



REGROUPEMENT DES MAISONS
POUR FEMMES VICTIMES
DE VIOLENCE CONJUGALE

CRIMINALIZING COERCIVE CONTROL

CHARTING A CANADIAN PATH INFORMED BY AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES



Mission Report

March 2026

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Foreword

Since fall 2021, the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale (hereinafter the “Regroupement”) has been working to raise awareness and promote recognition of coercive control among justice system stakeholders in Quebec. To date, it has trained more than 13,000 professionals, including lawyers, police officers, probation officers, prosecutors, administrative judges, and others.

During this period, the Regroupement advocated for the criminalization of coercive control in Canada. This work was further developed and refined through two missions to Scotland and England—jurisdictions where coercive control has been criminalized—during which team members met with justice system stakeholders to discuss implementation challenges and practices. The valuable insights gained from these exchanges helped inform those working in the domestic violence sector in Quebec and shape parliamentary discussions in Quebec and Canada on the introduction of a federal bill.

Our organization actively participated in consultations examining the possibility of criminalizing coercive control. The prorogation of Parliament in early 2025 brought an end to the parliamentary process for Bill C-332, which was close to being adopted.

In anticipation of a new bill from the federal Minister of Justice, the Regroupement attended the 5th World Conference of Women’s Shelters in Sydney and used the opportunity to organize a mission, similar to those conducted in Great Britain, to learn more about two Australian jurisdictions (Queensland and New South Wales) that have recently criminalized coercive control.¹

This mission took place in September 2025, in Brisbane and Sydney, and provided an opportunity to exchange knowledge and expertise with stakeholders involved in implementing the coercive control offence. Mtre Karine Barrette and Fanny Guérin, members of the Regroupement’s team, met in each of the two states with:

- representatives of the police
- prosecutors and staff from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- representatives of specialized victim support services

as well as a journalist and university professor.

We would like to thank Francis Lanouette, Inspector with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who attended certain meetings with police services in Queensland and New South Wales virtually.

We would also like to sincerely thank all those who generously shared their time and expertise. Finally, we are also very grateful to Diane Héroux, graphic designer, and Shannon Souter, translator, for all their hard work.

For ease of reading, the report begins with our recommendations, followed by key findings from the consultations and an analysis of these insights. The substance of the discussions, along with a detailed account of the processes for criminalizing coercive control and implementing the legislation, is organized by theme and presented in table format for each state. A statistical analysis of the number of recorded coercive control cases and their progression through the justice system then follows, offering explanations for certain figures.

Shortly before the publication of this report, the federal Minister of Justice, the Honourable Sean Fraser, introduced Bill C-16, which seeks, among other measures, to create a new criminal offence addressing coercive control. We hope that this report will help inform federal, provincial, and territorial authorities regarding the implementation phase that will follow the coming into force of this major reform.

1 The state of South Australia, in turn, adopted on September 4, 2025 (on the eve of our departure for Australia), legislation introducing an offence of coercive control (the *Criminal Law Consolidation (Coercive Control) Amendment Bill 2024*). The offence had not yet come into force at the time of publication of this report.

Territorial Acknowledgement

This report was written in large part in Tiohtiá:ke / Montréal, on unceded Indigenous land, historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. The Kanien'kehá: ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters of this territory. The reflections and discussions that led to the production of this report also took place on other unceded lands more than 15,000 km away: those of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation (Sydney) and those of the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples (Brisbane).

As an organization committed to social justice and to addressing violence against women, the Regroupement acknowledges the past and present consequences of colonialism, from Australia to Canada. In Canada, these consequences continue to disproportionately affect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women.

Individuals and Organizations Consulted

QUEENSLAND

Queensland Police Service (QPS), Domestic Family Violence & Vulnerable Persons Command

- Katherine Innes, Assistant Commissioner
- Rowena Hardiker, Inspector, Coordination and Advocacy, State Domestic Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) – Queensland

- Todd Fuller KC, Director of Public Prosecutions
- Nathan Crane, Deputy Director
- Greg Cummings, Deputy Director
- Kyla Hayden, Project Executive Lawyer
- Caitlin Penfold, Principal Lawyer, Women's Safety and Justice Project team

Angela Lynch, Executive Officer, **Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN)**

Michelle Royes, Director of Social Impact and Advocacy, **DV Connect**

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Police Force, Domestic and Family Violence Command

- Danielle Emerton, Superintendent-Commander
- Sinead Berry, Strategic Policy and Project Manager / Coercive control
- Adam Wood, Senior Sergeant, Legal advisor
- Sarah Boffa, Assistant Project Officer / Coercive control
- Umut Tokdogan, Senior Constable
- Nathan Blatch, Inspector (OLAU-Operation Legal Advice Unit)
- David Roth, Sergeant (OLAU-Operation Legal Advice Unit)
- Rebecca Witherspoon, Inspector

Kerryn Lawler, Senior Constable, **Griffith Police Station**

St George Police Area Command / Co-location pilot program

- Paul Dustan, Superintendent Commander
- Sergeant Ashleigh Papageorgiou
- Georgia Weir, SSWDVCAS Assistant Manager Women's DV Court Advocacy Service

NSW Police Force, Crime Prevention Command / ACLOs, MCLOs and GLLOs into Commands

- Brad Parker, Inspector
- Jade Symons, Detective Inspector
- Rima Elhage, State Coordinator / Multicultural Community Liaison Officer Program
- Krystal Hough, State Coordinator / Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Program
- State Coordinator / Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer Program (GLLO)

Auburn Police Area Command / Civilian ride-along with two police officers

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) - New South Wales

- Anne Whitehead, Deputy Solicitor Legal
- Matthew Coates, Crown Prosecutor
- Lisa Hanshaw, Solicitor
- Jane Wolf, Witness Assistance Service Manager

Michelle England SC, ex-Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), member of the Coercive Control Legal Reference Group of the *Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce*

Angie Gehle, WDVAS Senior Policy & Advocacy Officer, DV NSW

Annabelle Daniel, Chief Executive Officer, **Women's Community Shelters (NSW)**, member of the *Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce*

Jess Hill, journalist, Industry Professor at the University of Technology Sydney, and speaker

Our Recommendations

The recommendations below are drawn primarily from the mission to Australia in September 2025, which is the subject of this report. They complement those issued following the mission to England and Scotland in May 2024,² which are reproduced in Appendix 4 to this document.

ON THE WORDING AND APPLICATION OF THE OFFENCE

1. That the offence be limited to intimate partners pending the first legislative review.
2. That the *mens rea* of the offence also include recklessness as a form of culpable intent.

ON THE OVERSIGHT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OFFENCE

3. That the new legislation criminalizing coercive control in Canada provide for the establishment of provincial/territorial task forces³ to coordinate the implementation and evaluation of the legislation, as well as a federal task force to oversee its rollout across the country, inspired by the model and mandate of the NSW Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce.
4. That these task forces include, at a minimum, representatives of prosecution services, police services, and specialized services supporting victims of domestic violence.
5. That these task forces establish advisory groups composed of members from Indigenous, ethnocultural, LGBTQIA+, and disability communities, as well as justice system professionals, victims/survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence, the specialized support services working with them, and the families of victims/survivors. These groups will provide recommendations to the task forces regarding the implementation process and the impact of the legislation on the communities they represent.
6. That the offence come into force two years after Royal Assent, to allow sufficient time for the training of justice system professionals, the conduct of public awareness campaigns, and the establishment of oversight mechanisms.

ON THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OFFENCE

7. That the new legislation establish a governance structure that ensures accountability to the Parliament of Canada for the implementation of the offence.⁴
8. That provincial/territorial registries or registries established by police services be set up to consolidate incident reports or operational case files identifying coercive control.
9. That data relating to coercive control cases be collected by police services and by provincial and federal prosecutors.

2 To consult the 2024 mission report: <https://maisons-femmes.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/GB-Mission-Report-RMFVVC-CACP-2024-Coercive-Control.pdf>

3 As will be explained in the section on the oversight of legislative reform, the term task force here goes beyond the notion of an expert committee with a primarily advisory mandate. In this case, it refers to a hybrid between a working group with an operational mandate and an expert committee.

4 The legislator could, among other things, draw inspiration from the structure of section 3 of Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*: <https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/43-2/bill/C-7/royal-assent>

10. That the list of data to be collected be determined by the federal task force and include, in particular, the following:
 - the number of cases opened by administrative region;
 - the number of cases accepted and rejected at the charge authorization stage;
 - detention or release pending trial;
 - the nature of the prohibited conduct;
 - victim participation and, where applicable, the stage at which victims withdraw;
 - other concurrent offences included in the charge;
 - the progression of charges, including charges dropped, guilty pleas, and cases proceeding to trial;
 - the time elapsed between police intervention and the laying of charges, and between the laying of charges and sentencing, where applicable;
 - demographic information on victims and on suspects/accused persons;
 - the existence of prior protection orders;
 - breaches of conditions.
11. That a mechanism be established to evaluate the impact of the legislation as of its adoption.

ON THE REVIEW MECHANISMS

12. That review mechanisms be put in place at both the police and prosecutorial levels for cases involving the coercive control offence, and that they be carried out by specialized staff.
13. That a process for performing a predominant aggressor analysis be implemented at both the police level (e.g., assessment tools) and the prosecutorial level (e.g., guidelines), in order to prevent misidentification of the primary victim and reduce the risk of the offence being weaponized by perpetrators of violence.

ON THE COLLABORATION WITH VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

14. That workers specialized in domestic violence be assigned to work within police stations and prosecution offices.
15. That the Government of Canada provide funding to the provinces and territories to support specialized services for victims of domestic violence, as well as police organizations and prosecutorial units specializing in domestic violence, in order to adequately respond to the anticipated increase in needs arising from the new legislation.

ON TRAINING PROFESSIONALS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

16. That across Canada, all police officers, as well as prosecutors and judges likely to work on domestic violence cases, receive mandatory training on coercive control tailored to their field of practice before the offence comes into force and continue to receive such training as part of their ongoing professional development.
17. That such training be jointly developed and delivered by representatives from police services, prosecution services, and victim support organizations.
18. That the training address, in particular, manifestations of coercive control, the risk of homicide associated with coercive control, predominant aggressor analysis, reactive violence, barriers to reporting and separation, trauma-informed approaches, intersectional perspectives, etc.
19. That the training include, in particular, contributions from individuals with lived expertise, the use of surveillance video footage, case studies, etc.
20. That specialized domestic violence teams be created within police services and prosecution offices, and that they receive in-depth, ongoing training on domestic violence.

21. That a wide-reaching public awareness campaign be carried out to raise awareness of coercive control and its recent criminalization.
22. That targeted awareness campaigns be developed for Indigenous peoples, ethnocultural communities, older persons, and persons with disabilities by representatives and ambassadors from these communities.
23. That the Government of Canada provide additional funding to the provinces and territories to enable provincial and territorial departments of justice and public safety, as well as specialized services for victims of domestic violence, to cover the costs associated with developing and delivering training on coercive control, including the participation of police, justice system and domestic violence personnel in such training.
24. That an external organization conduct an independent evaluation of the impact of training on police and judicial practices.

ON THE REVIEW OF THE LEGISLATION AFTER ITS ADOPTION

25. That the legislator provide for a review of the legislation every two years over a six-year period, based on reports from the task forces and focusing on the issues they identify.

ON OTHER CONDITIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE OFFENCE

26. That all police officers be equipped with body-worn cameras to collect video evidence, including recording statements.
27. That each police officer have a phone for professional use, in particular to provide simultaneous translation and refer victims to resources.
28. That police officers conduct systematic risk assessments during interventions in domestic violence cases.
29. That an application be developed, in collaboration with victim support services and approved by the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Justice, for victims and survivors to securely document conduct and evidence of coercive control.

Findings and Analysis of the Criminalization of Coercive Control in New South Wales and Queensland

This section presents the results of our analysis, based on interviews with 38 individuals conducted over some twenty meetings in both jurisdictions, between Sydney and Brisbane. The analysis is based on the two tables presented in Appendices 1 and 2, which provide an overview of the process of criminalizing coercive control in each state, using the same classification: overview, oversight of the legislative reform, monitoring and evaluation, review mechanisms, collaboration with victim support services, training/awareness, and the legislative review. To make this section easier to read, all applicable sources and references are provided in the footnotes to the tables presenting our findings.

OVERVIEW

Prior to Criminalization

In Australia, the criminalization of coercive control occurred in the wake of the murders of Hannah Clarke and her three children in Brisbane in February 2020. These murders had a profound impact on public opinion and contributed to placing coercive control at the centre of political and media debate in both Queensland and New South Wales (NSW).

In NSW, the debate quickly centered on the issue of criminalization. However, discussions were polarized. Some organizations adopting an anti-carceral stance expressed significant concerns, particularly regarding the over-representation of Indigenous men in prisons. Others raised concerns about the risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor and the potential criminalization of victims.

Data from a national study conducted with survivors of coercive control from various communities played a crucial role in shaping subsequent discussions. The fact that 91% of respondents indicated that they were in favour of criminalization contributed to bringing survivors' voices back to the forefront and to mitigating some of the opposition.

At the institutional level, NSW proceeded in stages. Following a report by the Domestic Violence Death Review Team revealing that 111 of the 112 homicides related to family violence had been preceded by patterns of coercive control, a parliamentary committee was established in 2020 to examine the advisability of creating a specific offence. The committee's work, informed by extensive public consultations, led to 23 recommendations, including the creation of a standalone offence and the development of a police training program. The authorities also closely examined international experiences, particularly in Scotland, where they were in attendance alongside representatives of the Regroupement in 2024.

In Queensland, the process took a different form. The government tasked the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, chaired by the Honourable Margaret McMurdo, with conducting broad consultations on women's experiences within the criminal justice system and on the relevance of criminalizing coercive control. The work of this widely respected body enabled in-depth discussion and resulted in detailed recommendations regarding the implementation of the reform.

In addition, a commission of inquiry on domestic violence, stemming from the work of the task force, brought to light significant structural issues within the Queensland police, including instances of institutional misogyny and racism. These findings contributed to drawing public attention to policing practices and to the fragile relationship of trust between certain victims—particularly Indigenous women, racialized women, or women living with disabilities—and police institutions, notably due to the misidentification of the predominant aggressor and implicit expectations associated with the stereotype of the “perfect victim.”

Several individuals we spoke with highlighted the exceptional work carried out in Queensland during the consultation phase. At that stage, the focus appeared to be more on how best to proceed with criminalization than on whether it should be pursued, as the debate in principle had already been largely settled elsewhere in the country. However, this extensive groundwork does not appear to have been matched by the same level of momentum during the implementation and data collection phases following the coming into force of the legislation.

In NSW, the polarization of the debate appears to have contributed to a more cautious approach to the reform. The inclusion of several accompanying mechanisms—including a task force responsible for overseeing implementation and mandatory statutory reviews—reflects a degree of humility on the part of the legislator in implementing the offence, as well as a degree of deference to specialized domestic violence services and survivors.

Legislative Content

Both states have introduced a specific coercive control offence in recent years. In NSW, the offence was adopted in 2022 and came into force in July 2024. In Queensland, it was introduced in 2024 and came into force in May 2025, as part of a much broader legislative reform affecting several aspects of the judicial response to domestic violence.

In both cases, the offence is based on demonstrating a course of conduct, which constitutes a significant departure from the traditional criminal law approach centred on isolated incidents. This type of offence remains relatively rare and requires significant adaptation of police practices and prosecution strategies.

There are some important differences between the two models. In NSW, the offence applies only to intimate partners, whereas in Queensland it also extends to certain contexts of family violence and informal care. However, several individuals consulted indicated that they had limited practical experience with instances of coercive control in informal care relationships, which raises challenges for the practical application of this part of the Act.

In both jurisdictions, the offence requires proof of the offender’s specific intent to coerce or control the victim. However, this requirement creates a particularly high burden of proof. In NSW, the element of recklessness was reportedly removed at the last minute, for reasons that remain debated, according to those consulted, but notably due in part to concerns about the risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor, particularly in Indigenous communities.

Both Acts also adopt an objective approach to the likely effect of the course of conduct on the victim. The offence is established where the conduct was reasonably likely to cause fear of violence, have a serious impact on the victim’s day-to-day life (NSW), or cause harm (Queensland), even if the impact never in fact occurred.

In addition, both jurisdictions have included a defence where the course of conduct was reasonable in the circumstances.

In both states, the offence was designed to complement other criminal offences, particularly by addressing situations that are not adequately captured by those offences. At this stage, it is not viewed as an “umbrella” offence covering all forms of violent behaviour, although the decision ultimately rests with prosecutors. This is an important difference from the Scottish model under DASA.

