

Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No:	50
Submitted by:	Miracle Mums Movement Inc.
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	



Submission to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submitted by: Miracle Mums Movement Inc.

On behalf of the Executive Board

Contact person: Louise Smith (known publicly as Lou Feltham Smith), Founder & President

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Address: Redcliffe, Queensland – Confidential location (withheld for the safety of committee and participants)

Miracle Mums Movement Inc. is a survivor-led charity supporting mothers and families who have experienced domestic abuse. We work closely with women navigating systems that were not designed with trauma or coercive control in mind.

While we support the goal of enabling timely protection for victim-survivors, we hold serious concerns about the proposed power for police to issue on-the-spot police protection directions without immediate oversight from a Magistrate. This reform may unintentionally place survivors at greater risk if applied without trauma-informed understanding and safeguards against misidentification.

Our Observations and Experience

Through our frontline support of women impacted by domestic abuse, we frequently see how coercive control operates in nuanced and manipulative ways. These patterns are often misunderstood by authorities, especially when victim-survivors present with trauma responses that may appear defensive, volatile, or avoidant. We are deeply concerned that without careful implementation, this power may be misused—whether unintentionally due to a lack of training, or deliberately by perpetrators using DARVO tactics and cross-application strategies to continue exerting control.



Concerns About the Bill

- On-the-spot directions risk being made in high-stress, high-conflict moments where trauma responses are misread.
- Coercive, manipulative offenders may use these directions to punish and silence victims through cross-reporting.
- Without oversight from a Magistrate, there is no safeguard to ensure procedural fairness or access to legal or specialised DV support that is typically available in court settings.
- In our direct experience, police are not adequately trained to recognise trauma responses, coercive control, or patterns of manipulation. Post-separation abuse, especially involving children, is often overlooked. Victim-survivors are frequently told they must go to Family Court, even when they disclose fear or risk. This undermines safety and fails to recognise that legal systems can become tools of continued abuse.

Recommendations

1. Require same-day or next-day court oversight of all police protection directions.
2. Ensure all directions issued by police are subject to internal supervisory review to prevent misuse.
3. Mandate specialist training for:
 - Queensland Police Service officers and staff
 - Magistrates and judicial officers
 - Court support staffThis training should include coercive control, DARVO, trauma responses, victim/perpetrator behaviours, and evidence-based risk assessment tools.
4. Mandate the use of thorough timeline-based assessment tools that consider the full relationship history—namely the DASH, DARA & TITRA models as used in the UK.
5. Involve survivor-led organisations and lived experience advocates in the co-design, delivery, and monitoring of training and implementation practices.

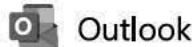
This reform must be trauma-informed and systems-aware in its design and rollout. If not carefully implemented, it risks reinforcing the same systems abuse it aims to prevent.

We urge the Committee to ensure this Bill protects all victim-survivors — not just in theory, but in practice, where lives and futures depend on getting it right.

We would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to share our insights further.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Lou Feltham Smith
Founder & President
Miracle Mums Movement Inc.



Urgent Concerns Regarding Police-Issued Protection Directions

From Lou Feltham Smith [REDACTED]

Date Tue 29/04/2025 8:24 PM

To Kerri-Anne Dooley MP - Member for Redcliffe [REDACTED]

Hi Kerri-Anne,

Thank you so much for letting me know about your meeting with Amanda Camm tomorrow. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to have these concerns raised.

As a survivor and an advocate who works closely with victim-survivors of domestic abuse, I'm extremely concerned about the proposed reforms allowing general duty officers to issue 12-month Protection Directions on the spot. While I fully acknowledge the intent is to protect those at risk, without adequate training in identifying coercive control and understanding trauma responses, these powers may unintentionally place victims in even greater danger.

A common tactic used by perpetrators is DARVO (Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim/Offender), which can result in victims appearing confused, unstable, or even aggressive—particularly when in a heightened trauma state. Without specialised training, officers may easily misidentify the primary aggressor.

Another critical issue is the frequent minimisation by police of reports of coercive controlling behaviours, including stalking. I've supported women who have been told their experiences don't meet the threshold for intervention, despite clearly aligning with legislative criteria. Often, victims are informed that police must contact the perpetrator for their version of events allowing time to fabricate a defence that is frequently accepted at face value before even lodging a report. This retraumatises the victim and increases their fear of retaliation if the perpetrator learns they have involved police. This approach is not trauma-informed and severely undermines victims' safety and trust in the system.

In the UK, frontline officers use the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and Honour-Based Violence) risk assessment tool, developed by Laura Richards, a criminal behavioural analyst and former head of New Scotland Yard's Violent Crime Prevention Unit, to identify high-risk cases. Laura has also worked with the Queensland Government on the state's coercive control reforms. I am trained in the DASH, as well as a more comprehensive tool called TITRA (Trauma-Informed Timeline Risk Assessment), which provides a clear overview of patterns of abuse, helping police understand the full context of the relationship rather than treating incidents in isolation.

Additionally, I'm currently completing the Trauma-Informed Advocacy & Expert Witness Certification under the guidance of Kate Beesley, a UK-based domestic abuse specialist, DASH risk assessor, and founder of *Say No to Domestic Abuse and Stalking*. Kate has extensive training in trauma and the core issues surrounding violence against women and girls. She has developed a short training course specifically for law enforcement to strengthen their understanding of trauma-informed practice, which I would be willing to present if helpful.

I respectfully urge the government to ensure any rollout of these reforms includes mandatory training in coercive control, DARVO dynamics, and trauma-informed practice, alongside the consistent use of

proven risk assessment tools. I am more than willing to support this work and offer lived-experience-informed insight to help ensure these reforms truly protect those they are intended to serve.

Thank you again for your support and for raising these concerns on my behalf.



Lou Feltham Smith



connect • uplift • empower



www.miraclemumsmovement.com
