

Mrs Marianne J Walker
8 Balcara Avenue
Carseldine Qld 4034

Home: 07 3863 2139
Work: 07 3258 8603

9 August 2002

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

**House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Inquiry into crime in the community: victims, offenders, and fear of crime**

Please find attached my Submission to the above Inquiry.

If you need any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me per the details above.

A hard copy, including my original signature will be posted to you.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Marianne J. Walker

House of Representatives
Standing Committee
on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Inquiry into crime in the community:
victims, offenders,
and fear of crime

Submission

Prepared by:

Mrs Marianne J Walker
8 Balcara Avenue
Carseldine Qld 4034

Home: 07 3863 2139
Work: 07 3258 8603

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My Introduction

My name is Marianne Jayne Walker. I am an interested individual in this Inquiry, and would like to tender my Submission.

I am divorced and have no partner. I work full time as Personal Assistant to our General Manager Civil for Henry Walker Eltin, a Mining and Civil Engineering Contracting Company in Brisbane. I have been employed in this role for five years. Prior to this I was employed by Philips Electronics and was retrenched, due to downsizing after 10 years. My previous employment history has been with Peter Kurts Real Estate for 5 years, GEC Electrical for 3 years and the Royal Australian Airforce for 3 years.

I am, or was, a mother. My only child Luke Christopher Walker was killed in a car crash on 15 December 2001. He was 17 years, four months and five days old when he was killed.

Luke had been living "away from home, on the streets, or at friends homes", for six weeks before he was killed. I had not seen or heard from him during that time, neither had his father. He had recently met some young people at Caboolture and was staying with them. A young man stole a car from Toombul on 14 December 2001, and drove it to Caboolture where Luke and another young man, were staying with a group of other young people. They got in the car and drove to the city. Luke was the back seat passenger, with a seat belt on. They drove into the city to do some painting (graffiti) and afterwards headed North out of the City. The police gave chase as they recognised the car as being stolen, but stopped chasing about 1k before the car crashed. The driver of the car has advised that he was under the influence of drugs, and was speeding at the time of driving the car. He lost control of the car and it ran off the road.

Luke was killed when a timber post went through his face. The driver and front seat passenger were uninjured, ran away and left Luke in the back of the car. They were both apprehended approximately 2 weeks later.

The driver of the car was 18 years old and was initially charged by police with murder. His defence lawyer advised that if the murder charge was dropped, the driver would plead guilty to dangerous driving causing death. The driver is still in remand and will be sentenced in September 2002. He has numerous charges outstanding for dangerous driving, and 3 days before the crash was due to appear in Court for dangerous driving offences. He failed to appear in court. There were several warrants out for his arrest for dangerous driving and car stealing at the time of the crash.

The front seat passenger has been charged with stealing the car.

Luke was a kind, caring and loving young man, he always said "I love you Mum, I might not act like it, but I do love you". He loved animals; his pets were Biggles, a Cockatiel and Oliver, a Beagle. He had a great personality and sense of humour. He loved cooking and wanted to be a chef. He was a gentleman. He had perfect manners, would always say "please" and "thank you", and always opened the door for me; he continued to address people as "Mr" and "Mrs". He was intelligent and smart, with an above average IQ, and he was an extremely good Chess player. He had low self-esteem and self worth. He was a rebel. He wanted to live life to the full.

Luke was also a juvenile offender.

I am not only the victim of crime, with my son's death, but was the mother of a juvenile offender.

My submission will be based on juvenile crime only, from my own personal experiences.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to tender my Submission to the:

**House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Legal and Constitutional Affairs;**

Inquiry into crime in the community: victims, offenders, and fear of crime.

I hope that I can make a difference, for Luke's sake.

I dedicate this Submission to the loving memory of my son Luke, who would have been 18 years old on 10 August 2002.



Luke Christopher Walker

10 August 1984
to
15 December 2001

*"Drugs kill people, and ruin the lives
of us that have loved them,
and are left behind"*

The Types of Crime Committed Against Australians

During his life, Luke committed a variety of offences including:

- Drug and Substance Abuse
- Stealing and Shop Stealing
- Burglary and Theft
- Break and Enter
- Graffiti

As you note in your Inquiry Information; there are two types of crime; against property and against the person. I will address both.

