



National | World | Lifestyle | Travel | Entertainment | Technology | Finance | Sport | Video



You are here: news.com.au > Lifestyle > Real Life

lifestyle

LATEST IN LIFESTYLE



Wang wows with original fashion



What wedding night is really like



Inside the wardrobe of a fashion blogger



HIV positive and in a Peruvian jail

Bronwyn Kay Atherton is serving 14 year sentence for drug trafficking in Lima, Peru

This story was published: 2 HOURS AGO | OCTOBER 15, 2014 2:37PM

SHARE



TEXT SIZE





Bronwyn Kay Atherton is serving a 14 year sentence at a women's only prison in Peru. Pic: Thomas Jacob and Alexander Neumann *Source: Supplied*

EVERY day she thinks of the ocean.

The kiss of the salty breeze on her face, her body immersed in the cool water. For [Bronwyn Kay Atherton](#), a 29-year-old Australian, dreaming of the sea offers respite from prison life.

“The first thing I want to do when I get out of here is skinny dip in the ocean,” she jokes in between sips of tea.

The thick grey clouds makes this spring day a brisk one. “Well maybe not skinny dip because I don't want to end up back inside, so I guess I'll settle for a nice long swim in a cute bikini.”

TO GET MORE
EVERYTHING PLAN.

10

MONTHLY LINE ACCESS

Get Connected

Advertisement

STORY BY

TERRA HALL



RIGHT NOW IN LIFESTYLE

1285
READERS

[Bronwyn Kay Atherton serving sentence for drug trafficking i...](#)

189
READERS

[Married reddit users reveal what really happened on their we...](#)

163
READERS

[Fashion Bloggers: Inside the wardrobe of Harper and Harley's...](#)

150
READERS

[Terminally ill cancer patient adds his voice to dying with d...](#)

133
READERS

[Model Anna Maria Mostrom brain dead after bike accident in U...](#)

FASHION PHOTOS

Atherton lives a kilometre from where brackish waves crash into the rocky shore of Lima, Peru, yet she can't remember the last time she dipped her toes into the chilly waters of the Pacific Ocean.

That's because she has spent the last half a decade locked behind the iron bars of the Penal Santa Monica, a women's prison in the Chorrillos District of Lima.



CelebCon - Braless in Paris 📷



CelebCon - Kardashian show goes on 📷



Atherton was sentenced in 2008 and says she tries to accept her new life in jail. Pic: Thomas Jacob and Alexander Neumann. Source: *Supplied*

“Every day in jail is both easier and harder,” Atherton explained.

“[It’s] easier because I’ve become accustomed to being a prisoner. I have to deal with it. It’s my life and I accept that, but there’s no escape and that’s what makes every day harder.”

Atherton’s life in this Peruvian prison began six years ago on October 17, 2008 she tried to traffic cocaine from Peru to Paris.

It was only after police detained her that she learned the Nigerian drug cartel who organised the trip had nearly doubled her load from the nine kilograms they told her she’d be taking, to the 17 kilograms that were found in her suitcase.

Police arrested Atherton and charged her with aggravated drug trafficking. She pleaded guilty and a judge sentenced her to 14 years in prison.



CelebCon - Stars at Milan Fashion Week

MORE FROM OUR LIFESTYLE SITES

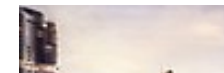


Budget beauty

What you should splurge on, and where to save.

BLAKE LIVELY AND RYAN REYNOLDS' BABY NEWS. ▶

VOGUE



Brisvegas or die

7 very good reasons why Brisbane is



The exterior of the prison where Atherton will spend 14 years. Source: *Supplied*



COOL.

WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE TO DO A MOVIE
SEX SCENE. ▶





Atherton's guilty plea means there is little chance of her getting out, her lawyer said. Source: *Supplied*



People gather outside the prison. Source: *Supplied*

Sign up to our daily newsletter



Get the latest headlines delivered to your inbox each morning.

[sign up >](#)

New Rule in Newark, NJ



[Oct 2014] If you drive less than 50 mi/day you must read this... [\[continued here\]](#)

Smart Consumer Watch

Advertisement

Sponsored Links



Atherton is also HIV positive and suffers from mental health issues. Source: *Supplied*

“[Atherton’s] admission of guilt is what is standing between prison and freedom,” said Socrates Grillo Bockos, Atherton’s lawyer in Peru.

“But the reality is that she was never mentally capable to admitting guilt.”

