

Roundtable RoundUP



HealingFoundation

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Strengthening practice: creating healing

ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children

Responding together: a practitioner roundtable on coercive control legislation

On 17 July, WorkUP welcomed practitioners from across the sector and state to a conversation about the new laws making coercive control a criminal offence.

This roundtable is just one of the many ways we're helping the workforce build knowledge and confidence around coercive control.

You can see our other offerings here: <https://workupqld.org.au/coercive-control/>

Here are some of the key insights and reflections from the day.

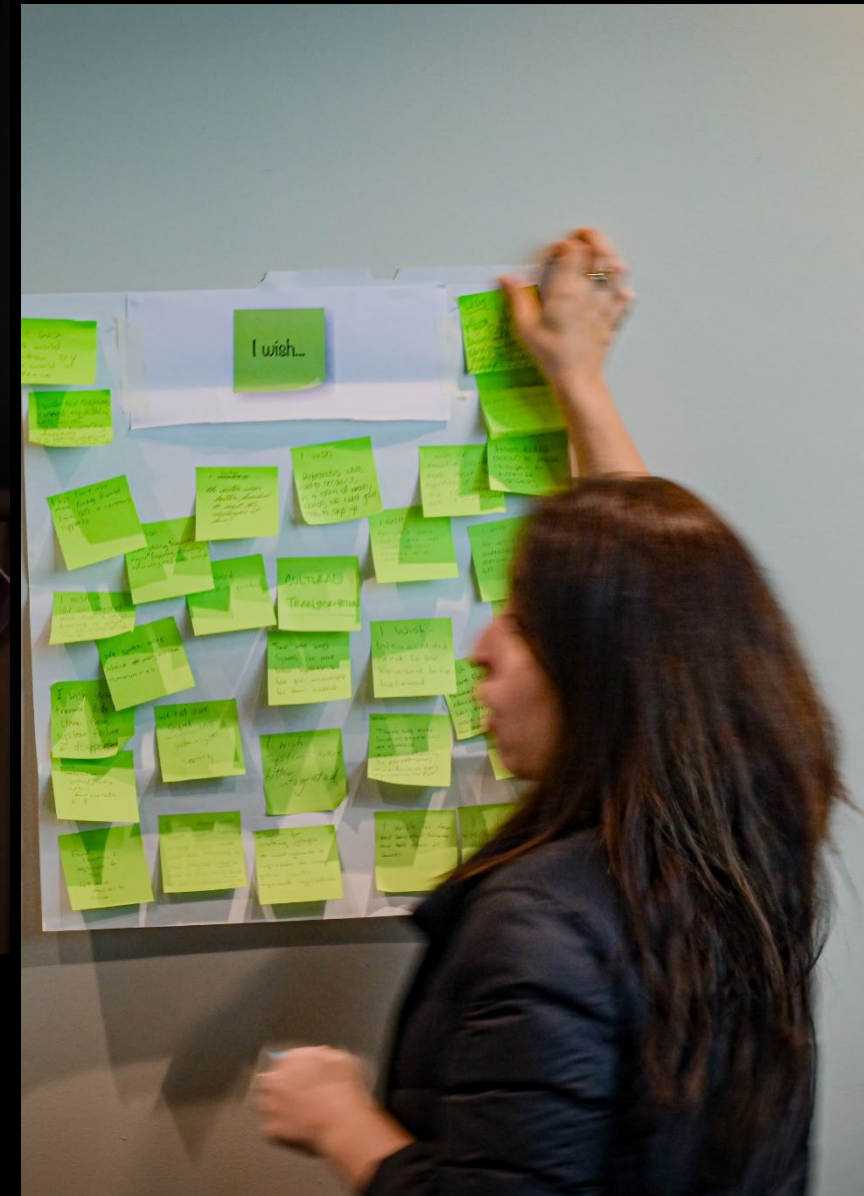


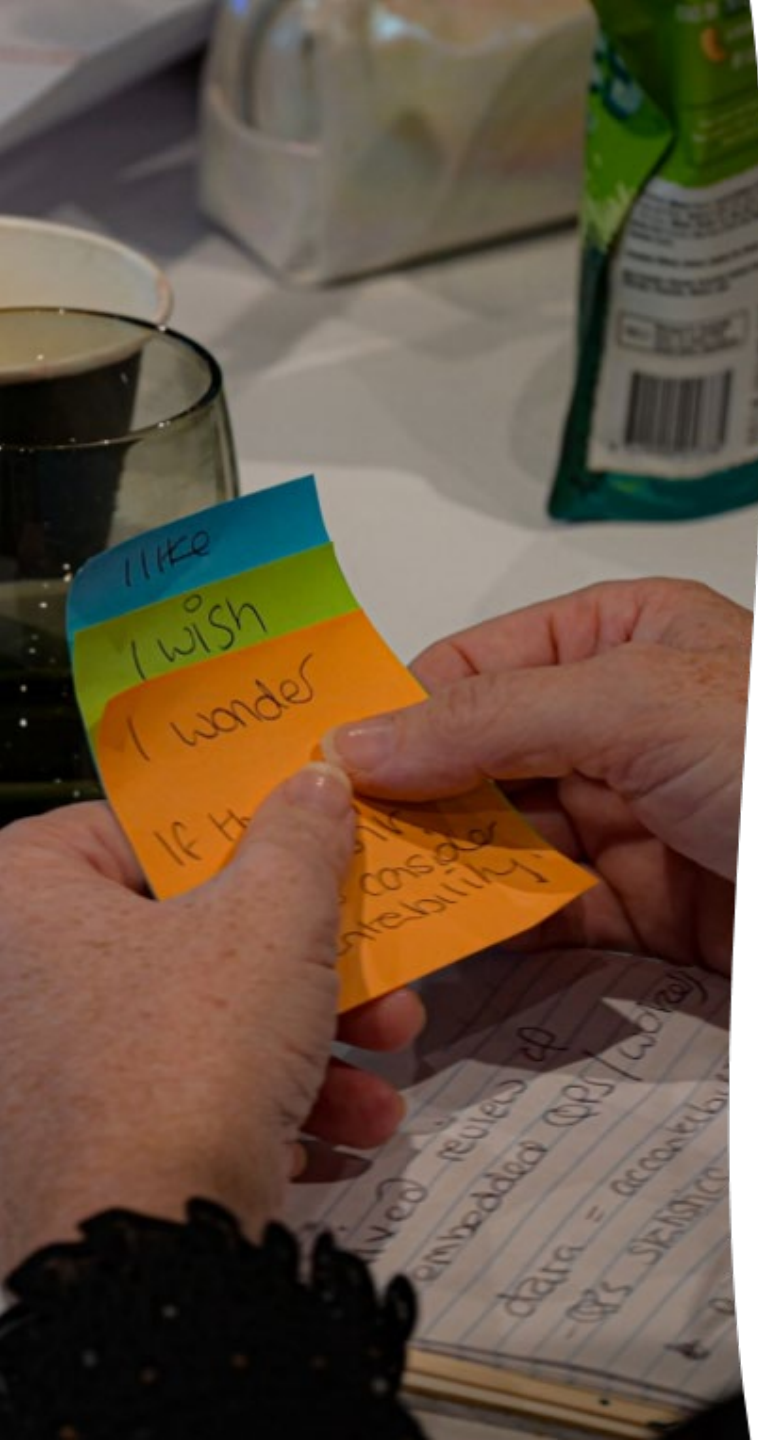
What you said about the law:

- Strong conceptual support, but practical doubts.
We support the intent but worry how it will work in practice.
- Implementation support is critical, including police training and community education.



- Risk of misidentification is front of mind and a dominant concern.
- Hope and hesitation: the legislation has the potential to transform this space, but we still need to grapple with the complexities and unknowns, particularly for groups made vulnerable by history and systems.





Your reflections....

I like

- Honest, open conversations
- Sector solidarity and collaboration
- Focus on and momentum for system reform
- Centring the voices of victim survivors
- The potential for education and prevention

I wish

- Systems were coordinated, consistent and accountable
- For deep cultural change within QPS
- Power and funding was shifted to community-based organisations for prevention, early intervention and holistic support
- For equity, inclusion and survivor centred practice

I wonder

- Whether systems are ready
- Whether power can be shifted to victim survivors
- Whether the burden for safety can be shifted to people using violence and services
- What true accountability looks like, for systems as well as perpetrators
- What impact comprehensive training could have
- How to ensure frontline workers are equipped and connected

Collaborative workshopping conversations

The morning's activities resulted in a series of emerging themes.

