

## **The impact of stalkers on their victims**

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**BACKGROUND:** This paper examines the social and psychological impact on victims of stalking. **METHOD:** A group of 100 victims of stalking completed a 50-item questionnaire on their experiences. **RESULTS:** The majority of the victims were subjected to multiple forms of harassment including being followed, repeatedly approached and bombarded with letters and telephone calls for periods varying from a month to 20 years. Threats were received by 58 subjects, and 34 were physically or sexually assaulted. All but six victims made major changes in their social and work lives, with 53% changing or ceasing employment and 39% moving home. Increased levels of anxiety were reported by 83%, intrusive recollections and flashbacks by 55%, with nightmares, appetite disturbances and depressed mood also being commonly reported. Suicidal ruminations were acknowledged by 24% of victims. The criteria for a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder were fulfilled in 37% of subjects, with a further 18% having the clinical features but not qualifying for a stressor involving threatened or actual physical harm. **CONCLUSIONS:** The study indicates the extent of the social and psychological damage sustained by those subjected to persistent stalking, and underlines the inadequacy of the current legal and medical responses to the needs of these victims.

## **Intervention/Prevention Responses**

As discussed in some detail in the third chapter "Current Explanations of Stalking", there are a variety of criteria by which typologies of stalkers have been developed. These typologies have primarily drawn upon psychiatric conceptions of motivations for offending and the relationship between the victim and the offender. The reason why these different classificatory schema of stalkers were focused upon in the third chapter is because the development of such typologies leads to the derivation of quite different management responses to the problem of stalking. For example, Mullen et al. argue that intimacy-seeking stalkers are impervious to judicial sanctions and so require assertive psychiatric management. This is in contrast to rejected stalkers who may be persuaded to desist through criminal justice intervention (although Mullen et al. note the exception of those involved in child custody disputes) (1999, p. 1248). Others have been concerned with identifying the potential for danger and/or violence, be that in threatening letters (for example, Dietz et al. 1991) or styles of stalking (for example,

Wright et al. 1996). More comprehensive typologies of stalker characteristics should (at least in theory) allow for an enhanced capacity to effectively identify “danger signs” and the most appropriate response to such signals. Researchers who have specifically oriented their research towards intervention strategies have identified a variety of means by which stalkers might most effectively be dealt with.

## Therapeutic Intervention

Roberts and Dziegielewski (1996) focused upon victims of stalking, using a therapeutic framework that focused upon short-term crisis intervention. They categorised stalkers according to whether they were 1) domestic violence stalkers; 2) erotomania/delusional stalkers and/or simply; and 3) Research and Public Policy Series

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nuisance stalkers. They argued that there are three primary events which result in a victim of stalking requesting treatment or intervention, these being a) escalation in the incidence or severity of the episodes; b) injury being inflicted whether purposeful or accidental; and c) relationship and/or employment disturbance (Roberts and Dziegielewski 1996). While not specifically recommended, these characteristics could also be considered as “signifiers” of an escalation in threat which investigators should be aware of in attempting to determine the “seriousness” (and potential seriousness) of the offence (that is, if these are characteristics which most concern victims, they should also be characteristics recognised by intervention agencies). Roberts and Dziegielewski’s research is clearly within the psychological paradigm, and so it is not surprising that the treatment strategies they suggest involve psychologists and therapists ensuring that victims:

- addressed safety concerns;
- explored measures of practice effectiveness;
- ensured the survivor let the stalker know that the survivor is not interested;
- use relaxation training to help the survivor confront the stalker;
- encourage the survivor to be direct, concrete and to the point as much as possible when confronting the stalker;
- utilise a behavioural rehearsal of the confrontation;
- encourage survivor to cease all contact with the stalker;
- focus treatment on victim’s mental health;
- look for possible PTSD symptoms and dissociative reactions to pain; and
- assess potential for suicide.

There is nothing inherently untoward in any of these strategies and, indeed, the more “stalking focused” of them are eminently sensible. Specifically, given that stalking necessarily incorporates a degree of obsession, contact with the stalker, whether positive or negative, will only serve to fuel the obsession of the offender. Strategies such as cutting all links ensure that there is nothing for the stalker to “feed off”.

