

Submission

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To: Stalking (DJCS) <stalking@lawreform.vic.gov.au>

To whom it may concern,

I wish to make an anonymous submission to the Stalking discussion.

While I have not been a victim of Family Violence Stalking, I believe I have been a victim of non-Family Violence Stalking in my younger years.

The most serious incident was when I was a student, living in a boarding house, on the ground floor, and a "peeping tom" set up a loose brick platform outside my bedroom window, he must have used the platform multiple times before a friend noticed him watching me through a tiny gap in the window frame, which was bolted in place to give me some ventilation. The blind was mostly down, day and night, but a small gap for air, meant that this man could watch me closely, although I did not see him there. The man was committing a sexual act. Once we discovered him, he ran away, and we called the police. The police knew this man, said he was harmless, and spoke to him, and I was not bothered again, but it was frightening. He had been about 1 foot away from me on multiple occasions, and until that night I didn't know.

The take-away from this was that I was told by the police that basically it was my own fault, for not having the blind fully down. I had left a 1inch gap. (In other words, I was asking for it). Who would ask for that?

On two other occasions I was "followed". Both incidents were late at night, walking home. One time a driver in a car followed me, stopped when I stopped, started when I started. I was terrified, and ran in to a stranger's driveway and up to the front door, the driver stopped and watched, and when I knocked on the door and explained what was going on, the man of the house walked outside ... and the car took off. The second incident was the same as the first, but the man was on foot, and yelling abuse.

None of these incidents represents a major crime, and they are probably very common, but, if you are a woman, or a man for that matter, they are frightening. I am lucky that I was not a "victim", however, I felt like a victim at the time.

It is wrong for a man to follow a woman against her wishes. It is wrong for a man to spy on a woman against her wishes, or without her knowledge. The same applies to women following, or spying on men. This needs to be known and understood by the whole community.

It is a criminal act. Whether it involves technology or not, it is a criminal act.

Discussion about Stalking needs to be part of the education system, and part of the discussion in the general community, we need to call it out.

Stalking doesn't need to be defined by repetitive acts, just one incidence of "following" someone, that one incidence needs to be on the criminal scale, maybe at the lower end, but reportable.

Following someone, and frightening them is not ok.

Hunters use the same term. "Stalking" describes following prey, with the intent of capturing it, or killing it. From experience, when you are being stalked you feel that the hunter/stalker might take you away, or kill you.



I don't feel qualified to comment on the horrendous experiences suffered by victims at the high end of the Stalking scale. But, having had the experiences I have had, at the low end, I can say that the fear was awful enough. Is awful enough.

Yours faithfully

