

I am not a victim of stalking but I was a friend of Celeste Manno and have been greatly impacted by the tragic loss of Celeste Manno [REDACTED]

I strongly believe that the current legal system is not well equipped to deal with victims of stalking and stalkers. I believe the legal system is too lenient when dealing with stalkers and fails to provide protection for victims of stalking.

I would like to make a few suggestions on how the laws can be amended in order to provide protection to victims and provide rehabilitation to the perpetrators. Our legal system is built on the basis of protection and rehabilitation and I believe both can occur for perpetrators.

#### **INTERVENTION ORDERS:**

I believe intervention orders do not provide protection to victims as perpetrators know that breaching an IVO won't do anything. They know that they will just get a slap on the wrist.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I believe the police and laws need to enforce harsher punishments for breaching IVO's, regardless of whether the breach is physical or on social media. Perpetrators need to realise that stalking is a serious offence and everyone needs to realise the fear and pain that stalking inflicts on victims. People need to realise that stalking has long lasting effects.

#### **TRACKING SYSTEM:**

There needs to be an implementation of an electronic monitoring system similar to the study conducted in Tasmania. The trial conducted in Tasmania has resulted in positive outcomes for victims. In the trial, devices tracked the location of the perpetrators in order to make sure that they were not close to the victim's place of work, house etc. The results demonstrated a huge decrease in assaults, threats, abuse and stalking. In addition, the electronic monitoring provided victims with a sense of safety and protection. The electronic monitoring also formed part of evidence in court.

I believe implementing a tracking system will benefit the victim. Stalking causes fear, and a lack of feeling safe, this tracking system will ensure victims feel protected and safe once more. In addition, I believe it is something that can deter perpetrators from committing physical acts of violence. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

If this electronic monitoring system is to be adopted, I believe there should be additional factors taken into consideration. The monitor should alert authorities if the perpetrator is a certain distance away from victim.

## **REHABILITATION:**

Some of the aims of the legal system is to punish, deter and rehabilitate those who commit crimes. I believe perpetrators of stalking need to be provided with some form of rehabilitation. Mandatory mental health assessments should be administered to anyone accused of stalking. If any mental health issues are identified they must be addressed appropriately, such as with counselling sessions.

In addition, I believe assessments need to be conducted looking at the potential risk of violence. There are numerous scales and assessments that have been created to consider the risk of violence.

The violence risk scale considers static and dynamic risk factors to assess the risk of violence.

## **EDUCATION:**

I believe educating people at a young age and continuing that education in all aspects of life is important. Stalking has a negative connotation around it, people do not see how serious of an offence it can be. This view needs to change and it has to start now.

Education in schools needs to be provided, teaching children at a young age that stalking is illegal and that if you are stalked that it is not something to be ashamed of and to report it. This may help change the views and demonstrate that stalking is in fact a heinous crime that needs to be taken seriously.

Education needs to be provided in a wide variety of settings including workplaces showing that reporting stalking is not something to be ashamed of, you are not being dramatic and it is something to be fearful of.

Providing education in school and workplace settings will encourage victims to report stalking and help victims not feel alone and ashamed. It will also help show victims and inform others that stalking can present itself in many ways.

## **POLICE:**

The segment with Aggie on A Current Affairs mentioned that the police had limited guidelines when dealing with non-family violence stalking. I believe this gap has been noticed by the VLRC and new guidelines must be developed and implemented to address this gap. Police need to learn and be provided with guidelines when approaching stalking as a crime, stalkers and victims. These guidelines need to demonstrate the seriousness of stalking as a crime and not see it as a minor offence.

The view of stalking not being a serious offence needs to change. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Victims need to stop being blamed or told to limit what they can do because of stalking. It is not up to the victim to limit their right to use of social media or limit their freedom because of a stalker.

Police need to be provided with greater power to enforce harsh punishment for perpetrators. Victims of stalking live in immense fear and constant paranoia that the perpetrator is watching them or will do something to them. These need to be taken into consideration when looking at stalking as a crime and looking at how to punish perpetrators.

**PUNISHMENTS:**

I believe that perpetrators of stalking believe they will not be punished harshly for the atrocities they commit. They know that they can go back to stalking and continue to do it repeatedly with no harsh punishment. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The law needs to demonstrate to the perpetrators that stalking is not a small offence it is a serious offence with serious punishments. For this exact reason I believe depending on the conduct there should be instant jail time and bail should not be granted. During this time the perpetrator should receive specific rehabilitation and counselling to ensure they do not continue with their horrific conduct once released.

**CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, I believe stalking needs to be viewed as a serious crime that has serious consequences. Perpetrators need to be punished accordingly and victims need to be taken seriously. The legal system is not well equipped to deal with stalking [REDACTED]

Celeste should be alive right now. She should have not had to live in fear of being stalked. She should not have experienced the horrors and fear that she did in her last moments of life. Her mum should not be blaming herself for what happened. Celeste's family, friends and loved ones should not be experiencing the hurt, sadness and grief that they are. Please spare future victims this harrowing ordeal and improve stalking laws and introduce Celeste's Law. Unfortunately, it will not bring our beloved Celeste back but hopefully this will be a wakeup call to legislators and law enforcement.

Celeste and I were best friends in primary school and we unfortunately drifted apart, although, we remained friends and went to the same high school and university. One of my biggest regrets in life is drifting apart with her. I wish I could have helped her in some way. Unfortunately, I cannot. This is my only way of doing something to fix it. I urge you to take what I have written into consideration.