

I arrived in my now home town of Melbourne in 1988. I bought a business shortly afterwards that sold music c.d.s. A client quickly became one of my most faithful customers. He was in my house (I ran the business from home) every week and as a result, I had significant contact with brother and parents as well.

He finished school and then moved on to his first job, stacking shelves in a supermarket.

About 9 months later (at least partially as a result of bullying at work), he decided that he hated his life enough to end it at the tender age of 19.

He went to Melbourne Central, up to the second floor of the shot tower and jumped off. He was unsuccessful in killing himself, so he went up another two or so floors and jumped again, so that he could do the 'job' properly.

I regret to this day that I was so busy with my business that I didn't spend a little more time finding out what was happening in his life and a little less time selling c.d.s to him.

Suicide in Australia is a male issue. I don't care what the feminists say. Men are topping themselves at 4 times the rate of women, so attention needs to be focussed on men.

What can you do? Boys learn how to be men by following role models. If their father is absent, they will gravitate to other strong models, no matter how inappropriate (rappers, gang members, rock stars etc.)

1. Make it easier for fathers to spend more time with their kids. Allow income splitting for tax purposes. Stop subsidising childcare (the outsourcing of parenting) and start spending that money on families that choose to look after their own kids!

2. Make a rebuttable presumption of shared parenting (in the Family Court) the law. I might add that I am 16 years happily married with 3 kids. The family court has traditionally treated men terribly. It's not even a terribly well-kept secret! Things have improved a bit since the recent law changes, but now the feminists are trying to wind even those back!! Please do not allow any changes that further disenfranchise men or disinvolve them further in their childrens' lives.

Yours Sincerely,

Malcolm Pryor