A PROFESSOR who has dedicated 15 years to decoding one of Australia’s biggest mysteries hopes a new portrait of the victim could crack the case.

The image, commissioned by University of Adelaide’s Professor Derek Abbott, reconstructs the living face of the man found dead on an Adelaide beach nearly 65 years ago: The Somerton Man.

By constructing a clearer picture of the man in life, Prof Abbott hopes researchers can learn more about his death.

He has created 3D scans, written lists of commonly reported inaccuracies, and constructed a detailed timeline of the investigation. The body of the unknown man was found by a sea wall at Somerton Beach on December 1, 1948.

Two months later, a pathologist re-examining the body found a small pocket. Inside, rolled tightly and ripped from a book, was the printed phrase “tamam shud”.

But the book – with its missing back page – had a secret. Visible only under ultraviolet light, police found what looked like a code, which has never been deciphered.

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