



Mark Speakman
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MEDIA RELEASE

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WORLD-FIRST APP TO HELP ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A world-first app aimed at holding domestic violence perpetrators to account and increasing their compliance with protection orders to help safeguard victims has been unveiled today.

Attorney General and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Mark Speakman launched the NSW Government-funded Avow app as part of a package of products to help people understand their legal obligations under an [Apprehended Domestic Violence Order \(ADVO\)](#).

“The scourge of domestic violence needs to be tackled both by protecting victims and by helping perpetrators to stop their abusive behaviour,” Mr Speakman said.

“The Avow app puts information perpetrators need to comply with their ADVO at their fingertips.

“It’s available anytime, anywhere, for free, meaning perpetrators can more easily address their behaviour.”

An ADVO is a court order that imposes multiple conditions on a perpetrator, including limiting their contact with the victim to ensure they do not stalk or intimidate them. Breaking these conditions is a criminal offence, which can lead to a gaol sentence.

The Avow app includes:

- Straightforward information about ADVOs, court processes and the consequences of breaching an ADVO;
- Information about appearing in court;
- Features that allow users to add their ADVO conditions into the app and plan for how they will comply with them; and
- A directory and links to support services.

A new NSW Police referral card will also be used to promote the app and encourage perpetrators to contact the [Men’s Referral Service](#) that can put them in touch with supports, including Men’s Behaviour Change programs.

NSW Police Corporate Sponsor for Domestic Violence, Assistant Commissioner Leanne McCusker, said police take a proactive approach to ADVO compliance.

“Each day police respond to nearly 400 domestic violence incidents across the state,” Assistant Commissioner McCusker said.

“The primary focus of police is to protect victims and in the last two years we have significantly increased our compliance activities to ensure perpetrators are held to account. Last year alone we identified nearly 17,000 breaches of ADVO incidents.

“The Avow App will give perpetrators the information they need to ensure they are abiding by the requirements of the ADVO, and they can access referral pathways to get the help they need to change their behaviour.”

No to Violence Chief Executive Jacqui Watt said having clear information available anytime, anywhere, is incredibly important.

“Hopefully this information can help those subject to an ADVO know the requirements to prevent breaches,” Ms Watt said.

“We are also pleased that these resources highlight that support is available. If you are struggling or need someone to speak to about your behaviour, give the Men’s Referral Service a call on 1300 766 491.”

Legal Aid NSW will launch a new YouTube animation ‘How to Stick to Your Order’, with an accompanying publication. Shorter animations will form part of a social media campaign along with a podcast for community workers who support victims and alleged perpetrators.

Legal Aid NSW Chief Executive Officer Brendan Thomas said these resources are innovative ways to promote access to justice.

“While nothing beats in-person legal advice, the app will serve as an invaluable reference tool that will help to keep victims safe and perpetrators out of gaol,” Mr Thomas said.

The information will be delivered state-wide to the legal assistance sector through Legal Aid NSW’s Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program, which partners with Community Legal Centres, the Aboriginal Legal Service, disability advocates, police and local courts.

The Avow app was developed by the Department of Communities and Justice with the Department of Customer Service and Miroma Project Factory. The Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program also reviewed the app during development to ensure it was fit-for-purpose.

You can download Avow on your mobile from [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#).