However, introducing the concept of coercive control represents a significant shift in the work of police officers and prosecutors. Beyond the legislative framework, effective implementation—particularly in terms of identifying, documenting, and presenting evidence—requires a thorough understanding of control dynamics, the barriers faced by victims, and the strategies employed by perpetrators of violence.

These skills must be developed before the offence comes into force to prevent justice system professionals from becoming disengaged and victims from becoming discouraged if the initial applications prove challenging, as has been observed in other jurisdictions.

Given the limited time available for training police officers and prosecutors, it appears prudent to follow the approach adopted in NSW by initially limiting the offence to intimate partner relationships, with a view to expanding it to other types of relationships through legislative review.

The requirement to establish specific intent also sets a high threshold for meeting the criteria of the offence. In practice, this requirement can significantly hinder the work of justice system professionals, as perpetrators of violence often develop strategies that allow them to operate at the limits of what is explicitly prohibited.

The decision to remove recklessness as a possible form of *mens rea* in NSW was driven by concerns about the criminalization of victims and the misidentification of the predominant aggressor. However, this issue is not limited to offences involving recklessness. Rather, it reflects a broader lack of understanding of domestic violence dynamics, including victims' use of reactive violence, as well as persistent stereotypes of the 'perfect victim' and cultural biases. It may also reflect operational shortcuts—something Canada is not immune to.

These issues should be addressed directly, in particular through training tailored to justice system professionals and through monitoring mechanisms to track arrests and charges involving women in coercive control cases.

The primary added value of the concept of coercive control lies in its ability to capture the full range of abusive behaviours experienced by a victim over the course of a relationship. This approach not only helps validate the overall experience of the violence endured, but also improves risk assessment, particularly with respect to homicide or serious bodily harm.

However, using the offence of coercive control only where the conduct does not already constitute another offence may limit the scope of the concept. In our view, this approach does not fully leverage its analytical strengths, whether in recognizing victims' experiences or in assessing the overall level of risk in a given situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the offence be limited to intimate partners pending the first legislative review.
- That the *mens rea* of the offence also include recklessness as a form of culpable intent.

Actors and the Judicial Response to Domestic Violence

The addition of a new offence, representing a major shift in how domestic violence cases are approached, requires clear institutional leadership, particularly given that such cases constitute a significant portion of police interventions. Such a reform cannot be limited to the adoption of a new legal tool. It requires changes in practices, the adoption of coherent operational directives, and sustained mobilization of police personnel and prosecutors. In jurisdictions that have undertaken such a shift, implementation generally relies on internal coordination and support structures tasked with guiding practices and supporting frontline officers.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Australia's experience clearly illustrates this dynamic. In NSW, for example, the police have a central structure dedicated to domestic and family violence within the New South Wales Police Force. This entity is not an operational investigative unit. Rather, it serves as a governance body responsible for developing policies, producing guidelines, and supporting members of the organization in applying the legislation. This model highlights the importance of an institutional leadership hub capable of ensuring consistency in practices across the organization.

This strategic structure is complemented by operational mechanisms implemented at various levels across the state. At the regional level, specialized teams handle high-risk domestic violence incidents, while each police station has a team dedicated to domestic violence cases, including a liaison officer. Despite this organizational specialization, interventions are primarily carried out by patrol officers, reflecting the operational reality of these cases, which often arise in emergency contexts requiring an immediate response. Where coercive control is suspected during an intervention, the case is assigned to an investigator, while any other offences remain the responsibility of the patrol officer.

In this regard, structured tools play a central role in standardizing practices. In NSW, police officers are required to conduct a risk assessment during every domestic violence intervention; otherwise, the report is considered incomplete. This assessment tool enables officers to determine whether the victim's safety is at threat or at serious threat, which in turn triggers different protection measures for the victim, ranging from referral to support services to the activation of inter-agency coordination mechanisms aimed at ensuring their safety (Safety Action Meetings). This systematic approach to risk assessment helps structure police intervention and direct the response to protect victims.

The police organization also provides mechanisms to support evidence collection. Patrol officers have access to the full history of interventions, including protection orders and previous risk assessments. Officers are also equipped with body-worn cameras, the recordings of which can be automatically transcribed, facilitating the documentation of factual elements observed at the scene. As in the United Kingdom, those consulted in Australia also highlighted the advantages of these cameras for documenting coercive control. These tools make it possible not only to capture elements relating to the environment in which the victim is living, but also to observe their reactions and emotional state at the time of the intervention. They also enable officers to record video statements, which can provide important evidence in cases where the conduct unfolds over time.

The police officers consulted also emphasized the extent to which the use of mobile phones in a professional setting helps them in their work. As technology now allows for real-time translation of conversations, this tool can prove decisive when the victim does not speak the language used by responding officers. Even where the victim is able to communicate in a second or third language, it remains strongly recommended that they be able to do so in their mother tongue, particularly when sensitive events are involved that may later be examined in judicial proceedings.

The integration of new technological tools also constitutes an important lever for improving the police response. Police officers can, in particular, send a victim a secure link (BluLink) allowing her to activate her phone camera, share her geolocation and live stream images or translate messages into numerous languages. Similarly, the *Empower You* mobile application, developed by the New South Wales Police Force, allows victims to access local support resources, alert trusted persons and record, in a secure journal, the behaviours they have experienced and the associated evidence, including photographs. Several individuals consulted described this tool as a true “game changer” due to its concrete impact on victims’ ability to document the violence experienced and to seek help. Given the success of this application, Canada could consider developing a similar technological tool, either as a nationwide initiative or through provincial and territorial efforts, with government approval.

At the judicial level, the prosecution structure is also based on a particular allocation of roles. In NSW, the majority of charges are managed by police prosecutors, of whom there are approximately 550 across the state. Some receive specific training on coercive control, although all prosecutors may be called upon to handle these cases. More serious cases or those involving multiple counts may be transferred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. However, at present, there is no specialized domestic violence team within this organization, a gap that some individuals consulted identified as affecting the consistency and specialization of expertise.

QUEENSLAND

Queensland has a similar structure, although with some distinct features. The police service is organized into districts, each with a unit dedicated to domestic and family violence and vulnerable persons within the Queensland Police Service (QPS). As elsewhere, interventions are generally carried out by patrol officers, while more complex investigations may be assigned to detectives.

In this jurisdiction, police officers play a central role in the initial management of cases and we were told police prosecutors were responsible for deciding which charges to lay. Crown prosecutors primarily intervene where offences are likely to result in more serious penalties before higher courts. As in NSW, there is no specialized domestic violence team within this organization, which limits the development of specific expertise in this area.

Certain features of the legal framework in Queensland also raise significant issues. Since January 1, 2026, police officers have been able to issue protection orders themselves for a maximum duration of twelve months without judicial review. Although this measure is intended to speed up the implementation of protections for victims, it has also attracted criticism. Several observers have pointed to the risks associated with granting such broad powers to police officers, particularly with respect to the possibility of misidentifying the predominant aggressor or the risk of the system being weaponized by certain perpetrators of violence.

These comparative experiences highlight several findings. On the one hand, even in jurisdictions that have developed advanced tools and policies, interventions rely heavily on patrol officers, underscoring the importance of their training and support. On the other hand, organizational mechanisms designed to support expertise—whether strategic units, specialized teams or risk assessment tools—appear essential to ensuring a consistent and effective response to situations that are often complex and evolving.

Implementing an offence targeting coercive control requires not only an appropriate legislative framework but also an institutional structure capable of supporting practitioners and ensuring a specialized, coordinated response. Teams must have leadership to guide the application of the offence and support their work with victims. Because victims generally face numerous barriers to participation, particularly due to interference by the perpetrator, specialized teams are essential at both the police and prosecutorial levels. With specialized training and expertise, teams will be better equipped to act with confidence, and victims will benefit from support more closely aligned with their needs and circumstance.

Pending full uptake by police officers, police prosecutors, and Crown prosecutors in both jurisdictions, a degree of unease was evident in our discussions. The desire to get it right—under close national scrutiny of how cases are evolving—along with concerns about making errors or creating unfavourable case law, may reflect the legislator’s caution in New South Wales and may be contributing to a restrained application of the offence. This issue is discussed further in Appendix 3 of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That specialized domestic violence teams be created within police services and prosecution offices, and that they receive in-depth, ongoing training on domestic violence.
- That police officers conduct systematic risk assessments during interventions in domestic violence cases.
- That all police officers be equipped with body-worn cameras to collect video evidence, including recording statements.
- That each police officer have a phone for professional use, in particular to provide simultaneous translation and refer victims to resources.
- That an application be developed, in collaboration with victim support services and approved by the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Justice, for victims and survivors to securely document conduct and evidence of coercive control.

OVERSIGHT OF THE LEGISLATIVE REFORM

An analysis of the experiences in New South Wales and Queensland shows that criminalizing coercive control is an essential, but insufficient, part of the reform. Establishing a dedicated governance structure appears to be key to effective implementation in practice.

NEW SOUTH WALES

In NSW, the reform included major efforts to train and raise awareness among the general public, and a focus on ensuring that the various professionals required to interact with victims were adequately prepared. The coercive control legislation established a task force responsible for implementation and evaluation. The task force is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice and includes three statutory members representing the police, the Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council, and the domestic and family violence sector, along with representatives from various government agencies. It also draws on reference groups composed of members of different communities affected by domestic violence. In this way, frontline leaders with direct knowledge of the challenges faced by teams in their respective fields were engaged to lead and oversee implementation.

This body is supported by a dedicated secretariat and a specific budget to coordinate its work and consult stakeholders through reference groups. The structure goes beyond an advisory role; it can make operational decisions, for example on the timeline for entry into force, allowing the system to adjust in advance. The direct participation of victim support organizations, Indigenous communities, and survivors of domestic violence reflects the importance placed on frontline and lived expertise.

The reform was accompanied by targeted funding within the NSW Police Force, which created 58 liaison officer positions to build bridges with communities, established a team of seven advisors to support the Police Commissioner's office, and recruited three officers for a team dedicated to implementing the coercive control offence. These measures supported effective coordination and active engagement at both the leadership level and on the ground within communities.

However, certain shortcomings have been reported. We were told that no additional funding was provided for Crown prosecutors, and victim support organizations did not receive additional financial resources despite an increase in demand for services of up to 70% in some shelters. These findings underscore that, without adequate funding for all actors involved, the reform risks creating operational pressures and delays in providing support to victims.

QUEENSLAND

In Queensland, the reform built on the work of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, which produced two reports that served as a roadmap for implementation. The Office of the Independent Implementation Supervisor monitored the progress of the reforms. However, its mandate ended in February 2025, before the offence came into force. Continued oversight once the legislation took effect would have been valuable.

The Women's Safety and Criminal Justice Steering Committee was also established to oversee implementation, but it is a governmental body.

While those consulted emphasized the exceptional work carried out in advance of criminalization by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, many also noted the absence of independent and transparent monitoring of implementation. This makes it difficult to assess how the reform is being implemented in practice and limits accountability.

In light of these different approaches, several key lessons can be drawn:

1. **Independent structure and decision-making mandate:** NSW illustrates the importance of establishing a task force with an operational, rather than purely advisory, mandate, supported by a dedicated secretariat and budget. Independence from political changes helps ensure continuous and timely oversight of implementation.
2. **Inclusion of relevant stakeholders:** Including representatives from support organizations, Indigenous communities, and victims helps tailor implementation to on-the-ground realities, monitor potential unintended effects, and ensure that the rollout of criminalization aligns with the legislature's objectives.
3. **Funding of essential resources:** The experience in NSW shows that targeted funding for police supports coordination, while underfunding Crown prosecutors and victim support services risks creating operational constraints.

Stakeholders unanimously emphasized the need to delay the offence coming into force. One indicated that a two-year period would be optimal to allow those involved in the reform to receive training and adapt their practices (new procedures, monitoring, etc.). Rushing implementation in Canada could jeopardize adequate preparation. It should be noted that the two Australian jurisdictions have populations five to eight times smaller than Canada's, and that each has a single police force and a single prosecution service. By contrast, Canada must contend with a multitude of autonomous police organizations, as well as federal and provincial prosecutors operating under distinct guidelines. This multiplicity is likely to create significant coordination challenges, though they remain surmountable.

In both jurisdictions, implementation is closely scrutinized by civil society actors and the media. Authorities, prosecutors, and police services are well aware that public opinion plays an oversight and accountability role. Several individuals consulted in NSW view this pressure positively, noting that it drives action and encourages a commitment to getting it right.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the new legislation criminalizing coercive control in Canada provide for the establishment of provincial/territorial task forces to coordinate the implementation and evaluation of the legislation, as well as a federal task force to oversee its rollout across the country, inspired by the model and mandate of the NSW Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce.
- That these task forces include, at a minimum, representatives of prosecution services, police services, and specialized services supporting victims of domestic violence.
- That these task forces establish advisory groups composed of members from Indigenous, ethnocultural, LGBTQIA+, and disability communities, as well as justice system professionals, victims/survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence, the specialized support services working with them, and the families of victims/survivors. These groups will provide recommendations to the task forces regarding the implementation process and the impact of the legislation on the communities they represent.
- That the offence come into force two years after Royal Assent, to allow sufficient time for the training of justice system professionals, the conduct of public awareness campaigns, and the establishment of oversight mechanisms.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring how the coercive control offence is applied in NSW is an essential tool for assessing the effectiveness of legislative reforms and protecting the rights of victims. In NSW, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) provides rigorous, publicly available oversight of the reform's progress. Since August 2024, six detailed reports have been published, the most recent in December 2025. These reports offer a comprehensive picture, including reported incidents, the nature of coercive behaviours, related offences, the progression of court cases, demographic data on victims and alleged perpetrators, histories of orders, and the impacts on marginalized populations, including Indigenous peoples.

In Queensland, monitoring relies primarily on the police case management system and internal quarterly reports, most of which are not made public. As of November 2025, the only publicly available data was an Excel document that was difficult to interpret. The Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board nevertheless provides critical insights into misidentification and risks to victims, revealing in particular that 44.4% of women who died had previously been identified as perpetrators of violence in protection orders.

The disparity in the availability and quality of data highlights the need for transparent and accessible data tracking mechanisms to support accountability and inform legislative and operational decisions.

The experience in NSW demonstrates that structured and public monitoring helps quickly identify and correct implementation gaps. The task force, in collaboration with BOCSAR and the reference groups, has established continuous oversight, assessing in particular:

- the impact on marginalized populations;
- misidentification of the predominant aggressor;
- the effectiveness of training and awareness campaigns;
- victims' experiences within the justice system, through qualitative research overseen by the Women's Safety Commissioner.

Statutory reports and annual forums, such as the one held in September 2025, provide a unique opportunity to adjust practices and inform other regions. Organizational accountability helps ensure that best practices are shared, while errors or disappointing outcomes drive change. These elements are essential to learning and addressing systemic shortcomings. The active participation of reference groups also ensures that victims' voices remain at the centre.

In Queensland, data collection does exist, but its fragmentation and confidentiality limit critical analysis and the ability to improve interventions. Data on deaths reviewed by the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Board shows that persistent structural issues, such as identifying the predominant aggressor or addressing the situation of Indigenous populations, cannot be effectively addressed without systematic and independent data tracking. This underscores a crucial lesson for Canada: without transparent data tracking and formal evaluation mechanisms, it is difficult to determine whether the legislation is achieving its objectives and whether victims are in fact better protected.

In Canada, the multiplicity of organizations and bodies requires mechanisms for sharing police and legal information. Information is a cornerstone of police intervention in domestic violence cases. It is essential to have registries in place so that all professionals have the most complete and accurate picture of the situation—and of the risks faced by both the victim and those responding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the new legislation establish a governance structure that ensures accountability to the Parliament of Canada for the implementation of the offence.
- That provincial/territorial registries or registries established by police services be set up to consolidate incident reports or operational case files identifying coercive control.
- That data relating to coercive control cases be collected by police services and by provincial and federal prosecutors.
- That the list of data to be collected be determined by the federal task force and include, in particular, the following:
 - the number of cases opened by administrative region;
 - the number of cases accepted and rejected at the charge authorization stage;
 - detention or release pending trial;
 - the nature of the prohibited conduct;
 - victim participation and, where applicable, the stage at which victims withdraw;
 - other concurrent offences included in the charge;
 - the progression of charges, including charges dropped, guilty pleas, and cases proceeding to trial;
 - the time elapsed between police intervention and the laying of charges, and between the laying of charges and sentencing, where applicable;
 - demographic information on victims and on suspects/accused persons;
 - the existence of prior protection orders;
 - breaches of conditions.
- That a mechanism be established to evaluate the impact of the legislation as of its adoption.

