COERCIVE CONTROL IN DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Organisation: One in Three Campaign

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Submission to the *Inquiry into* coercive control in domestic relationships



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ABOUT THE ONE IN THREE CAMPAIGN

One in Three is a diverse group of male and female professionals – academics, researchers, social workers, psychologists, counsellors, lawyers, health promotion workers, trainers and survivor/advocates. The Campaign aims to raise public awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence and abuse; to work with government and non-government services alike to provide assistance to everyone affected by family violence; and to reduce the incidence and impacts of family violence on Australian men, women and children.

One in Three is primarily a lobbying and advocacy organisation. While we would love to do more, and there is a desperate need for additional services, we lack the resources to provide our own services or work extensively with other NGOs in providing services.

The main resource we provide is our website <u>oneinthree.com.au</u>. It provides:

- information about the experiences of male victims and the barriers they often face to disclosing;
- research and statistics about male victims;
- opportunities for men to tell their own personal story and read over 200 stories from other men;
- news from around the globe; and
- a comprehensive list of national and international resources.

We have produced some powerful videos¹ of men telling their personal stories of family violence and abuse. We regularly give conference presentations, provide research assistance to students, and give talks at high schools. We have produced a series of seven free digital poster designs² aimed at educating boys and young men about respectful and healthy relationships. Unless we give men and boys the courage and support to disclose their experience as victims of family violence, they will continue to suffer in silence.

We have collaborated with various NGOs to establish better services for male victims, most notably working with *Victims & Witnesses of Crime Court Support* (VWCCS), *NSW Police* and *Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service* to develop the *Insight* trial court support scheme for male victims of violence at the Downing Centre and Parramatta Courthouses in inner and western Sydney. The scheme operated between 2013 and 2015. Unfortunately, because of issues such as resistance to the scheme from other agencies including the Police, who failed to help advertise or promote the service, the work of the program was eventually folded into the day-to-day work of VWCCS.

Some other examples of collaborative work with other NGOs include:

- assisting the *Men's Advocacy Network* in WA in developing the groundbreaking 2010 *Intimate Partner Abuse of Men*³ report conducted by researchers from the School of Psychology and Social Science at Edith Cowan University
- collaborating with the Western Sydney Men's and Relationship Services Network to produce a poster⁴ listing domestic violence services available to male victims, which was distributed widely amongst service providers in Western Sydney.

¹ <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_VhEXei2s8</u>

² http://www.oneinthree.com.au/posters

³ Tilbrook, E., Allan, A. & Dear, G. (2010), Intimate Partner Abuse of Men. East Perth: Men's Advisory Network, May 26, 2010.

⁴ <u>http://www.oneinthree.com.au/storage/pdfs/Domestic_Violence_Services_for_Male_Victims_2015.pdf</u>



One in Three regularly lodges submissions, attends consultations and appears before government inquiries and royal commissions into family violence. As a result, many recent state and federal inquiries have acknowledged the existence and needs of male victims of family violence and have recommended that better support services be provided for them.

For example,

- The 2012 NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into *Domestic violence trends and issues in NSW* recognised the gap in services for male victims and encouraged the government to examine how services could most appropriately be provided to male victims of domestic violence⁵.
- The 2015 Victorian *Royal Commission Into Family Violence* recommended that within a two year period, the Victims Support Agency and all other relevant support services should develop joint arrangements to ensure that male victims of family violence are supported in obtaining the help they need⁶.
- The 2015 report of the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into *Domestic Violence in Australia* recommended that the Commonwealth Government recognise the need to provide appropriate services to male victims of domestic and family violence⁷.

One in Three receives no funding and operates on an entirely voluntary basis. As such we currently lack the time and resources to provide a more substantial response to this inquiry.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

We would like to address the following Term of Reference of this inquiry:

1. The committee inquire and report on coercive control in domestic relationships.

⁵ New South Wales Parliament (2012), Legislative Council, Standing Committee on Social Issues, <u>Domestic violence trends and issues in</u> <u>NSW</u> (Report ; no. 46), p.xxxii.

⁶ State of Victoria (2016), Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations, Parl Paper No 132 (2014–16), p93.

⁷ The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee (2015), <u>Domestic violence in Australia</u>, August 2015, p109.



