





In Australia, police receive over 50,000 missing persons reports annually. Although many individuals are located shortly after, approximately 2,900 cases persist as long-term disappearances, spanning over three months. **These people matter, The Missing Matter.....**

When a loved one is reported missing, the emotional toll on their family and friends can be profound. It's crucial to recognize that each person may grapple with their emotions uniquely, responding in diverse ways.

Family members and friends of missing persons often express a spectrum of emotions, including fear, anger, guilt, blame, frustration, helplessness, ambiguity, and isolation. While not everyone undergoes all these feelings, it's vital to understand that any of these reactions are typical responses to an extraordinary circumstance.



**Sally Leydon**, has lived experience having dealt with the ambiguous loss of her mother's disappearance some 28 years ago. Determined not to let it break her and after years of struggles, research, media awareness and determination, Sally achieved at least some answers when a coronial inquest deemed her mother deceased. This bizarre and yet now well publicized case now sits with the NSW Unsolved Homicide squad for ongoing investigation. Sally, through the backing of thousands of followers launched The Missing Matter podcast. Sally said, I want to create a space for people who may not have had the chance to share their story — whether through media or podcasts — to talk about their missing loved ones. It's almost unfathomable, but every 15 minutes, someone in Australia disappears.

It is believed in all these cases; the answers are out there. Perhaps that person who rests their feet whilst sitting, may be the one that holds the information to aid a family dealing with a missing loved one.

[www.themissingmatter.com](http://www.themissingmatter.com)

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# Someone, Somewhere, Knows something

Sally now launches 'The Green Seat Project' to raise awareness of the missing, those who are forgotten, those who are swept aside and lost in the system, as well as those families that are left behind suffering the trauma of not knowing. **The Green Seat Project** has the backing of tens of thousands of online supporters. The purpose is to provide a green bench seat in prominent locations in cities and towns throughout the country. Each seat will provide a space for effected people to sit, reflect on the missing and remember them, as well as raising public awareness of their situations through the statement "THE MISSING MATTER" on the seat. Sally envisages each seat to be embellished with a QR code leading people to specifics about the long-term missing people and awareness of the family and friends of the missing person's plight.

MEDIA RELEASE

## HONOURING THE MISSING: FIRST GREEN SEAT UNVEILED AT DOUG JENNINGS PARK

XX September 2025

- Australia's **first** Green Seat unveiled at Doug Jennings Park, The Spit – a place of reflection for missing loved ones and their families.
- The Green Seat Project, founded by advocate Sally Leydon, honours her mother Marion Barter and raises national awareness of missing persons.
- Gold Coast Waterways Authority supports the initiative, creating public spaces with meaning, connection, and community wellbeing.

The Gold Coast Waterways Authority (GCWA) has proudly unveiled the first Green Seat in Australia, a powerful national initiative honouring missing loved ones and the families who live with their absence.

Installed at **Doug Jennings Park on The Spit**, the Green Seat provides a place of reflection overlooking the Broadwater, creating space for remembrance, awareness, and community connection.

The **Green Seat Project** was developed by advocate **Sally Leydon**, who has spent 28 years seeking answers following the mysterious disappearance of her mother, **Marion Barter**. A Southport resident and former teacher at The Southport School, Marion embarked on a journey to Europe in 1997 and vanished without a trace.

Driven by determination to uncover the truth, Ms Leydon partnered with 7 News to produce *The Lady Vanishes* podcast, one of Australia's most widely downloaded true crime series. The podcast uncovered vital new information, ultimately leading to a coronial inquest.

Building on this momentum, Ms Leydon launched *The Missing Matter* podcast earlier this year, highlighting the confronting reality that **"every 15 minutes, someone in Australia disappears."**

"I want to create a space for people who may not have had the chance to share their story, whether through media or podcasts, to talk about their missing loved ones," Ms Leydon said.

"This initiative is deeply personal to me because I believe everyone deserves to be heard and valued. Missing persons and their families matter."

The Green Seat Project seeks to install green bench seats in prominent public locations across Australia. Each seat bears the statement **"THE MISSING MATTER"** and includes a QR code linking to information about long-term missing persons and resources for families affected by loss.

GCWA Chief Executive Officer **Chris Derksema** said the Green Seat adds a deeply human dimension to public space.

"The Marion Barter case is a poignant reminder of the profound impact a disappearance can have on those left behind," Mr Derksema said.



[gcwa.qld.gov.au](http://gcwa.qld.gov.au)



Queensland  
Government

“Public spaces like Doug Jennings Park should serve many roles - offering recreation, reflection, and connection. Supporting community-driven initiatives such as the Green Seat Project is one way we can create places with meaning and purpose.”

The first Green Seat reflects the value of public spaces in enhancing wellbeing, encouraging conversation, and honouring shared stories.

For more information about the Green Seat Project, visit: [The Green Seat Project](#) | [The Missing Matter](#)

**ENDS**

**GCWA Media Contact:** 0428 923 308



[gcwa.qld.gov.au](http://gcwa.qld.gov.au)



**Queensland  
Government**

# Green seat of hope for missing Aussies

Every 15 minutes,  
someone goes  
missing in Australia

DAVID MURRAY  
NATIONAL CRIME  
CORRESPONDENT

As Sally Leydon gazes across the Gold Coast broadwater from a new seat dedicated to missing Australians, she thinks of the mother she hasn't seen for almost 30 years.

If others sit at the same spot and reflect on lost loved ones and their families, Leydon will have achieved her mission of bringing attention to the many people who go missing every year.