REVIEW MECHANISMS

It is clear that review mechanisms governing the application of the coercive control offence must pursue at least three objectives: (1) ensure strict compliance with directives and practices; (2) harmonize evidentiary thresholds across jurisdictions; and (3) limit the officer/prosecutor effect.⁵ They must also prevent unintended consequences, in particular the risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor, which remains a concern in both jurisdictions studied.

In NSW, the progression of coercive control cases follows a structured process. On the ground, when a patrol officer identifies a potential situation of coercive control, they inform their sergeant, and this aspect of the case is assigned to an investigator, either local or specialized in high-risk domestic violence, depending on the circumstances. If the offence is considered substantiated, the file is submitted to the specialized Domestic & Family Violence Command for consultation, which provides guidance before any charges are laid. Finally, a criminal investigations supervisor must approve the decision to proceed. This step is expected to be phased out once there is sufficient familiarity with the new offence. Several individuals consulted view this process as an essential safeguard, both to prevent misuse of the offence and to ensure alignment with the legislature's intent.

5 For further information on the concept of the “officer effect,” see Myhill, A., Hohl, K., & Johnson, K. (2023), The ‘officer effect’ in risk assessment for domestic abuse: Findings from a mixed methods study in England and Wales. *European Journal of Criminology*, 20(3), 856-877. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708231156331>>.

Despite this, certain challenges persist. Our observations indicate that patrol officers do not always systematically assess the presence of coercive control, which may limit the number of cases recorded. Moreover, failing to systematically assess the predominant aggressor particularly exposes Indigenous women and women from ethno-cultural communities to the risk of being wrongly identified as perpetrators, especially when they engage in defensive or reactive behaviours in response to violence.

In Queensland, the approach differs but includes noteworthy measures. A systematic review by a supervisor before charges are laid is not mandatory in most cases. Instead, a gender-centred review dashboard enables the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command to identify cases in which a woman is recorded as the perpetrator and a man as the victim, in order to assess the possibility of misidentifying the predominant aggressor. However, the focus on the “person most in need of protection” during police intervention suggests that the analysis may be based on isolated incidents rather than on a course of conduct, as the identity of that person may vary from one intervention to another.

Both NSW and Queensland have implemented complementary second-review mechanisms. In NSW, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions receives a preliminary report and may request further investigation or amend charges where there is a risk of misidentification. It may also determine that it is not in the public interest to proceed against a victim who has engaged in reactive violence. In Queensland, decisions by prosecutors to reduce or withdraw charges must be approved by a senior prosecutor, and an interagency review committee regularly monitors cases and shares best practices. Victims also have the right to seek a review of a decision to discontinue proceedings, a mechanism that applies beyond domestic violence cases. These mechanisms highlight the importance of structured review to limit errors and ensure consistency in decision-making. However, a concern remains, as not all cases reach Crown prosecutors’ offices, where such review mechanisms are in place. A significant proportion of cases remain with police prosecutors.

The risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor remains real, particularly for Indigenous women, racialized women, and people from linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as in cases involving manipulative offenders. Data from a victim support organization in Queensland indicate that 90% of men initially identified as victims by police and referred to the service are, upon further analysis, found to be the predominant aggressors. These observations confirm the need for systematic, specialized monitoring to limit the negative consequences of such errors.

While the highly gendered nature of coercive control is well established,⁶ concerns about the offence being weaponized by perpetrators of violence remain significant in Canada. In light of the findings in Australia, it is important to put in place the necessary mechanisms to prevent such an outcome, even if these concerns have not been borne out in the United Kingdom. It would also be relevant to consider implementing an equivalent to the Philadelphia Model,⁷ used in the context of sexual violence.

6 See Myhill, A. (2015). Measuring Coercive Control: What Can We Learn From National Population Surveys? *Violence Against Women*, 21(3), 355–375. And <https://www.copfs.gov.uk/about-copfs/news/lord-advocate-calls-for-societal-change-to-tackle-domestic-abuse/>

7 For more information on the Philadelphia model: https://womenslawproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/WLP_SexCrimeCaseReviewGuidebook_FINAL_11-30-22.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That review mechanisms be put in place at both the police and prosecutorial levels for cases involving the coercive control offence, and that they be carried out by specialized staff.
- That a process for performing a predominant aggressor analysis be implemented at both the police level (e.g., assessment tools) and the prosecutorial level (e.g., guidelines), in order to prevent misidentification of the primary victim and reduce the risk of the offence being instrumentalized by perpetrators of violence.

COLLABORATION WITH SPECIALIZED VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

The Australian experience highlights the central role that specialized victim support services can play when they are involved from the earliest stages and on an ongoing basis. Placing survivors' voices—recognized as lived expertise—at the centre of implementation efforts has helped demonstrate the relevance of criminalization, increase the effectiveness of public awareness and of training for professionals, and promote practices tailored to a range of situations and victim profiles.

Consultation and involvement of specialized services

A comparative analysis of New South Wales and Queensland reveals different models for including victim support services in the implementation of the legislation.

- **New South Wales:** Initial consultation prior to the adoption of the legislation was limited, with certain debates dividing rather than uniting the victim advocacy sector. However, following the enactment of the legislation, the active participation of victim support organizations within the task force and its reference groups helped address specific issues, particularly in relation to rural areas, Indigenous women, persons with disabilities, and individuals from ethnocultural communities. The institutional representation of these organizations helps ensure that judicial actors take into account on-the-ground realities.
- **Queensland:** By contrast, the early inclusion of the victim support sector in the work of the task force fostered buy-in to the reform and enabled open discussion of initial concerns. However, during the implementation phase, limited ongoing consultation with these organizations left them on the margins of operational decision-making, reducing their ability to influence police and judicial training and to ensure that implementation reflects the diverse challenges faced by victims.

These contrasts underscore that consultation cannot be a one-off exercise. It must be ongoing and structured around explicit recognition of expertise on the ground.

Training and knowledge sharing

The direct involvement of specialized services in training police officers and Crown prosecutors is a critical success factor:

- In NSW, four organizations were consulted in developing police training content, and exchanges also took place with Crown prosecutors regarding their training. These collaborations strengthened the training content and helped better prepare judicial actors. One improvement suggested by those consulted would be to deliver training jointly with a domestic violence specialist, in order to strengthen the link between theory and practice.

- In Queensland, by contrast, the involvement of victim support services in training was more limited, particularly in providing feedback on police training. This limited participation reduces opportunities to bridge the gap between the knowledge of frontline police officers and that of specialized services, which could affect the quality of support provided to victims.

Referrals and direct support

In NSW, co-locating specialized services within police stations has had a strongly positive impact, helping to strengthen trust between victims and the justice system:

- Victims receive immediate, personalized, trauma-informed support;
- Practitioners provide ongoing follow-up with victims throughout the judicial process, increasing the likelihood that they remain engaged;
- Collaboration fosters better mutual understanding between police officers and specialized resources, helping address gaps observed when the legislation came into force.

Crown prosecutors have a support program for victims of serious crime, which is not specific to domestic violence. Victims will be informed of any changes to the charges, and any questions or requests for clarification may be addressed as needed. There is always communication prior to trial. This role is carried out by internal resources rather than by specialists from domestic violence support organizations.

In Queensland, referrals occur primarily when victims are reluctant to engage or are considered high-risk. Certain liaison officers facilitate communication between support services and police. However, new legislative provisions relating to preliminary complaint evidence, which notably allow hearsay evidence at trial in certain circumstances, raise concerns about the protection of information collected by specialized service workers and the risk that they may be compelled to testify.

In light of the anticipated increase in demand for support from specialized services—as observed in NSW following public awareness campaigns and the coming into force of the legislation—and the potential impacts on justice system professionals, the Government of Canada should allocate adequate financial resources to establish and maintain specialized domestic violence services, both within community organizations and within specialized units in police services and Crown prosecutors’ offices.

Information collection and sharing

Other mechanisms in NSW, such as Safety Action Meetings—similar to coordinated response teams aimed at preventing serious injury and death related to domestic violence, as seen in Quebec—enable structured, secure information sharing among different agencies and help enhance victim safety in high-risk situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That workers specialized in domestic violence be assigned to work within police stations and prosecution offices.
- That the Government of Canada provide funding to the provinces and territories to support specialized services for victims of domestic violence, as well as police organizations and prosecutorial units specializing in domestic violence, in order to adequately respond to the anticipated increase in needs arising from the new legislation.

TRAINING / AWARENESS

Canada can draw several important lessons from Australia's experience in training professionals and raising public awareness. Discussions held in Scotland and other jurisdictions show that preparing justice system professionals before the legislation comes into force is key to avoiding early difficulties in applying the offence and ensuring its effective implementation. Both Australian states also emphasize the importance of initial training as well as ongoing professional development.

However, developing training jointly with specialized domestic violence services has not always been prioritized. Experience in other jurisdictions shows that this approach helps incorporate complementary expertise, ensures a strong understanding of each sector's practical needs, and highlights the added value of collaboration among partners.

Training professionals

IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Substantial funding was allocated to train the entire justice sector, including police, prosecutors, judges, and legal aid services.

POLICE TRAINING WAS DELIVERED IN THREE PHASES:

- **PHASE 1:** Mandatory online training for approximately 23,000 staff members, both police and civilian, introducing the concept of coercive control and the conduct constituting the offence, completed entirely before the legislation came into force;
- **PHASE 2:** Mandatory in-person training for all police officers, covering police response, evidence gathering, prosecutions, and community-specific considerations. Separate modules were developed for investigators and police prosecutors. This phase began before the legislation came into force, with a target of training 75% of personnel before it came into force, and the remainder afterward;
- **PHASE 3:** An advanced training program combining the first two phases, currently being rolled out.

Several practices were implemented to ensure that the concept of coercive control remained embedded in day-to-day police work: champions were appointed in each station; the Domestic & Family Violence Command developed screensavers and visual materials; and shift changes were used to remind staff to keep coercive control front of mind in their interventions.

Several promising elements were identified: the inclusion of testimonies and lived expertise, including those of relatives of victims and adults who experienced coercive control as children; an emphasis on asking about the history of the relationship and the impacts on the victim's life to identify red flags beyond the incident itself; and the use of concrete case studies.

However, certain gaps remain. Case studies are reportedly not sufficiently representative of the diversity of victim profiles or of intersecting experiences, and some police officers still need greater awareness of the manipulation strategies used by perpetrators of violence, as well as of the risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor. We were also told that there appears to be some resistance to modifying the police academy curriculum.

CROWN PROSECUTORS received mandatory training, with approximately 100 barristers (trial prosecutors) and more than 500 solicitors (lawyers responsible, in particular, for case preparation and communication with witnesses), along with staff of the Witness Assistance Service, completing 14 modules delivered over 15 hours through a combination of in-person sessions and online learning. The program covered three components:

- A general understanding of coercive control, including the realities of LGBTQIA+, migrant, and Indigenous communities;
- Legal aspects relating to charging decisions, evidence gathering, and advocacy techniques;
- Victims' lived expertise, supplemented by podcasts and reference groups.

Real-life accounts often prompted 'eureka' moments, and some particularly striking images—such as those associated with the Hannah Clarke case—had a strong impact. Some individuals consulted consider that further movement away from an incident-based approach toward a course-of-conduct approach remains necessary.

Despite these efforts, certain challenges persist. We were told that few judges agreed to receive specific training on coercive control, which may undermine victim protection and the effectiveness of the offence. An independent evaluation of the impact of training on police practices is also needed.

IN QUEENSLAND

POLICE did not receive dedicated funding, and training was largely developed and delivered internally by the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command, with input from a women's safety research organization (ANROWS) and the head of a program for perpetrators of violence. Victim support services often felt excluded and expressed concern about the limited change in police culture, despite expressed goodwill and the efforts made. Mandatory training reached approximately 15,000 officers through three- to five-day sessions and online modules, covering the identification of coercive control, prioritizing victim safety, perpetrator accountability, and a holistic approach that takes into account victims' lived expertise. Members specializing in domestic violence received an additional five days of training. The police academy devotes 21 days to domestic violence within a six-month training program.

Several key elements were identified: the use of body-worn camera footage to focus on perpetrators and illustrate how police officers can also be subject to manipulation by perpetrators; scenarios that include diverse victim profiles (a woman living with a disability, an Indigenous woman); and a case study to help identify defensive injuries.

CROWN PROSECUTORS received an internal training program consisting of ten modules, combining in-person and online training, and covering trauma-informed approaches, understanding coercive control, and jury decision-making. A university professor contributed to the development of one segment of the training. He emphasized the importance of prosecutors mastering and presenting the full narrative of coercive control experienced by the victim, in order to prevent jurors or judges from filling gaps in the account with their own biases.

Judges in Queensland received a one-day training session, co-facilitated by researchers, authors of specialized works, and judges, combining theoretical and practice-oriented awareness. This format was considered particularly effective.

Public awareness

Public awareness is a cornerstone of successful implementation.

It serves three main objectives:

1. To inform the public about what coercive control entails and the wholly unacceptable nature of such conduct in our society;
2. To guide victims and survivors on the steps to take if they wish to report the situation to authorities. In this regard, it is important to explain the non-retroactivity of the offence to avoid significant disappointment;
3. To enable victims, in all their diversity, to identify with the individuals represented in awareness materials. The campaign must therefore rely on a range of ambassadors drawn from targeted communities who are familiar with the needs and characteristics of those populations.

The campaigns conducted in Australia were considered highly effective, according to those consulted.

In NSW, a multilingual campaign was funded. It incorporated ambassadors from Indigenous, multicultural, and LGBTQIA+ communities and addressed a range of themes, including elder abuse, financial control, sexual violence, and alternatives to reporting to police. Content is continuously updated by community liaison officers in collaboration with local leaders to avoid stigmatization while promoting victim identification with the tools provided.

In Queensland, community momentum was driven by media coverage of tragic cases, notably the quadruple murder of Hannah Clarke and her children, as well as by widely accessible books and television series. Numerous local groups developed their own campaigns, generating sustained and meaningful public discussion on coercive control.

According to those consulted, the key to success lies in a tailored approach, extensive consultation, the involvement of community leaders, and access to information in multiple languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That across Canada, all police officers, as well as prosecutors and judges likely to work on domestic violence cases, receive mandatory training on coercive control tailored to their field of practice before the offence comes into force and continue to receive such training as part of their ongoing professional development.
- That such training be jointly developed and delivered by representatives from police services, prosecution services, and victim support organizations.
- That the training address, in particular, manifestations of coercive control, the risk of homicide associated with coercive control, predominant aggressor analysis, reactive violence, barriers to reporting and separation, trauma-informed approaches, intersectional perspectives, etc.
- That the training include, in particular, contributions from individuals with lived expertise, the use of surveillance video footage, case studies, etc.
- That a wide-reaching public awareness campaign be carried out to raise awareness of coercive control and its recent criminalization.

- That targeted awareness campaigns be developed for Indigenous peoples, ethnocultural communities, older persons, and persons with disabilities by representatives and ambassadors from these communities.
- That the Government of Canada provide additional funding to the provinces and territories to enable provincial and territorial departments of justice and public safety, as well as specialized services for victims of domestic violence, to cover the costs associated with developing and delivering training on coercive control, including the participation of police, justice system and domestic violence personnel in such training.
- That an external organization conduct an independent evaluation of the impact of training on police and judicial practices.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

Canada is about to undergo a paradigm shift. While lessons can be drawn from jurisdictions that have already criminalized coercive control, it would be unrealistic to expect the legislation to be perfect upon Royal Assent. Although challenges are to be expected in a major reform of this kind, and adjustments will be required, it would be highly problematic—particularly for victims of coercive control—to assume that no changes to the wording will be needed in the short or medium term. Potential amendments should be approached with informed humility, without suggesting that the initial version of the legislation is improvised. The work carried out by parliamentarians prior to the adoption of the legislation—such as the work leading to Bill C332—as well as the work of the future task force between Royal Assent and its coming into force, will help establish the best possible conditions for implementation.

The Australian experience offers concrete lessons. In NSW, the legislation explicitly provides for a statutory review every two years until 2030. This mechanism allows for a structured assessment of wording options that were considered but not retained in the final version, as well as other important elements, such as the expansion of relationships covered by the offence beyond intimate relationships, the addition of recklessness as a possible form of *mens rea*, the prevention of misidentifying victims as perpetrators, sentencing ranges, the typology of prohibited conduct, the interaction of the offence with other traditional offences, the application of the statutory defence, regional and local variations, the training of stakeholders, and the impacts on Indigenous peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the LGBTQIA+ community. This iterative process is seen by those consulted in Australia as ensuring that the legislation remains adaptable and responsive.