A SIGNIFICATION PROPORTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS ARE MALE

The following data taken from the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics *Personal Safety Survey* (2016)⁸ provides an overview of the experience of violence by males and females in Australia over the past 12 months.

	Males	Females
Violence by an intimate partner	113,900 (35%)	211,700 (65%)
Violence by a cohabiting partner	75,500 (33%)	155,900 (67%)
Violence by a current partner	56,000* (39%)	88,700 (61%)
Violence by a previous partner	16,400** (19%)	69,100 (81%)
Violence by a boyfriend/girlfriend or date	27,800*** (35%)	51,700 (65%)
Emotional abuse by a partner	381,200 (46%)	451,500 (54%)
Emotional abuse by a current partner	265,800 (47%)	298,700 (53%)
Emotional abuse by a previous partner	125,400 (44%)	161,200 (56%)

* Estimate has a Relative Standard Error (RSE) of 25.5% and should be used with caution due to the relatively small number of males surveyed by the ABS (35% of persons who experienced violence by a current partner since the age of 15 were male with no RSE warning).

** Estimate has a Relative Standard Error (RSE) of 26.7% and should be used with caution due to the relatively small number of males surveyed by the ABS (22% of persons who experienced violence by a previous partner since the age of 15 were male with no RSE warning).

*** Estimate has a Relative Standard Error (RSE) of 40.1% and should be used with caution due to the relatively small number of males surveyed by the ABS (20% of persons who experienced violence by a boyfriend/girlfriend or date since the age of 15 were male with no RSE warning).

We have attached a more in-depth, externally verified analysis of the data from the latest ABS *Personal Safety Survey* and the Australian Institute of Criminology's *National Homicide Monitoring Program* as **Appendix A** to this submission.

The above figures demonstrate that while males make up a minority of persons who experience family and domestic violence, they make up a significant proportion indeed - between one in five and almost half, depending on the type of violence or abuse measured.

MANY MALES NEVER REPORT THEIR VICTIMISATION OR SEEK HELP

Male victims of family violence and abuse – like women – often face many barriers to disclosing their abuse. However, male victims face a set of unique barriers which make them much less likely to report being a victim of family violence.

Men are 2 to 3 times more likely than women to have *never* told anybody about experiencing partner violence⁹. 54.1% of males who have experienced current partner violence have *never* told anybody about it, along with 20.9% of males who have experienced previous partner violence.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017). Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016 (Cat. No. 4906.0). Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

⁹Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2012, cat no 4906.0, ABS, Canberra. Table 23 EXPERIENCE OF PARTNER VIOLENCE SINCE THE AGE OF 15, Whether ever told anyone about partner violence. 54.1% of males and 25.6% of females have never told anyone about violence by their current partner since the age of 15. 20.9% of males and 6.7% of females have never told anyone about violence by their previous partner since the age of 15.



Men are also around 50% more likely than women to have *never* sought advice or support about experiencing partner violence¹⁰. 68.1% of males who have experienced current partner violence have *never* sought advice or support, along with 59.2% of males who have experienced previous partner violence.

Many barriers to male victims disclosing their abuse are created or amplified by the lack of public acknowledgement that males can also be victims of family violence, the lack of appropriate services for male victims and their children, and the lack of appropriate help available for male victims from existing services. Such barriers include:

- not knowing where to seek help
- not knowing how to seek help
- feeling there is nowhere to escape to
- feeling they won't be believed or understood as victims
- feeling that their experiences would be minimised or they would be falsely blamed for the violence and/or abuse
- feeling that services would be unable or unwilling to offer them appropriate help
- fear that they would be falsely arrested because of their gender and that their children would be left unprotected from the perpetrator.

Many male victims face barriers to disclosing their abuse because of the challenges such disclosure brings to their sense of manhood. Such barriers include:

- shame, embarrassment and/or social stigma
- shame at feeling unable to protect themselves and/or feeling less independent
- fear of being laughed at or ridiculed
- fear of being called 'weak' or 'wimpy'
- disbelief, denial, and making excuses for their partner's violence and abuse.

