

For Immediate Release

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NSW Parliament Launches Coercive Control Report in Favour of Considered and Consultative approach to Criminalisation

The Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control today released their [report on coercive control in domestic relationships](#), with 23 recommendations on the process of criminalising coercive control.

“Coercive control is one of the most insidious forms of domestic and family violence,” says CEO of DVNSW Delia Donovan. “For DVNSW, the issue was never whether to criminalise coercive control, but *how* and *where* to criminalise it in the eyes of the law. We are supportive of the considered approach the committee have taken, recommending some priority reforms and a taskforce set up to oversee longer-term reform.”

The main recommendation (recommendation 1) is that the NSW Government criminalise coercive control in a considered manner, with thorough consultation and training which is assisted through a multiagency taskforce. The committee further recommends that the legislation around ADVOs be changed as a matter of priority to add coercive control to the definition of domestic violence and therefore increase the number of victims who will be able to access justice for that type of abuse.

“This report indicates an educated and careful approach, and has included DVNSW’s key recommendations of increased funding to the DV sector to provide crucial supports on the ground,” says Ms Donovan. “We were also pleased to see a focus on primary prevention, ongoing consultation and the increased investment in the ongoing education and training of police and the judiciary.”

The report comes as a result of the 2020-1 Inquiry into Coercive Control, which saw over 150 submissions and numerous days of public hearings on the issue. The Government must now respond to the Committee’s recommendations within six months. DVNSW’s key recommendation that NSW prioritise improving the civil law and updating the definition of domestic violence to explicitly include coercive controlling behaviours was adopted by the committee.

Other key recommendations include the call for a uniform National Definition of domestic violence, increased resourcing to DV services and an increased focus on primary prevention, including information on coercive control in schools.

“DVNSW wholeheartedly supports this approach to the criminalisation of coercive control, and is especially pleased to see the report prioritising changes to the civil law which will offer improved protection to victim-survivors. As our colleagues in Scotland and England have demonstrated, some of the most powerful changes are those to community attitudes and the attitudes and supports provided by police and other first responders,” says DVNSW’s Policy and Research Manager Renata Field. “It is essential that we support these and future changes with thorough funding for implementation and training.”

You can read DVNSW’s full submission [here](#).

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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