Queensland has not established a formal legislative review mechanism, suggesting a risk that the legislation may be less able to respond to operational challenges or unintended effects in practice.

In Canada, it would therefore be prudent to include a mechanism in the legislation for ongoing monitoring and adjustment, drawing on the NSW model to establish a structured process that ensures the Act is effective, responsive to Canada’s social and cultural realities, and aligned with the objectives of the legislature. Parliament would rely on the work of task forces, supported by data from statutory reports and findings from reference groups, to quickly identify the need for adjustments and strengthen practitioners’ and victims’ confidence in the legislation.

RECOMMENDATION

- That the legislator provide for a review of the legislation every two years over a six-year period, based on reports from the task forces and focusing on the issues they identify.

Conclusion

Canada is fortunate to benefit from lessons learned in past experiences with the criminalization of coercive control. This international exchange was made possible by the generosity and openness of partners, as well as by the Regroupement's commitment to playing a leading role.

The key lesson emerging from this mission is aptly captured by one of the individuals consulted: the care devoted to implementation is as important—if not more so—than the creation of the offence itself. In Canada, the complexity of jurisdictions makes it all the more important to work collaboratively, from coast to coast, to ensure effective implementation.

Having had the opportunity to closely observe several of these reforms—in Scotland, England, and now New South Wales and Queensland—we recognize the importance of shaping these changes in a way that reflects each jurisdiction and the broader context surrounding victims of domestic violence. While the lessons outlined here should inform and enrich our collective reflection, they must above all guide us in charting a distinct path for Canada, drawing on the strengths of its justice system, victim advocacy organizations, and victims themselves.

Appendix 1

Process for Criminalizing Coercive Control in New South Wales

	NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)
Overview Prior to Criminalization	<p>The debate surrounding the criminalization of coercive control gained momentum following the murders of Hannah Clarke and her three children in February 2020, against the backdrop of a global pandemic.</p> <p>In NSW, at the initiative of a coalition of organizations and advocacy groups for victims of domestic violence, the media outlet <i>Are Media</i> launched a campaign and a petition in November 2020 calling for the criminalization of coercive control.⁸ The campaign encountered reservations and resistance, particularly from Indigenous communities and from movements advocating non-penal measures and adopting an anti-incarceration. Other concerns focused on two main issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor• the over-representation of Indigenous men in prisons. <p>A national study conducted by researchers with a diverse sample of survivors of coercive control—including Indigenous women—found that 91% supported the criminalization of coercive control.⁹ This result helped weaken anti-criminalization arguments, refocus attention on the experiences and voices of survivors, and ease the debate.</p> <p>However, the polarization of the debate influenced the direction of the reform, which some individuals consulted considered conservative.</p> <p>Following the release of a report by the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, highlighting that 111 of the 112 homicides linked to domestic violence had been preceded by coercive and controlling behaviour,¹⁰ the Government of New South Wales (NSW) sought to examine whether a criminal justice response should be considered. In October 2020, the Department of Communities and Justice issued a publication, and Parliament voted to establish a committee¹¹ tasked with determining whether a</p>

8 Now to love, “Sign the petition and join us in the fight to criminalise coercive control,” <https://www.nowtolove.com.au/news/local-news/criminalise-coercive-control-65499/> (consulted on September 18, 2025).

9 Fitz-Gibbon, Kate; Reeves, Ellen; Meyer, Silke; Walklate, Sandra (2023). Victim-survivors’ views on and expectations for the criminalisation of coercive control in Australia: Findings from a national survey. Monash University. Report. <https://doi.org/10.26180/22309345.v3>

10 NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team, Report 2017-2019, page 154: https://coroners.nsw.gov.au/documents/reports/2017-2019_DVDRT_Report.pdf.

11 Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
<p>Overview Prior to Criminalization</p>	<p>a separate criminal offence should be created and under what conditions. The committee’s findings followed extensive consultations (public hearings, written submissions, and round-table discussions). In June 2021, the committee issued 23 recommendations,¹² including the creation of a standalone offence and the development of a police training program.</p> <p>Following the committee’s work, the government submitted a draft bill and conducted further consultations (written submissions and targeted roundtables with police services, organizations specializing in domestic violence, and Indigenous organizations) before preparing the final draft of the bill.</p> <p>International experiences with the criminalization of coercive control were analysed in detail. In particular, the NSW Police Force engaged with its counterparts in Scotland, maintaining an ongoing dialogue over several months.</p>
<p>Overview Legislative Content</p>	<p>The offence of coercive control was introduced in November 2022 through the <i>Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022</i>¹³. It came into force in July 2024.</p> <p>Key features of the legislation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies only to adult offenders; • Applies only to intimate partners; • Requires proof of the offender’s intent to coerce or control the victim. The element of recklessness was reportedly removed at the last minute, either to prevent the misidentification of the predominant aggressor or as a result of pressure from defence lawyers. • Adopts an objective approach to the likely effect of the course of conduct on the victim, taking into account the context, namely whether it would cause the victim to fear that violence may be used against her or another person, or that it would have a serious adverse impact on the victim’s capacity to engage in some or all of her day-to-day activities. It is specified that it is not necessary for such fear or significant impacts to have actually occurred. • Provides a definition of intimate partner violence, along with a non-exhaustive list of behaviours, which was appreciated by the individuals consulted. • Provides for a defence of reasonable conduct in the circumstances; • Is punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment for 7 years. • Includes the establishment of a governance structure to oversee the reform: <i>Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce</i>¹⁴. • Provides for three statutory reviews of the Act. <p>The offence of coercive control is intended to complement other offences and function as a stop-gap offence. It is not intended to operate as an “umbrella” offence, unlike the Scottish approach under DASA, although the choice of charges ultimately rests with the prosecutor.</p>

12 *Coercive Control in domestic relationships, Report 1/57 – June 2021*, Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control, Parliament of New South Wales: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/inquiries/2626/Report%20-%20Coercive%20control%20in%20domestic%20relationships.pdf>.

13 For the full text of the legislation: <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/act-2022-65>.

14 For more information on its mandate, reports and recommendations: <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/police--legal-help-and-the-law/criminalising-coercive-control-in-nsw/coercive-control-implementation-and-evaluation-taskforce.html>

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
<p>Overview Actors and the Judicial Response to Domestic Violence</p>	<p>Police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSW Police Force has a unit dedicated to domestic and family violence (<i>Domestic & Family Violence Command</i>). It is not an operational team but rather a team responsible for developing and implementing policies and guidelines. • At the regional level, there is a team dedicated to high-risk domestic violence. • Each police station has a team dedicated to domestic violence, including a liaison officer. • For every call or intervention related to domestic violence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Patrol officers respond to the call. – Police conduct a risk assessment using a risk assessment tool¹⁵. Reports submitted without it are considered incomplete. Based on 12 questions, the tool determines whether the situation involves threats or serious threats. In the first scenario, the victim is referred to a victim support organization. In the second scenario, a response mechanism is activated to ensure the victim’s safety (Safety Action Meetings)¹⁶. – If the victim is willing to provide a statement, the police record it on video. If the victim prefers to do so later, the police take and transcribe the statement at the police station. • In most cases, Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders¹⁷ are requested by the police on behalf of the victim, that is, the person requiring protection. In such cases, the police may issue a provisional order protecting the victim pending the court hearing. However, the victim or a third party acting in the victim’s interest (family member, social worker, etc.) may also submit an application directly to the court, which may grant or refuse it. A breach of this order constitutes a criminal offence. • Patrol officers have access to the full case history, including protection orders and the risk assessment. • Police officers are equipped with body-worn cameras with automatic transcription. • Police officers can send a <i>BluLink</i>¹⁸ link to a victim in danger. The link allows the victim to give police access to live images. It also shares the victim’s geolocation and translates text messages into more than one hundred languages. • Several individuals consulted across different organizations highlighted the value of the <i>Empower You</i>¹⁹ app developed by the NSW Police Force and available in 11 languages. The app provides victims with contact details for local support services and allows them to send messages with their location to pre-identified trusted persons. It also includes a diary function where victims can record the behaviours they have experienced and upload

15 Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool.

16 Safety Action Meetings are convened by the police and bring together several organizations (correctional services, child protection, local services, etc.) to develop a safety plan for victims of domestic violence.

17 Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders, ADVO

18 https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/safety_and_prevention/policing_in_the_community/blulink

19 For more information on this app: https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/crime/domestic_and_family_violence/empower_you

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
<p>Overview Actors and the Judicial Response to Domestic Violence</p>	<p>photos to document them. The introduction of the app, appreciated by both the police and specialized resources supporting victims, is said to have had a positive impact on the ground, to the point of being described as a “game changer.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare coercive control reports, police officers have a list of evidentiary elements to consider. Legal officers review the reports to determine whether charges should be laid. • Approximately 550 police prosecutors across the state will be the primary actors responsible for laying charges. In each district, a number of police prosecutors are trained in coercive control, although all prosecutors may be called upon to handle such cases. When the charges are more serious, particularly where multiple offences are involved, the case is taken over by prosecutors from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions New South Wales (ODPP NSW). <p>Crown Prosecutors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prosecutors specializing in domestic violence. The establishment of such a team was one of the main changes suggested by one of the individuals consulted. • Charges laid by police prosecutors may be reviewed by the Crown prosecutors, which may also request further investigation. • The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions New South Wales has staff dedicated to supporting victims.
<p>Oversight of the Legislative Reform</p>	<p>The coercive control legislation provides for the establishment of a task force responsible for implementing and evaluating the legislation. It is composed of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Secretary of the department responsible for administering the Act (Department of Communities and Justice), who serves as chair; • three statutory members: a representative of the NSW Police Force, the Chair of the Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council, and a member from the domestic and family violence sector; • members from various government agencies. <p>The task force must ensure that stakeholders are consulted through reference groups²⁰ organized around various themes. It monitors developments on an on-going basis and is required to report on the implementation of the legislation through statutory reports.</p> <p>To carry out its work, the task force relies on a secretariat within the Department of Communities and Justice, composed of three staff members and provided with a budget to coordinate activities.</p>

20 Six reference groups were established to facilitate engagement with, among others, professionals from the justice sector and organizations supporting victims, as well as with First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and victims themselves. Over time, the task force recommended the creation of additional reference groups, notably to reflect the experiences of children and young people. For more information: <https://dj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/police--legal-help-and-the-law/criminalising-coercive-control-in-nsw/coercive-control-reference-groups.html>

	NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)
<p>Oversight of the Legislative Reform</p>	<p>According to several individuals consulted, this structure proved decisive in enabling coordinated, thoughtful action that is responsive to realities on the ground.</p> <p>Several success factors were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task force benefited from funding that enabled the coordination of its work. • Its role is not limited to an advisory function; it is also empowered to make decisions regarding implementation. For example, it was responsible for determining the timeframe before the Act came into force, in order to allow the system to adjust in advance • The structure allows for meaningful inclusion of the perspectives of various professionals involved in the reform (organizations supporting victims, Indigenous communities, victims themselves, actors involved in implementation, etc.). The victim support sector holds one of the committee's three statutory member seats. • Thanks to this structure, implementation does not depend on the party in power. • The reform was accompanied by funding for new resources within the NSW Police Force. The Domestic & Family Violence Command received funding that enabled the hiring of three staff members to form an implementation team dedicated to coercive control. The NSW Police Force also established a seven-person team advising the Commissioner's office, which heads the police service, and created 58 liaison officer positions across the state to build bridges with various communities and foster trust in the police. <p>According to the individuals consulted, the legislative reform was not accompanied by funding for additional resources within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to respond to the demands generated by the new offence. Some identified this as a shortcoming they would seek to address if they could revisit the reform.</p> <p>Organizations supporting victims, already overstretched and facing increased workloads, also did not receive additional financial support. Some shelters and support centres reported increases in demand for assistance of up to 70%, driven in part by an influx of victims seeking to report abuse under the new offence, but who sometimes return disappointed following their interaction with the police. Police are not always in a position to proceed, due to the non-retroactivity of the offence, lack of familiarity with the new offence, evidentiary requirements. Specialized resources report chronic underfunding following 10 years without new government investment.</p>

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) is responsible for the public monitoring of the coercive control reform. To date, BOCSAR has published six data reports since August 2024, the most recent of which was released in December 2025.²¹</p> <p>These reports present highly detailed statistics on the use of the offence, including: incidents of coercive control reported to police (number and regional distribution), the nature of the behaviours involved, factors associated with the incidents, offences co-occurring with coercive control, legal actions commenced, the nature of the charges, the time required to process cases, profiles of victims (gender, age, belonging to an Indigenous community, prior victimization), profiles of alleged offenders (gender, age, belonging to an Indigenous community), the nature of the relationship, and the history of protection orders.</p> <p>The task force's most recent statutory report sets out the recommendations of the reference groups in favour of expanding the data collected (same-sex intimate partner relationships, older persons, persons living with a disability, cultural and linguistically diverse communities, sexual and reproductive coercion, etc.).</p> <p>The task force began monitoring the implementation when the legislation came into force. It tracks developments through BOCSAR reports and through regular meetings of task force members and the reference groups. Prior to the offence coming into force, it was required to submit its advice every six months. It is now required to do so annually through statutory reports.</p> <p>Several elements are closely monitored by the task force, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact on members of First Nations and other marginalized groups; • Misidentification of the predominant aggressor; • The effectiveness of training and awareness-raising campaigns. <p>A forum to assess the first year of the offence was held in September 2025 with members of the reference groups.</p> <p>At the same time, the task force will oversee a qualitative study conducted by BOCSAR and the New South Wales NGS Women's Safety Commissioner²², on the experiences of victims of domestic violence in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>The reform is evaluated on an ongoing basis through the work of the task force, including regular consultations and statutory reports. Recommendations emerge as implementation progresses. Several individuals consulted indicated that this approach has been one of the key factors in the successful implementation of the reform.</p>

21 To access the reports: <https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/topic-areas/domestic-violence.html>.

22 The New South Wales Women's Safety Commissioner provides leadership and oversight across the whole of NSW governments to strengthen responses to domestic, family and sexual violence. The role, held by Dr Hannah Tonkin at the time of our mission, fosters collaboration across the government, specialized services and the broader community. She also works to ensure that victims and survivors have a voice in the development of policies and programs. <https://dj.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/our-commissioners/womens-safety-commissioner.html>

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Review Mechanisms	<p>At the policing level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the field, when a patrol officer identifies potential situations of coercive control, they must notify their sergeant. An investigator will then take over to investigate the coercive control. This may involve either non-specialized investigators (at the local level) or, for cases that go beyond routine matters, investigators from a team dedicated to high-risk domestic violence situations. The patrol officer retains responsibility for the file with respect to other potential offences. • If the investigator determines that coercive control has occurred, the file is referred to the Domestic & Family Violence Command for advice before charges are laid. • The decision to lay charges for a coercive control offence must be approved by a criminal investigations supervisor (inspector or superintendent). This approval requirement is expected to be phased out over time as the offence becomes more fully established in practice. <p>The process for handling coercive control cases is considered by several individuals consulted to be an important safeguard, both to prevent misuse of the offence and to avoid case law that could depart from legislative intent.</p> <p>At one police station visited, a team of four constables reviews all domestic violence case files. It is not clear, however, whether this is a widespread practice.</p> <p>The leadership of the commander of Domestic & Family Violence Command on the issue of coercive control was highlighted as facilitating the maintenance of police engagement on the issue.</p> <p>Some individuals consulted expressed concern that police officers may not have a clear understanding of what is needed to build a case, potentially underestimating the elements required, which could lead to a low rate of charges and subsequent disappointment. Conversely, our observations suggest that considering whether coercive control may be present has not yet become a reflex for patrol officers, which could limit the number of cases recorded by police.</p> <p>At the Crown prosecutor level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As most charges are laid by police prosecutors, only the most serious cases are transferred to Crown prosecutors. This transfer provides an additional opportunity to review the file and identify any potential misidentification of the predominant aggressor. However, not all cases will benefit from this second review. • The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions receives a preliminary report from police prosecutors, reviews it and assesses whether the charges are appropriate. Additional investigation may be requested if necessary. At this stage, the Office may amend the charges or withdraw them, particularly if there is a risk that the predominant aggressor has been misidentified