Some people may raise the question, "have male victims who don't seek advice or support done so because the violence they experienced was so minor or trivial?" There doesn't appear to be evidence to support this theory. The only Australian study we are aware of to have explored this question is the large-scale South Australian *Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Survey*¹¹ which found that "females (22.0%) were more likely to report the [domestic violence] incident(s) to the police than males (7.5%)" Respondents who did not leave their partner as the result of the violence were asked their reasons for staying in the abusive relationship. 28 per cent of males and 20.8 per cent of females answered "violence not serious enough" – slightly higher for males but not significantly so. Respondents who had left or stayed apart because of the violence and abuse were asked their reasons for leaving. 50 per cent of males and 64.1 per cent of females answered "continuation of violence/abuse" – once again slightly higher for females but not significantly so.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017). Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016 (Cat. No. 4906.0). Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Table 17.1 EXPERIENCE OF CURRENT PARTNER VIOLENCE SINCE AGE 15, By sex of respondent, Estimate. 102,400 males in 2016 did not seek advice or support after incident of violence by a current partner, while 150,300 males had experienced violence by a current partner since the age of 15. 126,900 females in 2016 did not seek advice or support after incident of violence by a current partner, while 275,000 females had experienced violence by a current partner since the age of 15. Table 18.1 EXPERIENCE OF PREVIOUS PARTNER VIOLENCE SINCE AGE 15, By sex of respondent, Estimate. 235,300 males in 2016 did not seek advice or support after incident of violence by a previous partner, while 397,300 males had experienced violence by a previous partner since the age of 15. 506,800 females in 2016 did not seek advice or support after incident of violence by a previous partner, while 1,372,900 females had experienced violence by a previous partner since the age of 15.

¹¹ Dal Grande et al. (1999). Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Survey. Adelaide: South Australian Department of Human Services.



Internationally, "The 2004 [Canadian] General Social Survey (GSS) on victimisation found that fewer than 3 in 10 (28%) victims of spousal violence reported the abuse to the police (36% of female victims and 17% of male victims)"¹². The 2008-09 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey: Partner Abuse found that... "Around one in five (21%) who experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months said the police did come to know about the most recent / only incident. Again, this figure was significantly higher among women (35% compared with eight per cent of men)".¹³ Watson & Parsons' *Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland: Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse*¹⁴ (a large-scale community survey) found that "women are more likely than men to report [severe abuse] to the Gardaí [Irish Police]. Over a quarter of women reported their experience to the Gardaí compared to about one man in 20" (a statistically significant difference).

COERCIVE CONTROL AFFECTS MALES TOO

The Committee will likely hear evidence that coercive control is predominantly or almost exclusively perpetrated by men towards women and children.

Recent research from the UK challenges this assertion. In 2014 Elizabeth Bates from the University of Cumbria, along with Nicola Graham-Kevan and John Archer from the University of Central Lancashire published their study titled *Testing* predictions from the male control theory of men's partner violence¹⁵:

The aim of this study was to test predictions from the male control theory of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Johnson's (1995) typology. A student sample (N = 1104) reported on their use of physical aggression and controlling behaviour, to partners and to same-sex non-intimates. Contrary to the male control theory, women were found to be more physically aggressive to their partners than men were, and the reverse pattern was found for aggression to same-sex non-intimates. Furthermore, there were no substantial sex differences in controlling behaviour, which significantly predicted physical aggression in both sexes. IPV was found to be associated with physical aggression to same-sex non-intimates, thereby demonstrating a link with aggression outside the family. Using Johnson's (1995) typology, women were more likely than men to be classed as "intimate terrorists", which was counter to earlier findings. Overall, these results do not support the male control theory of IPV. Instead, they fit the view that IPV does not have a special aetiology, and is better studied within the context of other forms of aggression.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies' *Experiences of Separated Parents Study (Evaluation of the 2012 Family Violence Amendments)*¹⁶ is based upon interviews with a nationally representative sample of 6,079 parents who had separated between 1 July 2012 and 31 December 2013.

It found that fathers made up 57.3% of parents who reported often feeling controlled after physical violence since separation, and 59.5% after emotional abuse alone. Fathers made up 57.4% of parents who reported often feeling coerced after physical violence since separation, and 60.5% after emotional abuse alone.

¹² Statistics Canada (2009). Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile.Ottowa: Minister of Industry.

