

News releases - John Rau

New initiatives to combat domestic violence

John Rau

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The State Government will develop laws to allow video evidence to be admissible in domestic violence related legal proceedings, and continue to develop a trial domestic violence disclosure scheme under new moves to address this important issue.

The Government today outlined its response to feedback on its Domestic Violence Discussion Paper, following on from extensive consultation with the non-government sector, advocacy groups and the broader community.

Key initiatives include:

- The development of protocols for a trial domestic violence disclosure scheme, which would enable South Australians who may be at risk of domestic violence to find out whether their partner has a history of offending
- New laws that would allow video evidence recorded by police, including at a scene, to be admissible in court
- Changes to the law that would see a wider range of domestic violence-related offences classified as 'aggravated' offences, meaning that higher penalties can apply

Based on feedback through the consultation process, the Government is committed to not imposing expiry dates on intervention orders.

The Government will also seek to include domestic violence as a ground of discrimination under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

To read the Government's response to consultation on the discussion paper as well as summaries of the feedback received, go to www.agd.sa.gov.au/DVResponse

Background

In July last year, the State Government released a Domestic Violence Discussion Paper, which included an unprecedented level of data from South Australia Police that helped shine a light on the prevalence of domestic violence in the State.

The paper considered a range of issues including how data on domestic violence could be collected, whether videos recorded by police at the scene should be admissible in court, and how a domestic violence disclosure scheme could operate in practice.

While the consultation process demonstrated strong support for the implementation of a domestic violence disclosure scheme, it also raised a number of issues that needed to be

considered prior to the implementation of such a scheme, including ongoing resourcing to process applications and ensure relevant support services are present when any information is provided.

The Attorney-General's Department, the Office for Women and SAPOL will work with the sector to finalise protocols that could govern a trial domestic violence disclosure scheme.

Through the consultation, both representatives from the non-government sector and the broader community expressed concern that imposing an expiry date on intervention orders could potentially place people at risk.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General John Rau

Domestic violence affects our whole community. We are grateful so many individuals and community organisations were willing to have their say through this consultation process.

The Government will be expanding the definition of 'aggravated offences' within the Criminal Law Consolidation Act so we can better collect data relating to domestic violence-related offences.

However, there is more that can be done. The Government will work with SAPOL, the Courts and the Director of Public Prosecutions to find ways to improve the way we collect data about family violence, so we have the information to develop targeted programs to better protect South Australians.

Quotes attributable to Minister for the Status of Women Zoe Bettison

The Government takes domestic violence very seriously, and is committed to undertaking reforms to better address domestic violence offending.

We have considered all of the feedback from both the sector and our community to develop a response that outlines new steps we'll be taking to better protect South Australians at risk of domestic violence.

To more effectively address domestic violence in our community, we need to have the best possible understanding of the extent of the issue.

Given the complexities involved in developing a trial domestic violence disclosure scheme, we are working to finalise a set of protocols that can be used in South Australia to address the issues raised through the consultation process.