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Review Mechanisms	<p>and the primary victim may have used defensive or reactive violence. The prosecutor could then justify the decision on the grounds that proceeding with charges would not be in the public interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior champions within the Office who have a strong understanding of coercive control were identified as both a facilitating factor and a driving force in keeping teams engaged. A challenge may arise when these ambassadors leave their positions. <p>More generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several individuals told us they deplore the legislature’s decision to create an offence that is difficult to prove, requiring specific intent in order to guard against potential unintended effects, such as misidentification of the predominant aggressor. In their view, training and a mandatory analysis to identify the predominant aggressor would have helped minimize these unintended effects. However, this predominant aggressor analysis does not appear to be emphasized by all stakeholders—quite the contrary. In situations of domestic violence, according to current practice, police officers are required to identify the person in need of protection at the time of the intervention. This practice appears to reflect the outdated approach of treating incidents as isolated events and suggests an understanding of domestic violence in which the victim may vary depending on the circumstances. • One stakeholder shared a specialist’s analysis of this issue with us. The specialist noted that many Indigenous women and women from ethnocultural communities, who do not trust the authorities, feel they must defend themselves on their own in situations of domestic violence. As a result, they are at greater risk of engaging in reactive or defensive violence. In the absence of an adequate analysis of the predominant aggressor, they may unfortunately be wrongly identified as such.
Collaboration with Victim Support Services	<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRIOR TO CRIMINALIZATION Debate over whether coercive control should be criminalized divided the victims’ rights advocacy community, rather than bringing it together—as was the case in Queensland—to consider how the reform should be implemented. Only once the legislation had been adopted were groups able to engage in substantive discussions about implementation. • AS PART OF THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE-S The presence of victim support organizations among the task force’s three statutory members, as well as in the roundtables it organizes, has been a key factor in ensuring that concerns from the field are taken into account. This has made it possible to negotiate improvements and secure concrete gains. For example, the task force obtained government funding for the training of specialized services. <p>Through the work of the reference groups supporting the task force, the sector was also able to highlight issues affecting rural regions, persons with disabilities, people from linguistically diverse backgrounds, etc.</p>

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Collaboration with Victim Support Services	<p>• WITH THE POLICE</p> <p>The NSW Police Force Domestic & Family Violence Command organizes quarterly meetings to which victim support organizations are invited. These meetings help strengthen the partnership and provide an opportunity to exchange information on police practices and on realities in the field.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>The NSW Police Force consulted four organizations from the sector during the development of the police training. This contribution was considered very valuable, despite initial hesitations. In hindsight, however, victim support organizations indicated that they would have preferred someone from their sector to co-deliver the training for police officers.</p> <p>On the Crown prosecutor side, there were exchanges between specialized resources and the prosecutors who developed and delivered the training content.</p> <p>Referrals</p> <p>A “co-location” project between victim support organizations and police services began in 2022 as a pilot project in the Sydney region and has since been expanded to several other regions.</p> <p>This project allows domestic violence specialists²³ to work directly within a police station in order to offer victims who come forward immediate support using a trauma-informed approach. Each police intervention is followed by a systematic call to the victim from a worker in the program.</p> <p>This presence within the police station offers several advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better mutual understanding of the work of the police and of the program, as well as closer working relationships, which support collaborative work; • Continued engagement of victims throughout the judicial process, thanks to the program’s support (assistance in preparing victims, support during statements and/or court proceedings, liaison with judicial actors, etc.); • Better support for victims through personalized assistance based on a trauma-informed approach; • Privileged access for program workers to the difficulties encountered on the ground. This has notably helped bridge a gap between the legislation and practice during the early stages of implementing the coercive control offence. At a time when police handling of reported coercive control cases was not yet optimal and women risked leaving the police station discouraged and hurt by their experience, the co-location project made it possible to acknowledge and validate victims’ experiences and to minimize the loss of hope associated with a police response that was still evolving.

23 For more information about the Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program: <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-partners/womens-domestic-violence-court-advocacy-program>.

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Collaboration with Victim Support Services	<p>Information collection and sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Action Meetings, which are convened by the police, are similar to Quebec’s coordinated response teams (<i>cellules d’action concertée</i>). These meetings bring together several organizations (correctional services, child protection, local services, etc.) to develop a safety plan for victims of domestic violence. • A concrete example of information sharing that helped prevent a case of misidentification of the predominant aggressor was reported to us. It involved an immigrant woman who, due to her lack of knowledge of English, was unable to communicate with the police and was charged with assault based on her partner’s account. A women’s shelter became involved in the case and provided contextual information that led to the charges being dropped.
Training / Awareness	<p>A large amount of funding was granted by the government to provide training for the entire judicial sector (police, prosecutors, judges and legal aid).</p> <p>With respect to the police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training was developed internally, with consultation of certain organizations in the victim support sector. The individuals we consulted considered at times these consultations unsatisfactory or oriented toward less critical groups. • The training was delivered during working hours and was strongly encouraged by the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force. • It was rolled out in three phases: the first took place entirely before the act came into force; the second began before its entry into force and concluded afterward; and the third began when the offence came into force: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Phase 1 : introduction to coercive control, the legislative reform and the behaviours constituting the offence. The training was delivered online and was mandatory for all employees (sworn and unsworn). Approximately 23,000 people completed the training. – Phase 2 : police responses to coercive control, evidence gathering, prosecution for the offence and considerations relating to different communities. This mandatory training was delivered in person to all sworn members of the NSW Police Force. Specific modules were also developed for investigators and police prosecutors. – Phase 3 (ongoing): combines Phases 1 and 2 to form a training package for police officers.²⁴ • To ensure that coercive control remains a daily priority, several practices have been implemented: leaders have been appointed in each station by the Commanding Officer; the Domestic & Family Violence Command has developed screensavers, banners and visual materials as reminders; and shift changes are used as opportunities to keep coercive control front of mind and remind staff that it must always be considered in their interventions.

24 For details of the training as of June 2024, see page 31: [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/tp/files/188803/Crimes%20Legislation%20Amendment%20\(Coercive%20Control\)%20Act%202022%20Statutory%20Report%20June%202024.pdf](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/tp/files/188803/Crimes%20Legislation%20Amendment%20(Coercive%20Control)%20Act%202022%20Statutory%20Report%20June%202024.pdf) (consulted on March 4, 2026).

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Training / Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of content, several noteworthy elements were reported to us: the inclusion of testimonies and lived expertise, including those of relatives of victims and adults who experienced coercive control as children; an emphasis on the importance of asking questions about the history of the relationship and the impacts on the victim’s life in order to identify red flags beyond the incident itself; and the use of concrete case studies. However, we were also told that the case studies presented are not very representative of the diversity of victim profiles and intersecting experiences. The recurrence of certain highlighted cases may contribute to obscuring other experiences. Others stressed the importance of raising police awareness of manipulation strategies used by perpetrators, as well as the need to address the possibility of misidentifying the predominant aggressor. • At the end of the first year of training, some confusion about the concept of coercive control still remained. However, police reports were noted to be more detailed following the training. • Frontline police officers also received training on trauma-informed approaches. New training content on this topic for investigators and police prosecutors is currently being developed in collaboration with the University of Sydney. • We were told that there appears to be some resistance to modifying the police academy curriculum. • Some observers would have preferred to see an independent evaluation of the training’s impact on police practices. <p>With respect to Crown Prosecutors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training was developed internally and was mandatory for approximately 100 barristers²⁵ and more than 500 solicitors, as well as for staff of the Witness Assistance Service. • The training was delivered before the Act came into force, thanks to the implementation period. • The training program comprises 14 modules and approximately 15 hours of training delivered over several months, combining in-person sessions and online learning. • The training covered three distinct components²⁶: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A component focused on understanding coercive control, delivered in part by Justice Jacoba Brasch, as well as the realities faced by various communities (LGBTQIA+, migrants and refugees, First Nations peoples). – A legal component on prosecuting perpetrators of coercive control: the elements of the offence, evidentiary techniques, trial advocacy, cross-examination, etc. – A component on coercive control victims, presented by the Lived Expertise Reference Group. A podcast was also developed by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judicial Commission of NSW, with participation from members of the reference group.

25 Within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), solicitors handle case preparation and provide legal advice, while barristers, who specialize in trial advocacy, represent the prosecution in court.

26 *Op. cit.* note 24, pages 33 to 36.

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Training / Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of content, several noteworthy elements were reported to us: Testimonies based on lived expertise helped anchor the concept in reality and often produced a “eureka” moment. Images of Hannah Clarke’s murderer shopping for items in preparation for the murder also left a strong impression. However, we were told that further changes are still needed to fully integrate a course-of-conduct approach and move away from an incident-based approach. • The training is being monitored, and performance indicators have been established to assess its effectiveness. • A first doctrinal article²⁷ was published in 2024 to guide lawyers in applying the legislation and to help avoid misidentifying the predominant aggressor, particularly when situations involve individuals from marginalized communities. A second article²⁸ was published in 2025 examining, in particular, the decision-making process for proceeding by indictment rather than by summary procedure, the development of the evidence, the defence, the misidentification of the actual victim as the predominant aggressor, and sentencing. <p>With respect to the broader legal community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A podcast on coercive control was produced by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judicial Commission of NSW, intended in particular for judges. • Legal aid services developed their own training drawing on the testimonies and expertise of the task force’s reference groups. • We were told that judges have received very little training on domestic violence in general, and that the training that does exist is not based on a trauma-informed approach. Following the introduction of the new legislation, we were told that many declined training on coercive control. This situation raises concerns that court decisions may be unfavourable to victims and could undermine efforts to use the offence. <p>With respect to raising public awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task force insisted on and secured substantial funding for a public awareness campaign. Educating the public was considered just as important as implementing the legislation. • The campaign was considered very successful by many of the individuals consulted. • The campaign was rolled out in several languages and included variations designed to reach specific communities (Indigenous, multicultural and LGBTQIA+ communities). Ambassadors from each community took part in the campaign.

27 M. England SC, E. Sercombe, The coercive control offence: some practical aspects Part 1, 2024 Winter Bar News, *The Journal of the NSW Bar Association*. <https://bn.nswbar.asn.au/article/the-new-coercive-control-offence-some-practical-aspects-part-1>

28 M. England SC, E. Sercombe, The coercive control offence: some practical aspects Part 2, 2025 Summer Bar News, *The Journal of the NSW Bar Association*, pages 56-59. <https://barnews.nswbar.asn.au/flipbook/summer-2025-2/index.html>

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)	
Training / Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the initial public awareness campaign, the coordination team for community liaison officers is developing content to continue raising awareness of coercive control in various communities, with a focus on themes such as elder abuse, financial control, sexual violence and alternatives to reporting to the police, etc. To develop and disseminate this content, liaison officers rely on trusted contacts within communities (Indigenous elders, community leaders), built through relationships of trust established over time. We were told that this work involves navigating a delicate balance between ensuring these communities are represented so they can recognize themselves in the campaigns and avoiding their stigmatization. The key to success therefore lies in a tailored approach, extensive consultation, collaboration with community leaders and multilingual information. • One of the messages conveyed was that perpetrators of violence should never be allowed to justify unlawful behaviour on cultural grounds.
Legislative Review	<p>The legislation provides for a statutory review, requiring the Act to be reviewed every two years until 2030.</p> <p>The review will examine whether changes are needed in several areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expanding the relationships covered by the offence beyond intimate relationships; - adding recklessness as a possible form of intent for the offence; - the misidentification of victims as aggressors; - the length of sentences; - the prohibited conduct reflected in the charges laid; - the use of the offence on its own or in combination with other offences; - the statutory defence; - variations across regions and police stations; - training; - the impact of the offence on Indigenous people, on individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and on members of the LGBTQIA+ community. <p>This iterative process is viewed very positively by the individuals consulted.</p>

Appendix 2

Process for Criminalizing Coercive Control in Queensland

	QUEENSLAND
Overview Prior to Criminalization	<p>The murders of Hannah Clarke and her three children in Brisbane in February 2020 served as a political catalyst across the country, including in Queensland, where the murders took place. These murders had a profound impact on the community and brought the issue of coercive control to the forefront of public debate. The family became a leading advocate for legislative change.</p> <p>In 2021, the Queensland Government established the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce²⁹, chaired by the Honourable Margaret McMurdo AC, a former President of the Court of Appeal, and tasked with conducting broad consultations (legal professionals, support services, Indigenous communities, feminist organizations) on the need to create a specific offence of coercive control and on women’s experiences in the criminal justice system. The task force was highly respected and helped foster meaningful debate. It recommended the criminalization of coercive control and provided detailed recommendations on how to implement this reform.</p> <p>A commission of inquiry into domestic violence, established following one of the task force’s recommendations, found that police culture within the Queensland Police Service (QPS) was marked by structural misogyny and racism.³⁰ The inquiry helped draw significant public attention to policing practices.</p> <p>Victims, particularly racialized women, Indigenous women, and women living with disabilities, tend to view the police negatively, citing issues such as the misidentification of the predominant aggressor, how complaints are handled, and implicit expectations of “perfect victims.”</p>
Overview Legislative Content	<p>The coercive control offence was introduced in March 2024 through the <i>Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024</i>³¹ of Queensland. It came into force in May 2025.</p>

29 For more information on its mandate, reports, and recommendations: <https://www.families.qld.gov.au/our-work/domestic-family-sexual-violence/end-domestic-family-violence/about/womens-safety-justice-taskforce/about>

30 *A Call for Change – Report* (2022), Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence. <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2022/5722T1912-958B.pdf>

31 *Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024*: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2024-005>

QUEENSLAND	
<p>Overview Legislative Content</p>	<p>Among the elements of the legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies only to adults; • Targets intimate partners, informal caregivers, and family violence; • Includes a lengthy list of examples of prohibited behaviours; • Requires proof that the offender intended to coerce or control the victim; • Adopts an objective approach to the likely impact of the pattern of behaviour on the victim, taking into account the context, namely to cause the other person harm, and without requiring proof that harm actually occurred; • Provides for a defence of reasonable conduct in the circumstances; • Carries a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. <p>The coercive control offence is intended to complement other offences. It is not intended to serve as a 'catch-all' offence in the short term.</p> <p>Some of the individuals consulted reported having very limited practical experience and knowledge of the specific characteristics of coercive control in situations involving informal caregivers, and feeling somewhat ill-equipped to apply this aspect.</p> <p>The criminalization of coercive control forms part of a broader legal reform that addresses other key issues, including bail, the concept of consent, stealthing, the sharing of intimate images, rules of evidence, and alternative measures, among others. It is not simply the addition of a new offence, but rather a shift toward a new approach to addressing domestic violence.</p>
<p>Overview Actors and the Judicial Response to Domestic Violence</p>	<p>Police :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is divided into 15 districts, each with a unit dedicated to domestic and family violence and vulnerable persons, which report to a specialized unit, the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command. • Domestic violence cases generally remain at the patrol level. Detectives may become involved in more complex cases. • We were told that police officers have no obligation to lay charges, but must record each case and intervention in the system. However, we have recently become aware of contradictory information. • Police officers may impose conditions³², in emergency situations and then apply to the court for a protection order³³. The victim, or a person authorized by the victim, may also apply to the court. Since January 1, 2026, police officers have been able to issue protection orders for a maximum duration of 12 months without requiring court review.³⁴ This lack of judicial oversight has been criticized by several observers due to the broad powers granted to police, the risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor, and the potential for perpetrators of violence to manipulate the system. A breach of these orders constitutes a criminal offence. • Police officers are equipped with body-worn cameras.

32 Police Protection Notice (PPN)

33 Domestic Violence Order (DVO)

34 Police Protection Direction (PPD)

QUEENSLAND	
<p>Overview Actors and the Judicial Response to Domestic Violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The victim may provide a video-recorded statement at the time of the intervention. • Police prosecutors decide which charges to lay. <p>Crown Prosecutors (Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Queensland / ODPP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They become involved when the case requires a higher court (sentences of more than three years). • Charges may be discussed with the police. • There is no team dedicated to domestic violence within the organization.
<p>Oversight of the Legislative Reform</p>	<p>The Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce produced two reports in 2021 and 2022, whose recommendations aimed to reform the justice system as a whole ahead of the coming into force of the offence. These reports serve as a roadmap for the implementation of the new legislation.</p> <p>The Queensland Government publishes an annual report on justice reform and women’s safety,³⁵ outlining progress made in implementing the recommendations of the task force and the commission of inquiry into policing.</p> <p>The Office of the Independent Implementation Supervisor (OIS) was established to monitor the progress of the reform arising from the recommendations of the task force.³⁶ Its mandate ended in February 2025, before the coercive control legislation came into force.</p> <p>A Women’s Safety and Criminal Justice Steering Committee was established to oversee the implementation of the reforms arising from the task force’s recommendations. It is a government body that brings together several departments.</p> <p>None of the individuals consulted mentioned these structures overseeing the implementation of the reform. On the contrary, the absence of an independent body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the offence was identified as a shortcoming. We were told that it was difficult to determine how the reform was being implemented and taking effect on the ground, due to a lack of accountability.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation</p>	<p>For each domestic violence case, police are required to identify all applicable offences, conduct an investigation, and record everything in the centralized system, even if no action is taken against the aggressor.</p> <p>The monitoring of statistics related to coercive control cases relies on the QPS case and information management system, as well as its internal quarterly reports. We were told that an initial report had been produced, but not made public.</p>

35 For more information on these reports: <https://www.families.qld.gov.au/our-work/domestic-family-sexual-violence/queensland-government-response-womens-safety-justice-taskforce-recommendations/our-progress/womens-safety-justice-reform-annual-reports>.