Crime Against Property

From an early age Luke displayed a tendency to want to procure property from other people. Whilst in grade 1, he was always the child that would steal the other child's pencil, or notebook, or lunch. He wanted something that other children had. As he progressed through the years the property that he took from other children at school tended to become more expensive; calculators, good pen sets etc. I was always troubled when he'd come home from school with property that I knew was not his. He would say a "friend" had "lent" it to him, and that he would give it back the next day.

After he had been excluded from school at age 14, his more serious "stealing, burglary, break and enter and graffiti" offences commenced.

Crime Against the Person

I believe crime against the person is divided into two separate categories:

1. Crime Against the Person – Violent
2. Crime Against the Person – Non Violent

Crime Against the Person – Violent

Neither I, nor any of his friends have ever known Luke to be violent against another person. I believe violent crime has differing reasons for its action than non violent crime. Offences are bullying, assault, rape, etc. I know that when some young people are under the influence of Amphetamines they have a tendency to be violent, and this may be assault of strangers in relation to other crime, e.g. armed robbery, but can also include violence towards their own family members. Some mind altering drugs can have the effect of violence.

Crime Against the Person – Non Violent

These types of crime are theft, and can include “emotional assault”, for example a Mother concerned that her son is continually truanting from school, and that her son has not come home after advising he would be home by 10.00pm. Mother is anxious to know where he is and cannot sleep.

I would add illegal substance abuse to this category also; this is a crime against the person, being the individual committing it.

Perpetrators of Crime and Motives

Perpetrators

Luke came from a loving, caring family background. Neither his father nor I were ever involved in family abuse, alcohol abuse, substance abuse or any type of crime. His father had a well-paid job, and we were financially able to bring Luke up in an honest and responsible family atmosphere. I stayed at home during his early years to be with him.

Luke was a perfectly normal, healthy baby and a happy contented young child. He was an only child; we had tried for more children but were unsuccessful. Luke had always wanted a sibling, but that was not to be.

Luke's father and I separated when Luke was 3 years old. He lived with his father while I moved out of the family home and lived with my father. Luke's father was the primary care giver. I spent every weekend with Luke until the time he was 6 years old and started grade 1, then I moved back into the family home, and Luke's father moved into a flat. I then became Luke's primary care giver.

Luke's history of offending started at an early age, as mentioned earlier, with stealing another child's pencil at school, to expensive calculators and eventually break and enter, burglary, graffiti etc.

When Luke was young, he committed these minor offences by himself, but as he grew older, he would team up with his friends and commit offences jointly with others. His companions in the offences were always around the same age as him. He never teamed up with others outside his own age group.

Luke and his group of friends were re-offenders and continually repeated their offences, even after punishment such as good behaviour bond, fines, and detention.

Other young people that Luke would associate with and offend with came from similar family backgrounds as his; responsible, honest parents, who had tried unsuccessfully to deter their children from "going off the rails". Although there were some young people he associated with whose families did not "care" for their children, nor did they "care" what their children were doing.

Conclusion

From my experience, I would suggest that half juvenile offenders are from honest, responsible family backgrounds, whilst the other half is from the opposite end of the scale. For some reason the children from differing backgrounds do mix together, and mix well. I can always remember one of Luke's Family Services Officers saying:

"If you put a group of kids from different cultures, religions and backgrounds together in a big yard, within 10 minutes the group of kids that have a tendency to offend, will be segregated from the group of kids that have no desire to offend"

Children will always seek out other children of the same persuasion as themselves.

Luke had many opportunities to mix and associate with children who had no desire to offend, but always seemed to choose children of the same persuasion as him. He wanted to be involved in, and I supported his involvement, in the Scout Movement, Soccer Club (I was the Manager of Luke's Soccer Club for a few years), Cricket Club, Chess Club and Little Athletics. He was interested in all of these activities, until he reached high school and drugs and offending took over his interests.

Motives

When Luke was young, I believe that he was stealing from other children for attention. Not because he did not have these items of his own. I was financially able to give them to Luke and he always had similar items of his own. I believe he was attention seeking because his father and I had separated, and I had moved out of the family home. There was obviously not enough attention from me, and I firmly believe this is the reason for his attention seeking behaviour.

As Luke grew older, I believe he had got into a pattern of attention seeking behaviour and his stealing and offending continued, in a more serious manner.

Luke had his first experience with marijuana in his last year at primary school, and by the time he entered high school, he had been abusing other substances as well, including sniffing glue and paint.

Luke began to realise that by being able to procure marijuana and use it, his friends at school looked upon him as some sort of hero; again this is attention-seeking behaviour.

