



Coercive Control finally a criminal offence in NSW

One woman in Australia dies every week at the hands of her current or former partner. A review by the NSW Coroner’s Court found that coercive control was present in 99% of relationships which ended in homicide.

Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse where perpetrators of the abuse, by their actions, take away their partner’s autonomy and freedom.

The sorts of tactics which might be used by a perpetrator of coercive control include isolating their partner from friends and family, gaslighting, constant humiliation and criticism which has the effect of undermining someone’s self-esteem, tracking a partner’s movements, controlling what their partner wears or how they spend money (even money they might have earned themselves), threats about what will happen if that partner ‘dares’ to leave the relationship and often, punishments

if sexual advances are refused.

Historically, NSW domestic violence law covered some types of coercive and controlling behaviour. But the justice system was geared to respond to individual incidents of physical violence which made it harder to detect and punish perpetrators who used a complex pattern of behaviour to abuse their partners. As a consequence, victims of coercive control felt trapped in their relationships. Police were often helpless because coercive control was not a crime under the law within which police are bound to operate.

In November last year, NSW became the first Australian State to create a stand-alone offence of coercive control. People found guilty under the new law will face up to 7 years in jail.

These changes are long overdue and will hopefully, with ongoing education amongst the judiciary, law enforcement, social workers and teachers, be an important step towards saving lives.



FREE 10 MINUTE CONSULTATION

For a **FREE** confidential 10 minute phone consultation, call **Managing Director, Fiona Reid.**

Fiona Reid is the Managing Director of Reid Family Lawyers, a boutique specialist family law firm with offices in Brookvale and Surry Hills. She is supported by a team of expert family lawyers. The firm has a wealth of experience in all facets of family law including complex property matters, parenting matters, child support and spousal maintenance issues, relocation, de facto and same sex issues, surrogacy and adoption.



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