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In a similar vein, Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000) also recommend a therapeutic approach to “managing” stalkers. While they acknowledge that the focus of their research upon mental health represents, as much as anything, their personal occupations, they also argue that stalking is a form of “social pathology and that while it is not easy to treat delusional disorders or modify narcissistic character traits... it is far easier, and quicker, than altering societies” (Mullen, Pathé and Purcell 2000, p. 288). Thus, they recommend intervention strategies which involve the management of any continual mental disorder and targeting the actual stalking behaviours. This involves:

- shifting the stalker’s focus from thinking that their victim loves them to acknowledging that it is they who are in love with the victim;
- establishing the importance of the love, in light of previous loneliness and/or lack of previous relationships; and

- focusing upon supposed expression of the victims love, and suggesting re-interpretations of how these might be interpreted.

Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000, p. 287) also argue for the need to help the stalker identify the costs in terms of time and resources that they have placed into engaging in stalking behaviour, allowing the stalker to abandon stalking behaviours with a sense of dignity, and helping them to invest their energies into more realistic relationships.

Such therapeutic interventions have also been implemented by many focusing on domestic violence stalkers. For example, the “Stalker Stabilisation Program” utilises cognitive therapy in order to identify and break through “dysfunctional thinking processes that serve to escalate anxiety, anger and the need to re-attach to the partner as a means to quell emotional dysphoria” (Walker and Sonkin 1999, p. 4). Regardless of how it is that we may define “dysfunctional thinking processes” and “emotional dysphorias”, the aim of the program is to teach batterers that domestic violence is a crime and that all forms of violence are inappropriate. This is done through identifying offenders’ injurious practices and teaching them that change is possible by learning new methods of coping that are reliable, responsible and respectful of their partners.

Such strategies are obviously to be recommended in the case of extreme examples of stalking. In such cases where the offender obviously has an obsession that has gone beyond “normal” expressions of devotion, these

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interventions can only be beneficial. Thus, in cases where the stalking behaviours culminate in a final psychotic frenzy, therapeutic interventions must be recommended. An example of this phenomenon was where the final outcome of the stalking involved the offender locking his ex-wife out of the house whereupon:

the appellant remained there for some seven hours with the children. His conduct was bizarre. He destroyed two photographs, one of which showed his ex-wife in an advanced state of pregnancy. He cut the depiction of the abdomen out of the photograph and burned it. He also destroyed one of the children’s toys, a teddy bear, by inserting a knife into it. At length the appellant arranged for the elder of the two children to get dressed and sent him off to school with some money. The appellant stole \$60 from the house and, after the siege, as it has been called, of some six or seven hours, eventually gave himself up to police who had been in attendance for much of the time. (R v Blick [1999] VSCA 211 (6 December 1999))

This offender was diagnosed as psychotic at the time of his offences, and the benefits of focused therapy attempting to “manage” these behaviours can only be considered advantageous. However, it is not always the case that people who engage in stalking can be medically defined as “psychotic”. Indeed, even in extreme examples, many offenders have been medically examined and deemed to not be suffering a medical condition at the time of their stalking. For example, in one case an offender’s wife ceased cohabiting with him.

You were described by those who knew you as having become obsessed with that situation, and angry with your wife for bringing it about. At first your wife remained in Darwin. However, various incidents occurred, including one or more incidents of violence by you towards her. Such was your conduct towards your wife that, on 3 December 1990, a restraining order was made against you in a court of summary jurisdiction at Darwin. In about the same month, your wife left Darwin and came to live in Adelaide because, due to your behaviour, she was fearful for her safety. You had abused her in public, accused her of having affairs, and threatened to kill her. It is said that, in 1990, you had threatened to strangle her and had actually seized her by the throat in an

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incident in a carpark, which is described in the material before me in

some detail. After being in Adelaide for some months, your wife secured permanent employment here and established herself in a flat at Parkside. It seems clear that, from time to time, you harassed her with telephone calls at her work and made threats such as “I will get you. If I can’t have you, nobody will”. On the afternoon of 23 March 1992, your wife consulted a solicitor at Greenhill Road, Parkside, about her concerns with regard to your continuing behaviour. She left the solicitor’s office at about 5.30 p.m. Some 10 minutes later a bicyclist riding along Swaine Avenue near the Queen Victoria Hospital heard a loud scream. He saw you discharge a firearm wrapped in a blanket, at short range, at a person in the street—who proved to be your wife. She fell to the ground. The same general incident was seen by at least two other female pedestrians in the area. Although immediate assistance was sought from the hospital medical staff, the gunshot wound was fatal. (R v. Colin Arthur Case [1993] SASC 4255 (10 November 1993))

In this particular case, the offender was examined by a psychiatrist who diagnosed him as not suffering from any psychiatric condition. What is particularly disturbing about this case is that not only was the offender found to be “sane”, but that the legislative alternatives available, such as restraining orders, proved fatally inadequate.

