

To Whom It May Concern, I am a [REDACTED] year old woman who lives in [REDACTED]. I would like to share my story in all its horror with you.

It started when I was 1st conceived, & goes downhill from there. I wasn't wanted no different to a lot of children, but i grew up with a cruel violent father my earliest memory was begging my mum to leave my dad she never did. For reasons that were not clear to me she stuck by him till he died, she even nursed him at home when the lung transplant he had failed (no he never smoked he was an asthmatic). My mum was a [REDACTED] so when i was growing up she worked shift work & my dad worked full time [REDACTED]. I was forced to stay with my grandmother who was just as bad as my father, all my mum's brothers & sisters were in abusive relationships same as my grandparents & all my dad's siblings as well so i never knew there was another sort of relationship that didn't include being beaten or financially or verbally abused. It was the norm even in the neighbourhoods i have grown up in & even now live in it isn't normal & makes me nervous when things are quiet, there is always some man usually threatening to kill the woman they are with & children on the streets. I recently went to another house on a Saturday night recently with my ex hubby & was shocked at how quiet it was, scarily quiet. But that is how I grew up i was an only child thank god so it was just me who coped the crap from dad. My parents didn't have my brother till [REDACTED] years after i was born so by then I had escaped & could monitor the way my brother was brought up.

When I was [REDACTED] I left home & chose to live on the streets it was safer then home. The thing I could not understand was back then in the [REDACTED]s there was no help for the homeless. I was under age so cops picked me up & i spent a night in the lockup. They then put me straight back into my dad's custody. I went to court the judge said I had a wonderful parents & he couldn't understand why I would be acting out. (The norm).

Everyone who met my dad thought he was the most stand up guy, top bloke couldn't find anyone better, & you couldn't as long as you didn't have to live with him & put up with the cruel things he said & did. My mum never wanted to work she wanted to be a mum but she had to. She had to pay for food & all the cars & bills my dad ran up. Whatever he wanted he got. I copped a busted cheekbone & numerous other bruises I was a clumsy child. Sound familiar yet. When he punched me in the face it was my fault because we had gone away for a huge family reunion & i had forgotten to pack him clean socks. All the family was there 100s of them they watched him punch me. They didn't step in it was acceptable behaviour; my dad had been drinking once again all day.

This is my child hood by my late teens early [REDACTED]s I had been raped twice. Never got any help. The 2nd time i was raped was while i was at uni in the [REDACTED]. I was a supervisor of a [REDACTED] i was threatened if i said anything i would lose my job & the uni would make sure i didn't pass. Mind you by this time i had beaten drug & alcohol addiction so I thought. I was drinking everyday by the time i was [REDACTED] also drugs.

When i finished uni & passed i came back to [REDACTED], because i had gotten into a dangerous violent relationship again & had to escape again. Mind you before i went to uni in [REDACTED] i had just escaped another abusive relationship. Seeing a pattern. In my late [REDACTED]s to late [REDACTED]s i had numerous relationships all violent or abusive. Then in [REDACTED] I went to court to get a restraining order against a violent ex. It was a joke I was forced to go to mediation with him which he was abusive to the mediator. It was a joke so were the police. The female officer who came to me the night he bashed me & threatened me was very angry & intimidating towards me. I had to spend the next year looking over my shoulder scared he was always going to turn up.

At this time in my late [REDACTED]s in [REDACTED]. I started going to a counselling service a decent 1 who are really busy due to the fact they only deal with domestic violence cases. [REDACTED] my counsellor has been excellent, especially seeming that soon after I entered into another abusive relationship but this time for the first time ever he moved in with me full time & i married him. In the first [REDACTED] months things were great I had never met a guy who told me i was attractive before all the red flags were there but i didn't take notice. The ex hubby had gone through the joke of the legal system with me so he knows the loopholes, anyway cut a long story short got married in [REDACTED].

Separated in [REDACTED] & for the past [REDACTED] years have been trying everyday to get him to leave me alone. I get roughly [REDACTED] calls from him & messages on both home & mobile phones; he has also waited for me at shopping centres & comes to my house. I am not sure how far he will go or what he is prepared to do I do know he has been enquiring about purchasing a [REDACTED] & has looked into the legalities of owning 1. I guess like a lot of women my future is in the hands of the gods. It is not a way to live my whole life i have had to survive i have never been in the position to enjoy life, i had to survive childhood then my teens & now adulthood & going into mid life I am still surviving just wondering what it would be like to never be afraid . I have never been on a holiday in [REDACTED] years of existing i have never had a car that has not been [REDACTED] years old. The little bit of furniture I own is all [REDACTED] years old. I have never even lived in a place for more than [REDACTED] years I am always escaping from men. I know a great part of it is me. But i cannot choose a healthy relationship because from birth i have never see a relationship that wasn't abusive from family & neighbours they have all been abusive. It is sad that in my family i am the 4th generation that has never known anything but a abusive relationship from my great grandparents to me. Abuse & alcohol is drummed into the Australian culture. It needs to change.

The Government put so much money & resources into quit smoking campaigns but i have never noticed someone who has too many cigarettes & goes home & bashes his wife & children. I have seen 1st hand the damage caused due to a man going out drinking coming home bashing his wife & children, also not having enough money to buy food or pay rent due to the money going towards alcohol.

How about a royal commission into how much alcohol abuse costs the health system & society in general. WE have to stop the culture of the aussie drunk. It's not okay it has to change.

I chose not to have children due to the fact i did not want to give another generation the sort of life i have had. If i had not seen things i have seen or had things happen to me i may have chosen to have them, but existing & surviving is not a lifestyle choice i would recommend.

Also women need to change as well. I have been to a lot of courses where it has been women only & have noticed how women are another women's worst enemy. The way women judge each other & put each other down is sad & disgusting. I have been judged so often when i have gone to shop in stores by the women who work in them. One makeup store I went to the sales woman said i would not be able to afford their product mind you i did purchase the same product at a more expensive price. People have got to stop judging you never know what struggles another faces every day. We also need our Government to do more in the safety of all their constituents not just the middle to higher socio economic groups. I have a voice & i am just as important as the next person as Terry Pratchett says in his book i shall wear midnight "people aren't just people, they are people surrounded by circumstances".

[REDACTED]