



ANNUAL
REPORT
2021

MPAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It's been another year of adversity for most of the globe, as living with uncertainty has extended well beyond our community to become the norm for many.

It was a great privilege to assist families of missing loved ones during these especially difficult circumstances, and heartening to have even more skilled professionals volunteer their time and expertise for those in need. With the bulk of interactions now being online, we also managed to strengthen international ties, opening doors for further collaboration into the future.

Despite earlier research from the UK indicating a decrease in missing incidents there, the toll of Australia's restrictions led to a more than 20% increase in reports of missing persons to police here. Lockdowns and border closures limited families' ability to search, and thus further heightened feelings of hopelessness

and helplessness for those left behind. Consequently, the need for our services seemed more acute for those directly impacted and more easily understood by those who weren't.

In an era of untold compassion fatigue, we were especially grateful to have received more funds from individual donors than ever before; an encouraging indicator of brand awareness, growth and appreciation for the work we do. The public's outpouring of support and generosity for the fact that 2021 was a milestone year for me personally (marking a decade since the disappearance of my brother Dan) also made a remarkable impact.

The demands of project and relationship management have grown so significantly that we're fast approaching the point of needing a second staff member. A notion that no longer seems completely out of reach.

Our Board gladly welcomed a new member in Erin Dolan, whose professional background in law and the for-purpose sector, as well as her lived experience, makes a valuable addition to the organisation.

When MPAN was founded, the idea of it being a *network* was purely aspirational. Now, nearly nine years on, it has well and truly actualised. With so many loyal, compassionate supporters, and having managed to achieve goals set for both this unruly year and the one before it, I am excited about what we'll accomplish in 2022.



Loren O'Keeffe
FOUNDER & CEO

1. CORE WORK

MPAN's involvement with families is always guided by their wishes. Accordingly, our work varies from touching base on difficult dates, to fielding media requests and negotiating those boundaries, to contacting specific individuals, services and organisations that can help with any number of obstacles a particular family may be facing.

Building and maintaining these relationships is critical, because being able to connect families with communications experts, graphic designers, specialised counsellors, journalists, corporate entities, lawyers, retired detectives and advertising professionals is as invaluable as the assistance they can give.

This year, though actually finding missing loved ones isn't our mission, our actions directly led to two cases being resolved. One gave us an insight into the morally-questionable void that an unsaid 'lost contact' police classification can create, and made use of our relationships with media and police contacts for what was eventually a fantastic ending; a heart-warming reunion.

The other exemplified the vital importance of our volunteers, namely Mike, who through his mastery of technology and boundless generosity, was able to locate a loved one's remains. We were also the first to be called after another family's missing loved one was also tragically found deceased, and promptly arranged media support and counselling.