As he continued to abuse drugs and substances on a more regular basis, his need for money became intense, thus his more serious offences of stealing, burglary and break and enter had started.

I, and my partner at the time, would find money missing from our wallet and purse. My partner had most of his power tools stolen by Luke. He had always had pocket money, and when he had finished school, had a succession of casual jobs, but the cost of his drug and substance abuse could not be countered by pocket money or casual jobs.

Luke's graffiti activities were a passion for him, and he was a good "artist", well respected and revered by his friends for his talent, albeit, illegal talent. He needed to express himself and had always needed respect from his group of friends. He had low self-esteem and this was a way that people "noticed" him.

Luke's inappropriate behaviour at school included truancy, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, and graffiti, this led him to be excluded from various State Schools and eventually excluded from all State Schools. He was 14 years old. Not being allowed to attend school and having nothing to occupy him during the day while I worked was a perfect opportunity for him get into trouble. He would "hang out" at shopping malls, go to friends' homes or parks. He did not stay home often by himself. He needed company.

You mention in your Inquiry information that;

"external stimuli such as violent movies may increase the risk of young people committing crime."

As I have mentioned earlier, Luke was never prone to violence towards others, but given the tragic way in which he died, I have to mention that the driver of the car that killed Luke advised he had a fixation with a movie called "Gone in 60 Seconds" which is about stealing cars, driving fast and killing people while driving them. This then could be deemed as a motive for crime. I would therefore agree with your comment above, although I have no personal experience that the above stimulated Luke.

Conclusion

Motives for crime, in addition to those you have already mentioned, may, in varying degrees, include:

- Lack of self-esteem and self worth - wanting to be noticed
- Childhood trauma, e.g. parents separating - attention seeking behaviour
- Regular drug and substance abuse - need for large amounts of money
- Regular in-activity - need to "do" something

Fear of Crime in the Community

My own personal fear of crime relates to:

1. How do I cope when my child begins to offend? where is the support?
2. How will the community treat me, when I am the mother of a juvenile offender?
3. What is to become of our children, and how can we stop the natural progression from juvenile offenders into adult offenders?
4. Will my child get through the formative teenage years, to become an honest and responsible member of our community?

1. How do I cope when my child begins to offend?

I don't know how I have coped, but I have. You just learn to and hope that each new day will bring a change in your child's behaviour. I have not had the support from the community, government, schools or related bodies that I feel I should have. There has been much support after my child has begun offending, but I have not been able to gain any support to prevent him going down that track.

I had contacted Boys Town to ask them to take Luke when he was 11 years old, and was showing signs of offending, but they would not take him until he had actually started offending.

2. How will the community treat me, when I am the mother of a juvenile offender?

There is much embarrassment and shame when your child is a juvenile offender. I have always felt in some way responsible for the way Luke behaved. You consider that it is your fault and that somehow you could have prevented the behaviour. You feel shame as you are called in the middle of the night by the local police station to come down and sit with your child while he is interviewed for an offence. You feel shame as you sit in court and listen to the extensive list of charges against your child being read out. You feel shame as you visit your child in the Detention Centre.

I have met many mothers through various support groups for juvenile offenders, and have kept in contact and feel that this support is very necessary. It is difficult to talk to members of the community in general about your child's behaviour, unless they have been down the same track, with the same juvenile offending.

3. What is to become of our children, and how can we stop the natural progression from juvenile offenders to adult offenders?

My concern has always been;

"if I can't stop Luke's behaviour now, what will become of him?"

I no longer have this concern since Luke's death, but my concern still rests with other young people who are at risk of the progression from juvenile offending to adult offending.

We as a community need to recognise that juvenile offending is a very serious problem. I am sure that the statistics will show there is a natural progression from juvenile offending to adult offending, and we must address juvenile offending to prevent adult offending.

How we do this is a problem I cannot answer. Maybe we need more education in our school system; maybe we need to teach our young people the values and respect for other people, their property and police, although as a young child we as Luke's parents did teach him this.

4. Will my child get through the formative teenage years to become an honest and responsible member of our community?

Again, I no longer have this concern regarding Luke, but I still worry for other young people. I have spoken to a number of people who had children of Luke's age that did offend, but as they grew older, and matured, their offending behaviour did stop, and they did become responsible and honest members of our society. But can we afford to wait until all our young people have matured, as I am sure that some of them, as with Luke, will not make it.