¹³Macleod, P., Kinver, A., Page, L., Iliasov, A. & Williams, R. (2009). <u>2008-09 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey: Partner Abuse</u>. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

¹⁴ Watson, D., & Parsons, S. (2005). <u>Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland: Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse</u>. Dublin: National Crime Council.

¹⁵ Bates, E. A., Graham-Kevan, N. and Archer, J. (2014), Testing predictions from the male control theory of men's partner violence. Aggr. Behav., 40: 42–55. doi:10.1002/ab.21499.

¹⁶ Kaspiew, R., Carson, R., Dunstan, J., De Maio, J., Moore, S., Moloney, L. et al. (2015). <u>Experiences of Separated Parents Study</u> (<u>Evaluation of the 2012 Family Violence Amendments</u>). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.



Fathers made up 51.7% of parents who reported experiencing the highest levels of severity of fear (9 or 10 on a 10-point scale) since separation, 60.5% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reported experiencing the most severe control, and 57.6% of parents who reporte

Fathers were statistically significantly more likely than mothers to report having often felt controlled or coerced after experiencing physical violence or emotional abuse since separation. When it came to severity, fathers were also more likely than mothers to report experiencing the highest level of fear, control and coercion (10 on a 10-point scale) that they felt arising from the focus parent's behaviour since separation. Experiences of control and coercion were statistically significantly higher for fathers than mothers.

UK researchers Deborah Powney and Professor Nicola Graham-Kevan from the University of Central Lancashire are currently analysing the results of a recent international survey¹⁷ of male victims of coercive control which attracted 2083 participants, including 687 Australian men who had experienced coercive control from abusive female partners. Initial findings from the Australian participants included the following results:

- 45% said they were always/often threatened with false allegations.
- 69% said partners controlled whom they were allowed to see.
- 60% had phones/social media monitored.
- 52% said partners refused to work.
- 49% of men said ex-partners withheld contact with children unless demands for money were met.
- 60% had sex withheld as punishment always/often.

RECOMMENDATION

We urge the *Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control* to consider the needs of ALL victims of family violence and abuse equally, no matter their gender, geography, socio-economic status, age, ability, sexual preference, culture, race or religion, when undertaking this important inquiry.

Any recommendations made by the inquiry must be applicable equally to victims and perpetrators of all genders, and not be affected by gender bias in any respect.

On behalf of all male victims of family violence and abuse, we request that you give serious consideration to this submission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this inquiry.

Greg Andresen Senior Researcher 27th January 2021

¹⁷ http://www.oneinthree.com.au/news/2020/11/23/call-for-participants-for-international-research-in-male-vic.html



APPENDIX A - MALE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE: KEY STATISTICS

Male victims of family violence: *key statistics* Research from the 2016 ABS Personal Safety Survey and Australian Institute of Criminology shows that both men and women in Australia experience substantial levels of violence.

Males make up a significant proportion of victims of family and sexual violence, yet are excluded from government anti-violence programs.

75 males were killed in domestic homicide incidents between 2012-2014. *This equates to one death every 10 days.*

EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BY GENDER

The proportion of men experiencing **current partner violence** in the last 12 months between the 2005 and 2016 ABS Personal Safety Surveys rose **more than five-fold** (a 552% increase), while the proportion of men experiencing **emotional abuse** from a current partner in the last 12 months **more than doubled** (a 223% increase).



The majority of men that experienced intimate partner violence experienced it by a female perpetrator (93.6%). The remainder were in same-sex relationships with male perpetrators*.



EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BY GENDER

DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS*:

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Over 1 in 3 persons who experienced violence from an intimate partner were male (35.3%)





For more information and research about male victims of family violence, or for media comment visit www.oneinthree.com.au

If you are experiencing family violence, seek support, call MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78

Information has been sourced from the ABS and the AIC. Produced by the One in Three Campaign (oneinthree.com.au/infographicrefs)

EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BY GENDER

DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS*:

Almost half the persons who experienced emotional abuse by a **partner** were male (45.8%) (47.7% of persons who experienced it by a **current partner** and 43.4% by a **previous partner**)





13.8% of men that experienced emotional abuse by a current partner had their partner **deprive them of basic needs** such as food, shelter, sleep, or assistive aids, compared to 6.4% of women.