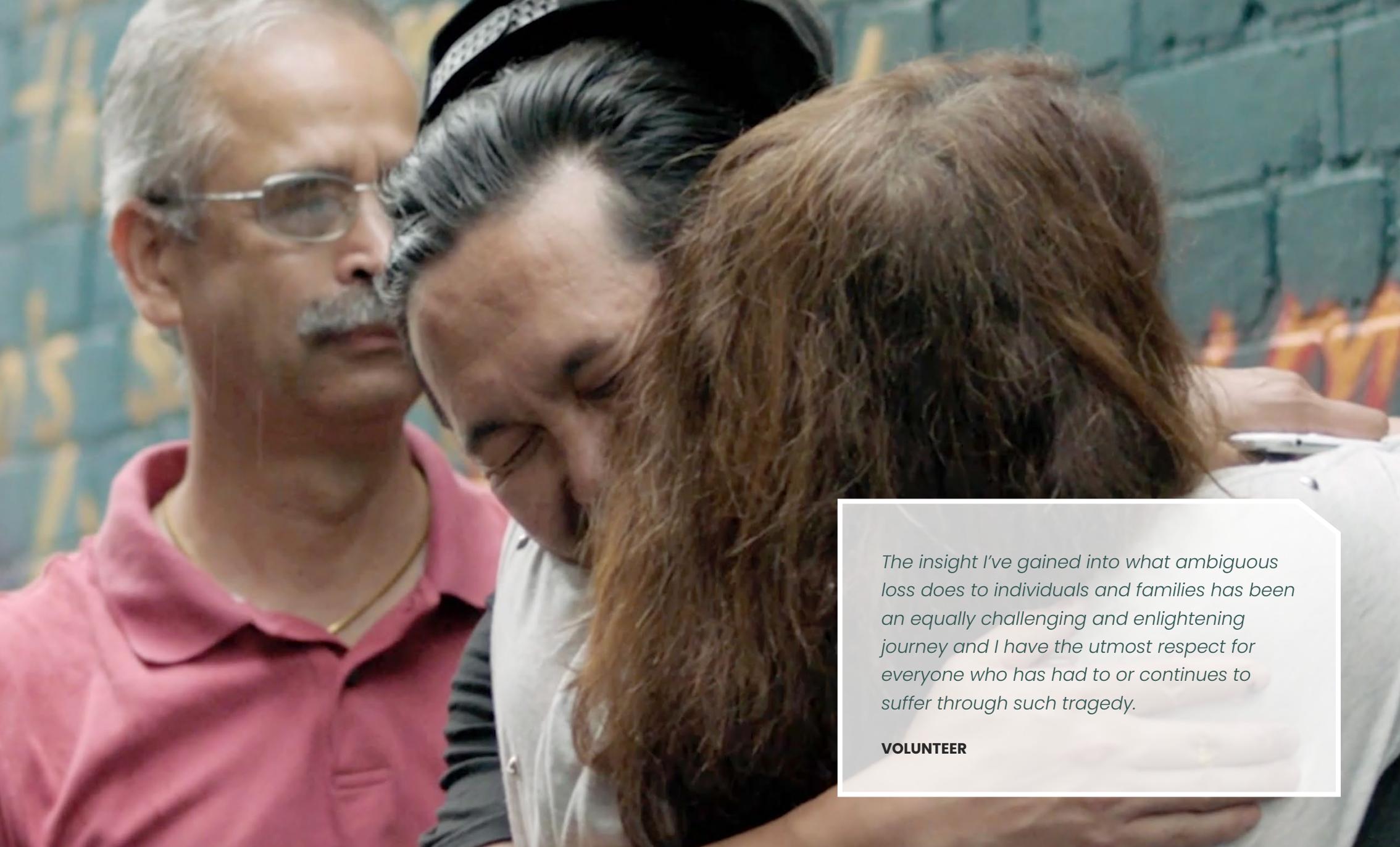


Beyond our standard services for families, we also provided direct practical assistance during the especially gruelling experience of coronial inquests; ranging from legal representation to media support and accommodation.

In 2021, for the first time, we also attended coronial inquests, a memorial, and a funeral (all with invitation from the families, of course) – an important demonstration of the depth of connection MPAN has with those we work with.



Loren with Théo Hayez's family and volunteers



The insight I've gained into what ambiguous loss does to individuals and families has been an equally challenging and enlightening journey and I have the utmost respect for everyone who has had to or continues to suffer through such tragedy.

VOLUNTEER

2. PROJECTS

- I. Ambiguous Loss
- II. Social Return on Investment
- III. Showcasing MPAN
- IV. Cold Case Review
- V. Missing Status
- VI. What's Missing podcast
- VII. Let's Make it Official

I. Ambiguous Loss

Off the back of a successful pilot in 2020, we designed and promoted our program, Ambiguous Loss Training with Dr Sarah Wayland, and trained another 21 professionals working in the field of missing persons.

Attendees of the two-part March course represented the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Red Cross, Missing People (UK), WayAhead Mental Health Association, National Missing Persons Helpline (Ireland) and included psychology students, social workers, project managers and executives. Dr Wayland very generously ran the course in-kind, with all registration fees going to MPAN.

Feedback from graduates was again overwhelmingly positive and we're exploring the potential for packaging and scaling the program to upskill

generalist phone counsellors, offer peer supervision, and train police to understand the trajectory of ambiguity, both in Australia and abroad.

This work is being noticed. Throughout the year, a number of families – some of which had no existing relationship with MPAN – reached out specifically asking for referrals to ambiguous loss counsellors. We have also been contacted by the Coroners Court of Victoria in regards to this work.

Ambiguous loss has infiltrated the vernacular, and we're excited to further address the issue with a new project in collaboration with Dr Wayland in 2022.