My philosophy was;

never give up on Luke. I am all Luke has left, if I give up on him, there will be nobody.

Our Education system, and Family Service Units cannot afford to give up on these young people. They are our future, and we must try and support them and get them through these dangerous teenage years.

Impact of Being a Victim of Crime and Fear of Crime

Being a Victim of Crime

I consider myself a victim in two ways;

1. Being a victim - my Son was killed, and,
2. Being a victim - my Son was a juvenile offender

I will address both issues.

Being a victim - my Son was killed

When the police knocked on my front door at 2.30am on Sunday 16 December 2001, I thought to myself "what has Luke done now?"

I have had many such visits from the police in the early hours of the morning, some to bring Luke home in a paddy wagon when he was high on drugs and wandering the streets, at other times to ask me to come down the police station where he was being interviewed.

I did not imagine the tragic news they brought me.

The Constable that broke the news to me was supportive, kind and caring, he even made me a cup of tea. I cannot speak highly enough of him and the respect and decency with which he treated me. He knew of Luke's background with offending and that the car was stolen, but still he treated me with the utmost respect.

They advised that his face was unrecognisable and they had identified him from his fingerprints. I just kept saying "are you sure it is Luke" I did not cry, I was in shock.

The days and weeks that followed are a bit of a blur to me. I do not remember the funeral with any great accuracy, neither Christmas. It was five weeks before I could return to work. I could not leave the house, I felt that if I went back to work, and left the house, I would be letting Luke down, and not caring about him.

I started drinking too much. I can easily see how people turn to alcohol and drugs during times of this type of trauma, it is very easy to do. Had I not returned to work, I feel that I may have had an alcohol problem.

I have lost some weight. I felt that I couldn't cook anything, and it was not fair to eat when Luke was dead.

I still have no social life, I still feel that it is not right that I should be out enjoying myself when Luke is dead. I sometimes get angry at my friends who are leading social lives, thinking to myself "how dare they enjoy themselves, don't they know that Luke is dead?"

My relationship with my partner of 6 years had broken down, and he has moved out of our home. I felt that I could not share my grief with him, it is all my own and belongs to only Luke and me. I did not want the responsibility of loving my partner when all I wanted was to love Luke and nobody else.

I am a totally different person now, to what I was on 14 December 2001. I know that I shall never be the same. My only child has been killed, how can I ever be the same?

Being a victim – my Son was a juvenile offender

To a certain extent, I feel a victim with Luke's juvenile offending. I feel robbed of "normal" childhood activities and experiences.

Luke did not get invited to children's birthday parties, as he was always the naughty boy in the class and other parents did not want Luke to attend.

Luke did not sit any exams at high school, due to his truancy and expulsion from school. I feel cheated that I was not able to help him "swot".

Luke did not graduate from high school, again I feel cheated that I could not prepare for his graduation day, as other parents had.

I have had to take numerous amounts of time off from work to attend meetings with high school Principals and teachers. Luke attended four different high schools due to expulsion from each. I have also had time off from work to attend counsellors, the police station and court.

I did not tend to talk about Luke a lot to my friends, as I was ashamed of the way he was behaving. Other friends of mine who had children of the same age would talk about their kids, and how well they were doing at school, and sport etc. and what their aspirations were for college and uni. Luke was in a different world to these children and I tended to shy away for discussing Luke and how "well" he was doing.

Fear of Crime

I do not have anything further to add than my experiences under the heading "Fear of Crime in the Community", mentioned above.

Strategies to Support Victims and Reduce Crime

Strategies to Support Victims

When Luke was killed the police charged the driver with murder, and the police gave me some information from Queensland Victims Homicide Support Group. I read through this material and felt it did not specifically apply to me, and my son had not been "murdered with intent" and I felt uncomfortable reading it and being part of the support group. I was also given by the police, some forms to fill out advising that I could be reimbursed Luke's funeral expenses from the Queensland Government, Department of Justice and Attorney General.

I have since learnt that as the murder charge was dropped and the driver will be charged with dangerous driving causing death, I will no longer be entitled to any reimbursement of funeral expenses.

Luke has still been killed. He is still dead. That is not going to change and another person is still responsible for his death, I fail to see therefore, why I would not still be entitled to some reimbursement of Luke's funeral expenses.