While therapeutic interventions are thus recommended, they need to be considered as simply one option amongst a range of possibilities. In saying this, it could be well argued that the previous example should have been perceived of as a mental health case, and that the failure to diagnose as such is a weakness in the legislative system (see Fritz 1995). However, this focus upon mental health risks denying the very difficulty entailed in defining what constitutes stalking (as discussed in the second chapter “Defining Stalking”). Indeed, one of the criticisms that has been directed towards stalking legislation is that it has in fact treated stalkers as if they were “crazy”. This is despite research which has demonstrated that the greatest danger of serious violence from stalkers in the United Kingdom is not from people with mental illnesses, but from non-psychotic ex-partners (Farnham, James and Cantrell 2000). Thus, while the importance of addressing mental illness in stalking is critical and “may be a useful analysis in some cases, in general it merely serves to reinforce inaccurate stereotypes about people who have been in the mental health system being seen as more dangerous than average, ‘sane’ abusers” (Lemon 1994, p. 1).

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If we have behaviours that, on the one hand, constitute a criminal offence, but, on the other hand, are representative of cultural mores relating to obsessive love, a singular focus on mental health issues risks becoming unhelpful. Indeed, such an orientation arguably only becomes effective if we are willing to accept that perhaps society overall requires therapeutic attention or intervention. Whilst this is an intriguing premise, in practical terms, such a view does not help us address many of the behaviours that may lead to stalking, most specifically the form which is most common, stalking related to domestic violence. While focused therapy should be utilised where appropriate, it should be done in conjunction with a variety of other potential intervention strategies (an approach with which Mullen et al. would concur). Such an approach is outlined by Williams, Lane and Zona (1996).

Williams, Lane and Zona (1996) also focus upon the victim, although their strategies are slightly wider-ranging than the more narrowly defined interventions proposed by therapists such as Dziegielewski and Roberts. Specifically, they provide an overview of the LAPD Threat Management Unit which was established in 1990. Its specific aim is the investigation of long term, abnormal patterns of threat and/or harassment. They argue that resources must be devoted to three specific areas of victim intervention: education, behaviour and therapy.

Williams, Lane and Zona (1996) place a high emphasis on education, arguing that victims must take responsibility for self-protection against

stalking, including developing “sufficient tolerance” for some stalking behaviours. Safety options and community assistance should be drawn upon by the victim, and they should be pro-active in attempting to deal with stalking situations, rather than simply placing all responsibility on police. This includes addressing personal behaviours and situations such as changing their phone number, considering relocation, preserving anonymity and changing everyday routines on a regular basis. In extreme circumstances, the authors recommend complete identity changes. Finally, resources need to be placed into law enforcement, but with a strong focus on developing a “therapeutic alliance” with the victim, through such mechanisms as support groups and self-defence classes. In terms of police practices, Williams, Lane and Zona (1996, p. 25) recommend that “intervention by law enforcement and victim must be early and aggressive”.

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## Legislation

The authors also provide a series of legislative recommendations for stalker intervention, outlining the range of possibilities available, such as restraining orders, detention, arrests, mental health diversions, criminal convictions and, when possible, deportation. They argue that interventions should be multiple, and instituted simultaneously. With respect to restraining orders, they make an important point that such orders may only be helpful when they are enforced. “When they are not enforced they reinforce the sense of immunity on the part of the stalker.” (Williams, Lane and Zona 1996, p. 26) Similarly, if stalkers are arrested and detained, the authors argue that they should have to sit out a period of detention and not be “released the following day on their own recognisance” (Williams, Lane and Zona 1996, p. 26). This is because a set period of incarceration has a “sobering effect” on stalkers and allows victims some time to adjust their lives. Whilst incarcerated, stalkers should be monitored in order to ensure that they are not able to continue harassing their victims, through mechanisms such as phone calls or letters. This is equally applicable with respect to parole.

Australian courts have appeared to take these issues seriously. For example, one offender was charged twice for breaking parole due to engaging in stalking behaviours. On the first occasion he was charged with stalking an ex-lover.

In August 1997 the Board received a complaint from Katrina Power, a woman who alleged that she had had a relationship with the plaintiff between August 1996 and February 1997. She further alleged that since the end of the relationship, the plaintiff had telephoned her constantly, written threatening letters to her, followed her, damaged her property, threatened others associated with her including colleagues, made allegations to others about her personal affairs and breached restraining orders she had obtained against him.