Working in groups, participants addressed the themes, using the ERA framework



Collaborative workshopping conversation topics

What do systems that 'work' for people look like?

When holding people's stories, what is our responsibility?

What other conversations do we need to have? And with whom?

How does the workforce understand accountability?

How do we demonstrate the values of trust, care and collaboration?

How does improving understanding enhance safety?

What do systems that 'work' for people look like?

A transformed DFV system is one that is integrated, inclusive, healing-focused, and driven by the voices of victim-survivors and families; embedding shared responsibility, accountability, and prevention across all sectors.

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What do systems that ‘work’ for people look like?

Key points

Whole-of-system collaboration and integration

DFV work should be embedded across all sectors with coordinated cross-agency funding, shared responsibility, and aligned national and state systems.

Inclusive, accessible, and diverse support

Services must be accessible, culturally safe, and reflective of the communities they serve. This includes visible diversity in staffing and providing non-mandated, low-barrier entry points to behaviour change and support programs for people using violence (PUVs).

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Victim-survivor and child-centred practice

Responses must be led by victim-survivors’ voices, be child-focused and family-oriented, and ensure transparency for safety and accountability. Practices should be grounded in active listening, and a deep understanding of lived experiences.

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Shift toward prevention, healing and accountability

There’s a need for greater investment in early intervention, education, health promotion, and healing-oriented approaches for PUVs, alongside strengthened social media regulation and shared community responsibility.

When holding people's stories, what is our responsibility?

We hold a profound responsibility to share people's stories with consent, care, and integrity, amplifying truth without harm, challenging harmful narratives, and using stories to foster understanding, compassion and systemic change.

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When holding people's stories, what is our responsibility?

Key points

Respect, consent and care

We have a duty to share stories deliberately, with respect for the storyteller's agency - including their right not to share - and to avoid embellishment, misinterpretation, or drawing our own conclusions.

Ethical framing and impact awareness

Stories should be used to illuminate *patterns* of harm, avoid black-and-white thinking or "inspiration porn," and be mindful of unintended consequences, including stigma and harm to children or others.

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Modelling accountability and compassion

Sharing stories can model respectful relationships and challenge harmful narratives, including those that excuse or centre people using violence (PUVs). It's important to highlight accountability and avoid enabling image management.

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Voice, visibility and structural change

Stories can reduce isolation, amplify the voices of children and other silenced victims, and play a role in securing resources or shifting public understanding - but only if used with care and integrity.

What other conversations do we need to have? And with whom?

We need bold, inclusive conversations, across sectors and communities, that confront systemic injustices, centre lived experience, build collective accountability, and advance a cultural movement for safety, equity and healing.

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What other conversations do we need to have? And with whom?

Key points

Confronting systemic discrimination and power dynamics

We need brave, ongoing conversations about racism within policing, courts, and communities; ableism and transphobia in service delivery; and how systemic biases shape concepts like the “perfect victim” and influence access to justice and safety.

Building understanding and accountability across systems

Discussions must include all sectors (education, housing, health, justice) and focus on building trust, transparency, and mutual accountability. This includes clarifying roles (e.g. police and VPU powers) and addressing barriers like evidence-gathering and housing insecurity.

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Challenging norms, elevating marginalised voices

We must talk about the real impacts of coercive control legislation, ensure children's experiences are centred, and expand public conversations around gender diversity, disability, and early intervention. This includes using case studies and lived experiences to build an evidence base and dismantle silencing.

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Framing change as collective and cultural

Conversations should ask: are we a movement? Who are the role models shaping public narratives? Are we willing to listen, to challenge, and to show that our work is making a difference in real lives?

How does the workforce understand accountability?

Accountability is a shared, reflective, and relational practice, grounded in empathy, ethical responsibility, and a collective commitment to both safety and transformation.

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How does the workforce understand accountability?

Key points

Relational and collective accountability

Accountability is understood not as an individual burden, but as something built through teamwork, trust, and collaborative decision-making, with strong support systems for practitioners and shared responsibility across management, services, and systems.