36 <https://www.families.qld.gov.au/our-work/domestic-family-sexual-violence/office-independent-implementation-supervisor>

QUEENSLAND	
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Some individuals within the QPS appeared to already have data on hand, or to be interested in analyzing certain aspects, such as victims withdrawing from proceedings.</p> <p>Some of the individuals consulted expressed concern about the lack of accountability and the absence of reporting to the community, which would have made it possible to assess the situation. They also indicated that they would have liked the partners involved in the reform to be able to consult and work together, and for an independent agency to be responsible for analyzing the statistics.</p> <p>The only source of data comes from the police’s annual crime statistics. In November 2025, the QPS released an Excel document that was considered difficult to read and interpret.</p> <p>The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is also working to establish a monitoring review process.</p> <p>Reports from the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board were cited as helping to highlight key issues, such as the misidentification of the predominant aggressor. One of these reports³⁷ indicates that 44.4% of women who died in the cases examined had previously been identified as perpetrators of violence in a protection order at least once before their death. In nearly all cases involving a deceased Indigenous person, that person had been identified both as a perpetrator and as a victim in protection orders.</p> <p>No evaluation process for the training or the effects of the legislation was reported to us. However, the task force’s recommendations—including the creation of the coercive control offence—are expected to be subject to an evaluation process.³⁸</p>
Review Mechanisms	<p>At the policing level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases are no longer systematically reviewed by a supervisor prior to charges being laid, as was previously the case. Approval from a supervisor is now required only when no police action is taken. In certain cases where risks are identified, a verbal briefing may be provided to the supervisor. • The QPS has developed a gender-centred review dashboard to review cases. The specialized unit can examine cases in which a woman is identified as the perpetrator and a man as the victim, in order to detect potential misidentification of the predominant aggressor. Where there is doubt, the case is returned to the officer for further investigation.

37 Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, 2016-17 Annual Report, page 82: https://www.coronerscourt.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/723675/domestic-and-family-violence-death-review-and-advisory-board-annual-report-2016-17.pdf

38 The Queensland Government has established a monitoring and evaluation framework: <https://www.families.qld.gov.au/our-work/domestic-family-sexual-violence/queensland-government-response-womens-safety-justice-taskforce-recommendations/our-progress/dfsv-system-monitoring-evaluation-framework>

QUEENSLAND	
Review Mechanisms	<p>At the Crown prosecutor level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When legal advisors seek to reduce or withdraw charges, the decision must be approved by a Crown prosecutor or by management, depending on the seriousness of the offence. It is noted that the mere fact that these decisions are subject to review constitutes a control mechanism in itself. • A sexual offences review committee (including domestic violence) brings together police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to discuss stays of proceedings, best practices, and identified challenges. A monthly report is prepared by the prosecutions committee to track discontinued cases involving domestic violence and child sexual abuse. • Victims (not limited to domestic violence cases) have a right to judicial review when charges are withdrawn. This mechanism has been used in 10 cases since its implementation (over a six-month period at the time of the interviews). <p>From the perspective of stakeholders in the specialized victim support sector</p> <p>The risk of misidentifying the predominant aggressor is very real, particularly for Indigenous and racialized women, as well as women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or in cases where the perpetrator is highly manipulative. In such situations, men’s accounts are often considered more credible, and police do not systematically assess who the predominant aggressor is.</p> <p>The QPS has developed decision-making tools to identify the person most in need of protection during police intervention. However, this person may vary from one situation to another, suggesting that assessments are conducted on the basis of isolated incidents rather than patterns of behaviour.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised about allowing police to issue 12-month protection orders without court review, as it allows them to act on the basis of isolated incidents without judicial oversight. If a victim is subject to such an order, a breach could result in a coercive control charge.</p> <p>Among the men who contact victim support services for domestic violence, we were told that 50% had been referred and identified as victims by the police. Upon further analysis, 90% were found to be the predominant aggressors. This screening carried out by the specialized service highlights the existence of misidentification of the predominant aggressor by the police.</p>
Collaboration with Specialized Victim Support Services	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Including the victim support sector in the discussions leading up to the criminalization, through the work of the task force, helped build support for the reform and allowed underlying concerns to be discussed openly.</p> <p>There do not appear to have been similar efforts during the implementation phase, which gives victim support organizations the impression of being left to catch up with the changes and unable to contribute to a coherent and coordinated implementation. Specialized domestic violence services have had limited involvement in</p>

QUEENSLAND	
Collaboration with Specialized Victim Support Services	<p>the development of training for police and prosecutors, and have little information on what frontline officers know about coercive control. To our knowledge, two groups provided feedback on police training.</p> <p>Referrals Police refer victims to specialized services when they are reluctant to engage in the judicial process. Some police units include social workers. Referrals may be made without consent when the situation is considered high risk, particularly where the perpetrator has a criminal history.</p> <p>Information sharing A designated police officer works within the offices of one of the organizations that support victims of domestic violence. The officer serves as a liaison between support services and the police, facilitating information sharing and mutual understanding. Information sharing works well in high-risk situations.</p> <p>However, new legislation³⁹ on the admissibility of hearsay evidence at trial in domestic violence cases (preliminary complaint evidence) is raising concerns among support services, as police are increasingly seeking to obtain information gathered during their interactions with victims. In some cases, police have gone so far as to obtain search warrants following a refusal to provide the requested information. One support organization is concerned that this practice could become more widespread to support coercive control cases, and that support workers may be called to testify in court in the absence of independent evidence.</p>
Training / Awareness	<p>With respect to the police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No funding was provided for training. • Training was largely developed and delivered internally by the specialized unit. It was reviewed, in particular, by the head of a program for perpetrators of violence and by ANROWS⁴⁰. Victim support services felt excluded from the process and noted a lack of transparency regarding what information police have following the training. The limited change in police culture leads them to question the effectiveness of the training, beyond the stated good intentions. • Training began before the offence came into force, in response to the commission of inquiry and the task force’s recommendations:⁴¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A three-day in-person training course, mandatory for all police officers (15,000), called “DFV: The Holistic Approach User Course.” The course covers the identification of risk factors, the detection of coercive control, the identification of the person most in need of protection, as well as investigations. It incorporates a conceptual framework (“The Whole Story”) to address domestic violence holistically and from the perspective of victims’ experiences.

39 *Op. cit.* note 31, see *Division 4 Expansion of preliminary complaint evidence*
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2024-005#pt.6-div.4>

40 Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety

41 See the QPS 2022–2023 Annual Report for more details on training:
https://www.police.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/QPS%20Annual%20Report%202022-23.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

	QUEENSLAND
<p>Training / Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A two-day in-person training course to support the implementation of the holistic approach, with a focus on prioritizing victim safety, holding perpetrators accountable, and meeting community expectations. - An online training program (asynchronous, 2-3 hours) for all police officers, covering legislation, procedures, and perpetrator strategies, including impression management. - A five-day in-person additional training course for members specializing in domestic violence cases within the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command, called “DV Specialist Leadership.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QPS has developed a “train-the-trainer” model: members from each district receive training in Brisbane and then deliver the training locally. • In terms of content, the following key elements were highlighted: the use of body-worn camera footage to focus on the perpetrator and illustrate how police officers can also be subject to manipulation by perpetrators; scenarios that include diverse victim profiles (a woman living with a disability, an Indigenous woman); and a case study to help identify defensive injuries. • It should be noted that the police academy devotes 21 days to domestic violence (out of a total of six months of training). <p>With respect to Crown Prosecutors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training was developed internally and delivered by consultants or senior Crown prosecutors. It was provided to all staff within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, as well as to police prosecutors and a number of police investigators. A professor from the University of Queensland also contributed to the training. • The training program includes 10 modules, combining in-person and online training for more straightforward topics. • Small group sessions are organized to discuss changes in practice and the challenges to be addressed. • The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is currently considering ongoing training. • In terms of content, the following key topics were highlighted: a trauma-informed approach, how the accused presents themselves, the content of the legislation, and an understanding of coercive control. • Another key element communicated to prosecutors focused on jury decision-making and the importance of presenting the full narrative, as jurors may otherwise fill in the gaps based on their own experiences. <p>From the perspective of judges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all judges in Queensland received a one-day, in-person training session. It was delivered jointly by an author/speaker, researchers, and judges. According to one of the trainers interviewed, this format proved to be particularly effective.

QUEENSLAND	
Training / Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of content, the following key elements were highlighted: a trauma-informed approach; assessing the person most in need of protection; the history behind the concept of coercive control, which sought to explain how prisoners in forced labour camps, despite being trained to resist interrogation, were unable to resist coercive control; and the importance of language and the messages conveyed by judges (whether their words minimize the behaviour or hold perpetrators accountable). <p>With respect to raising public awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government carried out a large-scale public awareness campaign. • The media presence of Hannah Clarke’s parents helped raise widespread awareness of coercive control, as no physical violence had preceded the quadruple murder. • The release of Jess Hill’s book <i>See What You Made Me Do</i>, along with the series adapted from it, also generated significant public interest. • Many groups launched their own local campaigns. This community momentum helped foster a productive public conversation around coercive control.
Legislative Review	The legislation on coercive control does not provide for a review of the Act.

Appendix 3

Review of Australian Statistics

In this section we present data relating to reported offences or incidents associated with the new coercive control offences, as well as their progression through the justice system, in both jurisdictions.

For New South Wales, the data are drawn from reports by BOCSAR⁴², which publishes statistics on the application of the offence at regular intervals. A copy of the report issued in December 2025 is included in this appendix to allow for full review of the information it contains, as well as the visual representations that facilitate a clear understanding of the data.

As Queensland does not publish a similar report, some of the data presented for that state are drawn from general crime statistics⁴³ compiled by us, while others have been identified by journalists.⁴⁴

Finally, this appendix concludes with an analysis of the data, including possible explanations for the relatively low number of cases recorded by police services and charges laid.

JURISDICTION	NEW SOUTH WALES	QUEENSLAND
Period covered	Between July 2024 and September 2025 (15 months)	Between May 2025 and November 2025 (6 months)
Incidents or offences	386 coercive control incidents reported by police	187 reported offences
Accused persons	18 accused persons (all men)	49 (including 1 woman)
Victims	386 (362 women, 24 men) 94% women	187 (176 women, 11 men)
Charges laid	18 (9 by the NSW Police Force 9 by Crown prosecutors) Significant increase in the last quarter. Most often include charges of intimidation, stalking, and assault.	53 (May 26, 2025 – October 26, 2025 / 5 months)

42 The statistics for New South Wales are drawn from the BOCSAR report, reproduced on pages 63 and following of this document: https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/documents/topic-areas/domestic-violence/Coercive_control_monitoring_report_Sept_2025.pdf

43 The first three rows for Queensland are drawn from general crime statistics compiled by us: <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/maps-and-statistics>

44 The two other rows for Queensland are drawn from an ABC article: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-28/coercive-control-laws-in-queensland-record-more-than-50-charges/106056170>

JURISDICTION	NEW SOUTH WALES	QUEENSLAND
Legal outcomes	<p>386, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 216 incidents with no charges laid - 2 coercive control charges only - 13 coercive control charges + other offences - 153 charges other than coercive control <p>Of the 18 charges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 guilty plea, resulting in a conditional sentence (18 months), community service, and the use of an electronic monitoring bracelet - 2 withdrawn by the Crown - 15 are still active before the courts as of September 30, 2025 	<p>149, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40 resolved (guilty plea, conviction, or dismissal) - 39 charges withdrawn - 70 still active + 17 unfounded (not included in the total)

In New South Wales, in February 2026, outside the period covered by the most recent report published by BOCSAR, a first conviction for coercive control, in which the accused had pleaded not guilty, resulted in a two-year term of imprisonment, with no possibility of parole for 15 months, as well as a ten-year protection order.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/samantha-s-ex-partner-isolated-and-abused-her-he-s-the-first-man-in-nsw-to-serve-jail-time-for-coercive-control-20260203-p5nz2i.html>

COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

Quarterly Report: September 2025

A new offence of coercive control commenced in NSW on 1 July 2024 (*s54D, Crimes Act 1900*)

The offence relates to abusive behaviours directed towards a current or former intimate partner with the intention to coerce or control them. The offence captures repeated patterns of physical or non-physical abuse used to hurt, scare, intimidate, threaten or control someone. The law applies to behaviour from 1 July 2024. This report shows the operation of the new offence.



Coercive control incidents recorded by NSW Police

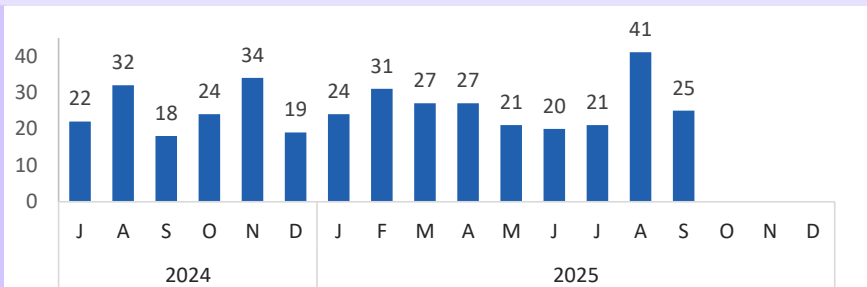
Jul 2024-Sep 2025

1.1 Number of recorded incidents of coercive control

386

Coercive control incidents

July 2024 – September 2025



1.2 Nature of controlling behaviours



4 distinct controlling behaviours were involved per coercive control incident, on average.

Controlling behaviours identified	2024Q3	2024Q4	2025Q1	2025Q2	2025Q3	Total behaviours Jul 2024-Sep 2025	% of coercive control incidents
Harassment, monitoring or tracking	42	47	51	37	44	221	57%
Threats or intimidation	34	42	42	42	51	211	55%
Financial abuse	31	36	40	37	52	196	51%
Social isolation or cultural abuse	30	32	35	28	48	173	45%
Shaming, degrading or humiliating	33	36	35	33	34	171	44%
Physical violence	21	24	22	21	24	112	29%
Deprive liberty or otherwise control	18	20	16	15	22	91	24%
Damage or destruction of property	10	21	10	12	12	65	17%
Sexual violence	8	11	12	16	18	65	17%
Other coercive behaviour	14	6	8	4	12	44	11%
Harm to a child	3	4	4	4	9	24	6%
Animal abuse	4	5	4	6	3	22	6%
Total incidents	72	77	82	68	87	386	100%

A single incident of coercive control recorded by NSW Police involves a course of conduct of abusive behaviour rather than a specific instance. Each coercive control incident can include more than one type of controlling behaviour.
Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2025.

COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

Quarterly Report: September 2025

1.3 Incidents of coercive control recorded by NSW Police by region

Region of incident	2024					Jul 2024 to Sep 2025		
	2024Q3	2024Q4	2025Q1	2025Q2	2025Q3	Total number	Rate per 100,000	Ratio to NSW*
NSW total	72	77	82	68	87	386	4.6	1.0
Greater Sydney	37	33	29	28	34	161	3.0	0.6
Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	2	1	0	1	1	5	1.8	0.4
Blacktown	4	1	1	4	4	14	3.3	0.7
Central Coast	6	4	6	4	3	23	6.5	1.4
City and Inner South	4	3	1	3	1	12	3.4	0.7
Eastern Suburbs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Inner South West	6	3	5	1	3	18	2.9	0.6
Inner West	2	4	3	1	1	11	3.5	0.8
North Sydney and Hornsby	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.2	0.0
Northern Beaches	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.4	0.1
Outer South West	1	1	2	1	0	5	1.6	0.3
Outer West and Blue Mountains	4	5	4	4	4	21	6.2	1.3
Parramatta	4	7	2	2	2	17	3.3	0.7
Ryde	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.9	0.2
South West	3	1	4	3	13	24	4.8	1.0
Sutherland	1	3	0	2	1	7	3.0	0.6
Regional NSW	35	44	53	40	53	225	7.8	1.7
Capital Region	2	4	4	4	5	19	7.8	1.7
Central West	7	7	3	6	11	34	15.8	3.4
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	0	3	1	1	3	8	5.4	1.2
Far West and Orana	2	4	6	1	2	15	12.7	2.7
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	3	2	11	7	11	34	11.1	2.4
Illawarra	5	3	3	0	4	15	4.7	1.0
Mid North Coast	3	4	4	3	3	17	7.3	1.6
Murray	2	0	3	5	3	13	10.3	2.2
New England and North West	3	6	3	7	3	22	11.6	2.5
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	4	3	6	2	1	16	4.0	0.9
Richmond - Tweed	3	5	5	0	5	18	6.9	1.5
Riverina	1	2	3	3	1	10	6.1	1.3
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	0	1	1	1	1	4	2.5	0.5

*A ratio of one indicates parity with the NSW rate. Red indicates the rate is double (or more) the NSW rate, while ratios half the NSW rate (or less) are highlighted in green.

