



The peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NSW AND THE NSW WOMEN'S ALLIANCE PROPOSE NINE-POINT PLAN TO ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence NSW (the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW), and the NSW Women's Alliance (a representation of peak organisations and state-wide specialist service providers that work to prevent and respond to sexual, domestic and family violence), are calling for urgent reform to address sexual violence in NSW in an open letter to Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

The nine recommendations were developed following extensive consultation with frontline specialist domestic and family violence services who work with victim-survivors of sexual violence on a daily basis. Frontline specialists are calling on the NSW Government to act.

"Despite changing attitudes around sexual violence in society, Domestic Violence NSW remains concerned that not enough is being done to address sexual violence in our laws, courts, and communities," says Delia Donovan, CEO of Domestic Violence NSW. "We need sweeping reforms that address consent and judicial processes, provide justice and support for victim-survivors, and ensure that we are preventing violence by providing education in our schools, workplaces and communities."

The nine-point plan is as follows:

NSW Women's Alliance Nine-Point Plan to Address Sexual Violence

- 1. Introduce affirmative consent laws in NSW.**
- 2. Introduce changes to evidence and procedural law to make the court process more accessible, safer, and trauma-informed for adult sexual assault complainants.**
- 3. Better recognise sexual assault in the context of domestic and family violence in our laws, including introducing jury directions on domestic violence.**
- 4. Develop a model for the practical implementation of court specialisation for matters involving domestic, family and sexual violence in NSW, including attached support services for victim-survivors and offenders.**
- 5. Fund sexual assault case management teams to operate out of currently funded domestic and family violence specialist services, and supports for young offenders.**
- 6. Fund independent legal representation for sexual assault complainants in criminal trials.**

7. Introduce mandatory reporting and systematic audits of sexual assault complaints in aged and disability care settings, and develop a trauma specialist, survivor-led response to disclosures.

8. Fund a comprehensive, whole-of-community primary prevention strategy for NSW, in line with the national framework *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, including a roll out of whole-of-school community education on consent.

9. Examine alternative pathways to supplement the criminal justice system in holding perpetrators to account and delivering justice for victim-survivors, noting that the overwhelming majority of victim-survivors of sexual assault do not want to report to police or engage in current court processes but do want access to justice.

“The NSW Women’s Alliance Nine-Point Plan to Address Sexual Violence clearly demonstrates the need for NSW to better recognise sexual assault in the context of domestic and family violence in the judicial system, to fund a comprehensive whole-of-community primary prevention strategy, and to investigate alternative pathways for delivering justice for victim-survivors outside of the judicial process,” says Ms Donovan.

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Domestic Violence NSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. It has over 80 member organisations across NSW. Member services include crisis and refuge services, transitional accommodation and community housing providers, family support services, Aboriginal controlled organisations and specialist CALD organisations, specialist homelessness service providers, men’s behaviour change programs and networks, community organisations working with high risk communities, specialist women’s legal support services, women and children’s support services, and Safe at Home programs.

The **NSW Women’s Alliance** represents peak organisations and state-wide specialist service providers that work to prevent and respond to sexual, domestic and family violence. The Alliance includes Domestic Violence NSW, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, ACON, Immigrant Women’s Health Service, Immigrant Women’s Speakout Association NSW, Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation, Muslim Women Australia, NCOSS, No to Violence, Older Women’s Network NSW, People With Disability Australia (NSW), Women’s Safety NSW, Women’s Legal Service NSW, Women’s Health NSW, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women’s Legal Service and the Senior’s Rights Centre.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence help can be found via:

☎ **1800RESPECT** or 1800 737 732 which offers a national counselling helpline, information and support.

☎ **NSW Domestic Violence Line** 1800 65 64 63 which offers a state-wide counselling helpline, information and support.

☎ **Men’s Referral Service** 1300 766 491 for men, or friends and family of men using violence.