The Board summonsed the plaintiff to attend a hearing of the Board to determine whether his behaviour in relation to Ms Power amounted to a breach of the conditions of his parole. Following the interview, the Board found that the plaintiff had breached the requirement to be of good behaviour, and on 12 August 1997 the Board added further conditions to those which the plaintiff was already subject. The new

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conditions specified that the plaintiff must: (1) maintain a diary of his daily movements and communications initiated by the plaintiff including phone calls, letters and electronic communications; (2) undertake and complete a psychiatric assessment and treatment at the direction of the parole officer; (3) take such medication as prescribed by the treating psychiatrist; (4) not contact, or attempt to contact or associate in any way with Katrina Power; (5) not to contact, attempt to contact or associate in any way with any Tandanya Board member nor visit the Tandanya premises. (*Armstrong v Parole Board of South*

Australia No.SCGRG–98–959 Judgment No. S6791 [1998] SASC 6791 (10 August 1998)

And, on the second occasion, he actually started stalking his parole officer. On 22 May 1998 I received a telephone call from the Secretary to the Parole Board, Kevin Hill. Mr Hill informed me that he had that day received a telephone call from John Heath, the Regional Manager of the Western Metropolitan Region of the Department of Correctional Services. Mr Heath reported to him that one of his staff, Parole Officer, Marion Kennedy, had reported that she had received several telephone calls at home from an anonymous caller who hangs up when the receiver is lifted. She also believed that her house was being watched on two occasions by a person parked outside the house in a red car. Ms Kennedy described the person in the car. Ms Kennedy reported to Mr Heath that she suspected that the caller and the watcher may be the same person, namely the plaintiff. Ms Kennedy's reason for suspecting the plaintiff lay in the fact that she is the parole officer of Laurel Egan, a woman with whom the plaintiff had had a relationship and who had been complaining of her ongoing harassment from the plaintiff since 5 February 1998 in the form of anonymous telephone calls, a break-in of her unit and the stealing of an address book, and telephone calls to other acquaintances such as her General Practitioner and to the staff at the Western Community Corrections Centre. (10) I formed a suspicion that the plaintiff had breached his parole conditions, and in particular, the condition of being of good behaviour, keeping the peace towards persons and not committing any breach of the law. In arriving at that conclusion I took into account, in addition to the allegation of Ms Kennedy, the plaintiff's previous breaches of parole as outlined in paragraphs 8 and 9 above and their similarity to the allegations now

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made. I considered that the gravity of the alleged conduct, and the fact that it was alleged to be ongoing was sufficient to justify the issue of a warrant for the plaintiff's arrest, rather than have him summonsed to appear before the Board. (*Armstrong v Parole Board of South Australia* No.SCGRG–98–959 Judgment No. S6791 [1998] SASC 6791 (10 August 1998))

In this particular case, however, the stalker was a convicted felon who was on parole after having served the majority of his sentence for murder. He was not specifically charged with stalking, but rather with "breaking parole". Given the seriousness of his previous offence, it would perhaps be surprising if the judiciary did not consider him a potential threat.

## Restraining Orders

The most obvious legislative interventions to be used against stalking are restraining/intervention orders. Indeed, as noted in the chapter on "The Legislative Framework", stalking legislation was positioned in some part in order to strengthen the effectiveness of such orders. Despite the proliferation with which such orders are placed, there has been hardly any empirical research conducted on their effectiveness in relation to stalking (Goode 1995). When research is conducted, it tends to focus upon domestic violence intervention orders. The effectiveness of these orders are controversial, with empirical investigations varying in their conclusions. Some researchers argue that such orders are effective (Kaci 1994), some argue that they are unsuccessful (Berk et al. 1983), and others argue that they are actually aggravating factors which further exacerbate the likelihood of violence (DeBecker 1997).

One exception to this trend has been conducted by Meloy et al. (1997) investigating the impact of domestic violence protection orders on the likelihood of subsequent violence. The authors argued that a principal variable in whether protection orders were successful or not was whether the orders were mutual or non-mutual. Mutual orders are those determined by negotiation with both parties, non-mutual orders are those instigated by

only one person and then enforced through court. Not surprisingly, it was those orders which were not mutual that were the most likely to be broken (Meloy et al. 1997, p. 455), a finding which is extremely significant in relation to stalking behaviours, given such orders are almost never likely to be mutually accepted. This is clearly seen in the following case studies.