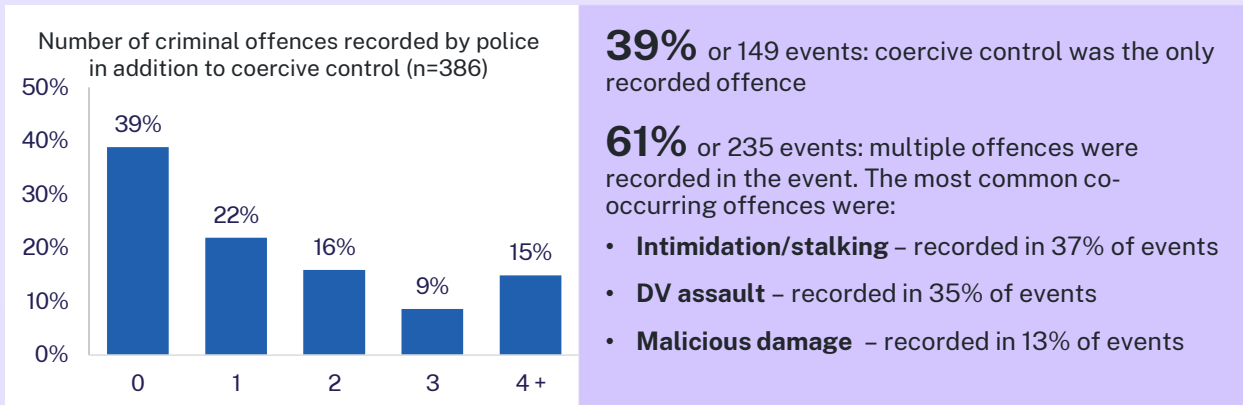
COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

Quarterly Report: September 2025

1.4 Factors associated with coercive control incidents (n=386 incidents)



1.5 Offences co-occurring with coercive control



Legal actions commenced

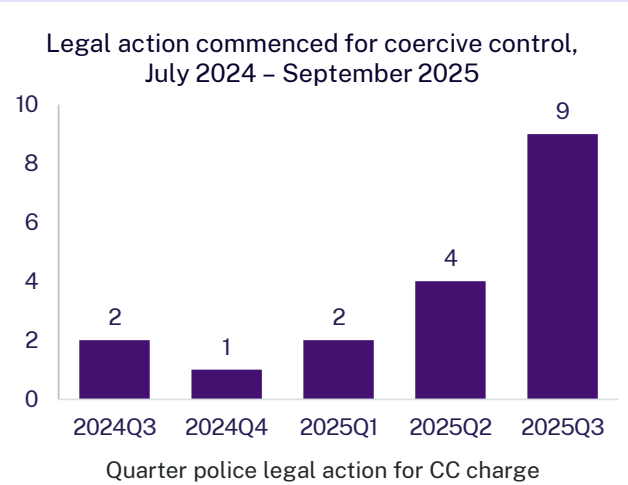
1.6 Legal actions commenced for coercive control

Between July 2024 – Sept 2025, **18** coercive control charges have been laid. Of these:

- **9** were laid by NSW Police, **9** by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- **1** was proven and received an Intensive Correction Order; **2** were withdrawn by the prosecution
- **15** remain pending before the court (as at 30 September 2025).



Median time from coercive control event to charge: **146 days**



COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

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1.7 Nature of charges laid on the criminal event*

Type of charge laid	Count	% of all coercive control events
No charge of any type	216	56%
Coercive Control charge only	2	0.5%
Coercive Control charge plus other charge/s	13	3%
No Coercive Control charge but other charge/s	153	40%
Total coercive control events[^]	384	100%



Coercive Control charge plus other charge/s (n=13)

- **10** events included an **intimidation/stalking** charge
- **8** events included a **DV assault** charge
- **4** events included a **property damage** charge
- **3** events included a **breach AVO** charge
- **1** event included a **sexual assault** charge

Other charges on events include a possess/use illicit drug charge, an arson charge, an abduction charge, and other against the person charge



No Coercive Control charge but other charge/s (n=153)

The most common criminal charges were:

- **97** events with an **intimidation/stalking** charge (63%)
- **94** events with a **DV assault** charge (61%)
- **33** events with a **property damage** charge (22%)
- **26** events with a **breach AVO** charge (17%)

[^] Two coercive control events recorded two separate coercive control incidents on the event.

*Note: Data on page 3 indicates that 18 coercive control charges have been laid in total. Three of the coercive control charges were not connected to a coercive control incident created by NSW Police. Those three charges do not appear on this page as the focus here is charges arising from NSW Police recorded events that include a coercive control criminal incident.

COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

Quarterly Report: September 2025



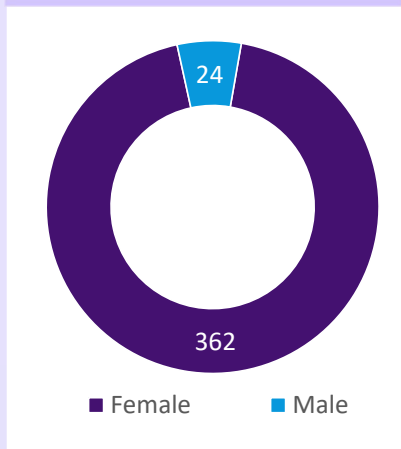
Victims of coercive control (n=386)

Jul 2024-Sep 2025

2.1 Victims by gender



94% of victims of coercive control were female



2.2 Victims by gender of the alleged offender

92% of coercive control incidents involved a female victim and a male alleged offender



2.3 Aboriginality of victims and alleged offender



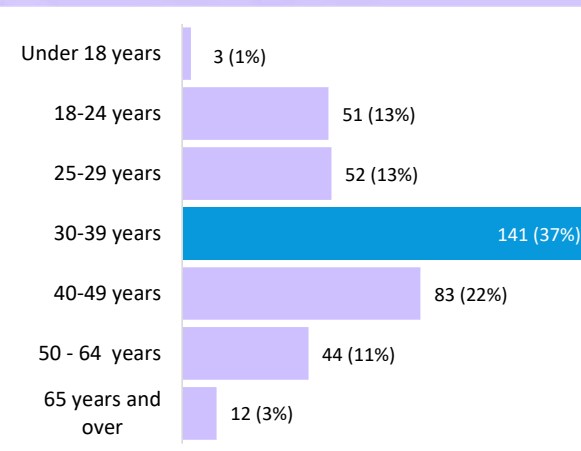
9% of victims of coercive control were Aboriginal



2.4 Victims by age



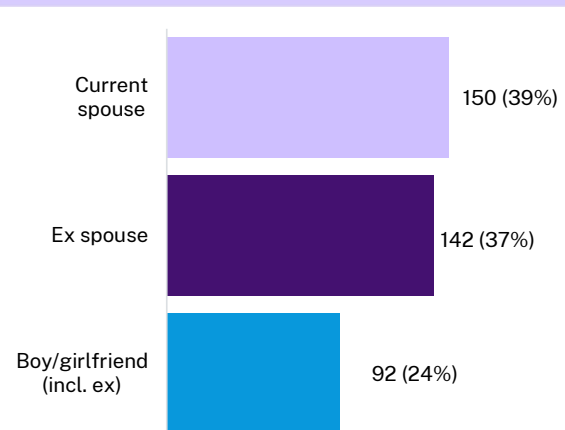
37% of victims of coercive control were aged 30 to 39 years



2.5 Relationship type of coercive control



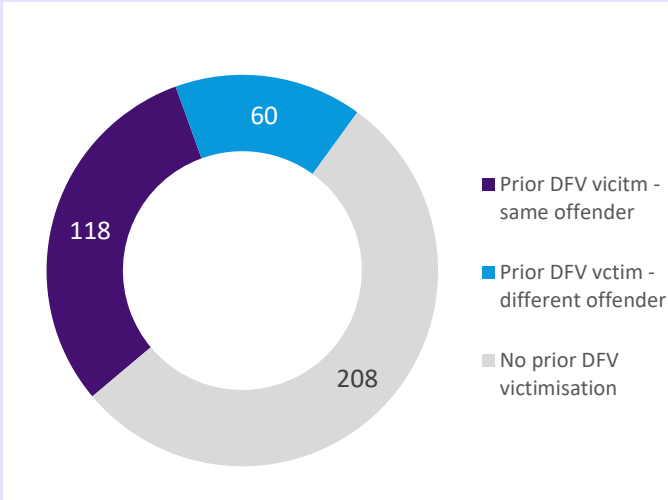
76% of victims of coercive control were the current spouse or ex spouse of the alleged offender



COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

Quarterly Report: September 2025

2.5 Victims of coercive control recorded as prior victims of any domestic violence offence (n=386)



54% of coercive control victims had no prior history of DFV victimisation recorded by NSW Police.

46% (178) of coercive control victims had a previous DFV victimisation recorded by NSW Police.

- **31%** (118) by the **same** alleged offender
- **16%** (60) by a **different** alleged offender.



Among the **118** victims with a prior recorded DFV victimisation involving the same alleged offender, **30%** (35) had at least 3 records of prior DV victimisation involving that offender.

2.7

average number of prior victimisations among victims with a prior DFV victimisation record (n=178).



Persons legally proceeded against for a coercive control charge

Jul 2024-Sep 2025

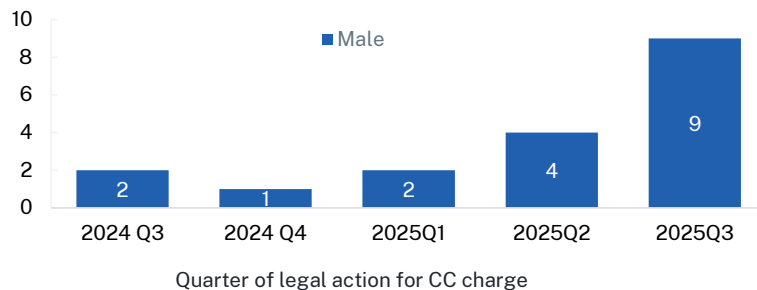
3.1 Persons legally proceeded against for coercive control charge by gender (n=18)

18 persons were legally proceeded against in the 15 months to September 2025.



All 18 were **male**, 17 were **non-Aboriginal** and 15 were aged between **30 and 49** years.

3.1 Persons legally proceeded against for coercive control charge by gender, July 2024 – September 2025

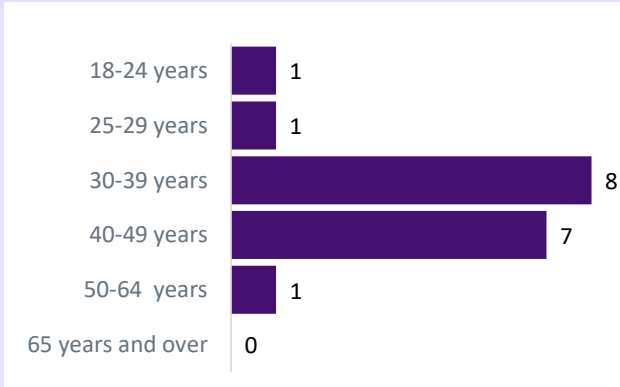


Note: Prior DV victimisation categories are mutually exclusive. Persons in the category of 'prior victim-different offender' excludes any persons who also had a prior victim record with the same offender.

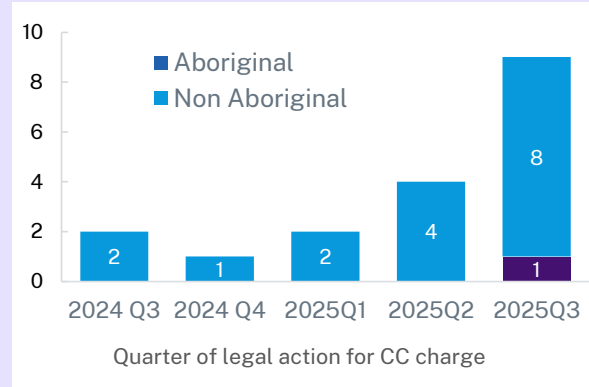
COERCIVE CONTROL MONITORING REPORT

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3.2 Persons legally proceeded against for coercive control charge by age



3.3 Persons legally proceeded against for coercive control charge by Aboriginality



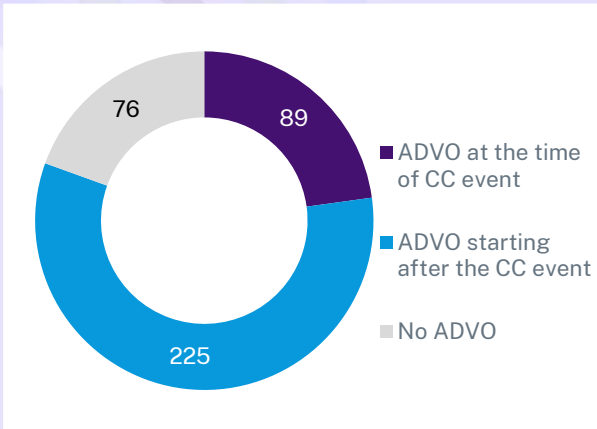
Apprehended domestic violence orders (ADVOs) & coercive control

Jul 2024-Sep 2025

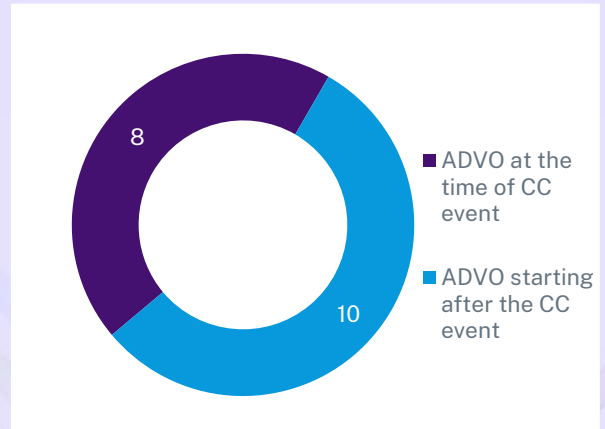
23% of coercive control victims had an ADVO in force against the POI at the time of the event.

58% had an ADVO commence after the coercive control event

4.1 Whether coercive control victims had an ADVO against the POI



4.2 Whether coercive control victims had an ADVO where a CC charge was laid



Note: includes the three events resulting in a coercive control charge arising from NSW Police records of domestic violence related criminal events that did not include a record of a coercive control offence.

Analysis of Selected Data⁴⁶

Before examining the data on cases initiated and charges laid under the new coercive control offences, it is helpful to briefly outline the demographic context of the jurisdictions concerned.

As of June 30, 2025, the population⁴⁷ of New South Wales was estimated at approximately 8,593,900, while that of Queensland stood at nearly 5,669,800.

The relatively modest figures observed in relation to the number of cases initiated under the coercive control offence may be explained by several factors identified by those consulted and others observed in the field. It is important to note, however, that these stakeholders do not view these data as indicative of a failure of the reform. On the contrary, several indicated that the criminalization of coercive control has already led to significant positive outcomes, particularly in terms of public awareness and education.

Some individuals consulted also emphasized that the caution surrounding the adoption and initial implementation of such a novel legislative framework was intended precisely to limit unintended effects. Others noted that the primary objective lay first and foremost in the adoption of the reform itself, with legislative review mechanisms subsequently allowing for the correction of any shortcomings. In this regard, the legislation in New South Wales provides for a statutory review every two years until 2030, thereby enabling adjustments in light of practical experience.

Several factors that may explain the observed statistics therefore warrant closer examination.

1. Non-retroactivity of the offence

As is the case in England and Scotland, the coercive control offence has no retroactive effect in either New South Wales or Queensland. It is reasonable to expect that any future Canadian framework would adopt the same approach.

