

## KILLER FLEES

### Classification:

#### Subhead: Schizophrenic man missing from hostel

**Text:** A paranoid schizophrenic who slit his mother's throat in 2005 but was found not guilty of her murder on the grounds of insanity spent less than three years at a secure psychiatric hospital before being granted supervised freedom in the community.

A manhunt continued last night for **Enoch Samuel Walsh**, known as Sam, who has been missing since Sunday after he failed to return to the Claremont psychiatric hostel where he was living.

Fears are held for Mr Walsh's state of mind because he has not had the twice-daily medication needed to manage his schizophrenia since early on Sunday.

He showed no signs of mental illness or any problems before he disappeared, according to hostel licensee Judith Balfe.

The 38-year-old had been living at Romily House for four years and had not put a foot wrong before he failed to return from a church service, she said.

"We are just devastated because this boy has walked the line for four years without making one mistake," Ms Balfe said.

"He had a job. He was driving his own car. He was a responsible person."

Mr **Walsh** was granted supervised release by the Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board in January 2008, less than three years after he was placed on a mandatory custody order when he faced trial over his mother's death.

The "leave of absence order" enabled him to leave Graylands Hospital and later live independently at Romily House.

He had to report to Graylands once a month — which he last did on September 23 — when he would spend a night and be assessed by a psychiatrist.

On Sunday Mr **Walsh** went to the evening service, telling staff he would phone if he was going to be later than 9pm.

When Mr **Walsh**, who changed his name from **Enoch** Wright, had not returned by 10.30pm, the hostel alerted Graylands Hospital.

Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board chairman Robert Cock said the board had become aware on Monday that Mr **Walsh** had breached his conditions.

Police were not informed until Monday afternoon, sparking a search. The public were alerted only yesterday morning.

Opposition Leader Mark McGowan said the Government had to explain why the public was not made aware immediately.

Attorney-General Michael Mischin said he would seek a report on how the situation was handled.

The police hunt has been centred on Kalgoorlie-Boulder after Mr Walsh's car was seen near Merredin, about halfway to the Goldfields town, on Monday morning.

Police warned the current resident of the home where Mr **Walsh** killed his mother to leave for his own safety.

Ms Balfe yesterday described his disappearance as "a bolt out of the blue".

She said staff would usually pick up on any mental health problems or changes in residents but there had been no signs. "He took his medication. He was totally respectful of women and staff," she said.

Ms Balfe said the supported accommodation at Romily House was about giving those with mental health problems a fresh start.

Margaret Doherty, from Mental Health Matters 2, said there were stringent reviews before an accused person detained for mental illness was released.

"There must have been a significantly good case with a very low risk assessment," she said.

Mr **Walsh**, who has a brother and sister living in Perth, worked at a factory in Belmont assembling chairs and was a lovely boy, Ms Balfe said.

Residents can come and go from Romily House as they please and staff at the licensed psychiatric hostel support them with their medication and independent living.

Police yesterday warned people not to approach Mr **Walsh**, saying he was "unpredictable".

Mr **Walsh** is 182cm tall, of slim build with brown hair and blue eyes and may be clean shaven.

He is believed to be in a 1998 silver Hyundai Excel hatchback, registration 1AFY124.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 131 444.