



Joint Media Release: Coercive Control Taskforce must include more than 1 NGO representative

For immediate release: Thursday 1 December 2022

The NSW Government announced last night the appointment of people and agencies to the Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation taskforce. The taskforce consists of 7 government representatives and 1 NGO representative.

The NGO sector has advocated strongly for an independent taskforce with multiple NGO representatives, including several First Nations representatives, including a representative from the Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network, representatives from other priority populations, lived expertise and more than one representative from the domestic and family violence sector with substantial expertise and experience in domestic and family violence service delivery who understand complexities in accurately identifying the person most in need of protection.

The Government agreed to an amendment to the Coercive Control law in NSW to establish the Coercive Control Taskforce. The legislation outlines representatives include:

- Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice (as Chair)
- Chair, Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council
- A representative of the NSW Police Force
- A member from the domestic and family violence sector with substantial expertise and experience in domestic and family violence service delivery

Four further members were announced in the Government's media release last night: senior members of key government agencies including

- NSW Health,
- Aboriginal Affairs NSW,
- Multicultural NSW and
- Legal Aid NSW

“While we welcome the urgency with which the Government has responded in appointing members to the taskforce, we are concerned by the lack of consultation and the membership being almost exclusively limited to government agencies. The NGO sector advocated strongly for an independent taskforce. Much broader NGO representation on the taskforce is required,” says Rachael Martin, Principal Solicitor, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre.

“We are deeply concerned that First Nations women and children experience the highest rates of gendered violence in this country and yet there is no First Nations community representation on the taskforce. Representation must be more than the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. We have consistently called for at least two First Nations representatives on the taskforce, including a representative from the Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network”, says Christine Robinson, Chief Executive Officer, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre and Co-Chair, Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network.

“Diversity of representation on the taskforce is vital,” says Dixie Link-Gordon, Program Co-ordinator, Aboriginal Women’s Advisory Network.

“It is not enough that priority populations, domestic and family violence and abuse services and people with lived experience are included on reference groups. Just as there are government agency representatives, there must also be much greater NGO representation on the taskforce itself. There must also be a mechanism to ensure the taskforce publishes all recommendations and proposals raised by members of reference groups and in other consultations, including recommendations and proposals the taskforce do not support, and the reasons why they do not support the recommendations or proposals. Transparency and accountability are vital to ensuring public confidence in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any coercive control reforms,” says Liz Snell, Law Reform and Policy Co-ordinator, Women’s Legal Service NSW.

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Background

The NSW Coercive Control legislation established a taskforce which is required to report to the Minister about implementation progress every 6 months prior to the commencement of the new offence and thereafter annually. The report must be tabled in Parliament and published within 21 days of receiving the report.

The legislation also provided for the establishing of reference groups to advise the taskforce.

The Women’s Safety and Justice taskforce, the independent taskforce that undertook an extensive review into coercive control in Queensland as well as into women’s and girls’ experiences of the criminal legal system included 5 NGO representative as well as academics. [Both reports](#) recommended the establishment of an independent implementation supervisor to have oversight of the implementation of all report recommendations to ensure public accountability and transparency. The recent [Commission of Inquiry report](#) into the Queensland Police Service also recommended the independent implementation supervisor have oversight of the implementation of Commission of Inquiry recommendations too.