

Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and children
1 September 2022

Program: Australian Federal Police

Written Question on Notice

Senator Paul Scarr:

Please provide the committee with:

- a) information on the *number* of Australian women and children who have been reported as missing, disaggregated by state/territory and year (1980 - present if available).
- b) information on the *number* of First Nations women and children who have been reported as missing, disaggregated by state/territory and year (1980 - present if available).
- c) information on the *number* of non-First Nations women and children who have been reported as missing, disaggregated by state/territory and year (1980 - present if available).
- d) Information on the *rate* of:
 - i. First Nations women and children,
 - ii. non-First Nations women and children,
 - iii. Australian (both First Nations and non-First Nations) women and children, and
 - iv. all Australianswho have been reported as missing, disaggregated by State/territory and year (1980-present if available).
- e) If you are unable to provide this information, please explain the reasons for not being able to do so (e.g. certain data isn't collected in a particular state/territory, or isn't captured by your agency etc.). Are there other sources that may reliably record this information? If so, what are they?

Answer:

The AFP, as host of the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC), has consolidated data received from State and Territory police on the number of Australian women and children who have been reported missing (**Attachment A** refers).

The table at **Attachment A** has been collated from data received by the AFP from annual reports from the State and Territory police agencies for the **calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021**. Prior to this time, the AFP did not receive information relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander missing person reports. The information provided for States and Territories includes total numbers of missing persons broken down into categories such as age, gender, Indigenous status, whether an Amber Alert was issued etc.

The AFP is not in a position to provide information on the rate of women and children who have been reported as missing due to inconsistent data collection across state and territory police.

The AFP consulted all relevant agencies on the release of this information to the Committee for the purpose of this inquiry. South Australia Police is providing its data in response to a separate Committee request, and has requested its information be excluded from AFP's response.

The AFP cannot attest to the data as a complete and accurate data source because:

- a) The data is provided by individual State and Territory police agencies, at their discretion, and is reliant on data quality and business processes within each jurisdiction;
- b) There are differences in approaches across jurisdictions which lead to inconsistent data reporting. For example:
 - In mid-2018, one agency began only placing those missing more than 7 days on their database. Therefore the 2018 data is not an accurate reflection of those reported missing in 2018. This approach was subsequently changed.
 - The way data was extracted in 2021 by one agency was different to what was undertaken in previous years, therefore there is a disparity between other years.
 - One agency utilises one report per child to record and manage children in care that repeatedly go missing from their placement. The number of missing juvenile incidents is therefore significantly greater than the reports. One particular child had 1 report but 80 missing incidents reported to police.

The AFP continues to work with all state and territory police to ensure to the extent possible, data is collated consistently. This data collection is outside the national data collections programs conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. As can be seen from the information above, there has been improvements. All jurisdictions are aspiring to provide data that meets the agreed **Missing Persons Minimum Dataset** (attached). This includes demographics, information on the missing event, recidivism rate, risk factors and case finalisation.

2021	Australian women reported missing	Australian children reported missing	First Nations women reported missing	First Nations children reported missing	Reported missing women that are not First Nations	Reported missing children that are not First Nations
ACT	152	223	2	17	150	206
NSW	1,513	4,991	97	483	1,416	4,508
NT	811	255	400	195	411	60
QLD	1,112	5,190	239	2,397	873	2,793
SA**	-	-	-	-	-	-
TAS	46	44	0	2	46	42
VIC	1,658	13,449	81	1,844	1,577	11,605
WA	429	1,438	117	593	312	845
Total	5,721	25,590	936	5,531	4,785	20,059