Doctors who regularly care for Atherton, who is HIV positive, diagnosed her with a gamut of mental health issues. While she is receiving treatment now, her lawyer said

she was not receiving medical attention when she decided to be a drug mule nor when she pleaded guilty.

Had she been, he believes her life would have been drastically different.

For this reason, three weeks ago Grillo Bockos submitted to a judge what in the Peruvian legal system is known as Recurso Extraordinario de Revisión, or the Extraordinary Resources of Revision.

Under this penal code, he will present new evidence in Atherton's case — the diagnoses of bipolar disorder, multiple personality disorder and schizophrenia.



Inside prison life. Pic: Thomas Jacob and Alexander Neumann Source: *Supplied*

“Our submission will have three possible outcomes,” Grillo Bockos said.

“First, it could be outright denied. Second, the judge could say that she was not mentally fit to admit guilt but that she should be released to a psychiatric institution in Australia. Or third, the judge could look at the evidence that shows that [Atherton] was not capable of admitting guilt due to her mental health issues, and that judge could

offer a reduced sentence.”

Atherton remains optimistic that she will receive an early release due not only to the evidence but also because of a slow change in South American drug laws.

Instead of viewing drug mules as hardened criminals who need harsh sentences, some nations have begun seeing them with a more sympathetic eye.

Pair that with extreme overcrowding worsened by foreign traffickers has led to countries beginning to look for alternatives.



Atherton is optimistic about her release as some nations have begun to see drug traffickers more sympathetically. Pic: Thomas Jacob and Alexander Neumann. Source: *Supplied*

Peru is among them. The standard prison sentence for drug traffickers in this Andean nation is six years and eight months.

A new law passed in September will allow foreign traffickers to appeal for parole which, upon review, could allow them an early release after they've served one-third of their sentence — or two years and two months.

While Atherton does not qualify for this benefit, both she and her lawyer believe it is evidence of a change in the “right direction” in the way Latin America approaches both drug trafficking and traffickers.

“There is finally a light at the end of this very dark and lonely tunnel,” Atherton said. “Perhaps this intense, challenging journey will come to an end and I can wash my hands clean. I’m so ready for a fresh and new start. I’m so ready to begin the rest of my life.”

Until then, she says she’ll be the girl who dreams of the ocean.

Pictures taken by Thomas Jacob and Alexander Neumann of [Project Pietà](#)

Ads By Google

Hey, Sandra Bullock Lied

Her Fans Are In Shock. Her Huge Secret Is Finally Exposed!



WE RECOMMEND



Shock as ‘dead’ son answers door

WORLD NEWS



Is there too much skin in this picture?

LIFESTYLE

FROM AROUND THE WEB



10 Ebola Facts People Need To Be Aware Of

RANTLIFESTYLE



Which groups rank among the biggest beneficiaries of

THE STATE OF THE GULF



Who are the most influential teenagers in the
VOGUE AUSTRALIA



The only trends you need to know for spring/summer
VOGUE AUSTRALIA



Never pay credit card interest again
FINANCE



Mrs. Obama Discovers Family of White Ancestors
ANCESTRY



Your 401(k) isn't growing as fast as it should - here's
MINT



I Have Something To Tell You: A Photographer
FAST COMPANY

[Powered by Outbrain]

DAILY DEALS



Loans from 6.99%
Compare top personal loans from leading lenders today



iPhone 6 Plans
iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus are now available on plans



iPhone 6 Plans
Compare Optus, Telstra, Vodafone and Virgin Mobile



0% For 14 Months
Get 0% p.a. on balance transfers with St. George Vertigo



Super Home Loan Deal
Australia's lowest variable rate home loan. No monthly fees



Amazing Cruise Deals
View Expedia's Cruise Specials

Jimmy Dean
A SATISFYING SNACK TO ENJOY ANYTIME
FIND IN THE FROZEN SNACKING AND BREAKFAST AISLES
Click to get 7
Available at Walmart

Advertisement

A NOTE ABOUT RELEVANT ADVERTISING: We collect information about the content (including ads) you use across this site and use it to make both advertising and content more relevant to you on our network and other sites. This is also known as Online Behavioural Advertising. [Find out more about our policy and your choices, including how to opt-out.](#)



NEWSLETTERS ▶



MOBILE ▶



RSS ▶



ADVERTISE ▶



ABOUT US ▶

Legal: [Privacy Policy](#) | [Relevant Ads Opt-Out](#) | [Cookie Policy](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#)

News Limited Copyright © 2014. All times on this site are AEDT (GMT +11).