

Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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SUBMISSION

Domestic and Family Violence Protection and
Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

DVConnect Submission

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Chief Executive Officer
DVConnect
PO Box 10575 Adelaide Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Website: www.dvconnect.org

DVConnect receives funding from the Queensland Government

DVConnect respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners/Custodians throughout Australia and pays its respects to Elders, children and young people of past, current and future generations. We are committed to helping anyone experiencing domestic, family and/or sexual violence. This includes the LGBTIQ+ community, people of all ethnicities, religions, ages, abilities and pets.



About DVConnect

DVConnect is Queensland's state-wide crisis response service for domestic, family and sexual violence and state-wide general support for victims of violent crime. We support people impacted by violence through immediate intervention, specialist counselling, case management and connection to safety – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Each year, DVConnect responds to over 100,000 contacts across our telephone and online services. Our programs include:

- **Womensline** – 24/7 crisis support, accommodation and safety planning for women and children
- **Mensline** – counselling and referral support for men who use violence or are affected by violence
- **Sexual Assault Helpline** – counselling and support for people impacted by sexual violence
- **Forensic Support Line** – information counselling and referral for people impacted by the Qld Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA management
- **START** trial – six week behaviour change intervention for men using violence
- **Pets in Crisis** – temporary foster care for pets of families escaping violence
- **Bella's Sanctuary** – medium-term housing for women and children rebuilding their lives after crisis
- **VictimConnect** – 24/7 helpline, counselling and case management for people affected by violent and personal crime under Queensland's *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009*
- **Victims of Crime Community Response Pilot** – responsive, community-based support following incidents of violence

DVConnect is also active in building evidence to inform practice and outcomes through research and partnerships. DVConnect is a partner in The Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEVAW), and is part of numerous collaborations including She Is Not Your Rehab and Griffith University Disrupting Violence Beacon.

We apply an **intersectional feminist** framework, recognising domestic, family, and sexual violence as gender-based violence, predominantly perpetrated by men against women. We acknowledge the influence of patriarchal and colonial systems on experiences of safety, violence, and justice across cultural groups, while holding perpetrators fully responsible and recognising the systemic factors that enable such violence.



Our services are trauma-informed, culturally safe and inclusive. We are guided by the voices of survivors and the strengths of the people we work with. We actively centre the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, support culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and respect the rights and choices of people with disability and LGBTQ+ people.

While most of our work is funded by the Queensland Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety and Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support, we utilise philanthropic funds and donations for distinct projects such as START. The establishment and running of Bella's Sanctuary is solely through donations and corporate investment

DVConnect's unique insight into Queensland's violence response systems, combined with our national collaborations, gives us a comprehensive, frontline-informed understanding of the realities facing victim-survivors and the services that support them. We bring this perspective to our submission.



Opening Statement

DVConnect acknowledges the intent of the **Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025** (the Bill) and sees several features of it, working to improve outcomes and safety for those impacted by domestic and family violence (DFV). However, there are a number of elements that are of significant concern with probable negative outcomes for those most in need of protection.

DVConnect has worked closely with the sector and QCOSS Interim DFV on its submission (QCOSS Submission). Overall, we agree with many elements of what is tabled in the QCOSS Submission.

We make our submission, to show collective endorsement of many issues in the QCOSS Submission, and to further some points that we see as important.

It is essential that these reforms include robust, transparent, and accountable review mechanisms, along with a process for collaborative adjustments, amendments, or repeal as needed.

As with most legislation there are several intersecting but distinct components to the Bill. We have considered their ultimate practical impact. This is also how we have grouped our overarching responses.

Police Protection Directions:

- **Do not support**
- If to be implemented
 - Suggest pilot location
 - Suggest rigorous evaluation model
 - Suggest oversight panel with independent DFV specialist members

Electronic monitoring:

- **Support**
- Emphasis on case management support for respondent and aggrieved
- Suggest trial locations with population and geographic diversity.

Video Recorded Evidence:

- **Support**
- Emphasis on community and sector education and victim/survivor agency

Approved Provider List:

- **Support**
- Emphasis on sector engagement in regulation development



Approved Provider List

DVConnect is a member of SPEAQ (Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland) and have been party to SPEAQ's advocacy to have the Approved Provider List both updated and the process for listing clarified.

We have seen the impact of examples where Magistrates who, out of lack of options and oversight, have used providers of the list to significant detriment to both the respondents progress of behaviour change, and to the safety of the victim/survivor.

The list also provides a useful benchmark for the community to understand who a suitable provider of perpetrator intervention work may be. This highlights the breadth of impact that the APL has.

These amendments address our primary concerns, the ability to update the APL and some clarity on how it is maintained and the process of application, such as the suggested regulation.

Dedicated, skilled practitioners and networks must be party to regulation development.

Oversight and rigour are important to ensure work with people using violence is safe, effective and inclusive.

Electronic monitoring:

DVConnect is an advocate of electronic monitoring **when it occurs in a comprehensively supported context**. Concerns regarding misleading sense of safety, systems abuse, poor community understanding, inappropriate breach responses and lack of support to change perpetrator behaviour exist around use of electronic monitoring devices in isolation.

