means without leaving a trace.⁴¹
42. In April 1975 Fred's brother, John Winslow, travelled to Australia from England to try to find his brother. Every effort was made by the police and media outlets to assist him in his endeavour, without results.⁴²
43. A report prepared by Detective 1/C Sgt Walker at CIB Perth on 5 August 1975 noted there had been some reported sightings of Fred arising from the media coverage, but the sightings could not be substantiated. It appears nothing new had been learned in the months that had elapsed since Fred's disappearance.⁴³

VIEWS OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

44. Fred's daughter Mary was reported in 1981 to believe that her father might still be alive and living on the opal fields in Lightning Ridge. This was presumably based upon the reported sighting of Fred in Lightning Ridge on 22 February 1975. It was also reported Fred's brother John believed that Fred had been murdered.⁴⁴
45. Fred's nephew's wife, Natalie Winslow, provided a statement to police on 6 June 2025. Mrs Winslow confirmed Fred was her husband Cliff's uncle. Mrs Winslow and Cliff lived in Victoria in the early 1970's and Fred had visited them in early 1975. He stayed with them for about a week, having come from Lightning Ridge where he had been mining with a friend. Fred described the friend as a retired policeman. After the visit, Fred had remained in contact with the couple via letters and they were aware he travelled from Melbourne to Perth and then slowly headed north to Darwin.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Exhibit 1, Tab 20.

⁴¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 20.

⁴² Exhibit 1, Tab 22.

⁴³ Exhibit 1, Tab 22.

⁴⁴ Exhibit 1, Tab 49.

⁴⁵ Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

46. While Fred was stopped in Port Hedland he contacted Mr and Mrs Winslow and asked them to sell his stock saddle that he had left with them. Fred told them he was short of funds, which was why he wanted them to sell the saddle. They sold the saddle and sent Fred the funds, as requested.⁴⁶
47. Mrs Winslow recalled speaking to the police around the time of Fred's disappearance and was aware that there had been no sign of him found at the crash scene. Knowing Fred's health issues, she believed he could not have walked away, noting he appeared weak and coughed a lot when he stayed with them. In Mrs Winslow's opinion, the most likely explanation for Fred's disappearance was that a car came along and collected him after the crash, with the intention of taking him to town to get medical help. Mrs Winslow speculated that he may have died during the journey and, in panic, the person may have left him beside the road.⁴⁷
48. Mrs Winslow and her son attended the inquest and confirmed that they had no further information and Mrs Winslow still considered this to be the most likely explanation for Fred's disappearance.⁴⁸

RECENT POLICE REVIEW

49. Detective Sgt Jeremy Spivey from the Homicide Squad Missing Person Team recently reviewed the original missing person investigation into Fred's disappearance and gave consideration to any further lines of investigation that could be explored. He took a statement from Fred's remaining surviving relative in Australia, Mrs Winslow. Efforts to locate Fred's daughter in England through Interpol were unsuccessful.⁴⁹
50. Detective Sgt Spivey conducted a number of 'proof of life' checks with Australian government agencies, all of which showed no new records relating to Fred since his disappearance in December 1974. A check of the unidentified human remains register showed no match for Fred.⁵⁰
51. Detective Sgt Spivey's analysis of the evidence identified that Fred lived a transient lifestyle, travelling extensively throughout Australia from 1971 to his disappearance in 1974. He had a number of significant health issues for which he received regular treatment, and he also received a part pension. However, after he left Darwin on 28 November 1974, there is no further record of Fred seeking medical treatment nor any further engagement with the repatriation agency that facilitated his pension payments. Since that date there has been no proof of life or other evidence to support the conclusion that Fred is still alive.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

⁴⁷ Exhibit 1, Tab 30.

⁴⁸ T 9.

⁴⁹ T 9.

⁵⁰ T 10 - 11; Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

⁵¹ Exhibit 1, Tab 4.

52. Detective Sgt Spivey expressed the opinion, consistent with the conclusions of other police officers who had investigated Fred's disappearance, that Fred died on or about 1 December 1974. Detective Sgt Spivey considers the evidence supports the conclusion Fred died shortly after the vehicle crash at the Golden Gate cutting, noting that he was likely to have been seriously injured and the weather conditions in the area were hot and humid and the environment is harsh and unforgiving. Although there was consideration given to whether Fred met with foul play, there was no substantiated evidence to support any third party involvement in Fred's death.⁵²
53. It was noted during the inquest that the search police conducted for Fred at the time his car was discovered was very thorough, but conducted in challenging terrain and without the benefit of modern technology, so it was possible he was left the car after the crash, in an injured and disoriented state and died, but was just not able to be located in the search. Other possibilities could not, however, be excluded, particularly given the lapse of time.

CONCLUSION

54. I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that Fred died on or about 1 December 1974 following a motor vehicle crash. His death was likely due to injuries sustained in the crash, given the state of the damaged vehicle, but he may also have died from natural causes prior to the crash (and leading to the crash) as he had a number of significant health conditions, including respiratory issues. Exposure may also have been a contributing cause if he left his vehicle in a disoriented state after the crash and went into the bush. Further, I cannot exclude the possibility someone else tried to render assistance, or in some other way became involved, but has not come forward for whatever reason. In the circumstances, given so much is unknown, Fred's cause of death must remain unascertained and I leave the manner of his death open.

S H Linton
Acting State Coroner
13 February 2026

⁵² Exhibit 1, Tab 4.