WORKSHOP SERIES

Ambiguous Loss

with Dr Sarah Wayland



II. Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Early in the year, we asked 180 Degrees Consulting to help us understand the impact of our work.

Over the course of four months – identifying our stakeholders, gathering data and conducting various surveys – they found that when the total investment from MPAN’s donors, volunteers, and corporate partners is compared to the social value created for loved ones and the community, as well as the volunteers and the partners themselves, the result is an SROI ratio of 5.73:1.

This value indicates that for every \$1 that is invested into MPAN, a social impact of \$5.73 is produced, which is above the sector average of between \$3-\$4.

A validating finding, and something MPAN is very proud to share with our supporters.

See the report [here](#)
And 180DC’s final presentation [here](#)



III. Showcasing MPAN

We'd long outgrown our original 2013 volunteer-made website, but unable to afford a professional upgrade, it took until late 2020 for a volunteer game enough to build a new website from scratch to accept the challenge.

With an admirable can-do attitude, Laura taught herself the basics, and with guidance on the fundamentals given by our partners at whiteGREY, design direction from our Creative Director Maricarmen, and content provided, our new website build began in January.

The deadline was decided when ABC producers gave us an air date for the *Families of Missing Persons* episode of *You Can't Ask That* we'd been involved with putting together (and featured in).

Thanks to whiteGREY developer Luke and ever-committed Laura, the site went live in the hours before the episode's end-screen unexpectedly directed viewers to it (alongside the AFP and Lifeline) and we watched on as hundreds of users visited in real time.



Volunteer Laura with Loren at MPAN HQ

Another important tool, and something we'd wanted for quite a while, was a reel video. We worked closely with our volunteer SenateSHJ/Kamber videographer Brad, sourcing and selecting clips over May-June to ensure the reel was live in time for anticipated media interest over the 10th anniversary of Dan's disappearance.

The video seamlessly showcases our work and communicates the essence of MPAN, was shared widely across social media and now sits proudly on our new website. Both elements were an important upgrade for the overall brand, and undoubtedly influenced many opportunities that followed.

See the reel on YouTube [here](#)

IV. Cold Case Review

In May, we were contacted by Murdoch University senior lecturers of forensic science and criminology, who run the Cold Case Review program. We offered the opportunity to participate to the elderly sister of the longest term missing loved one in our network.

After single-handedly pursuing the case without any support for four decades, she was thrilled to know it would – at long last – be thoroughly investigated by a dedicated team of 26 students. She'd reiterated since our 2018 introduction that it (an investigation) was all she ever wanted.

As though she was finally relieved of the burden, she died two weeks after the review got underway.

In September, the students presented their work, including but not limited to analysis of the coronial documents and police brief, construction of a visual timeline, a network association map, detailed police statement and geographical analyses, and the verification of details against records sourced from the historical society.

I invited our friend, retired Victoria Police detective Val Smith APM, to the presentation. Well impressed, he has offered to compile the information along with the associated report (we expect to receive in 2022) into a format that we can then provide to the Victoria Police Missing Persons Unit in the hope they will investigate avenues uncovered.

It has been a privilege to witness the incredible and critical work MPAN is doing in the missing persons space. I've been able to access support and educational material that was absolutely vital to the search I was involved in.

DONOR



MPAN's invaluable support, time and effort can never be quantified or thanked for. We could not have coped without Loren and are eternally grateful.

MOTHER

V. Missing Status

In August, a long term goal of MPAN’s – policy and legislative change regarding the affairs of missing Australians – was featured in the Australian Financial Review (AFR). Powerfully written by the son-in-law of a missing Sydney man, the article touched on the administrative and financial challenges we’re hoping to address.

Timed to coincide with National Missing Persons Week (NMPW), it reached an important new audience and prompted an impassioned response. One being a sizable donation from a benevolent barrister, the other an offer from highly regarded law firm Gadens; pro bono research into the associated challenges of a Missing Status.

Gadens provided MPAN with initial advice regarding the various legislative avenues by which the affairs of a missing person might be managed, in particular those relating to superannuation.

In 2022 and beyond, MPAN will consider advocacy for superannuation reform to allow the appropriate recognition of missing persons on compassionate grounds.

