



## Illawarra Women's Health Centre

### Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022

#### Submission to the NSW Government

August 2022

#### Background

The NSW Government has sought public feedback on the exposure draft Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022.

This draft is the result of a dedicated campaign by victim survivors and the domestic and family violence sector to criminalise coercive control. We all invested significant time, resources and emotional labour advocating for this legislation including presenting to the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control in 2021. We also insisted that for this legislation to be successful it must be accompanied by appropriate levels of investment to deliver comprehensive, multi-sectoral and community focused awareness, education and training programs, with particular attention to training those working across the criminal justice system. If properly resourced and strategically implemented, we argued that legislative change can lead to an invigorated system wide approach to reducing domestic and family violence.

The very limited (six week) consultation period for this Bill does not do justice to, nor does it show respect for, this work. It is particularly disrespectful and concerning to victim survivors, many of whom advocate for systems and legislative change to reduce domestic and family violence in their own time with their own resources. This short timeframe and the lack of dedicated engagement strategies or feedback options for victim survivors means the NSW Government runs the very real risk of substantially compromising the quality and success of this legislation.

Unfortunately, like many underfunded and stretched front line service providers, we did not have sufficient time to provide our own considered submission. Therefore, below are our two recommendations.

#### Recommendations

1. We call upon the NSW Government to **extend the consultation period by at least six months**, to allow for robust, considered and representative feedback that will minimise the risks inherent in this legislation and maximize the likelihood of its success.
2. We fully **endorse the recommendations in the Domestic Violence NSW submission** and note that we are signatory to the NSW Women's Alliance Open Letter.

## Illawarra Women's Health Centre

Nationally accredited, the Illawarra Women's Health Centre has a focus on mental health, women experiencing domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and sexual and reproductive health. The community-based Centre sees over 5,000 women a year and has an exceptional reputation, providing integrated care and social support to women with complex needs using a social model of health and a community development approach to service delivery.

The Illawarra Women's Health Centre initiated and has led the campaign to establish Australia first Womens Trauma Recovery Centre.

## Contact details

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