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The prosecution case was that, on 6 March 1995, the appellant entered the complainant's house uninvited, boasting that she no longer had protection because of the variation which had been made in the order. Her evidence was that he insulted and touched her, and that she threw cups at him and told him to leave. A neighbour called police, and the appellant spent the night in the watch-house. (R v Fitzgerald [1996] QCA 521 (17 December 1996)

It seems that the difficulties of the parties did not stop there. Ms Guss on 20 November 1997 pleaded guilty to stalking charges involving breaches of the intervention order and was sentenced to four months' imprisonment which was wholly suspended for 18 months. She was placed on a community-based order requiring her to undergo psychiatric assessment and treatment. She has appealed to the County Court against this sentence also. (Guss v Sullivan [1998] VSC 64 (11 September 1998)

The respondent would watch the Riordans' house from a parked car, he would follow members of the family about, call at the house looking for Lisa, threaten members of the family, make continual telephone calls and generally constantly harass members of the family. From about October 1995 the incidents escalated in both seriousness and frequency. They involved breaches of conditions of bail and a restraining order. (The Queen and Ors v Donald Francis Mark Legg and Ors [1998] WASCA 90 (9 April 1998)

Since the end of the relationship, the plaintiff had telephoned her constantly, written threatening letters to her, followed her, damaged her property, threatened others associated with her including colleagues, made allegations to others about her personal affairs and breached restraining orders she had obtained against him. (Armstrong v Parole Board of South Australia No. SCGRG-98-959 Judgment No. S6791 [1998] SASC 6791 (10 August 1998)

However, some dangers have been identified in the issuance of mutual protection orders. Specifically, concerns have been raised relating to offender accountability, where the offender may interpret the order as meaning that the court blames the victim as much as the offender (Topliffe

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1992, p. 1061). Other factors that need to be considered include research which indicates that mutual protection orders tend not to be enforced as rigorously as regular orders and that they may actually be used later against the victim (Topliffe 1992, pp. 1061-62).

Finally, the difficulties faced by the police in enforcing restraining orders for stalking need to be acknowledged. While Australian legislation does not introduce the same difficulties for police as does legislation in the United Kingdom and Wales (Addison and Lawson-Cruttenden 1997a; Addison and Lawson-Cruttenden 1997b; Gibbons 1996), issues remain concerning what constitutes a course of conduct, what constitutes "serious" fear, and what is the difference between domestic violence and domestic-violence stalking, as the answers to these questions will be fundamental in impacting upon police practices and stalking.

It can be seen then that while restraining orders are being increasingly used (Magistrates Court of Victoria 2000), we still need further research on just how effective they are against stalking behaviours. It may well be that restraining orders are actually an aggravating factor, which do not actually impact upon the behaviours except to escalate them, and that stalking charges should be laid immediately rather than following several breaches

of restraining orders, which is what it has been suggested is occurring in Tasmania (personal correspondence, Tasmanian Police, 2000).

## Community Attitudes

The final issue that needs to be investigated, specifically in terms of our definitional procedures, are community attitudes towards stalking. Hills and Taplin (1998) conducted one particularly impressive Australian study of this phenomenon. Specifically, they investigated the “effects of threat and target stalker relationship on female and male expectations about how they would respond to a heterosexual stalking episode, focusing on the extent to which they anticipated feeling afraid, and the extent to which they believed they would be likely to contact the police” (Hills and Taplin 1998, pp. 140–41). Given that this is one of the first studies to explicitly examine “community attitudes” within Australia, it is particularly important with respect to developing legislative responses. This is of great significance given that “legislation is aimed at those behaviours that exceed normal social interaction and that have the potential for harm” (Hills and Taplin 1998, p. 140). How we define potential for harm is the essence of how we make

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judgements about our criminal sanctions. Community attitudes concerning these understandings are therefore critical.

The sample studied by Hills and Taplin (1998) was comprised of 91 females and 81 males. Their research demonstrated that understandings of threat were the most important factor in defining situations as stalking, but that there were significant sex differences with regard to likelihood to inform police. “For males, a mean of ‘somewhat likely’ in the ‘no threat’ condition increased to ‘likely’ in the threat condition. In contrast, females were ‘very likely’ to call the police in both the no threat and threat conditions.” (Hills and Taplin 1998, p. 144)

While this finding has significant implications regarding the likelihood of males to perceive situations as stalking (far fewer men report them to the police), there are also significant implications with respect to how we as a community understand stalking.