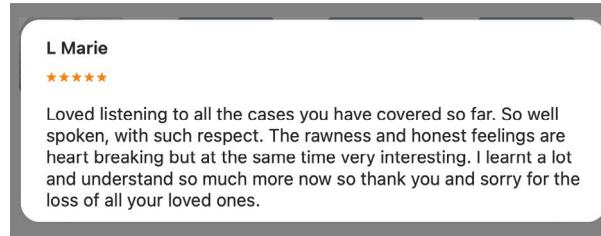
We will also continue to look for corporate support, especially from financial institutions, to appropriately recognise this gap in their policies.



VI. What's Missing podcast

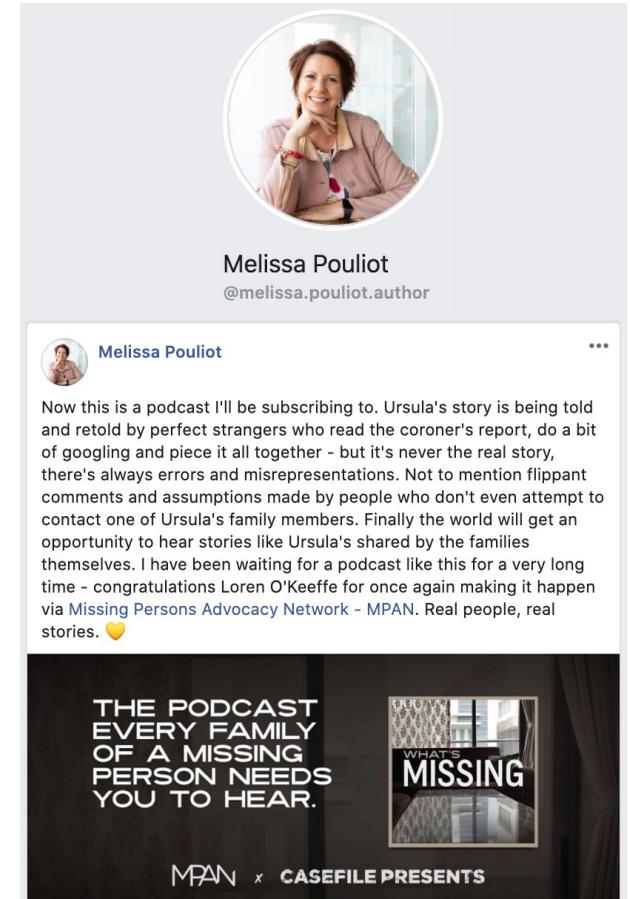
The first season of our podcast has had over 650,000 listens, and garnered fantastic feedback from loved ones of high profile cases, to members of the general public around Australia and the world. It is a critical platform for families to share their lived experiences with both people who can relate and those who can't imagine, without the pressures and constraints of traditional media opportunities.

In 2021, we spent two weeks with a Sydney family whose story will be told in the second season. Between February and October, Casefile's writers thoroughly researched the case to compile the script that was then edited by MPAN, then checked by their legal team and sent to the family for their ultimate approval.



Behind the scenes of What's Missing season 2

We plan to record the narration in the first half of 2022 for a season launch in the latter.



VII. Let's Make it Official

For NMPW, guided by the SenateSHJ brains trust, we created a parliamentary petition calling on the federal government to turn the initiative into an official calendar item. Considered a relatively easy ask (no actual cost) we hoped it could get a foot in the door to formalise government support for both the cause and our organisation.

To bolster the petition, our Creative Director created campaign assets, and families in our network filmed scripted pieces to camera that were tied together for a campaign video.

The petition went live days ahead of the NMPW launch, drew widespread interest from the community, generated 2,288 signatures and attracted national media attention (371 placements, with a potential reach of over 50 million people).

Then tabled in the House of Representatives, the petition was assigned to Minister Karen Andrews, whose letter of decline was dated in the final sitting week of parliament for the year, but only received when we followed up in December.

Personally, I can't help but wonder if the Australia-wide high profile events regarding Cleo Smith, William Tyrrell, Russell Hill and Carol Clay – that all occurred in the days and weeks *after* Minister Andrews signed the letter – could have altered the decision.

