

## Blog Article

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### Day 15 - 16 Days of Activism Domestic Violence & Coercive Control

Everyone deserves to feel safe at home. But for so many, home is where they are most at risk.

Over the last decade, public awareness of domestic violence has grown, thanks to the tireless work of advocates like Rosie Batty. Yet despite that, at least one woman is murdered by a current or former partner every week. We need to do more to protect victims of domestic violence and abuse.

We can start by recognising the full spectrum of domestic violence and abuse in our laws.

When people think of domestic abuse, they tend to think of physical violence. But domestic abuse is often more complex than that. Many victims of domestic abuse live in a constant state of fear, in relationships marked by dangerous patterns of controlling behaviour. This abuse is called 'coercive control'.

Perpetrators of coercive control seek to control their victims with actual or threatened harm. Whether it's demanding that partners cut contact with their friends or family, restricting their access to money, monitoring their calls and messages, or directing their day-to-day activities, these patterns of controlling behaviour are clear and damaging examples of domestic abuse.

We know that most women who have been murdered by a current or former partner were subject to controlling behaviour before they were killed.

But the law currently doesn't recognise patterns of controlling behaviour as a crime. Our laws need to change to protect victims of all domestic abuse and to prevent more tragic murders.

In 2021 an inquiry committee has unanimously agreed to criminalise coercive control in NSW, in a massive step for victims of domestic violence.

The joint select committee on coercive control has tabled its report on coercive behaviour within relationships this week, following five days of hearings in February and March this year.

The committee was formed in October 2020 and received more than 150 submissions as part of its inquiry process. The committee also visited regional NSW and heard evidence from over 100 witnesses before agreeing that coercive control should be criminalised.