Given that police, magistrates and jurors are all members of society, the implications of differently sexed understandings of the definition of “threat” in stalking are critical. Indeed this is one of the critical elements of most stalking legislation. Hills and Taplin argue that there is a “tendency for males to report being ‘somewhat unlikely’ to ‘uncertain’ about experiencing fear in the female-stalking-male situation, especially where the stalker was a former intimate, and where no overt threat had been made” (Hills and Taplin 1998, p. 145). If so, these findings have critical implications for how stalking is being not only experienced by men, but also being interpreted by police officers and magistrates, specifically given research findings that, when defining a crime, people use their own common sense understandings of the situation, rather than legislative definitions (Smith 1993).

In something of a contrast to this view, Sheridan, Davies and Boon have conducted similar research within the United Kingdom. In two articles published in 2000, the authors specifically examine perceptions of stalking, specifically in comparison to legislation and prevalence. In terms of legislation, the authors compare the United Kingdom and Wales’ harassment law (which as noted is extremely broad), the United States’ stalking law and the South Australian stalking law. Respondents were provided with transcripts of all three laws and then asked to define certain situational contexts according to whether they were stalking or not. Their research demonstrated that of all three laws, it was the broader United Kingdom and Wales legislation which generally produced the highest ratings in terms of defining behaviour as stalking, while that of the United

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States and South Australia were very similar, producing similar ratings. However, the reasons for this were two different elements in the legislation, these being: in South Australia, “the need to prove intent”; and in the

United States, “the requirement for the victim to fear bodily injury or death”.

What is interesting about this research is that it does appear to demonstrate that if provided a definition, the community will define specific situations according to the legislation, as opposed to interpreting for themselves.

Unfortunately, no analysis was then done on potential differences by sex or other characteristics which may have supported or disconfirmed Hills and Taplin’s research.<sup>9</sup>

What is particularly interesting about Sheridan, Davis and Boon’s (2000) research is that when they compared the legislative definitions against the respondents’ own opinions of what constituted stalking, it was the United Kingdom and Wales harassment laws which closely accorded with public opinion.

While this finding may merely reflect the fact that the research was done in the United Kingdom, it is, nonetheless, intriguing in comparison to the Australian concerns regarding “overbreadth”. The harassment laws of the United Kingdom and Wales do not demand intent, nor define stalking, but simply require “two or more harassing incidents”. Sheridan and colleagues argue that it is “perhaps the loose drafting of the Protection from Harassment Act is necessary for the prosecution of certain types of stalking cases, such as ‘transcript one’” where:

A chap in the recent past kept turning up at my house uninvited and just walking in. He was sometimes difficult to get rid of. The relationship was flirtatious at first but his behaviour I considered inappropriate and I therefore cooled off a bit in friendliness towards him. He failed to acknowledge or accept this and chose to write weird poetry and one particularly worrying letter to me which was menacing and full of “magical thinking” abstract type stuff. This behaviour stopped after a few weeks. (Sheridan and Davies 2000, p. 15)

This particular example could, and arguably should, be prosecuted under  
<sup>9</sup>For an excellent examination of the same issues in America, see Tjaden, Thoennes and Allison (2000).

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stalking legislation, as it represents a clear example of the sorts of behaviours that Australian commentators are fearful of being brought under stalking, and it represents a perfect example of the difficulties entailed in defining stalking. However, it is not difficult to imagine many rejected suitors who, having received a “cooling off” in friendship, engaging in the writing of bad poetry for a couple of weeks following. The notions that this should be considered as an example of stalking could be argued to risk demeaning the seriousness of the offence but, more importantly, it clearly demonstrates differences in understanding what constitutes stalking behaviour and the differences that are literally being written into legislation across the globe.

## Discussion

It can be seen that the primary interventions recommended and employed in stalking situations are therapeutic based responses. This is not surprising given that most research comes from a psychological and/or psychiatric framework, and they are to be recommended in being able to address individuals whose stalking behaviours develop from mental illness. In turn, however, there are a wide range of possibilities for intervention through legislative and community responses. Although less widely implemented, the few examples that are currently in force (such as the Threat Management Unit in Los Angeles) appear able to combine the therapeutic framework recommended by psychiatrists with more structural training and management practices that may be adopted by police and the courts.

Given the diversity of stalking behaviours, these co-operative endeavours are to be recommended in most successfully managing and addressing this complex crime. Specific recommendations for future research and policy are

provided in the final chapter.