

The Hon Jodie Harrison MP

Minister for Women

Minister for Seniors

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault



Ref: SGM25/735

21 August 2025

NSW State Coroner
Magistrate Teresa O'Sullivan
Coroners Court
1A Main Avenue
LIDCOMBE NSW 2141

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Magistrate O'Sullivan,

The NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Report 2021-2023

I write on behalf of the NSW Government to respond to the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (**DVDRT**) 2021-2023 Report tabled in NSW Parliament on 8 August 2024.

The DVDRT and Secretariat are to be commended for their delivery of this important data-focused report. Accurate and timely data is critical to understanding the scale of the challenges we face in preventing and responding to domestic and family violence, and the effectiveness of our efforts to address those challenges.

This report significantly enhances our understanding of the wide-ranging impacts of domestic and family violence, not only in the intimate partner context but also in other relationships. In particular, the filicide, relative/kin and 'other' datasets open our eyes to the prevalence of domestic and family violence homicides in a range of different contexts in NSW.

I also recognise the individual stories of courage, hope and resilience behind the data analysed in the report. I acknowledge the devastating impact that domestic and family violence has had on the individuals represented in this Report, as well as their families, friends and broader communities.

Report themes and findings

The Report's themes and findings both affirm and support the NSW Government's ongoing efforts to address domestic and family violence by highlighting the complexity and depth of victims' experiences.

Key examples of how the Report informs the work of Government include:

- The Report's findings underscore the gendered drivers of domestic and family violence and support the implementation of the Pathways to Prevention: NSW Primary Prevention Strategy (**the Primary Prevention Strategy**). Through place-

based initiatives, the Primary Prevention Strategy aims to stop violence before it starts by combatting the underlying beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that enable and condone the use of violence against women and children.

- The Report enhances understanding of the impact and complexity of the co-occurrence of domestic and family violence, alcohol and drug issues and mental health issues on victims' experiences. This will be critical to supporting the design of services and systems, and evidence informed policy responses.
- The Report highlights that women with abusive partners face heightened risk during the period leading up to and immediately following separation. This risk is not only to women, but also to their children and others close to them, including new partners. These findings demonstrate the need for strengthened protections and penalties and consistent approaches to risk assessment. The NSW Government has taken a number of measures to address these concerns, including:
 - Progressing several legislative reforms that aim to strengthen penalties for offenders and enhance protections for victims. Work is also underway at the complex intersection of parenting arrangements and our criminal justice system, which is directly relevant to the increased risk at separation.
 - Committing \$3.6 million in the 2025-26 NSW State Budget for a new Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety. This framework seeks to ensure victim-survivors receive a consistent and safe response, as well as allowing earlier intervention to prevent violence from escalating.
- The Report emphasises the urgent need to better understand and respond to the increasing overrepresentation of Aboriginal people evident in the data findings. The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner continues its partnership with the DVDRT on co-led, co-designed research into domestic and family violence homicides involving First Nations peoples.
- The Report highlights the specific barriers faced by women living in regional and remote NSW, including barriers to help-seeking and reporting, as evidenced by the devastating findings around female perpetrators of homicide who had been the predominant victim throughout the relationship. The NSW Government continues its work to expand Staying Home Leaving Violence to ensure that all 128 Local Government areas in NSW will have access to this critical service. The majority of new services are operational.
- The Report reinforces the critical need for effective and timely specialised trauma-informed interventions for children that maximise the child's safety and reduce ongoing harms. The NSW Government also recognises this need and in 2024-25 committed \$48.1 million to expand the Specialist Workers for Children and Young People program. These workers offer tailored support to children and young people accompanying their mother to a refuge. The investment expands the program to 10 new services covering an additional 34 Local Government areas, the majority of which are in regional and rural NSW.
- The Report highlights the various types of violence used by perpetrators and the prevalence of emotional/psychological violence. The NSW Government has raised

public awareness and improved understanding of coercive control. The coercive control offence commenced in July 2024, and the NSW Government has launched multiple awareness campaigns since August 2023 including the advertising campaign 'it's not love, it's coercive control'. The campaigns have been evaluated. The evaluation demonstrates an increased understanding of coercive control and what it means by those who have seen the campaigns.

I note that there are numerous other important findings in the report (for example, those relating to socio-economic disadvantage) which will also provide future direction for the NSW Government in its crucial work on domestic and family violence. This includes the Government's ongoing work to develop a strategy for people who are using domestic and family violence.

Supporting the DVDRT and next steps

In May 2024, the NSW Government announced \$2.1 million in new funding allocated to the DVDRT over four years, as part of the Emergency Package to improve responses to domestic, family and sexual violence. This funding is intended to support the DVDRT to deliver robust research around risk factors, trends and the impact of service delivery.

In 2024/2025, this funding supported:

- two additional positions for the DVDRT Secretariat,
- a data expert located in BOCSAR to support a range of quantitative and qualitative research outcomes related to the work of the DVDRT, including the development of research into the connection between suicide, intimate partner violence and domestic and family violence more broadly,
- a co-led project between the Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner and the DVDRT Secretariat to strengthen the Government's response to DVDRT reporting, which will be overseen by the NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Board,
- a project to improve supports for children and young people who have lost a close family member to domestic and family violence homicide, and
- specialised research into domestic and family violence homicides involving First Nations peoples.

I look forward to understanding the outcomes of these developments for the DVDRT and how they support the Team's ongoing contribution to positive change in NSW.

The DVDRT's work continues to be critical to our efforts to address domestic and family violence in NSW. I look forward to our continued collaboration to change the story and keep our women, children and communities safe.

Sincerely,



Jodie Harrison MP
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