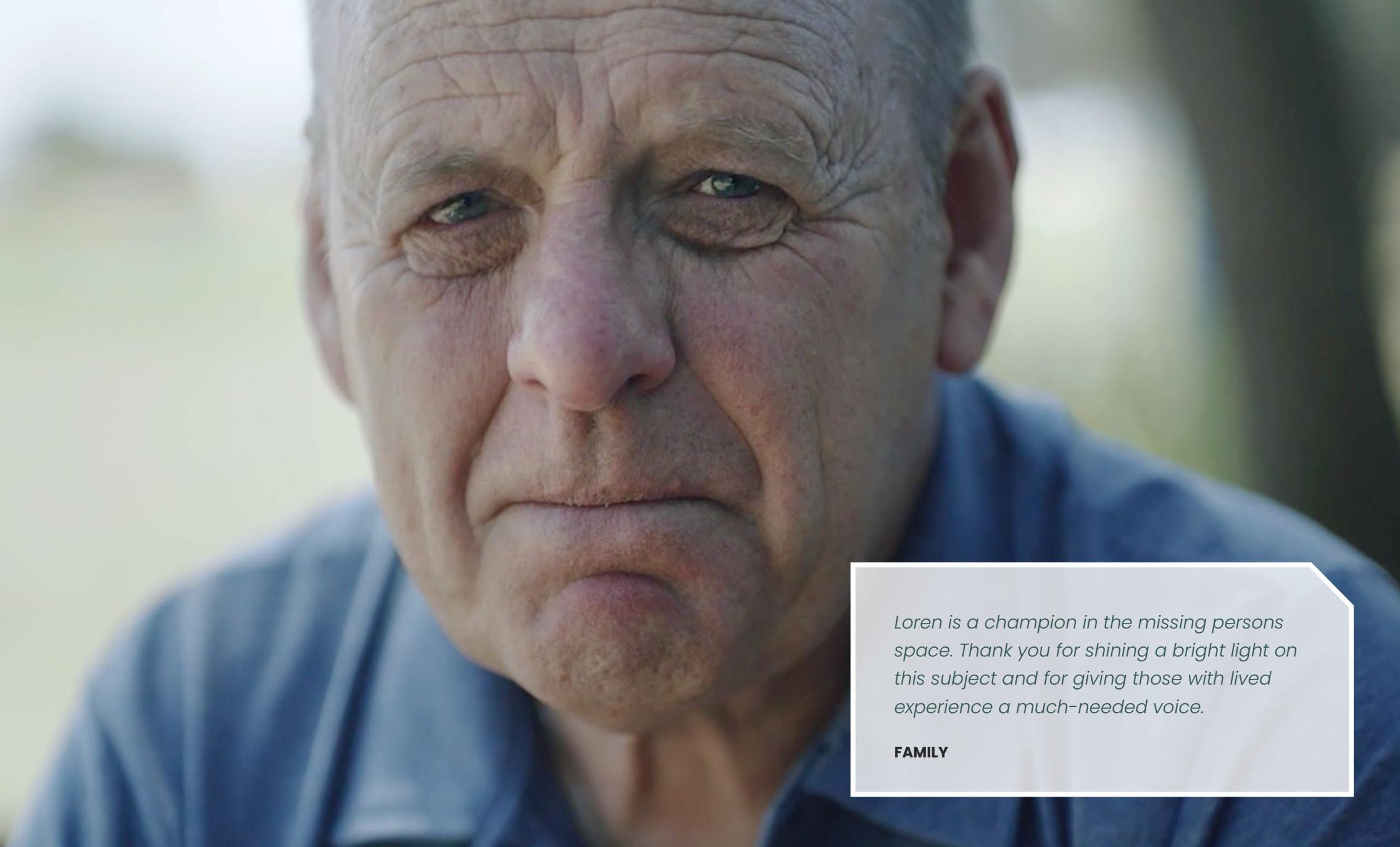
The team at SenateSHJ are following up with the Governor General's office in regards to dates of proclamation, and we remain committed to securing government support in some way, shape or form.



See the petition **here**

Watch the campaign video **here**

Read Minister Andrews' letter **here**



Loren is a champion in the missing persons space. Thank you for shining a bright light on this subject and for giving those with lived experience a much-needed voice.

FAMILY

3. REACH

I. Media

II. The Missing community

I. Media

Year-round, we reached a diverse audience throughout Australia and around the world. We covered all the usual outlets (nightly TV news bulletins, national and state-wide print and radio, women’s magazines etc) but broadened our reach with first-time features in prominent outlets like AFR.