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8.9% of men that experienced emotional abuse by a current partner had their partner **threaten to take their child/ren away from them**, compared to 4.6% of women.

38.5% of men that experienced emotional abuse by a previous partner had their partner **lie to their child/ren** with the intent of turning them against them, compared to 25.1% of women.

7.3% of men that experienced emotional abuse by a current partner had their partner **lie to other family members or friends** with the intent of turning them against them, compared to 6.6% of women.

10.1% of men that experienced current partner emotional abuse had their current partner **keep track of** where they were and who they were with, compared to 9.9% of women.

* Last 12 month data are better measures of current rates of violence than are lifetime data ("since the age of 15), as lifetime data include incidents that happened many years ago.



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EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BY GENDER

DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS*:

Over 1 in 3 persons who experienced **sexual harassment** were male (34.0%). Most males who experienced sexual harrassment were harassed by a female perpetrator (72.2% were harassed by a female while 48.2% were harassed by a male**).



The largest category of increase in sexual harassment between 2012 and 2016 was in **males harassed by a female perpetrator**, which rose by a massive 67.5%. Females harassed by a male perpetrator rose by 15% during the same period.

Over 1 in 3 persons who experienced **stalking** were male (35.0%). Most males who experienced stalking were stalked by a male perpetrator (68.9% were stalked by a male while 36.3% were stalked by a female***).



Almost 1 in 3 persons who experienced **sexual assault** were male (28.4%). Most males who experienced sexual violence were assaulted or threatened by a female perpetrator (82.9%****).



6 per cent of all males experienced violence compared to 4.7% of all females.



* Last 12 month data are better measures of current rates of violence than are lifetime data ("since the age of 15"), as lifetime data include incidents that happened many years ago. ** Proportions don't add up to 100% because some respondents may have been sexually harassed by both a male and a female perpetrator. *** Proportions don't add up to 100% because some respondents may have been stalked by both a male and a female perpetrator. *** Eximate has a Relative Standard Error (RSE) of 25.0% and should be used with caution due to the relatively small number of males surveyed by the ABS (55.2% of males experienced sexual violence from a female since the age of 15 with no RSE warning)



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EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BY GENDER

MEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED PARTNER VIOLENCE ARE:

- 2 to 3 times more likely than women to have never told anybody* about experiencing
- Current partner violence

Previous partner violence

Around 50% more likely than women to have never sought advice or support about experiencing

Current partner violence

• Previous partner violence

Almost 20% more likely than women to have not contacted police about experiencing

Current partner violence



• Previous partner violence

Less than half as likely as women to have had a restraining order issued against the perpetrator of

Previous partner violence

For more information and research about male victims of family violence,



* This data is taken from the 2012 ABS PSS, as it was not published in the 2016 ABS PSS.

** Estimate has a Relative Standard Error (RSE) of 25.2% and should be used with caution due to the relatively small number of males surveyed by the ABS



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EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE BY GENDER

BEFORE THE AGE OF 15:

2 in 5 persons who experienced **physical and/or sexual** abuse were male (40.1%)



Around 1 in 20 persons (4.5%) witnessed **violence towards their father** by a partner and more than 1 in 10 persons (11.3%) witnessed **violence towards their mother** by a partner.

4.5%

SINCE THE AGE OF 15*:

While a greater percentage of males experienced violence from an intimate partner or family member of the same sex than did females, the majority of males experienced family violence **perpetrated by a female.** The **perpetrators of family violence** against males by gender, ranked in order of prevalence, were as follows:

372,800

Violence since the age of 15. Violence by relationship to and sex of perpetrator, estimate, males (n)

Violence perpetrated by female previous partner

Violence perpetrated by father 258,000

Violence perpetrated by female current partner

Violence perpetrated by girlfriend or female date

Violence perpetrated by other relative or in-law (male)

The second second

145,6

Violence perpetrated by brother

94,400

Violence perpetrated by mother 76,800

Violence perpetrated by male intimate partner

60,500

Violence perpetrated by other relative or in-law (female)

37,200

* Lifetime data (since the age of 15) is used here because the ABS didn't publish data from the last 12 months.



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