This legislation can only be effective and safe in an environment of independent and comprehensive case management for the respondent and the aggrieved. Given these electronic monitoring devices will only be provided to high-risk cases, it is appropriate that case managed is commensurate.

This case management must be for the entirety of the duration of electronic monitoring. For the victim/survivor this must include education and support to understand the intent and limitations of electronic monitoring as well as referral and support pathways for her recovery and healing. For the respondent this case management may need to include consideration for new partners. It must include behaviour change engagement. It must also include education and support to understand the intent, potential ramifications of electronic monitoring.



Video Recorded Evidence

DVConnect supports any process that improves the robustness of evidence and a trauma-informed process for the collection of evidence. The framing of video recorded evidence in this Bill suggests that these changes will both improve the victim/survivors experience of giving evidence and the courts ability to use such evidence in convictions.

To ensure this legislation is taken up by victim/survivors it will be important that:

- Education is provided to the community and to support services
- In real time, police communication with victim/survivors is clear, simple and empowering, including the consent process
- Victim/survivors are encouraged to have agency over when and where video evidence is recorded (within the legislative limitations)
- That evidence can be collected in the person's preferred language, with support of an interpreter.

Police Protection Directives

DVConnect hold **significant concerns** about the use of Police Protection Directives (PPD). Many of these are mapped in the QCOSS submission.

We implore the panel to consider implementing **a trial of PPD**.

With many other elements of legislative review trial locations and pilot periods have enabled government, agencies and communities to be part of the process of assessing the impact of legislation changes and identifying ways that amendments can be implemented to ensure the intent of changes are achieved.

It is **both a missed opportunity and dangerous** that this approach is not being taken for PPD.

A trial of PPD in at least two locations, one rural/regional, should occur. This trial should be for a period **12 months with comprehensive evaluation**.

This evaluation should consider police efficiency, impact on court processes, victim/survivor experience, DFV service experience, breaches (including police and court work involved in breaches as well as safety and impact) with understanding across demographics specifically for priority cohorts. Analysis of the impact of the legislation should also be weighted when considered within the evaluation as a comprehensive assessment of overall community and policing outcomes where priority is given to ensuring this legislation is positively impactful for priority cohorts or areas where resources are limited, such as remote and rural Queensland.



This Bill speaks to a two-year legislated review timeframe. If a pilot is not to be enacted, then it will be imperative that a robust evaluation is applied.

This evaluation should consider the same metrics as outlined above. This evaluation should be shared in full with the community six-months before the legislative review date to enable comprehensive consultation and consideration.

Of critical importance in this consideration process will be ensuring that this legislation change is most effective for Queensland's most vulnerable populations.

If this change is proving to be effective for the majority of the population, especially those in metro areas, but is detrimental to distinct cohorts or regions, this must also be given grave consideration.

Regional/rural Queensland, First Nations people, racially diverse people, LGBTIQ+ people, older people, young people and people with disabilities cannot be disadvantaged by legislative changes when it is unequivocally proven these populations are most impacted by DFV.

Beyond these suggestions DVConnect does want to highlight areas of most significant concern. We simply make note of these as the QCOS Submission provides extensive detail.

Misidentification of the predominant aggressor. DVConnect Mensline received approximately 10 000 police referrals last financial year via the police referral system. Mensline received referrals for both male aggrieved and male respondents. While Queensland Police have highlighted a number of mechanisms and oversights to ensure misidentification is addressed systemically as well as in "real time", we note that we have not seen significant shifts in the number of aggrieved versus respondent referrals to the Mensline service. This suggests that current training that is in place, may not be gaining the outcomes that was hoped.

Shortening of the order length. *Not Now Not Ever* saw domestic violence orders extend from a standard of two years to five years for clear and intentional reasons. PPDs actively reduce this time frame to one year.

Support for respondents. Having a court process extends an important opportunity for respondents to become aware of and to access support services that help them change behaviours. PPD cuts off this opportunity for "first time" offenders. We know true safety comes from multiple intersecting responses holding him and the system accountable for her safety.

-Experience in Tasmania. There is clear and tangible evidence that PPD have had detrimental impacts on victim/survivors. This speaks to the importance of a trial in Queensland so we can test how this will work, as there is already a precedence of this not have the desired outcomes. This will also ensure we are fully prepared to implement all strategies required to make this an effective legislative change for police, the community, respondents and most of all victim/survivors.



Conclusion

DVConnect acknowledges the vigour with which the new Government wishes to enact real and tangible changes to our systems to achieve positive outcomes for people impacted by DFV.

This Bill is presented with the hope that these laws will enable greater accountability through electronic monitoring, trauma-informed and reliable evidence for court process through video recordings, greater oversight of intervention services for respondents and faster justice with less administration and process via PDDs. We too, want these kinds of improvements in our system.

But without caution and consideration, laws can be harmful. It is with this considered practice lens built from the voices of those that use our services, informed by clinical wisdom and underpinned, where possible, by academia, that we make the above suggestions to the Committee.

Thank you for your time and regard.