

Expanding Adult Time, Adult Crime and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 083

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Submission regarding anti-social behaviour with a focus on 'tenants and homeowners'.

I am requesting that the government focus on 'tenants and home owners' regarding victim impacts as well as the other focus points already being considered when reforming the laws regarding anti-social behaviour.

I have studied psychology and worked as a community service worker with families experiencing loss of child custody due to abuse and anti-social behaviour as well as a loss of housing. In this time, I was worked as a crisis intervention officer who provided immediate response to victims of horrendous abuse from anti-social behaviour. I have worked with both perpetrators and victims of anti-social behaviour.

During the past 25 years, I have personally experienced horrendous impacts from anti-social behaviour as a tenant. In the year 2000, I witnessed the Western Australian government relocating hundreds and thousands of people further away from the CBD of Perth and Fremantle to provide a safe, stable place for families to reside without the constant torment and threat of anti-social behaviour which I was personally experiencing in my own rental property. I moved to Victoria and in 2005, I lived in a unit which was one of 6, located in a nice area of town. During the three years of residing there, I was in and out of court on a continual basis with a total of 5 restraining orders being placed on my neighbours by me, due to ongoing violence, destruction of my property, horrendous acts that were unspeakable and traumatising. I have had to flee many properties due to ongoing anti-social behaviour that was not addressed by the police after many desperate requests. I was only instructed by police, to relocate to solve the issue. I have had tenants who displayed anti-social behaviour and have had to remove them from my own house.

For the past 3 years, due to the housing and affordability crisis, I have had to reside in mobile home parks and caravan parks. The first place I lived, I used my advocacy, counselling and crisis management skills to work with management and tenants of the estate to address chronic anti-social behaviour. The manager fought me all the way and did not want to address the issue. The tenants were homicidal and suicidal due to the horrendous and ongoing nature of the anti-social behaviour of other tenants and the continual flight, fight, fear and fawn responses it evoked. Children were suffering terribly and rocking back and forth inside their houses in fear, without any recognition from law enforcement or management. Elderly residents wanted to kill themselves and the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. I met with the police on several occasions. I called the police countless times and did not see any issues being addressed, the perpetrators being dealt or any consequences enforced for their tormenting and tortuous behaviour. I was in the process of taking the managers to court to have these matters addressed when they found a way to evict me, under the grounds of 'changing the use of the premises' which I was unable to prove as retaliatory action for my stance against anti-social behaviour.

I am now residing in a central Queensland caravan park and have been addressing the anti-social behaviours from tenants in this park. I have been communicating and working with the managers to educate and encourage prompt action. I have contacted the RTA on several occasions and asked that they formally record all concerns. The threat of court action is currently prominent.

The major concern in these premises has been continual thumping, loud music that can start as early as 7am in the morning and continue until the late hours of the night. It has been used as a weapon in neighbour disputes, to torment and torture other people. Other tenants use this type of disturbance to express their hatred for life, or to vent their personal frustrations without any care or consideration for anyone around them. I have seen tenants' suicidal and at their wits' ends, with their peace robbed from them and no hope of getting it back due to these ongoing disturbances. I have seen and heard tenants threaten other tenants for continually disturbing their peace, landing the victim in trouble instead of the perpetrators. Tenants have been continually discouraged and disappointed in asking management for help and are either uneducated or ill equipped to contact the RTA, breach the management and go through the arduous, intimidating and confusing process to get any kind of help. I have had managers say to me that they are intimidated by the court process of the Residential Tenancies Authority and do not want to issue breaches to tenants, to avoid these unwanted processes.

The seriousness of this issue is immense. People's lives, livelihoods and wellbeing are being destroyed from noise disturbance due to thumping loud music. This past year I have written to members of parliament and communicated with members of council about addressing this issue. One member of council notified me that he and his family had to sell their beloved home and move, due to a neighbour who would not stop playing thumping music day and night, his children were greatly affected, he and his wife could not take anymore. They had tried to use police help on many occasions, but no help was ever given to make it stop. I have spoken with other property owners whose livestock, including horses and cattle are affected by continual thumping music disturbances that are occurring day and night.

When I have called police, my experience over the past 25 years is; I hear them discuss, 'what should we put this down in our report as?' I am flabbergasted that there are no clear laws addressing anti-social behaviour or noise disturbance, no direction for police and previously there has not even been a category in the legal system for appropriate reporting. I have also never witnessed any police officer recognise the devastating impact on any victim.

