

Answer to question on notice – Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia

Defining coercive control should be part of a broader task of defining domestic and family violence. There are several examples of how that task has been undertaken in Australia, and how it has been possible to distinguish coercive control from “behaviours that may be present in ordinary relationships.” An appropriate definition of coercive control would necessarily exclude behaviour that is part of an “ordinary relationship” because behaviour that is designed to coerce, control or dominate another person is, by definition, distinguishable from acceptable behaviour within a relationship. The issue of defining coercive control and distinguishing it from behaviours arising in “ordinary relationships” should be considered separately from the question of whether criminalisation of coercive control carries risks in terms of defining its scope and its implementation.