

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Domestic Violence NSW Launches Voices for Change Report**

Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) has today released a report outlining the impacts of the Voices for Change program, a project aimed at bringing an end to domestic, family and sexual violence through survivor media advocacy.

“I strongly believe that the voices of people with lived experience are essential for improving community understanding of sexual, domestic and family violence”, says Voices For Change Project Coordinator Renata Field. “The media have a key role in reporting safely and well to inform and educate the community, as modern journalism holds considerable influence in our society.”

The Voices for Change advocates participated in 56 media opportunities over 18 months, with over 40 stories being published. Advocates spoke at 28 speaking events and met with the NSW Government on numerous occasions to advise on changes that are required to ensure NSW is a safe place for people and their families.

“The process of engaging in this type of change has been liberating,” says Voices for Change Advocate Jane. “I had forgotten my value and grew so much personally by working toward a common goal with DVNSW and amazing fellow advocates.”

The program aimed to facilitate people who had experienced violence with the skills to speak out and lobby for change, support media in accurate reporting of domestic and family violence, and contribute to changing behaviours and community attitudes about violence against women and LGBTIQ+ people. Launched in November 2018, Voices for Change grew from one to eighteen survivor advocates, fulfilling the objective of shifting community attitudes held on violent relationships.

“Survivors need to be part of those boards, committees, and to bring expertise from that perspective,” says Advocate Synthia. “We want to work with them to achieve effective outcomes that support victim-survivors.”

The report made 12 recommendations for future survivor advocacy projects, and 6 recommendations for promoting survivor advocacy in Australia. These included involving victim-survivors of domestic violence in all project and policy development, funding a federal roll-out of programs such as Voices for Change under the next National Plan and implementing a survivor advocate advisory group in jurisdictions beyond Victoria.

While it’s challenging to measure the reach and quantify the impact of a project like Voices for Change, Ms Field says some advocates stated that if just one person read their story and it helped them reach out for help, they would be happy.

“I think we can be content that this project has contributed to the suite of primary prevention initiatives across Australia which will lead to a reduction in domestic and family violence.”

The project closed mid-2020. You can read the report [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