"The whole purpose is to raise awareness of missing persons cases," Leydon said, launching her Green Seat Project on the Southport Spit on Thursday.

Leydon's mother, school-teacher Marion Barter, lived and worked across the broadwater from the green seat her daughter hopes will be the first of many around the country.

Barter hasn't been seen since 1997. A coroner last year found she had died, and that a convicted conman with whom she was in a secret relationship, Ric Blum, knew more than he was saying.

Since then, Leydon has been continuing a relentless campaign to find out what happened to her mother – who would have turned 80 this month – through her podcast *The Missing Matter*.

The first series picked up where the inquest left off. The second series is highlighting the plight of other families of the missing.



RUSSELL SHAKESPEARE, FACEBOOK

Green Seat Project launcher Sally Leydon, above, and with her mother, Marion Barter

A listener employed at the Gold Coast Waterways Authority offered to help her secure her first green seat. "That space is quite close to me, because my Mum literally lived across from the seaway at Ashmore, and taught at The Southport School. The water runs straight past TSS and past Sea World, where (husband) Chris and I met," Leydon said.

"That whole area brings back a lot of memories for me, and I'm really extremely chuffed and very humbled by the offer for them to help me create the first one.

"I'm not going to go and sit in a cemetery to remember my Mum, but I certainly will go and sit and look out to the seaway and wonder where she is in the world."

Her discussions with other families of the missing – who often turn to her for advice because of Barter's case having a high profile – have convinced her that some of the problems that hindered investigations into her mother's disappearance persist.

"We're still having the drama of having borders and different jurisdictions managing missing persons cases. My Mum lived in Queensland but all of her last timeline dots are in NSW. And they just don't communicate well enough together," she said.

Having effectively engaged the public to help fill in huge gaps in knowledge about her mother's disappearance, Leydon wants police to adapt to the times and abandon their hostilities towards media involvement that is not tightly stage managed. "Families are the ones that want the integrity of the case absolutely kept pristine, because we know that it will damage the case if something goes awry or something goes wrong," she said.

Her seat, repurposed by the waterways authority, has been painted green because it was one of Barter's favourite colours.

A plaque with a QR code links to personal stories about those who have gone missing.

It follows in the footsteps of the separate Red Bench Project, run by the Red Rose Foundation, which is raising awareness of domestic violence.

"I don't see why we can't do it for the missing as well," Leydon said. "I think it's an important space that needs help. Someone goes missing every 15 minutes in Australia. I want to try and bring awareness to not just those long-term missing cases, but what happens if someone goes missing in your space? What can you do?"

Some of those who pause at the seat may hold vital information about a missing person that could bring a family resolution, she said. "I'm really hoping that someone sitting on that seat overlooking the water will bring some awareness and thought-provoking conversation about missing people and what it means to be missing. Do they know something? Have they seen that person? Do they remember something?"

# CLARENCE VALLEY INDEPENDENT

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## UNANIMOUS VOTE SHOWS WHAT MATTERS

ENMA PRITCHARD

When a loved one goes missing, often suddenly and without explanation, the emotional and financial impact their disappearance has on their friends and family can be profound.

Fire, violence, uncertainty, frustration, helplessness, and even guilt, anger, and blame, manifest themselves over hours, days, weeks, months, and years, as they longingly await news of their mother, father, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, cousin, son or daughter, or acquaintance, while their absence continues to linger, never abating.

In Australia, police receive more than 50,000 reports of missing persons each year. While many are located shortly afterwards, almost 3000 remain missing, becoming categorised as long-term disappearances and subsequently, and sadly in some instances, cold cases as time stretches on.

It is a tragic circumstance which Sally Leydon is all too familiar with. The daughter of long-term missing woman Marion Barter, who disappeared without explanation 28 years ago, has endured a long, stressful, and lonely journey while trying to find her and understand what has happened to her.

In February 2024, NSW State Coroner James O'Flaherty ruled Ms Barter died on or around October 15, 1997, the day \$10,000 was electronically transferred out of her bank account.



A billboard in the Clarence Valley showing the details of Sally Leydon's mother Marion Barter, who has been missing for almost 30 years. Image: Sally Leydon.

She has never been seen or heard from since. In May 2025, Ms Leydon launched a publicised The Missing Matter as she continued the

search for her mother following the incident, while helping other families understand the processes involved in long-term missing persons cases. More recently, she launched The

Green Seat Project in honour of her missing mother, to help raise awareness of other missing Australians and ensure they are never forgotten. *Continued on pg. 2*

## Tender award deferred for Clarence Regional Library

ENMA PRITCHARD

Clarence Valley Councillors voted unanimously during the Ordinary Monthly Meeting of Clarence Valley Council (CVC) last week to defer awarding the tender to replace damage

which occurred to the roof of the Clarence Regional Library in Grafton during a severe storm in August 2025 when Clarence Valley Councillor Mayor Ray Smith revealed he had been advised that Council's

insurer would not have sufficient time to assess the situation and subsequently provide a cost estimate prior to the end of March.

The extent of the damage caused by the storm last year rendered sections of the building unusable and unsafe for staff or the general public to work within. The significant damage caused to the roof resulted in subsequent damage to internal walls, floors, ceilings, electrical systems, ventilation, and air conditioning, due to additional leaking.

Council had received five

tenders in February, but they will no longer be valid after March. While the cost of repairs is expected to be covered by the insurance company, Council will be required to cover up with the funds up front prior to being reimbursed.

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