



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

Natalie Ward
Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

MEDIA RELEASE

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CRIMINALISING COERCIVE CONTROL ONE STEP CLOSER

Coercive control is one step closer to being criminalised in NSW, with the NSW Government taking the significant step of releasing a draft bill for public comment ahead of introduction to Parliament.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the NSW Government is consulting on a public exposure draft bill to outlaw coercive control in intimate partner relationships, as part of its ongoing response to the [Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control](#).

Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse that involves patterns of behaviour which have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. This abuse can involve physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse.

Mr Speakman said the draft Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022 would provide further protections for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

"Coercive control is complex, is insidious and causes untold harm for its victims," Mr Speakman said.

"Creating a stand-alone offence will strengthen our criminal justice system's responses to abuse, but consultation is critical to ensure these reforms only capture very serious incidences of abuse, avoid overreach and do not unintentionally endanger those in our community we are seeking to help."

The new law will create an offence to carry out repeated abusive behaviours to a current or former intimate partner, and will carry a sentence of up to seven years in jail.

Minister for Women's Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Natalie Ward, who chaired the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control, said the Exposure Draft Bill also introduces a definition of 'domestic abuse' to the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*.

"These are landmark reforms that recognise that domestic abuse isn't just about physical violence, it can and very often does include physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse to hurt and control someone," Mrs Ward said.

“These reforms are crucial to ensuring that we recognise in law a pattern of behaviour which is identified as a precursor to domestic violence deaths.”

Coercive control is a significant ‘red flag’ for intimate partner homicide. The Domestic Violence Death Review Team [noted](#) that in 111 of the 112 (99%) intimate partner domestic violence homicides that occurred in NSW between 10 March 2008 and 30 June 2016 that it reviewed, the relationship was characterised by the abuser’s use of coercive and controlling behaviours toward the victim.

Submissions on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022 can be made via the NSW Government’s ‘Have Your Say’ website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/coercive-control-exposure-draft-bill>.

Consultation closes 31 August 2022.

The NSW Government provided an earlier draft to restricted legal stakeholders and NSW Police to identify and address any technical legal matters, prior to releasing an exposure draft for broader consultation.

The NSW Government is well-advanced to introduce a final Bill to Parliament in Spring 2022.

Release of the exposure draft bill follows the [NSW Government’s announcement](#) in June 2022 that more women and children experiencing domestic and family violence will be supported by \$69.6 million in new funding in the 2022-23 Budget, including an initial down-payment of \$0.7 million over two years to support the NSW Government’s commitment to outlaw coercive control.

This builds on the NSW Government’s landmark \$484.3 million investment in housing and related services as part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy.

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For confidential advice, support and referrals, contact [1800 RESPECT](#) on [1800 737 732](#).