
Serial killer probe 'tainted by race'

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The investigation into a serial killer responsible for the unsolved murders of three children 25 years ago has been criticised by federal and state politicians, who say the result would have been different if the victims were white.

The children, four-year-old Eve-lyn Greenup and 16-year-olds Colleen Walker and Clinton Speedy-Duroux, all disappeared from the small country town of Bowraville in northern NSW over five months during 1990 and 1991.

Dozens of their family members will march on the NSW parliament today to call for a retrial of the man detectives believe carried out the killings, Jay Hart.

Federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ken Wyatt said: "If this had been three children in Sydney's Point Piper, then would there have been a different approach? The approach would have been tackled with a lot more rigour ... by police, by authorities. There would have been an outcry." When the children disappeared, police initially spent months telling their families they had gone "walkabout" and did not establish a co-ordinated murder investigation until after the discovery of Clinton's and Eve-lyn's bodies beside a dirt road near Bowraville. Colleen's clothes were recovered from a river near where that road crosses a bridge.

Mr Hart, who has since left the town and changed his name, was subsequently put on trial separately for the Clinton and Evelyn murders and found not guilty. The decision to separate the trials, however, meant much of the evidence linking the murders was not put before a jury. A second police investigation has also uncovered evidence never heard in court.

The children's families will ask the state government today to refer the cases to the Court of Appeal, arguing that evidence linking all three murders should be heard together.

"They want answers and I fully understand that," said Mr Wyatt, the first indigenous member of the federal House of Representatives. They want an outcome that ends up with the person who committed these crimes to be imprisoned and punished for what they've done, because they've taken three lives. If it was my child, I would be equally persistent as they are." Asked whether the victim's race may have affected the outcome of the case, Josephine Cashman, a member of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, said: "Absolutely - no question about it. The government has got to say that Aboriginal women and children are just as valuable as any other category."

The failure to jail anyone over the killings in the past 25 years has had a devastating effect on the children's families, said Ms Cashman, a former NSW prosecutor. It is 18 months since a state parliamentary inquiry found "a perfect storm" of events and

decisions around the murder investigation has "characterised the families' experiences-" in the time since.

The NSW Attorney-General and Director of Public Prosecution have had access to 14 volumes of evidence about the murders submitted by police in 2007, but have declined to reopen the trials. "You've got three children murdered and no one ever being held responsible for it," said Linda Burney, the first indigenous member of state parliament. "You have to ask the question whether if it had been three white Australian children, would you have had the same outcome? That question needs to be asked."