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**JURISDICTION** : CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
**ACT** : CORONERS ACT 1996  
**CORONER** : MICHAEL ANDREW GLIDDON JENKIN, CORONER  
**HEARD** : 10 APRIL 2025  
**DELIVERED** : 24 APRIL 2025  
**FILE NO/S** : CORC 3327 of 2023  
**DECEASED** : GUIDERA, PETER JAMES

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*Catchwords:*

Nil

*Legislation:*

*Coroners Act 1996 (WA)*

**Counsel Appearing:**

Senior Constable C. Robertson assisted the coroner.

Coroners Act 1996  
(Section 26(1))

## RECORD OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEATH

*I, Michael Andrew Gliddon Jenkin, Coroner, having investigated the suspected death of **Peter James GUIDERA** with an inquest held at Perth Coroner's Court, Court 85, CLC Building, 501 Hay Street, Perth, on 10 April 2025 find that the death of **Peter James GUIDERA** has been established beyond all reasonable doubt, and the identity of the deceased person was **Peter James GUIDERA** and that death occurred on or about 8 May 1998, in an unknown location in the following circumstances:*

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Shortly before 12.00 pm on 8 May 1998, Mr Peter James Guidera (Mr Guidera) received a phone call relating to the sale of his former marital home, following the breakdown of his second marriage. A short time later, Mr Guidera drove off in his vehicle (a red Mitsubishi Pajero with Kojonup registration plates) in an agitated state. Mr Guidera was 58 years of age, and he has not been seen or heard from since.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
2. On 30 August 2023, the Acting State Coroner wrote to the Commissioner of Police to advise that on the basis of information received from Western Australian Police Force (the Police) on 18 August 2023, she had reasonable cause to suspect that Mr Guidera had died and that his death was a “*reportable death*”.<sup>4,5</sup>
3. On 29 October 2024, Detective Senior Constable Ellie Wold (Officer Wold) completed an investigation report into Mr Guidera’s disappearance, in which she expressed the conclusion that he had died on, or soon after 8 May 1998.
4. In her letter to the Commissioner of Police, the Acting State Coroner had directed that the suspected death of Mr Guidera be investigated. Following the completion of Officer Wold’s investigation, and in accordance with the Acting State Coroner’s direction, I conducted an inquest on 10 April 2025.<sup>6,7</sup>
5. Officer Wold gave evidence at the inquest,<sup>8</sup> and the documentary material that was tendered consisted of one volume. The inquest examined the circumstances of Mr Guidera’s disappearance and the issue of whether he had died.

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 1, P100 Report of Death (25.10.24)

<sup>2</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 2, Missing Person Report (undated)

<sup>3</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24)

<sup>4</sup> Letter - Deputy State Coroner to Commissioner of Police (30.08.23)

<sup>5</sup> Sections 3 & 23(1), *Coroners Act 1996* (WA)

<sup>6</sup> Letter - Acting State Coroner to Commissioner of Police (30.08.23)

<sup>7</sup> Section 23(2), *Coroners Act 1996* (WA)

<sup>8</sup> ts 10.04.21 (Wold), pp4-10

## MR GUIDERA'S DISAPPEARANCE

### *Background and medical history*<sup>9,10,11,12,13,14</sup>

6. Mr Guidera was born on 26 October 1939 in Semaphore, South Australia, and he moved to Western Australia with his family as a child. Mr Guidera and his first wife (Ms Lenore Guidera) were married in 1961, and they had two children. Mr Guidera's first wife died in 1991, and he married his second wife (Ms Sandy Charleston) in 1992.
7. Mr Guidera and his second wife separated in January 1997, and in about August 1998, Mr Guidera started a relationship with Ms Norma Reid, and they lived together in Narrogin. Mr Guidera had been employed as a gardener with the Shire of Narrogin, but on 1 May 1998, he began working as an orderly at the Narrogin Nursing Home.
8. Mr Guidera was described as a quiet, well-spoken person who loved horses and whale watching. There is evidence that Mr Guidera was diagnosed with depression, for which he was prescribed antidepressant medication. There is also evidence that Mr Guidera attended psychological counselling sessions, and that he had expressed suicidal thoughts, and told his second wife that he had made "*attempts to end his life on multiple occasions*".<sup>15,16,17</sup>
9. According to Mr Guidera's daughter (Ms Susan Plug) at around the time of his first wife's death, Mr Guidera had expressed suicidal ideation. In her statement to police, Ms Plug says:

Around the time of negotiating my mum's will, he threatened suicide. It was very graphic, he said he was going to put his stereo on, flat out in his car, and drive over a cliff on this end of the Great Australian Bight.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 1, P100 Report of Death (25.10.24)

<sup>10</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 2, Missing Person Report (undated)

<sup>11</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp1-2

<sup>12</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 7.1, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms S Charleston (02.09.98)

<sup>13</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 8, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms C Reid (25.08.98)

<sup>14</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 9, Missing Persons Detailed History - Mr T Guidera (26.08.98)

<sup>15</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p3

<sup>16</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 7.1, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms S Charleston (02.09.98), pp1-2

<sup>17</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 9, Missing Persons Detailed History - Mr T Guidera (26.08.98), p2

<sup>18</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 5, Statement - Ms S Plug (04.04.24), para 18

10. Mr Guidera was also described as someone who “*would get easily panicked*”, and his family said that following such episodes, he would “*go missing, though he usually returned home a night or two later*”.<sup>19</sup>

***Mr Guidera goes missing***<sup>20,21</sup>

11. Although it is known that Mr Guidera was last seen on 8 May 1998, there is a discrepancy in the evidence as to where and by whom he was last seen.
12. Ms Reid says that she last saw Mr Guidera the Narrogin Nursing Home at about 12.00 pm on 8 May 1998. Ms Reid says Mr Guidera received a phone call from someone she believed was his lawyer or settlement agent relating to the signing of paperwork associated with his divorce from his second wife.<sup>22,23</sup>
13. According to Officer Wold’s report, a short time after receiving the phone call, Mr Guidera drove off in his red Mitsubishi Pajero in a “*an upset and agitated state*”.<sup>24</sup>
14. However, an undated Missing Persons Report states that Mr Guidera was last seen by his son (Mr Timothy Guidera, who is now deceased) at 12.00 pm on 8 May 1998 at 27 Falcon Street, Kojonup. The Missing Persons Report states:

MP (missing person) was depressed due to marriage break up. Left home in his red Pajero KO7308 and has not been seen since. Has indicated suicidal tendencies in the past, and has attempted suicide previously while still with wife.<sup>25</sup>

15. Regardless of which version of these events is correct, Mr Guidera has not been seen or heard from since he disappeared on 8 May 1998.

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<sup>19</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 7.1, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms S Charleston (02.09.98), p1

<sup>20</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp1 & 5-6

<sup>21</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 17, Incident Report 301208 0807 86602

<sup>22</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp1 & 5-6

<sup>23</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 8, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms C Reid (25.08.98)

<sup>24</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp5-6

<sup>25</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 2, Missing Person Report (undated)

***Mr Guidera is reported missing***<sup>26,27</sup>

16. At about 3.00 pm on 15 May 1998, Ms Reid went to the Narrogin Police Station to report Mr Guidera as missing. A Missing Persons Bureau document dated 15 May 1998 contains the following comments about Mr Guidera's disappearance:

Was quite depressed over final stages of marriage breakup, and especially after a recent phone call from the Katanning lawyer who (is) winding up the sale of his marital home in 7 Spring Street, Kojonup. When last missing he turned up within a few days at his son's place in Kalgoorlie...No publicity please as MP (missing person) is the only son of a lady who turned 92 yrs today, and he is unaware that she has had a "turn" during the last week and that she is in hospital in Narrogin. She is likewise unaware of this report.<sup>28</sup>

17. The Missing Person's Detailed History (Victimology) completed by Mr Guidera's son (Timothy Guidera)<sup>29</sup> on 26 August 1998, includes information about significant recent events in Mr Guidera's life. These events are summarised in Officer Wold's report in the following terms:

Timothy described significant recent events in (Mr Guidera's) life, such as the passing of his mother, his marriage separation, and the resulting split of financial assets, inclusive of the marital home at 7 Spring Street, Kojonup. Timothy advised (that Mr Guidera) was struggling with the repayments on his vehicle, a red 1987 Mitsubishi Pajero, registration K07308, and had asked for assistance with late payments.<sup>30</sup>

18. In her Missing Person's Detailed History (Victimology) completed on 25 August 1998, Ms Reid gave the following explanation for why Mr Guidera had gone missing: "*His phone call from lawyer regarding selling his house, he panicked and didn't want to sign papers*".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp2-6

<sup>27</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 8, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms C Reid (25.08.98)

<sup>28</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 2, Missing Persons Bureau Document 92/204 (15.05.98)(undated)

<sup>29</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 9, Missing Persons Detailed History - Mr T Guidera (26.08.98)

<sup>30</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p4

<sup>31</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 8, Missing Persons Detailed History - Ms C Reid (25.08.98), p4

## POLICE INVESTIGATION

### *Search efforts*<sup>32,33</sup>

**19.** The police document relating to the search for Mr Guidera records the following unsuccessful efforts to locate him:<sup>34,35</sup>

- a. *29 May 1998:* Ansett Airlines was contacted to check if Mr Guidera had made any flight bookings since 8 May 1998;
- b. *5 June 1998:* requests were sent to Mustang Radio Communications and Citizens Band Radio Club International Inc. for a broadcast to be made about Mr Guidera's disappearance over Citizen Band radio;
- c. *22 June 1998:* the Regional Manager of Conservation and Land Management was asked to alert rangers to keep a look out for Mr Guidera's vehicle;
- d. *1 July 1998:* enquiries were made with hostels found no record of Mr Guidera having checked in;
- e. *20 July 1998:* roadhouses on Eyre Highway between Norseman and the State border were contacted but had no record of Mr Guidera;
- f. *20 July 1998:* checks with the Fruit Fly Post at Ceduna found no record of Mr Guidera's vehicle;
- g. *4 September 1998:* checks of caravan parks in Albany (where Mr Guidera's mother had lived) found no record of Mr Guidera;
- h. *7 September 1998:* an aerial search of the area up to 50 nautical miles<sup>36</sup> east of Eucla found no sign of Mr Guidera's vehicle;
- i. *29 September 1998:* a vehicle patrol with a number of vehicles departing from Eucla was planned; and
- j. *Various dates:* a media campaign including a poster, and media releases on various dates failed to unearth any relevant information relating to Mr Guidera's whereabouts.<sup>37,38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp6 & 8

<sup>33</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 17, Running Sheet - Incident Report 301208 0807 86602

<sup>34</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 13, Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera - Record of Actions, pp7-61

<sup>35</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 14, Missing Person Running Sheet (18.05.98 - 07.09.04)

<sup>36</sup> 50 nautical miles is the equivalent of 92.6 kilometres

<sup>37</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 18, Police Missing Persons Poster - Mr Guidera (22.07.98)

***Proof of life checks***<sup>39,40,41,42,43</sup>

20. Police conducted an extensive range of “*proof of life checks*” but no information relevant to Mr Guidera’s whereabouts was forthcoming. The agencies contacted by police included: Homeswest, Australia Post, Centrelink, the Western Australian Electoral Commission, Medicare, Australian Border Force, Westrail, major financial institutions, and the Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages in all States/Territories.<sup>44,45</sup>
21. There is no record of Mr Guidera having had any contact with the Police Forces in any State or Territory, and there are no unidentified remains on the Police computer system that could be linked to Mr Guidera. There is also no record of Mr Guidera having been imprisoned, and police have not unearthed any evidence of criminality associated with Mr Guidera’s disappearance.<sup>46</sup>