Accordingly, despite the legislation coming into force in New South Wales on July 1, 2024, a victim cannot expect their intimate partner to be prosecuted for coercive control in relation to conduct that occurred prior to that date. Over time, however, police authorities should be able to examine an increasing number of patterns of behaviour that have taken place since the legislation came into force.

It is therefore essential that this non-retroactivity be clearly explained in public awareness campaigns and to organizations supporting victims of domestic violence, in order to avoid any misunderstanding or disappointment.

It should nevertheless be noted that conduct predating the coming into force of the legislation may still be relied upon in Australia as tendency or context evidence⁴⁸, which is now recognized in both jurisdictions.

46 For further analysis of the Queensland statistics, see the comment by Angela Lynch, published a few months after our meeting with her: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/angela-lynch-am-gaicd-b963b73b_more-than-50-coercive-control-charges-laid-activity-7399930052903362560-EEt3?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAz-xS0BYhldgQcOyf3%0AaiU0ot38CGjxhMbs

47 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/latest-release>

48 *Op. cit.* note 28, p.57.

2. Requirement of specific intent

In both New South Wales and Queensland, the legislature has required proof of specific intent on the part of the accused, namely that the course of conduct be intended to coerce or control the victim.

In New South Wales, the possibility of invoking recklessness as a form of *mens rea* appears to have been removed at the very final stage of the legislative process. Officially, this decision was part of a cautious approach to the introduction of a new offence, aimed at avoiding unintended consequences in terms of the criminalization of victims (misidentification), particularly in cases of reactive violence, including among Indigenous women.

Other individuals consulted, however, referred to the existence of different forms of pressure aimed at establishing a higher evidentiary threshold. In their view, the issue of misidentification of the predominant aggressor predated the introduction of the coercive control offence and would require broader, systemic responses beyond simply imposing a requirement of specific intent. It should be noted that the legislation in New South Wales already provides for a review mechanism in this regard. Section 54J(2)(a) provides that the first statutory review, expected in 2026–2027, must, among other things, consider whether recklessness should be added as a form of *mens rea*.

The views of the prosecutors consulted remain divided. Some consider that the requirement of specific intent does not constitute a major obstacle, insofar as it may be inferred from the course of conduct itself, provided that the manifestations of coercive control have been properly identified and documented by police. From this perspective, the development of a coherent narrative by prosecutors can help highlight the manipulation strategies at play, with juries often better able to recognize intent when it emerges from a pattern of repeated behaviour rather than isolated incidents.

However, other prosecutors take the view that this burden remains difficult to meet and often requires reliance on inferences drawn from the offender's strategies of manipulation and domination.

3. Advantages of proceeding under other offences

One person consulted summarized the challenge as follows: the time required and the complexity of the investigation needed to establish a coercive control offence, combined with the fact that it carries a shorter sentence than other offences that are easier to prove, may discourage police officers from proceeding under this offence.

Although data on the median time between a police intervention and the laying of charges are not available for traditional domestic violence offences in New South Wales, the median time observed for coercive control charges—146 days—suggests a longer investigative process than for offences such as assault.

Moreover, certain alternative offences may result in significantly more severe penalties. For example, the offence of unlawful confinement carries a maximum sentence of 14 years' imprisonment in New South Wales, whereas the maximum penalty for coercive control is seven years.

It will therefore be interesting to observe whether, over time, the length of investigations decreases as police services gain more experience in identifying and documenting patterns of coercive control.

4. Perception of the offence as a stop-gap offence

As noted in the comparative table, an approach that prioritizes traditional offences and considers coercive control only in the absence of other possible charges risks leaving unaddressed many situations that nonetheless meet the criteria for this offence. A practice observed in the field instead involves adding a coercive control charge to a series of traditional offences where the circumstances warrant it. This approach differs in particular from the Scottish model, which favours an “umbrella” offence encompassing the entire course of conduct. How-

ever, an approach based on siloed offences undermines the broader understanding of domestic violence reflected in the concept of coercive control.

It will be interesting to see what approach is ultimately adopted in the Canadian context in this regard, particularly with respect to any guidance that may be provided to prosecutors.

5. Difficulty in eliciting the full scope of coercive control from the victim

The observations gathered indicate that, even where police officers have received training in domestic violence, it is not always easy or intuitive to identify and document the full range of coercive control experienced by the victim, despite the use of a risk assessment tool. The questions asked appear often to be used primarily to assess the immediate level of risk, rather than also serving as an entry point for exploring the more subtle strategies of control and domination employed by the perpetrator.

Moreover, particularly in the absence of physical violence, victims do not necessarily spontaneously report behaviours such as social isolation, humiliation, financial control, surveillance, or sexual violence. In this regard, the persistence of an approach focused on isolated incidents remains a significant challenge.

6. Apprehension about building cases under this new offence

Although the authorities in New South Wales and Queensland provided training to justice system actors prior to the coming into force of the legislation, these trainings remain recent, and time is still required for the knowledge to be fully assimilated and put into practice.

The implementation of a new offence under the scrutiny of the entire country, and even internationally, may also generate a certain degree of apprehension among the professionals concerned. Many wish to ensure that they are building particularly strong cases, with optimal factual contexts and evidence, in order to establish jurisprudence that aligns with the initial objectives of the reform.

However, this pursuit of perfection may also lead to a degree of paralysis and encourage reliance on more familiar and better understood offences. As the proverb goes, “the best is the enemy of the good.”

While it is important to proceed diligently, enhanced training, combined with supervision and feedback mechanisms, could help build the confidence of the professionals tasked with applying this new offence.

7. Application limited to intimate partners in New South Wales

Several of those consulted in New South Wales noted that limiting the offence to relationships between intimate partners may also contribute to reducing the number of potential cases.

In some cases, other family members may be involved in the pattern of coercive control established by the predominant aggressor. Similar strategies may also be employed in different contexts, particularly by a child, grandchild, or informal caregiver of an older person.

A comparison with Queensland, where the offence applies more broadly to family violence and informal caregivers, may eventually make it possible to assess the impact of this difference in scope. It is also possible that New South Wales may consider expanding the scope of the offence as part of a future statutory review.

8. Application limited to adult offenders

In both jurisdictions studied, the coercive control offence applies only to adult offenders. Situations involving coercive control between adolescents therefore currently fall outside the scope of these new provisions.

In Canada, criminal responsibility begins at the age of twelve, and the bills proposing the criminalization of coercive control did not contemplate restricting its application to adults only. Such an approach could help address the very real issue of violence in young people's intimate relationships.

9. Possible absence of mandatory charging policy in cases of domestic violence

In both jurisdictions studied, we were told that there is no mandatory charging policy in cases of domestic violence, unlike what generally prevails in Canada. Therefore, the decision to submit a case for charges could largely fall within police discretion. However, we have recently become aware of contradictory information.

Information relating to incidents must nevertheless be recorded, whether or not charges are laid. In Queensland, police indicated that the decision to formally proceed with a case most often rests with the victim, although authorities may act without the victim's consent in more serious situations. In New South Wales, police frequently issue at least some form of peace bond.

It is nevertheless worth considering whether all instances of coercive control reported to police—particularly those that do not constitute other offences and where the victim does not wish to proceed with a formal complaint—are in fact captured in the available statistical data.

10. Minimum threshold required to establish the offence

Finally, beyond the statistical data on the number of incidents related to coercive control that are reported, a portion of the behaviours experienced by the victim in each of these situations is not always reflected in those data.

Several of those consulted indicated that one of the challenges lies in ensuring that the documentation submitted for the purpose of laying charges captures the full pattern of coercive control occurring since the coming into force of the legislation, rather than only the elements strictly necessary to meet the threshold of the offence.

Thus, where a range of coercive behaviours has occurred over a period of several months, it is possible that only those behaviours occurring over a shorter period—yet sufficient to establish the constituent elements of the offence—are retained in the judicial process.

Such an approach has several consequences. It may limit recognition of the full extent of the victim's experience, restrict the court's ability to impose a sentence that reflects the totality of the conduct at issue, and reduce the accuracy of the risk assessment associated with the situation.

Appendix 4

Recommendations from the Great Britain Mission Report (2024)

POLICE

Training:

- 1. Hold a one-day in-person training:** An in-person training session of minimum one day must be provided to all personnel before the new coercive control legislation comes into force. This training would be developed and delivered in collaboration with resources specialized in domestic violence and would include victim testimonials.
- 2. Develop content focused on understanding domestic violence:** Training content would focus on understanding the dynamics of coercive control, the homicidal risk associated with these patterns of behaviour, and identifying the dominant aggressor. The content should also incorporate an intersectional approach. A particular emphasis would be placed on how to interact with victims during these types of interventions.
- 3. Integrate a trauma-informed approach:** The inclusion of a trauma-informed approach would not only promote the well-being of victims during their judicial process, but would also facilitate enhanced support for them, particularly through an improved understanding of their reactions.
- 4. Use interactive, dynamic teaching methods:** The use of evolving scenarios, case studies, impact techniques, body-worn camera footage, and recordings of 911 calls would ensure concrete, practical, and impactful teaching.
- 5. Highlight cases that have led to convictions:** Showcasing actual cases that have made their way through the justice system would provide a concrete illustration of the essential elements to be presented as evidence, all while highlighting the successes achieved. It would also help to mobilize the workforce.
- 6. Develop a *Train the Trainer* structure:** This structure would make it possible to have trainers within work teams, particularly within the call response units. This would ensure the ongoing dissemination of knowledge on coercive control and its continuity after the initial training.
- 7. Ensure ongoing and specialized training for police personnel:** It would be necessary to develop ongoing training sessions on domestic violence for all personnel working within police organizations. As for specialized resources and those dedicated to investigations, a more in- depth training would be called for. According to the suggestions received, this training could last three (3) days and should include joint sessions with specialized prosecutors.

In the field:

8. Set up a quality control structure: Setting up supervisory and review mechanisms, as well as adapting guidelines, procedures, and operational practices, would help ensure the quality of interventions and reporting related to cases of domestic violence.

9. Identify champions: The appointment of trainers who have completed the *Train the Trainer* course would enable teams to be staffed with resource persons who possess more in-depth knowledge of the issue. These individuals would then be in a position to train their colleagues on the reality of the problem following the initial training, and could accompany them when they intervene in situations involving domestic violence.

10. Develop a risk assessment tool incorporating coercive control: The development and use of a DARA-inspired risk assessment tool would enable Canadian police officers to better detect behaviours associated with coercive control, and thereby prevent domestic homicide.

11. Create specialized teams: The creation of teams specialized in domestic violence for all Canadian police services would assure victims personalized support, taking into account the time required to facilitate disclosure, associated follow-ups, and the development of a bond of trust.

12. Establish provincial and territorial teams dedicated to high-risk cases and repeat offenders: Setting up specialized, permanent, provincial and territorial units inspired by the Scottish model (*Domestic Abuse Task Force*) would ensure optimal monitoring of individuals at high-risk of homicide and repeat offenders, thereby preventing loss of life. This team would be equipped with a wide range of monitoring tools including surveillance, intelligence, and location tools (GPS, anti-approach bracelets, etc.).

13. Ensure collaboration with judicial and community partners: Concerted efforts among judicial and community partners, particularly those specialized in domestic violence, would help ensure greater efficiency in the development of safety nets. These exchanges would also help to maintain the involvement of victims all throughout the judicial process. Finally, it would take into account the importance of systematic referral, thus avoiding a gap in the continuum of services.

14. Strengthen the link between police and prosecutors: Optimum communication between police and prosecutors is essential. Feedback on the construction of cases and on the evidence to be obtained would enable the court to be provided with robust legal cases. The creation of platforms and of communities of practice between police officers and prosecutors working on domestic violence cases would provide a much-needed forum for discussing the challenges encountered and the possible solutions to address them.

PROSECUTORS

Training:

15. Hold a one-day in-person training session: An in-person training session of a minimum of one day must be provided to all prosecutors before the new coercive control legislation comes into force. This training would be developed and delivered in collaboration with resources specialized in domestic violence and would include victim testimonials.

16. Develop content focused on understanding domestic violence: Training content would focus on understanding the dynamics of coercive control, the homicidal risk associated with these patterns of behaviour, and identifying the dominant aggressor. The content should also incorporate an intersectional approach. Particular emphasis would be placed on how to interact with victims during these types of interventions.

17. Integrate a trauma-informed approach: The inclusion of a trauma-informed approach would not only promote the well-being of victims during their judicial process, but would also facilitate enhanced support for them, particularly through an improved understanding of their reactions.

18. Use interactive, dynamic teaching methods: The use of evolving scenarios, case studies, impact techniques, body-worn camera footage, and recordings of 911 calls would ensure concrete, practical, and impactful teaching.

19. Highlight court cases that have led to convictions: Showcasing cases that have successfully made their way through the justice system would allow for a concrete illustration of the elements to emphasize in court, all while highlighting the successes achieved. It would also help mobilize prosecutors.

20. Ensure ongoing and specialized training for prosecutors: It would be necessary to develop ongoing training sessions on domestic violence for prosecutors and support staff. As for specialized prosecutors, a more in-depth training would be called for. According to the suggestions received, this training could last three (3) days and should include joint sessions with specialized investigators.

In the field:

21. Create teams of specialized prosecutors: The creation of teams specialized in domestic violence for all provincial and federal prosecutors would ensure the development and maintenance of advanced expertise, particularly in terms of connecting with victims, personalized consultation with partners, as well as putting into evidence coercive control and pleading it.

22. Establish a vertical prosecution system: The implementation of a vertical prosecution structure, where a single prosecutor remains in charge of the case throughout the judicial process, would foster a bond of trust with judicial partners and with the victim, all while contributing to consistency in case strategies.

23. Adapt directives and procedures and promote a structure of case reviewing: The evolution of jurisprudence related to domestic violence and the ongoing improvement of practices in this field make it necessary to modify guidelines and procedures. With the potential introduction of an offence of coercive control, the case review process should ensure consistency between the decisions made by prosecutors and the directives that would have been adjusted.

24. Ensure regular communication with victims: Given that maintaining frequent communication with victims increases their confidence in the judicial process, it appears essential to ensure an improved flow of information, particularly regarding the following: explanation of the prosecutor's role and the decisions rendered in the case, bail conditions of the accused, support available within the organization, special assistance measures for testifying, and referrals to appropriate external resources. Holding preparatory meetings would contribute to the victim's feeling of inclusion.

25. Develop a holistic approach by facilitating consultation with partners: Detailed knowledge of partners involved through a holistic approach would help to ensure greater efficiency in the development of safety nets. An understanding of the victim's overall situation would also reduce the obstacles to her involvement in the legal process. To achieve this, exchanges and collaborations, particularly between police officers, victim support workers, and family lawyers, is essential.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

26. Develop awareness campaigns for the general public: The development of awareness campaigns on coercive control for the general public is a must. This type of communication initiative would first and foremost allow to educate the public about the broader concept of domestic violence, so that they can recognize and denounce it. It would also enable victims to identify what they are experiencing and seek the help they need from specialized resources and socio-judicial partners.

27. Organize specific training for the judiciary: The experiences of Great Britain (England and Scotland) show the importance of providing judges with in-depth training on coercive control. This training should last a minimum of one day, be held in person before the offence comes into force, and be developed in collaboration with specialized resources. It would address essential topics such as: the dynamics of domestic violence, coercive control behaviour patterns, the variety of potential reactions from victims, myths and stereotypes, and a trauma-informed approach. It would include case studies and victim testimonials.

28. Include training on coercive control for aspiring police officers and bar students: The integration of training modules into academic curricula, developed in collaboration with resources specialized in domestic violence, seems essential to facilitate the development of an understanding of the issue starting at the earlier stages of training for these professions. Ongoing training subsequently received as part of professional duties would consolidate acquired knowledge.

29. Provide training on coercive control for all professionals who work with victims of domestic violence: To ensure a consistent approach and a standard in the quality of support for all services received by victims, training on coercive control should be offered to all those who work with victims, including specialized victim resource workers, social workers, health and social service professionals, and court personnel.

30. Evaluate the feasibility of implementing body-worn cameras for Canadian police services: All the interviewees we met with emphasized the relevance of the police using body-worn cameras, both for training purposes and to put into evidence coercive control. It would be advisable to consider implementing these cameras within Canadian police organizations.

31. Ensure sufficient, sustainable funding for victim support services: Securing recurrent and sufficient long-term funding for victim support services is and remains a major challenge in Canada. By ensuring its sustainability, community organizations specializing in domestic violence would be able to fully play their role in supporting victims, promoting their well-being throughout the judicial process, as well as with socio-judicial partners. These services are an essential link in providing victims with the psychological and physical safety net they need.