Ethical practice and presence

Accountability means showing up with mindfulness, empathy, and respect, holding space for client choice, avoiding coercion, and navigating tensions (e.g., when victim-survivors don't want to report) with care and integrity.

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Responsibility to challenge and support change

Accountability includes recognising people using violence (PUVs) as human, while still holding them to account. It involves providing the right level of support to challenge behaviour and promote transformation, not just punishment.

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Ongoing reflection, boundaries and growth

Accountability is a balance between duty of care, risk awareness, and personal values - requiring reflective practice, training, clear boundaries, and a willingness to grow.

How do we demonstrate the values of trust, care and collaboration?

Trust, care and collaboration are lived through strong relationships, shared practices, diverse and supported teams, and by confronting the systemic pressures that can stand in the way of working together.

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How do we demonstrate the values of trust, care and collaboration?

Key points

Prioritising relationships and shared understanding

Building trust and collaboration starts with making time for genuine conversations, understanding each other's roles, and working towards shared goals, which deepens service knowledge and improves coordinated support.

Integrating systems and language

Demonstrating these values requires shared language, risk frameworks, and integrated responses, including clear, comprehensive referrals and consistent information sharing that prioritises safety and context.

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Creating cultures of equity and growth

A diverse and representative workforce builds stronger connections with clients and within teams, while ongoing upskilling and professional development signals a commitment to care, respect, and continual improvement.

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Naming and navigating structural barriers

While competition for funding can undermine collaboration, recognising and actively addressing these pressures is part of living these values with integrity and intention.

How does improving understanding* enhance safety?

Improved understanding enhances safety when it bridges systemic divides, builds trust, centres gendered realities, and empowers cultural change - moving beyond policy to true partnership and accountability.

**this group noted that first we must define what understanding, is, what it means, and do we need it to mean to hold a shared understanding*

How does improving understanding enhance safety?

Key points

Shared understanding as a foundation for safety

Work toward a shared understanding across systems, especially between the DFV sector and police, who often operate with different goals, definitions of success, and measures of risk.

Trust is built through respectful and ethical story holding

A lack of trust in how police handle victim-survivors' stories underscores the importance of deep, respectful listening and ethical information sharing. Without this, survivors may remain silent or unprotected.

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Understanding gendered violence is non-negotiable

Improving safety requires a stronger understanding of the gendered dynamics of domestic and family violence, particularly among police and other institutional actors.

Change requires cultural and structural shifts

Enhancing safety isn't just about knowledge. It's about investing in the DFV sector's capacity for activism and shifting responsibility to men to prevent violence, challenge harmful norms, and participate in solutions.



prevention starts at birth
recognise changes in qps
training and tools
passionate advocacy
knowledge
interesting
food for thought
complex systems
powerful voices
illuminating
great to share knowledge
highlight what is working
everyone doing their best
knowledge and passion
similar challenges
great networking
thought provoking
collaboration
hopeful
great collaboration
provocative
shared views
collaboration is key
unfinished
safety is collaborative
starting point
engaging
inspiring
powerful
hope
informative
connection
expert
disclosure
confused
advocacy
reflective
challenging
honesty
challenge
resilience
systems need to change
collaborative
enjoyed conversation
importance
surrounded by hope
info on court and evidenc
robust conversations
great conversations
learning
grateful

Reflections from the day

What's next?

A recording of the panel conversation will be available soon.

We heard that you wanted to hear more about how the police will implement the legislation – coming soon we will have an interview with Superintendent Ede that answers your questions

We are busy developing new resources including practice resources about misidentification, and toolkits for you to use.

We heard that you want to know more about changes to the Evidence Act, and Police Protection Directions – we are working on responding to those requests!

Want more?
Want to create something with us?

Let us know!

workforce@healingfoundation.org.au

or

theresa.kellett@healingfoundation.org.au

We will continue to build a library of resources at:

<https://workupqld.org.au/coercive-control/>

Thank you!

Thank you to our panel members: Karina Hogan, Lou Baker, Michael Ede, Silke Meyer, and Ria Wong

Thank you to all the participants for showing up so openly, with generosity, care and wisdom.

Thank you to our facilitator Jan Ungerer from Pattern Catcher