***Alleged sighting - 9 May 1998***<sup>47,48,49</sup>

22. On 18 July 1998, police received a report that a member of the public on the afternoon of 9 May 1998, had seen a burgundy coloured Mitsubishi Pajero with Kojonup registration plates travelling east on the Nullarbor between the Mundrabilla and Caiguna turnoffs.
23. A handwritten entry in the Missing Person Running sheet records that on 22 July 1998, police contacted Mr Guidera’s former employer (Mr Michael Woolridge) who advised police that: (Mr Guidera) twice drove to Nullarbor with the thought of killing himself...(Mr Guidera) had told (Mr Woolridge) “*If I kill myself nobody will find me*”.<sup>50</sup>
24. Subsequent police enquiries failed to identify Mr Michael Woolridge.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See for example: Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 20, Article: West Australian (03.08.98)

<sup>39</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), pp6 & 8 and ts 10.04.25 (Wold), pp8-10

<sup>40</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 21, Centrelink Certificate of Disclosure (02.11.23)

<sup>41</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 21, Medicare Certificate of Disclosure (16.10.23)

<sup>42</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 21, Letter - Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages (01.12.23)

<sup>43</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 21, Emails to various agencies seeking information about Mr Guidera (1928.05.19 - 18.01.24)

<sup>44</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 13, Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera - Record of Actions

<sup>45</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 14, Missing Person Running Sheet (18.05.98 - 07.09.04)

<sup>46</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p6 and ts 10.04.25 (Wold), pp9-10

<sup>47</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7 and ts 10.04.25 (Wold), pp7-8

<sup>48</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 13, Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera - Record of Actions, p24

<sup>49</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 17, Running Sheet - Incident Report 301208 0807 86602, p2

<sup>50</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 14, Missing Person Running Sheet (22.07.98)

<sup>51</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7



***Murder confession - 28 June 2001***<sup>52,53,54,55</sup>

25. On 28 June 2001, a man attended the Criminal Investigation Bureau office in Surfers Paradise, Queensland and confessed to the murder of an unknown person. The details provided to detectives by this man were:

The alleged homicide is alleged to have occurred on or about the 8 December 1998, on the Stuart Highway just north of Adelaide River, which is approximately 100 kilometres south of Darwin. (The man) described the victim as Male, Caucasian, approximately 35 years old, 180-183 centimetres tall, about 95 kilograms, with brown short hair and scruffy in appearance. The victim was driving a Mitsubishi Pajero 4x4 short wheel base, 1990-1994 model, maroon in colour, possibly with brown and white number plates.<sup>56</sup>

26. Northern Territory and Queensland Police investigated the claims, but no evidence was found which corroborated the man's confession. During the investigation the man was shown Mr Guidera's photograph but he told police that this was not the victim. The differences in age and build between Mr Guidera and the man's alleged victim led police to conclude that the man's confession of murder was not relevant to Mr Guidera's disappearance.<sup>57</sup>

***Mr Guidera's watch is found - 18 February 2002***<sup>58,59,60,61</sup>

27. On 18 February 2002, police executing a search warrant at a home in Katanning where police found a men's watch engraved "*P.J. Guidera Katanning 1982*". The homeowner told police he had found the watch "*at the side of the road during a Shire roadside rubbish collection*", and in her report, Officer Wold states: "*There is no indication that (the homeowner) had any involvement in Mr Guidera's disappearance*".<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7

<sup>53</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 13, Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera - Record of Actions, pp54-55

<sup>54</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 16, Viper Action Report (Action #38) - Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera (13.06.08)

<sup>55</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 16, Police emails relating to confession of alleged murder (22 & 24.01.18)

<sup>56</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7

<sup>57</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7

<sup>58</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7

<sup>59</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 13, Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera - Record of Actions, p59

<sup>60</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 15, Memo - FC Const. K Perry (19.02.02)

<sup>61</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 15, Viper Action Report (Action #342) - Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera (13.06.08)

<sup>62</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p7

### *Alleged sightings of Mr Guidera*

28. Following TV broadcasts and media releases on various dates, a number of alleged sightings of Mr Guidera were reported to police by members of the public. These alleged sightings were all investigated, but none of them turned out to be Mr Guidera.<sup>63,64,65</sup>

