



The Hon. Pru Goward MP
Minister for Family and Community Services
Minister for Women

Ref: MFACS13/297

The Hon. Niall Blair MLC
Chair, Standing Committee on Social Issues
Legislative Council
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Blair *Dear Niall,*

**Domestic violence trends and issues in NSW
NSW Government response – Executive summary**

I am writing to you with the NSW Government response to the final report of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues – *Domestic violence trends and issues in NSW* ('the Parliamentary Inquiry').

The enclosed document contains the consolidated comments of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), Department of Attorney General and Justice (DAGJ), NSW Police Force (NSWPF), and the Ministry of Health (Health) in relation to the final report of the Parliamentary Inquiry.

The NSW Government has welcomed the opportunity presented by the Parliamentary Inquiry to pursue comprehensive, systemic reform in relation to domestic violence. In tandem with the findings of the Auditor General in relation to NSW responses to domestic and family violence, the Government has used the Committee's recommendations to provide critical input into the development of a new, comprehensive Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Framework for NSW.

Should you require further information or have any questions relating to the enclosed whole-of-government response, please contact Ms Linda Matthews, Executive Director for Women NSW on linda.matthews@facs.nsw.gov.au.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to comment on the final report of the Parliamentary Inquiry, which has provided critical input into ongoing work to improve the response to domestic and family violence across NSW.

Yours sincerely

Pru Goward MP
Minister for Family and Community Services
Minister for Women

Encl.

Attachment A
Government response to the Parliamentary Inquiry, *Domestic Violence Trends and Issues in NSW*

Government Response	Recommendations
Supported	1, 2, 5, 12, 15, 16, 20, 32, 33, 36, 44, 46 – 48, 61, 62, 71, 74, 76, 78 – 80, 83, 85
Supported in principle	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 27, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 37 – 39, 40, 43, 45, 57, 58, 63, 65, 66, 68, 70, 72, 73, 81, 82,
Not supported	41, 42, 67, 75, 86
Addressed by the Framework or legislative review	13, 14, 17, 21 – 26, 28, 49 – 56, 59, 60, 64, 69, 77, 84, 87 - 89

Response to recommendations

The Domestic and Family Violence Framework (recommendations 1 – 29 and 35 - 36)

The NSW Government is committed to preventing and addressing domestic and family violence (DFV).

The NSW Government has provided significant funding and staffing to focus on the development of the new Framework. The Framework is being developed to articulate a common approach to responding to domestic and family violence in NSW. As recommended by the Committee, the new approach is being developed in a co-design approach with close consultation with the non-government sector and with close collaboration with partner agencies.

The draft framework will be released for public consultation in the first half of 2013.

The broad intent of recommendations 1-29 are supported, however the development of the Framework will determine the appropriate operational arrangements.

The Framework will also consider many of the issues identified by the Inquiry, such as the availability of counselling services to victims of domestic and family violence and their children (recommendations 35 – 36).

Accommodation for victims of domestic and family violence (recommendations 30 – 34)

The Government is committed to improving the availability of emergency accommodation for victims of domestic and family violence and their children. For example, in July 2012, 'Going Home Staying Home' was launched as the new plan for reforming the homelessness service system to respond more effectively to homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. A number of safe houses in remote NSW have also been funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH).

Another initiative, the Staying Home Leaving Violence Program, has been implemented in 23 locations across NSW. FACS (Community Services) has a commitment to an ongoing process of program reviews. An Evaluation Framework has been established to measure the outcomes of SHLV services based on a minimum data set that has been tested. Future funding of SHLV will be considered after the evaluation has been thoroughly reviewed.

The role of the NSW Police Force (recommendations 38 – 40, 43 – 48)

The NSW Police Force is dedicated to improving existing mechanism to ensure that police responses to domestic violence are of a consistently high standard. The majority of the recommendations relating to Police are either supported or are already occurring.

However, the Government does not support recommendations 41-42 as a robust promotions system already exists within the Police Force (recommendation 41) and a system of the allocation of Domestic Violence Liaison Officers is already in place and is required to remain flexible (recommendation 42).

Proposed legislative amendments (recommendations 49 – 60, 82 – 84, 88, 89)

A number of recommendations relate to the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* and the *Young Offenders Act*. Both these Acts are currently being reviewed. These recommendations will be considered in the course of these reviews.

Improving justice responses and systems (recommendations 63 – 66, 68 – 81)

Many of these recommendations relate to the recently released Domestic Violence Justice Strategy (DVJS) and are in the process of being implemented by the Department of Attorney General and Justice. The broad intent of the remaining recommendations are supported in principle and will be considered in the Framework.

The Judicial Commission to develop a stand-alone domestic violence bench book (recommendation 67)

This recommendation is not supported as the Judicial Commission has recently advised the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues it is not in favour of a separate bench book on domestic violence. Material on domestic violence is contained and regularly updated in the Commission's other bench books, all of which are available online on the Commissions website and on the Judicial Information Research System.

Children affected by in domestic violence (recommendations 37 and 86 - 89)

The broad intent of these recommendations are supported, and will be considered by the Framework.

However, recommendation 86 has not been supported as the Attorney General and the Minister for Family and Community Services have agreed jointly to examine options that might allow the children's court to better manager Apprehended Violence Orders where they may conflict with orders from other jurisdictions.

