



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC

Member for the Agricultural Region
Shadow Minister for Emergency Services; Regional Health;
Road Safety; Volunteering; Regional Cities

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Via email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

15 June 2023

Dear Chair

Petition No 91 – Murder of Stacey Robyn Thorne, 9 December 2007

I write to support the calls of the Thorne family who are seeking justice for the murder of 34-year-old Aboriginal woman, Stacey Thorne, in Boddington in December 2007.

This petition calls for the re-opening of the police investigation into Ms Thorne's murder, and additionally calls for WA Police to re-examine and complete forensic testing on all exhibits; obtain an internationally recognised knife wound expert to review previous evidence; request a full coronial inquest into Ms Thorne's tragic death; and disclose the findings of the Corruption and Crime Commission (CCC) in relation to this matter.

I note that since the launch of the petition in March, two significant developments have occurred. Firstly, on 17 May 2023, the State Government announced a major increase in the financial reward in relation to 64 unsolved "cold cases" in WA, one of which relates to the unsolved murder of Ms Thorne.

On the same date, the CCC tabled a report titled *Report to Attorney General on aspects arising out of the trial of Scott Austic*. This report suggests the initial investigation into Ms Thorne's murder was flawed and lacked thoroughness.

The family of Ms Thorne continues to request a full coronial inquest, a complete testing of all exhibits of evidence and an expert opinion on the knife wounds sustained by Ms Thorne.

It is disheartening to note the murder of Ms Thorne remains unsolved, despite the considerable passage of time since the incident occurred. The lack of progress in this investigation is deeply unsettling for both Ms Thorne's family and the wider community. Responding to the matters requested by Ms Thorne's family would demonstrate the commitment of the State Government and WA Police to seek justice for Ms Thorne and provide closure for her loved ones.

There remains significant public interest in this case, with consistent media coverage speculating on the murder of Ms Thorne for more than a decade. This media interest is by no means historic, with dozens of articles and news reports published into Ms Thorne's murder in 2023 continuing to draw attention to this tragic case.

21 Binda Place
(PO Box 255)
BINDOON WA 6502
martin.aldridge@mp.wa.gov.au

P: (08) 9576 0141
F: (08) 9576 0488
Free: 1800 336 905

Research has found ongoing exposure can have immediate and long-lasting effects on families, by invading their privacy, raising their hopes, and prolonging trauma. Continuing public commentary can also lead to rumour and speculation, which can further intensify the trauma experienced by families.

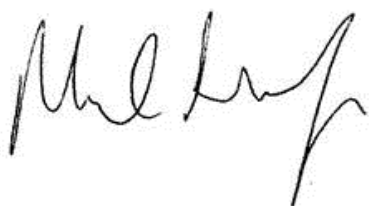
I also draw the Committee's attention toward the broader matter of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Australia. Numerous reports and studies, including the Commonwealth *Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence*, have shown Aboriginal women in Australia experience significantly higher rates of violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault and homicide compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts, and are often marginalised in the criminal justice system.

A previous petition into this matter was presented in August 2021, and attracted over 2,000 signatures calling for the Parliament to acknowledge the increased risks of violence and murder against Aboriginal women and conduct an inquiry into the deaths and disappearances of Aboriginal women.

In conclusion, I strongly encourage the committee to act in support of a full and comprehensive inquest into the murder of Ms Thorne, as well as the other matters arising from the petition. This is a crucial step towards seeking justice for Ms Thorne and her family and addressing wider issues of violence against Aboriginal women in Australia.

I thank you for considering the request to examine the issues raised in this petition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Aldridge', written in a cursive style.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region