FRANCE, Sydney 14 June 1905

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Driver	West Perth	Run over by train

Sydney France was 33 years of age when he mysteriously disappeared from the cab of his locomotive at West Perth. The coroner concluded that Sydney had left the cab to apply handbrakes and that he had fallen and was run over. Sydney's death was deemed to be an accident. Sydney lived at East Fremantle with his wife and four children. He is interred at Karrakatta Cemetery (WESLEYAN/CA/0271)

MANGLED BY A TRAIN.
AN ENGINE DRIVER KILLED.
PERTH, June 14.
When a goods train from Fremantle was nearing Perth at 4 o'clock this morning the fireman missed the driver, Sydney France. A search was instituted, and France's mangled body was found strewn along the line. It is not known how he got off the engine, as the fireman's back was turned at the time. The deceased leaves a widow and four, children.

Source: *Trove/Kalgoorlie Miner (WA) Thursday 15 June 1905 Page 4.*

WEST PERTH RAILWAY FATALITY.
VERDICT OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH.
The adjourned inquest concerning the death of Sydney France, a railway engine driver, who was killed at West Perth on Wednesday last, was held yesterday afternoon, before Mr. S. Stubbs, J.P., and a jury of three. Mr. Lukin appeared on behalf of the relatives of the deceased.

Alfred Ashton, the guard of the train which the deceased was driving, stated that when the train was stopped outside the Perth goods yard he was told that France was not on the engine. The train was travelling at the rate of two or three miles an hour. Though the regulations provided for a stoppage at Leederville to pin the brakes, yet on this occasion the rule was not observed. Drivers frequently did not stop there. There were two brakes on the vehicles, and the guard's brake. Vacuum brakes were on the three vehicles only, and there was a leakage in one, while the rest were not fitted.

Edward James Underwood, the fireman of the train, deposed that he last saw the deceased when the train was at the subway at Havelock Street. He was standing on the footplate, while the witness, was working the sand-gear. Near the West Perth signal box he heard a noise and when he locked up France had disappeared. The vacuum brakes were hard on, and the train was pulled up outside the goods yard. As he thought that the deceased had got out tofix the brakes, he waited for him to return. The distance between the spot where the body was found and the stopping point was about half a mile. When he missed France, the train was traveling at the rate of about four or five miles an hour. Near the top of the incline the deceased .remarked, "I think she's got us beat. mate." He considered that France left the engine to put on the hand-brake, as he thought that the train would over-shoot the signal. The deceased whistled for brakes.

William Devereaux, who was in the West Perth signal-cabin when the fatality occurred, said that he saw the train come down the hill towards West Perth at the ordinary speed. The accident, he thought, happened about five yards from the cabin, when the train was travelling at about four miles an hour.

Joseph Langoulant, foreman shunter said that four miles an hour was not an excessive speed where the accident occurred. The rails were slippery, and, if the train were travelling at four miles an hour, with all the brakes on hard at the West Perth Station, it might have overshot the signal.

The Coroner remarked that it seemed risky to run a train with so few brakes and it was a wonder that more lives were not lost in such circumstances.

The jury returned a verdict that the deceased came to his death accidentally by falling from the engine.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Wednesday 21 June 1905 Page 6.*

FAMILY NOTICES
FRANCE.-The Friends of the late Mr. Sidney France (late W.A.G. Railways) are respectfully invited to follow his remains to the place of interment, the Wesleyan Cemetery, Karrakatta. The Funeral is appointed to leave his father's residence, 319 Bulwer Street, Perth, at 3 o'clock THIS (Thursday) AFTERNOON, per road. Friends wishing to attend the Funeral may proceed by the 4 o'clock trains leaving Perth and Fremantle. BOWRA and O'DEA, Undertakers, 195 Pier-street.- Perth. Tel. 303.

W.A. LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE DRIVERS, FIREMEN and CLEANERS' UNION.
Members of above Union are respectfully invited to follow the remains of our late comrade, DRIVER SYDNEY FRANCE, Karrakatta Cemetery. The Funeral is appointed to leave No. 319 Bulwer Street, near Lake Street, Perth, THIS (Thursday) AFTERNOON, at 3 o'clock. Members' may leave Perth and Fremantle respectively per 3.30p.m. trains W. E. ABBOTT, General Secretary.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth)* Thursday 15 June 1905 Page 1.