Most notably, the BBC recorded a 40-min podcast about MPAN’s origin story, released to their 96-million-strong audience on the 10th anniversary of Dan’s disappearance (15 July 2021).



We also generated a huge response from the ABC’s You Can’t Ask That (YCAT) episode when it aired on television, as well as before and after via views on iview.



The episode gave an inimitable insight into the experiences of those left behind, and it evidently had a profound impact on viewers. Mega popular podcast and media network Shameless featured the episode in their weekly recommendations, I was selected for subsequent interviews by other

contemporary commercial outlets, and influencers shared the ABC’s Instagram promo videos to their fans too.

Another pertinent media inclusion was Australian Story: Forever Young. It followed a 2019 episode (that I was also honoured to introduce), about the formerly long term missing Ursula Barwick, and the story – namely the sequence of errors by myriad authorities – sparked an emotional response from viewers across the country and beyond.



I. Media (cont.)

We saw an increase in our own social media audience largely thanks to Casefile’s fundraising efforts and continued promotion of everything we do, as well as content shares (eg. YCAT preview, our reel, 10 for Dan fundraiser call-to-action and Let’s Make It Official campaign videos) from avid supporters and popular influencers like Allira Potter.



As mentioned, towards the end of the year, some high profile cases flooded the news media circuit. It was an interesting time for those in this niche space, and

provided an opportunity to consider the value add of certain coverage; the associated commentary and the impact it has on the individual, their family and others in this community. Accordingly, requests regarding Cleo Smith’s disappearance were very carefully considered, and for all outlets except the ABC, politely declined. Conversely, I was very pleased to be interviewed for an important article in The Conversation in direct response to that October–December period (when these cases saturated news media).



We were also delighted to see Val Smith APM sing MPAN’s praises in a live national TV interview regarding one such case.

Over the course of 2021, MPAN started to take an even firmer stance when helping families navigate media requests; setting parameters for journalists when necessary, and – successfully – suggesting commercial networks make a donation for the role we play in ensuring the best outcome for all.

Listen to the BBC interview [here](#)

Read the AFR article [here](#)

See Australian Story: Forever Young [here](#)

See You Can’t Ask That: Families of Missing Persons [here](#)

Read The Conversation article [here](#)

See the ABC News clip [here](#)

See Val’s shoutout to MPAN [here](#)

II. The Missing community

Throughout the year, MPAN reinforced its standing both domestically and globally.

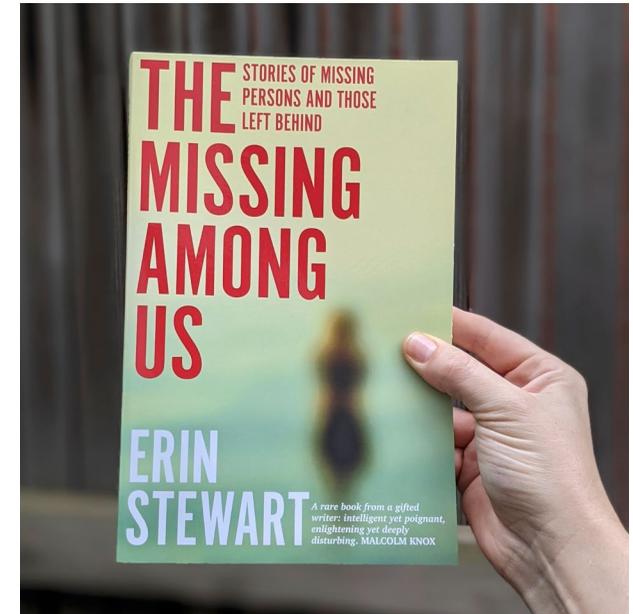
In February, I was invited to present to an international group of siblings of missing persons. Weeks later, I was thrilled to be sent a photo of a French sister with a French-speaking Dutch sister (that I presented with at an international conference in 2017) who met in Paris as a result of my introduction.

As touched on previously, the Ambiguous Loss Training we held in March drew a fantastic mix of attendees from various organisations around Australia, and missing persons services in Canada, the UK and Ireland.