I realise the Department of Public Prosecutions have a difficult job in prosecuting offenders in regards to criminal charges, and I do have the greatest respect for them, in this role. They have dealt with me in a caring manner, but somehow I still feel that I am just another "victim" and Luke is just another "dead" person, and they need to prosecute the offender. I have had to chase the DPP on occasions for information relating to Luke's case, and sometimes was only given generic information re the judicial process and not information relating specifically to Luke's case.

I must make mention of the inordinate amount of time it takes for the judicial process to reach a conclusion. Not only do I feel that I need some "closure" on the matter, but the young man accused of dangerous driving causing death, is still being held in remand, which is approximately 7 months now.

As mentioned earlier, I was given some forms to fill out for reimbursement of funeral expenses, but as the murder charge has now been dropped, I will not be entitled to any reimbursement, I was also advised that I may be able to make a claim for reimbursement of counselling expenses, this I imagine, will also be revoked as the murder charge has been dropped. It has been 7 months now since Luke has been killed, and I believe that depression is beginning to sink in. I felt at first that I was in shock, and felt numb, now there is a slow realisation that Luke is never coming back, and I think I am getting depressed. Professional counselling can be up to \$100.00 per hour, this is something that is beyond my income.

I firmly believe in self-help strategies. I have tried various actions to overcome my grief. For a while I joined the Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service. I was engaged as a volunteer to go out on to the "streets" on Friday and Saturday nights, to assist young homeless people with food, clothing, shelter and counselling etc. I enjoyed this work and really felt that as I could no longer help Luke, I would at least be helping other young people like him. Unfortunately, I came across a young man that reminded me so much of Luke that I broke down, I have not been able to continue with this volunteer work.

My Strategies for Consideration

My own thoughts on strategies are as follows:

1. We need caring and supporting police workers to deliver bad news.
2. Financial assistance for funeral expenses and counselling for the victim of death by another person, whether it is murder, manslaughter or dangerous driving causing death.
3. Consideration should also be given to attempting to reduce the amount of time taken in the judicial process, especially for those victims of death. The process is painful enough without having to wait inordinate amounts of time for some "closure" on the event.
4. Support for self-help strategies, although support groups seem to be very popular and are of great help to some victims, consideration should also be given to self-help strategies. Some victims may feel a little daunted attending support groups, but may find it more consoling to try something on their own.

Strategies to Reduce Crime

To reduce crime, we may need to look at reducing juvenile crime, which in turn leads, in most cases to adult crime.

In reducing juvenile crime, we should go right back to the start of the life of the young child, ensuring there is a loving, caring family atmosphere, where the child is brought up with responsible and honest parents. We need to ensure there is no family trauma to the child. All this seems perfect in the "perfect" world.

But the world is not "perfect". We need to address all possibilities that the child may not grow up in a "perfect" world.

Our young people need to have a respect for others and their property. This needs to be taught from an early age.

Our young people also need respect for the law and the police. I have heard some "horror" stories from some young people in respect to their treatment by the police. Some stories may be a little "far fetched", but I am sure that some are true.

Our young people need to be taught the dangers of drug and substance abuse. I believe that much crime is "drug related". Whereby young people need money to purchase drugs, therefore engage in stealing, break and enter and burglary to procure goods to exchange for money or drugs.

My Strategies for Consideration

My own thoughts on strategies are:

1. Caring family environment
2. Respect for people and property
3. Respect for the law and police
4. The dangers of drug and substance abuse

Apprehension Rates

The driver of the car and the front seat passenger ran away after the car crashed, and left Luke in the back seat. They were both uninjured.

The driver gave himself up to police approximately 2 weeks after the crash. Some of Luke's young friends advised me that they may have known who the driver was, but were uninclined to tell me or police, as you don't "dob" anybody in. There is a strange sort of "loyalty" among these young people, in which they seem to respect each other and hold fear of the police, in not assisting them to apprehend offenders. These young people tend to "look after each other".

We need to teach our young people that it is "ok" to report crime and that assisting police in detecting offenders is not "dobbing" on your mates, but being a responsible community member. It maybe helpful to advise the young people, that they may be actually helping the offenders at the same time.

I don't believe that "rewards" would be the answer, as these young people have a very keen, if not misguided sense of loyalty to each other.

Effectiveness of Sentencing

The young man being charged with dangerous driving causing death, will be sentenced in September 2002. I have no idea what his sentence will be, but from opinions he may be looking at a few years. Is this sufficient "time" for being responsible for taking another life? My head and heart speak differently on this matter.