### *Comments on the Police missing person investigation*

29. Despite aerial and vehicle searches, no sign of Mr Guidera or his vehicle have ever been found. Further, comprehensive proof of life checks with a variety of government and non-government agencies have failed to unearth any information about Mr Guidera's whereabouts. In her report, Officer Wold expressed the following conclusion:

This investigation identified no evidence of suspicious circumstances playing a part in the disappearance of (Mr Guidera). Proof of Life enquiries have been conducted via all States and Territories within Australia, each returning no new records or proof of life. Ongoing investigations and a subsequent review of inquiries undertaken have occurred. (Mr Guidera's) surviving family members have been spoken to, and are of the opinion (he) is deceased. It is the opinion of myself and other investigators that (Mr Guidera) is deceased, having died on or soon after 8 May 1998, somewhere along the southern coast line of Western, or South Australia, after leaving his work location in his personal vehicle in an upset and agitated state.<sup>66</sup>

30. At the inquest, Officer Wold said that in her opinion all reasonable efforts had been made to locate Mr Guidera, and confirmed that it is her opinion that Mr Guidera is deceased.<sup>67</sup>
31. Having carefully considered the available evidence, I am satisfied that the police investigation into Mr Guidera's disappearance was comprehensive, and that reasonable efforts were made to try to locate him.

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<sup>63</sup> See for example: Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 13, Operation: MPU 1998 Guidera - Record of Actions, pp32-42, 47 & 57

<sup>64</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 18, Police Missing Persons Poster - Mr Guidera (22.07.98)

<sup>65</sup> See for example: Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 20, Article: West Australian (03.08.98)

<sup>66</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p9

<sup>67</sup> ts 10.04.25 (Wold), pp9-10

### **HAS DEATH BEEN ESTABLISHED?**

**32.** In my view, the evidence establishes beyond all reasonable doubt that Mr Guidera died on or shortly after 8 May 1998 at an unknown location. In reaching that conclusion, I have relied on the following facts:

- a. Mr Guidera was last seen on 8 May 1998 at about 12.00 pm, and since that time no eyewitnesses have come forward with any information about his whereabouts;
- b. At the time he went missing, Mr Guidera was reportedly agitated and upset about arrangements relating to the dissolution of his second marriage;
- c. Mr Guidera had reportedly been diagnosed with depression and had previously expressed suicidal ideation and attempted to take his life;
- d. Mr Guidera's had a close relationship with his elderly mother, and is unlikely to have deliberately avoided attending her funeral;
- e. There is no evidence of criminality in relation to Mr Guidera's disappearance;<sup>68</sup> and
- f. A comprehensive police investigation has failed to unearth any information about Mr Guidera's whereabouts and concluded that Mr Guidera was deceased.

### **CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH**

**33.** The available evidence (including the fact that Mr Guidera's vehicle has never been found) suggests that the most likely explanation for his death is that Mr Guidera took his life on or soon after 8 May 1998.

**34.** However, in circumstances where Mr Guidera's body has not been located, I am obliged to find that the cause of Mr Guidera's death is unascertained, and I make an open finding as to the manner of his death.

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<sup>68</sup> Exhibit 1, Vol. 1, Tab 3, Report - Det. Sen. Const. E Wold (29.10.24), p9

## **CONCLUSION**

- 35.** Mr Guidera was 58 years of age when he went missing from Narrogin on 8 May 1998. He has not been seen or heard from since, and despite an aerial and land search, and a thorough police investigation, no information about his whereabouts has come to light.
- 36.** Although there are no eye-witnesses to Mr Guidera's final moments, it is my view that when considered as a whole, the available evidence leads to the inescapable conclusion that Mr Guidera died on or about 8 May 1998.
- 37.** Whilst the most likely explanation for Mr Guidera's death is that he took his life whilst in an agitated state, on the basis of the available evidence I was obliged to find that the cause of Mr Guidera's death was unascertained, and I made an open finding as to the manner of his death.

MAG Jenkin  
**Coroner**  
17 April 2025