

Falconio search will go on: cops

Sophie Elsworth and Remy Varga

Northern Territory Police has vowed to keep searching for the body of murdered British backpacker Peter Falconio, after his mother issued a desperate plea for help.

In an exclusive interview, Joan Falconio made an emotional appeal for anyone with any information to come forward to authorities so her family could finally have closure.

"I do hope I will find Peter in my lifetime and in my husband's lifetime," she said.

The body of Mr Falconio has never been found and his killer John Bradley Murdoch died in July last year after a battle with throat cancer.

In a statement, NT Police said they remained committed to finding the body of Mr Falconio and delivering justice to his family.

"It is deeply regrettable that Murdoch has died without, as far as we are aware, ever disclosing the location of Peter Falconio's remains," said a NT Police spokesman.

"We continue to urge anyone with information relating to the location of Peter Falconio's remains to come forward."

"No piece of information is too small, what may seem insignificant could prove critical in helping investigators resolve this final and deeply important aspect of the case."

Joan Falconio said she hadn't heard from police in a year and was scared her son's case had been forgotten.

"I don't hear from Australia at all, I don't hear from the police, I don't hear from anyone, not since 12 months ago," she said.

Peter Falconio was aged 28 when he was murdered by Bradley John Murdoch on July 14, 2001, while travelling on a remote stretch of the Stuart Highway with his girlfriend Joanne Lees, then 27.

Murdoch was found guilty of murder in the NT Supreme Court in 2005 and had been serving a life sentence with a non-parole period of 28 years.

A \$500,000 reward remains for any available information that leads directly to discovery of Mr Falconio's remain. NT Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro did not respond to questions before deadline.

Violent men coerce partners to commit crime

Abused women forced to become criminals



Engender Equality CEO Alina Thomas outside the Supreme Court of Tasmania. Picture: File

Amber Wilson

It's an everyday tragedy in Tasmania – but women under the control of abusive men are committing crimes at their request, and ending up in jail themselves.

Recent Tasmanian court and parole cases reveal a recurring pattern: abused women committing crimes under the coercion of violent partners.

The cases, described as "chilling, harrowing and awful", have raised questions about whether the women would have ended up in the court system had they been provided with any support before their stories reached the point of crisis.

"We use mums as scapegoats," Alina Thomas, CEO of Engender Equality said.

"Victim-survivors are bearing the brunt of a state that's failing to understand what family violence is – and what the impact of that is on a person's psyche, their choices, how they see themselves, and their relationships with their

children."

In one Tasmanian case, a woman was last week jailed after a court heard her violent ex-boyfriend incited her to bash another woman.

The Supreme Court also heard that the woman had been so afraid of the "violent, threatening, abusive and controlling" man that she had fled to Victoria to escape him.

In that case, the woman – now 29 – was convicted of nine counts of assault, plus a strangulation carried out by her ex-partner that she was also held criminally responsible for.

However, the sentencing judge took mercy, and gave her a fully-suspended eight-month prison sentence.

The following offences were serious, and have led to ongoing trauma for victims, including children the women harmed while in domestic violence situations.

However these cases have also highlighted the role coercive control and sustained abuse can play in women's offending.

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Alina Thomas
CEO of Engender Equality

In a parole case from 2025, a woman was finally paroled after serving more than four years at the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison for a serious case in which she helped her abusive partner sexually abuse her own daughter and his two children.

The Parole Board noted the woman suffered violence at his hands, became isolated from her family and friends, and

had told Community Corrections she remained "scared of him".

In another parole case, another woman spent six months in prison after failing to report to authorities that her partner was sexually abusing her daughter.

The sentencing judge in her case noted the woman had likely become desensitised to and disassociated from the abuse because of her fear of her partner, who emotionally abused and controlled her for years.

That woman, in applying for parole, said her loneliness was one of her biggest risk factors outside prison.

Ms Thomas said the cases painted a picture of a system that was failing abused women.

"Those women were not supported by any specialised services, and the reality in Tasmania is that we have a three-year wait for services," she said.

"How might things have been different, if those women had been able to reach out to

someone discreet and entrusted?"

"These women are living in absolutely hideous circumstances."

Ms Thomas said women living in violent or controlling situations were often unlikely to reach out for help as doing so could escalate the violence they were subjected to at home.

She also said crimes involving incest, and the issues leading up to it, were poorly understood in Tasmania.

Ms Thomas said services needed to become more readily available for abused women in Tasmania.

She also said fundamental cultural change needed to occur in which responsibility was placed upon primary perpetrators – the person holding the power in the first place.

"All of society blames the mums. Something bad is happening to the kids? It's the mum's fault," Ms Thomas said.

"When victim-survivors become the person who is criminalised – it just decimates your life."



Pauline Hanson.

Hanson vows to keep on running as she turns 72

Tia Clarkson-Pascoe

Pauline Hanson is adamant she is not too old for parliament as the One Nation leader turns 72.

Speaking on radio on Monday, just days after turning 72, the senator said she would only retire if her health declined.

"I'll let the people know this. I've already told my staff, if I become like a (former US president) Joe Biden, just tap

me on the shoulder and give me the heel to move on," Senator Hanson told 2GB radio.

"It will come down to my health. I've got nothing wrong with me. I take no medication, nothing. I've got more energy in me than a lot of these other people."

Without saying who, Senator Hanson claimed another member of parliament should retire because of their age.

"My staff are flat out keeping

up with me from eight o'clock in the morning till 10, 11 o'clock at night. I can still run down the halls of parliament in my heels when I have to get to the chamber, so don't underestimate me," she said.

The Queensland senator's reference to the former US president is unsurprising given Senator Hanson's admiration for former rival Donald Trump.

Senator Hanson praised Donald Trump's policies during a

speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference held at Mr Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in November last year.

"I hate to say it, but the Australian Labor Party will never make Australia great again despite a desperate need to turn our country around," she told the conference.

Support for Senator Hanson's One Nation party is soaring on voter backlash to the

federal budget, and the party has overtaken Labor for the first time.

The latest AFR/Redbridge Group/Accent Research poll shows One Nation's primary vote increased by four percentage points to 31 per cent over the past month, while Labor's primary support fell by three percentage points to 28 per cent. Meanwhile the Coalition's primary vote dropped from 22 per cent to 20 per cent.