



MEDIA RELEASE

22 February 2021

For Immediate Release

Domestic Violence NSW opens Parliamentary Inquiry into Coercive Control

Today, Domestic Violence NSW was the **first organisation** to give evidence to the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control at the public hearing in Parliament House.

In preparation for the submission and the consultation, DVNSW gathered a wide range of evidence and surveyed the organisation's 85+ members, as well as 178 people with lived experience expertise.

"It's an important day for the NSW Government in truly understanding the work we must carry out in order to keep victim-survivors safe," says Domestic Violence NSW CEO, Delia Donovan.

"The issue to be debated is not whether to criminalise coercive control, but how and where to criminalise it. It's also paramount that anything that may sound good in theory is translated safely into practice and considers the impact on frontline services and victim-survivors."

At the hearing, DVNSW made the following seven recommendations:

- 1. Increase funding to the specialist DFV sector** to ensure that people impacted by DV receive effective specialist support (including those who **do not choose** to seek redress via the criminal justice system – noting 1 in 10 victim survivors choose not to engage with the criminal justice system).

2. **Prioritise the funding of DFV primary prevention and early intervention programs**, services and education campaigns to *stop the violence before it starts*, and to change the culture of gendered violence in NSW.
3. Place an immediate priority on **working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations** in addressing the devastating impact of DFV on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in NSW.
4. **Substantially increase investment in the ongoing education and training of police and the judiciary** in how to effectively and appropriately police and prosecute DFV crimes, including non-physical abuse, as the implementation of current legislation is an issue in NSW.
5. **Prioritise a thorough consultation** process with the specialist DFV sector, leaders and leading organisations representing marginalised groups and people with lived expertise, **prior to adding a separate offence of coercive control to the criminal act.**
6. We recommend **amending the civil protection order legislation in the short term** with a clear definition that includes coercive control and some of the more common elements of coercive control, such as financial abuse. We believe this will be more swiftly enacted and allow victim-survivors to access redress and protection in the short-term, whilst consultation continues.
7. Finally, we recommend that the NSW government invest in **a cohesive, whole-of-system response to DFV.**

--ENDS--

Domestic Violence NSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. DVNSW provides a representative and advocacy function for specialist services and the women, families and communities they support. Their mission is to eliminate domestic and family violence through leadership in policy, advocacy, partnerships and the promotion of best practice.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence help can be found via:

- **1800RESPECT** or 1800 737 732 which offers a national counselling helpline, information and support
- **NSW Domestic Violence Line** 1800 65 64 63 which offers a state-wide counselling helpline, information and support

Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491 for men, or friends and family of men using violence

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