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Committee Members
Standing Committee on Social Issues
NSW Parliament

Dear Committee members,

Inquiry into the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022

We, the Domestic Violence NSW Lived Expertise Policy Advisory Group, are writing to you in response to the inquiry into the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022 (the Bill). We recognise the Government's commitment and bi-partisan efforts to address coercive control. However, all consultations in this process have seen a significant lack in victim-survivor engagement, and there remains no advisory group of victim-survivors to the NSW government. Writing legislation about us without our authentic engagement means crucial nuances are missed, and the legislation will achieve poorer outcomes. Research has strongly shown that the efficacy of bills, policies, programs, and practices is significantly impacted when lacking the inclusion of people who are affected by them in the design phase. We participated in a consultation on the draft bill, however our concerns were not taken into consideration in the revised bill- for example it still does not include family violence and now excludes the term recklessness.

"If the goal is to have a tokenistic document in order to be able to say "I did this", then protection of victim-survivors was never the goal. Rather, the bill should be about empowering victim survivors to have the opportunity to advocate and provide feedback. Having victim-survivors engaged in the assessment and implementation process will provide a unique lens to affect efficacy and identify gaps in outcomes." Jakye Burgess.

Victim-survivors are uniquely skilled at recognising the cumulative and subtle actions of perpetrators that most others are not able to identify. Meaningful inclusion of victim-survivors could fill a significant expertise gap in ensuring the coercive control bill succeeds in its aims.

"We are saddened that, in its current form, the bill is operationally limited due to the structural elements as it relates to intent. It was a recommendation from the Tasmanian submission that recklessness be included. It is concerning that this government may not truly be committed to making this work for survivors, nor protecting women and children. We urge the government to include recklessness at the very least. The bill also needs to complement our protection order process, which it currently seems deficient in." Jane Matts

Yours Sincerely,

6 members of the Domestic Violence NSW Lived Expertise Policy Advisory Group.