For people who experience distress from intrusive disturbance that is harassing or threatening, where they live, work, rest or play, it is a serious issue that ignites the fight, flight, freeze or fawn response to threat. The intrusive nature of this kind of disturbance is dictating, enforcing and is experienced as a form of abuse, similar to 'coercive control' which is now a criminal offence. Those who are victimised urgently need recognition, assistance and authoritative reform to address this issue and provide safeguards from ongoing suffering.

Coercive meaning - Forcing somebody to act / or using force to persuade people to do things that they are unwilling to do.
(Cambridge Dictionary)

Coercive control - ANY behaviour which scares, hurts, isolates, humiliates, harasses, monitors, takes away another person's freedom or unreasonably controls their day-to-day activities.
(NSW Government www.nsw.gov.au)

Disturbance from anti-social behaviour

Question: Can the disturbance be ignored?

If the disturbance cannot be ignored then it is dictating, enforcing and intruding. Anti-social behaviour, that cannot be ignored, coerces other people into making decisions or acting in ways that they are not willingly choosing to do.

- A disturbance from anti-social behaviour may include many different scenarios and variables. The disturbance may come from neighbours continually playing loud thumping base music or from a person physically confronting other people by yelling, imposing into someone's personal space, intimidating, threatening other's safety, stability and wellbeing, damaging property or threatening to damage property and much more.
 - Anti-social behaviour is unpredictable, the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour have been crossed. Kindness, thoughtfulness and consideration of others has been abandoned and the behaviour may escalate at any time for any reason, further threatening safety and stability.
- ⇒ **Anti-social behaviour 'dictates' what other people do around the perpetrator or to avoid the perpetrator.**
- ⇒ **Anti-social behaviour 'enforces' what choices and actions other people must make to protect themselves, find safety or to reduce stress or fear experienced from the disturbance.**
- ⇒ **Anti-social behaviour 'intrudes' into the lives, workplaces and activities of others.**
- ⇒ **Anti-social behaviour affects the physical and mental health of others, triggering flight, fight, fear or fawn responses to the threat.**
- ⇒ **The effects of Anti-social behaviour is that of control and abuse. Any one who has been a victim of anti-social behaviour experiences the same outcomes/emotions of those that have been assaulted, controlled, coerced, threatened, attacked, tormented, tortured or traumatised.**

The severity of the 'impact' on a person's life, from antisocial behaviour is based on many variables. How long is the disturbance going to last for? How often is the disturbance occurring? What are the effects of the disturbance? How is a person feeling due to the disturbance? Although these variables are endless, when determining if anti-social behaviour is impacting on other people's lives, ask these questions:

- ◇ Can people safely remain where they are or do they need to relocate?
- ◇ Do people feel threatened, is there a threat of danger to themselves, others or to property?
- ◇ Can a person enjoy what they are currently doing or are they forced to change what they are doing as a result of the disturbance?
- ◇ Is the disturbance affecting people's peace, mental health, safety, stability or wellbeing?
- ◇ Is the noise causing stress, distress, distraction or hindrance? How long is it going to last and how often is this occurring?

Anti-social behaviour is experienced as abuse, which is coercive, dictating, enforcing, intruding and controlling. The ongoing impact of anti-social behaviour for the community and individuals needs urgent recognition and attention, right now from police and policy influencers

I have tried to develop some materials to use as flyers, to educate victims to speak up and advocate for themselves. I have developed a victim impact questionnaire which I have given to people around town who have neighbours that continually perpetrate anti-social behaviour including ongoing noise disturbances which threaten the safety and stability of families, singles, elderly, disabled, children, surrounding property, pets and livestock. I have encouraged people to use this impact questionnaire to present their case to the police, property owners, property management or even the perpetrators of the anti-social behaviour themselves. However, it is dangerous to approach and confront a person who perpetrates anti-social behaviour because their response will also be anti-social. I am considering designing a website for victims to obtain information, empowerment and instruction on how to speak up and demand that the law makes necessary changes to address this issue. My efforts are because the Australian Government is not addressing this issue or helping desperate victims.

I cannot stop lobbying the government until the impact of anti-social behaviour on 'tenants and homeowners' is thoroughly researched and appropriate law reform carried out to restore and enforce a person's right to peace and quiet.

Please consider this submission. Please address the need to protect tenants and homeowners against anti-social behaviour and please make the necessary changes in the law. Please make the necessary changes while recognising the impact that anti-social behaviour from noise-disturbance is having on victims and how it is controlling the lives of tenants and homeowners and destroying their safety, stability and wellbeing. Please follow the changes in the law, right through to the Residential Tenancy Act, making it easier and less intimidating for tenants and property managers to address ongoing destructive anti-social behaviour. Victims need protection and recognition now!!!

Kind regards