We were over the moon when our very own volunteer Creative Director, Maricarmen, was offered a role as

an Expert Graphic Designer at the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP). Through it, MPAN has been noticed by yet another international authority, and connected their Director of Policy and Cooperation with Dr Sarah Wayland and MPAN Board member Assoc. Prof. Jodie Ward for an Australasian focus in their upcoming 2022 Global Report.

In April, academic and author Erin Stewart published her masterpiece, *The Missing Among Us*. The book was endorsed by distinguished figures like Malcom Knox, and featured an entire chapter on MPAN, as well as my own endorsement on the back cover. It is a terrific, comprehensive examination of this broad and complex subject, and we are humbled to have been highlighted in this way.



In September, the Secretary General of Missing Children Europe (MCE) invited me to share my expertise for a presentation on 'Impactful campaigning and raising awareness of the long term missing' at their quarterly member webinar. MPAN's work was showcased

II. The Missing community (cont.)

to a group of representatives from across Europe, and MCE also sought and published a comment from MPAN for their international media release on Not Found Day (25 September).

Their admiration for our work and interest in our projects, particularly our Ambiguous Loss Training, has boundless potential.

We are building these international connections with plans to collaborate into the future.

See MCE's Not Found Day media release [here](#).

The AFP invited MPAN to be involved with their National DNA Program launch in Queensland for NMPW, which

unfortunately was cancelled days out due to a reimposing of state border closures and lockdowns.

Our position on the Missing Persons Interagency, coordinated by the NSW government-funded Families and Friends of Missing Persons Service (FFMPS) continues and our increasingly frequent liaison with FFMPS in particular has been very beneficial indeed.

A few well-connected professionals reached out to MPAN over the year wanting to bring other highly sought after people (eg. business executives and politicians) into our fold, so we're optimistic that those opportunities also hindered by COVID will eventuate in 2022.

*MPAN gave me strength,
loving support and
extremely helpful
information and direction.*

MOTHER



Donation table at a family memorial / gratitude party



Working with MPAN has made us all feel like we are giving back to our community in a profound and powerful way.

CORPORATE PARTNER

4. LEVERAGED FUNDS

MPAN couldn't give the kind of support we're able to offer families or execute the work we do without the generosity of our corporate supporters.

Over the 20-21 financial year, **SenateSHJ** provided \$80,000 of in-kind support in the form of strategic and operational communications assistance for both families and the organisation, as well as the covetable Collins Street office space. Staff have become increasingly involved with MPAN and this partnership remains our most important.

Over nine years, SenateSHJ has given close to \$1M in-kind (as well regular and generous donations) and their genuine willingness to help has made an immeasurable impact.

Though 2021 was the sixth year of our pro bono arrangement with top advertising agency **whiteGREY**, with their staffing changes and the challenges of the pandemic, it was undoubtedly and understandably the quietest. Despite

the hurdles, with the briefing, creative development and around 40% of the research and refinement phase of our next project, the in-kind support they gave equated to \$34,000.

The Mobile Billboard Company

continues to generously contribute mobile and static billboards around the country to the annual in-kind value of \$15,000.

In November, a European family whose loved one disappeared in Australia, was facing the additional difficulties of travel during COVID as well as the associated expenses of accommodation for the 2-week coronial inquest (that also happened to coincide with Schoolies, in a Schoolies destination). Using my personal history with **Airbnb**, I reached out to relevant executives and the family

was promptly given \$20,000 worth of accommodation before, during and after what was a very distressing experience.

Words can't describe how important having someone to guide us through such an unknown process, who to speak to and what to do to find our loved one is.

DAUGHTER



14

Having a family member being a Missing Person is very isolating and lonely. Having MPAN is amazing for encouragement, support and just being a friend you can talk to.

SIBLING

5. FINANCES

In 2021, MPAN received the largest sum of funds — around \$130,000 — from the biggest number of individual donors yet (about 700). We saw a significant uptake in Facebook birthday fundraisers, received several unexpected donations from SME giving initiatives, and very gratefully accepted contributions from our monthly and major donors. In spite of COVID cancellations of multiple events, we also raised an unprecedented \$50,000 (approx.) from activity-based fundraisers.

Early in the year, we raised \$2500 in ticket sales for Ambiguous Loss Training that Dr Wayland donated in full. We also received about \$3000 from journalists who appreciated our time and effort in giving and coordinating interviews.

