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Draft Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022.

Feminist Legal Clinic Inc. is a community legal service based in Sydney, that works to advance the human rights of women and their children. We refer to our earlier submission to the Joint Select Committee on coercive control dated 28 January 2021 (submission 53).

Given the extremely short time frame provided, this feedback on the draft *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2022* ("the Bill") will be brief. In any case, we detailed our concerns in our earlier submission and these are largely unchanged.

While this Bill does remedy some of the deficiencies contained in the earlier bills by restricting its ambit to intimate partners, it stops short of explicitly framing the legislation for the specific protection of women. As raised in our previous submission, while we welcome this legislation in theory, our main concern is its potential misuse against women by male perpetrators of abuse.

Section 54F(2)(a) provides scope for abusive fathers to circumvent the cumbersome family court system when angered by mothers who withhold contact with children to keep them safe. Again, we urge you to consider the use of sex-based provisions to guard against this likelihood.

We also note the need for a substantial community education campaign to ensure everyone is aware that repeated derogatory taunts, monitoring a person's activities, and controlling or regulating a person's activities may now constitute grounds for a criminal offence.

We are concerned that this legislation may unwittingly result in even more women, particularly within the indigenous community, being unfairly charged and incarcerated for minor incursions while over-arching patterns of abuse by male perpetrators continue uncorrected.

Yours faithfully

Anna Kerr
Principal Solicitor