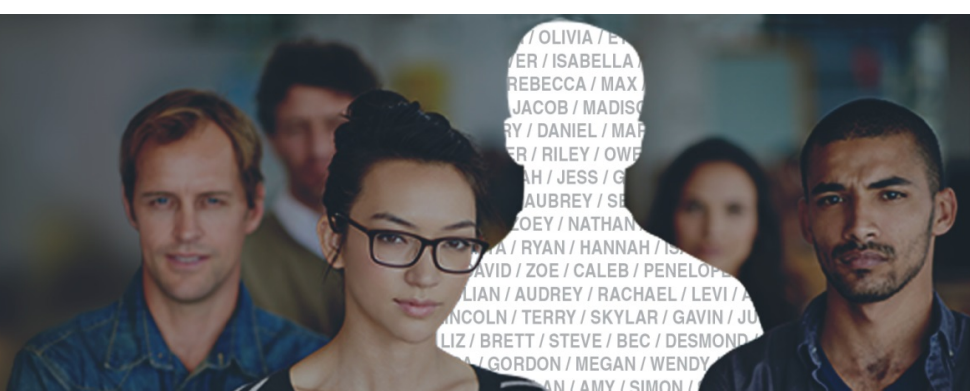
2020	Australian women reported missing	Australian children reported missing	First Nations women reported	First Nations children reported	Reported missing women that are not First Nations	Reported missing children that are not First Nations
ACT	221	323	-*	-*	-*	-*
NSW	1,581	5,443	152	980	1,429	4,463
NT	98	74	-*	-*	-*	-*
QLD	1,123	5,142	226	2,641	897	2,501
SA**	-	-	-	-	-	-
TAS	21	11	-*	-*	21	11
VIC	2,721	12,600	61	1,848	2,660	10,752
WA	456	1,304	116	683	340	621
Total	6,221	24,897	555	6,152	5,347	18,348

2019	Australian women reported missing	Australian children reported missing	First Nations women reported	First Nations children reported	Reported missing women that are not First Nations	Reported missing children that are not First Nations
ACT	195	309	-*	-*	-*	-*
NSW	2,201	4,734	164	724	2,037	4,010
NT	108	83	-*	-*	-*	-*
QLD	1133	6,342	246	3,316	887	3,026
SA**	-	-	-	-	-	-
TAS	25	23	0	0	25	23
VIC	1,818	11,999	-*	-*	-*	-*
WA	464	1,158	79	530	385	628
Total	5,944	24,648	489	4,570	3,334	7,687

2018	Australian women reported missing	Australian children reported missing
ACT	188	233
NSW	1,887	4,447
NT	28	78
QLD	1,166	2,228
SA**	-	-
TAS	26	29
VIC	1,755	10,015
WA	350	1,115
TOTAL	5,400	18,145

*Data not provided.

** South Australia Police is providing its data in response to a separate Committee request



National Missing Persons Minimum Dataset

Demographics

- Age (number)
- Gender (male, female, intersex)
- Citizenship (free text)
- Indigenous status (free text)
- Country of birth (free text)
- Marital status (select one)
 - Never married
 - Widowed
 - Divorced
 - Separated
 - Married

Information on the missing event

- Jurisdiction reported missing (State/Territory)
- Time frame missing (years + days)

Recidivism status

- First time missing (yes/no)
- Recidivist missing (yes/no)
- Number of times missing (number)
- Absconder/absent (yes/no)

Risk factors

- Health and disability status (select one if appropriate)
 - Mental health
 - Disability (physical or intellectual)
 - Dementia
 - Need for essential medication
- Intent to commit self-harm/suicide (yes/no)
- Alcohol/drug dependency (yes/no)

- Care and protection orders (free text)
- Family and social mediators (select if appropriate)
 - Victim/perpetrator of family and domestic violence (free text)
 - Other significant family conflict or abuse (free text)
 - Employment status (free text)
 - Financial problems (free text)
 - Violent, racist or homophobic victimisation (free text)
 - Other (free text)

Case Finalisation

- Location status (select one)
 - Alive
 - Deceased
 - Not yet located
- Method of location (select one)
 - Located by police
 - Returned home voluntary
 - Reported located via trusted person (doctor, school)
- Jurisdiction located (State/Territory)
- Probable cause (Select one)
 - involuntary missing
 - lost/wandered
 - voluntary missing
 - missing due to an event (disaster, lost at sea)
 - unknown