In March, anonymous Casefile host 'Casey' dedicated his 4x4x48 challenge to MPAN, raising over \$6,000 from over 200 donors within a matter of 48 hours. Their huge audience of listeners meant the brand exposure was likely even more valuable. Learn more [here](#).

To mark the long dreaded milestone of 10 years without Dan, I participated in the event that he and I were registered to complete the weekend he disappeared; Run Melbourne. Recognising the momentousness of the occasion, and aware that it was – organically – a major

fundraising opportunity, our partners at SenateSHJ/Kamber helped me create the 10 for Dan campaign. Launching on Dan's birthday (conveniently on the eve of June) we surpassed our \$10,000 target within hours and ended up raising just over \$40,000 across **Facebook** and **Raisely** fundraisers.

Towards the end of the year, one of our families held a memorial for their missing father that doubled as a gratitude party for those who'd helped them search. Family and friends raised \$2200 for MPAN at the event, and the daughter's employer (McKinsey) matched \$2000 of their own personal, additional \$2500 donation – via our Benevity account – to total about \$7000.

It was also at the end of the year that the father of missing man, who we'd

connected to an ambiguous loss specialist in June, raised just shy of \$10,000 ahead of swimming the 2022 Lorne Pier to Pub in honour of his son.

These fundraising events are an increasingly popular way to pay tribute to missing loved ones for families unable to perform standard rituals for their loss, and are an incredibly effective way for MPAN to fund the work we do.

Donating to MPAN, I've felt personal satisfaction that there is hope, understanding and support for those families experiencing ambiguity. As a community we are better for this.

DONOR

Please see the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss for the 20-21 financial year below, or see the separate high resolution versions [here](#) and [here](#).

Balance sheet report

30 Jun 2021

	Total
1-0000 Asset	
1-0001 Banking	
1-1110 Gift Account Acct no 458132371	20.00
1-1120 Operating Acct no447888368	88,701.89
Total Banking	88,721.89
Total Asset	88,721.89
2-0000 Liability	
2-0002 Current Liabilities	
2-2200 GST collected	1,799.72
2-2400 GST paid	(4,751.27)
Total Current Liabilities	(2,951.55)
Total Liability	(2,951.55)
Net Assets	91,673.44
3-0000 Equity	
3-0001 Current Earnings	
3-2000 Current year Surplus or Deficit	77,496.13
Total Current Earnings	77,496.13
3-0002 Retained Earnings	
3-1000 Retained surplus or Accumulated losses	14,167.34
Total Retained Earnings	14,167.34
3-9999 Historical balancing	9.97
Total Equity	91,673.44

Annual P&L

Cash mode

01 Jul 2020 - 30 Jun 2021

	Total
4-0000 Income	
4-2010 Donations received	91,514.97
4-3040 Philanthropic Trusts and Corp	21,348.36
4-4010 Sales of Goods	2,901.31
Total Income	115,764.64
Gross Profit	115,764.64
6-0000 Expense	
5-0210 Purchases of T-shirts	1,262.30
5-0220 Ambiguous Loss Counselling	5,409.16
6-0010 Accounting fees	279.66
6-0070 Bank charges	136.76
6-0085 Catering for Meetings	503.93
6-0220 Computer Expenses	343.31
6-0230 Consultancy Fees	500.00
6-0300 Internet	6.78
6-0340 Fundraising Expense - VIC only	115.51
6-0400 Insurance	727.50
6-0480 Meeting expenses	195.97
6-0510 Postage & courier	393.69
6-0520 Printing & stationery	7.27
6-0600 Wages & salaries	33,700.00
6-0680 Telephone	499.45
6-0700 Training and development	201.82
6-0710 Travel & accommodation	2,541.01
6-0711 Travel & Accom Domestic	1,870.99
6-0730 Volunteer Costs	255.51
6-6401 Fundraising	67.02
6-6402 IT	243.70
6-6403 Website	205.98
6-6405 Sundries	22.73
Total Expense	49,490.05
Operating Profit	66,274.59
8-0000 Other Income	
4-5050 Other income	11,298.07
Total Other Income	11,298.07
9-0000 Other Expense	
9-1000 Other expenses	76.53
Total Other Expense	76.53
Net Profit	77,496.13



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