On the one hand, my head says give him enough time in jail to learn his lesson, and hopefully he will come out of jail a more responsible young man. On the other hand, my heart says; what will he really learn in jail, will he come out of jail, bitter, angry and not be able to take his place in our community as a better person.

I believe we need to take a "firmer" stance on sentencing our juveniles. Luke has appeared in court on a number of occasions for offences of stealing, burglary, break and enter, graffiti and drug related crime. His sentencing commenced when he was about 15 years old, and started with warnings, good behaviour bond, fines and eventually detention. Nothing seemed to make any difference with Luke; he seemed to know that the leniency of the sentence was not going to deter him.

I, like a lot of mothers wished that my son had learned his lesson a few years ago by the whole judicial process of being arrested, charged, photographed, finger prints, court appearance and eventual sentencing, but he did not.

I was surprised to visit him in a Detention Centre and he told me that he had a quite a few privileges, among them was to be free to come and go in the kitchen, get himself something to eat, and a glass of Milo.

Again my head and heart compete with what I think should be done with these young people. My head says, make life in detention tougher for these young people, to deter them, and make them understand that detention is not a pleasant place to be and that they should not want to go back there. On the other hand my heart says please don't make it too bad, that they will come out scarred for life, by rape, or assault, or bitter and angry. I don't know what the answers are. I only know that I don't believe detention centres, the way they are now, to be a successful deterrent.

On the few occasions that Luke was sentenced to detention, a clause of early release was that he attends a "de-tox" centre. This was to be on his own undertaking, and naturally enough, he did not attend. We need to ensure that if young people are commanded by our courts to attend de-tox, then it is up to the courts to ensure that they do. To leave the attendance to their own undertaking is not working.

I would like to see, rather than a detention centre, an establishment away from their own environment, maybe in a rural area, that they could learn some life skills, and have a sense of purpose and achievement in their lives.

Community Safety and Policing

Community Safety

Every member of our community has a basic right to feel safe in their environment, be it at home, at the shops or merely walking along the street. I have never had the experience of coming home and finding my house had been burgled, or been accosted on the street, I can imagine these would be terrifying experiences.

Policing

Teaching our juveniles respect for the police is paramount in reducing crime in our community. The police are not the “bad” guys, they are there to help and support members of the community, and we need to teach our juveniles this.

Sometimes our juveniles only see the police as people who arrest them, interview them and charge them with offences. Maybe we need to get more interaction with the police and juveniles at an early age, and on a basis away from offending, e.g. social or community events.

My Summary

The main point I would like to stress is:

“Somebody please help us as parents, to deter our children away from crime, before it is too late”

As mentioned before, there was plenty of support for me once Luke had started to offend, but little support when he was showing warning signs of offending, but had not yet begun to offend.

When Luke was in grade 1 and he was the “naughtiest child in the class” the warning signs were there for me. I started counselling for Luke and the family to find out why Luke was behaving the way he was. Throughout his primary school life we attended Guidance Counselling, Family Therapy, and as he progressed into high school we attended various Counsellors, Psychologists and Psychiatrists. Luke was diagnosed in hospital as having no mental or physical disabilities, no dyslexia or learning disorders, he was a very healthy young child. One of his Psychologists tested his IQ, and it was well above average. Luke was an intelligent and smart young man, although he was not very well educated, due to his truancy and eventual expulsion from school.

To this day, I still believe Luke turned out the way he did, due to his father and I separating when he was 3 years old. Luke needed attention, which he wasn't getting from Mum, as I had moved out of the family home. I have always blamed myself, and continue to do so, and nothing will deter me from that belief. If I had stayed with Luke's father, Luke would have grown into a responsible, honest and trustworthy member of our community, and he would have not been the back seat passenger in a stolen car, his young body full of drugs, with a timber post through his face, while his two “friends” ran away and left him to die.

I have tried hard for many years to get some help and support for Luke, and although I have tried all sorts of counselling services for Luke, nothing helped him to deter him from his self-destructive behaviour.

I miss Luke terribly and grieve deeply for him. I feel that Luke's death is a terrible waste of what could have been a talented life.

Thank you for reading my Submission and allowing me to share Luke's life story with you.

Submission to
Inquiry into crime in the community: victims, offenders, and fear of crime

I believe this Submission to be an honest and factual statement of my beliefs and experiences.

Mrs Marianne J Walker
8 Balcara Avenue
Carseldine Qld 4034

Home: 07 3863 2139
Work: 07 3258 8603