

Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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**CONVENOR,
PROGRAM/ADVOCACY**
Lou De Castro Myles

Email: sibrisbane@siseap.org
Web: www.siseap.org

Postal Address:
SI Brisbane
C/- 2012/12 Edward St
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Australia

INQUIRY INTO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025: A SUBMISSION FROM SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL BRISBANE INC

TO: The Committee Secretariat
Education, Arts and Communities Committee
PARLIAMENT HOUSE QLD 4000
Email: eacc@parliament.qld.gov.au

FROM: Soroptimist International Brisbane Inc

Email: [REDACTED]

Key Contact for this Submission:

Ms Lou De Castro Myles - Convenor, Program/Advocacy and UN Liaison
Mobile: [REDACTED] (NFP)

INTRODUCTION

- **Soroptimist International Brisbane Inc (SI Brisbane)** appreciates the chance to contribute to the inquiry into the **Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025** (the Bill). Our members come from professional, business, and community sectors, united in our mission to advocate for the rights and well-being of all women and girls.
- As part of Soroptimist International, a volunteer-based global movement with over 66,000 members in 118 countries, we work to **educate, empower, and enable women and girls** at all levels—local, national, and international. Our mission is firmly aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**.
- We support legislative reform that enhances safety, justice, and recovery for victim-survivors of **domestic and family violence** (DFV). This includes alignment with the **UN Charter of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, and key Australian and Queensland policy frameworks.
- We commend the Queensland Government for addressing operational pressures on police while aiming to enhance protections for those experiencing DFV. Our submission comments on key provisions of the Bill and provides recommendations for trauma-informed, culturally safe, and rights-based implementation.

KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Police Protection Directions (PPDs)

We support measures to provide immediate protection for victim-survivors. However, the introduction of PPDs must be accompanied by strong safeguards to prevent misuse or misidentification, particularly for marginalised communities such as First Nations women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and those in rural and remote communities.

Recommendations:

- Require police officers issuing PPDs to undergo mandatory training in trauma-informed and culturally competent practices.
- Establish an independent external review mechanism for PPD decisions.
- Collect and publish disaggregated data on the use of PPDs by gender, ethnicity, disability, and other relevant demographics to monitor for systemic bias.

2. Electronic Monitoring Pilot

We support electronic monitoring for high-risk DFV perpetrators when implemented as part of a comprehensive safety and support framework. We also support the inclusion of safety devices for aggrieved persons.

Concerns:

- Surveillance must not replace holistic, long-term safety planning.
- Victim-survivors from Indigenous, CALD, and rural/remote communities may face barriers in accessing support and safety devices.

Recommendations:

- Define “high-risk” using transparent, evidence-based criteria.
- Ensure co-design of the pilot with victim-survivors and frontline DFV services, especially Indigenous-led and multicultural organisations.
- Embed accountability and ensure that monitoring is accompanied by perpetrator interventions.

3. Expansion of the Video-Recorded Evidence-in-Chief (VREC) Framework

We strongly support expanding VREC across all Magistrates’ Courts, recognising that video-recorded statements can reduce retraumatisation, particularly for women impacted by coercive control.

Recommendations:

- Ensure trauma-informed interviewing techniques and ongoing police training.
- Provide accessible interpreting services and culturally safe support throughout the recording process.

4. Strengthening the Approved Provider List (APL)

We support the development of robust criteria for approved intervention program providers to ensure consistency and quality across services.

Recommendations:

- All APL providers must adhere to minimum standards for gender-responsive and culturally safe practices, ensuring that **privacy and confidentiality requirements** are upheld.
- Involve DFV sector specialists, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and CALD services, in setting and reviewing APL criteria.

5. **Criminal Offence for Contravening a PPD**

We recognise the need to uphold the seriousness of protection orders. However, criminal penalties for PPD breaches must not exacerbate misidentification risks or disproportionately criminalise already marginalised individuals.

Recommendations:

- Provide clear guidance for police and courts to assess intent and apply proportionality in enforcement.
- Ensure access to culturally appropriate legal advice and community support for all respondents.

6. **Human Rights and Procedural Fairness**

The Bill engages several fundamental rights, including liberty, a fair trial, and protection from violence. We support the Bill's human rights considerations and encourage continuous monitoring to ensure alignment with the *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019*.

Recommendations:

- Include a statutory review of the Bill's implementation within two years, with public reporting on human rights impacts.
- Require regular, independent audits of the use of PPDs and electronic monitoring, with transparency and accountability built into the system.

CONCLUSION

- The **Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025** introduces significant tools to enhance the safety and well-being of those affected by DFV. Its effectiveness will depend on how reforms are implemented, the extent of community engagement, and the inclusion of safeguards for vulnerable groups.
- We urge the Queensland Government to ensure that the reforms are trauma-informed, culturally safe, and responsive to the diversity of women's lived experiences. We thank the Committee for considering our submission and welcome future opportunities to contribute further.

Soroptimist International Brisbane Inc



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