



Robyn Preston MP

Member for Hawkesbury

MEDIA RELEASE

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COERCIVE CONTROL REFORM

Domestic violence victim-survivors, frontline services, legal experts, law enforcement, academics and the Hawkesbury community will soon have the opportunity to share their views on whether to criminalise coercive control in NSW.

Member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston MP, said the NSW Government would move this week to establish a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee that will hold a public inquiry to examine coercive control in detail.

The NSW Government is issued a comprehensive Discussion Paper on Tuesday, 13 October 2020, detailing key issues. The Inquiry can use this as a guide to help inform consideration of this complex topic.

“Domestic violence rates in Hawkesbury continue to shock our community, and I think it’s really important we look at non-physical forms of abuse and how to address it,” Ms Preston said.

Robyn Preston said that the statistical area of Baulkham Hills & Hawkesbury has had a significant increase in recorded rates of domestic assault by 32.7% in the past two years.

“Creating a coercive control offence would be a complex though potentially very worthwhile reform; however, thorough research and consultation is absolutely crucial.”

Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse involving repeated patterns of abusive behaviour – which can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse – the cumulative effect of which is to rob victim-survivors of their autonomy and independence.

“The impact of this abuse on victims is horrific, but the appropriate response to this behaviour remains an ongoing challenge for law enforcement and legal minds alike,” Ms Preston said.

“There are many relevant questions to carefully consider, and that’s why the work of the Parliamentary Inquiry and the issues in this Discussion Paper are so important to explore.”

The Government's Discussion Paper seeks to explore:

- what coercive control is and how it should be defined;
- how coercive and controlling behaviours are currently addressed in NSW;
- experiences of other jurisdictions in responding to coercive control;
- how evidence of coercive control is currently considered in NSW legal proceedings;
- potential benefits and practical challenges associated with criminalising coercive control;
- possible elements of an offence of coercive control;
- other avenues for legislative reforms; and
- non-legislative issues like education and community awareness.

To read the full Discussion Paper, visit:

<http://www.crimeprevention.nsw.gov.au/domesticviolence/Pages/coercive-control-discussion-paper.aspx>.

Further updates on the Parliamentary Inquiry will be available in the coming weeks, including details on how to make a submission.

For confidential advice, support and referrals related to domestic and family violence, contact **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)**, the **NSW Domestic Violence Line (1800 65 64 63)** or the **Men's Referral Service (1300 766 491)**.

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