

Media release

Understanding Coercive Control Training

National coercive control training now available free to all Australian lawyers

A consortium of leading legal organisations has launched two free online training courses to help lawyers across Australia identify and respond to coercive control.

Women's Legal Service Victoria, First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence, Women's Legal Services Australia, and National Legal Aid have today launched the Understanding Coercive Control when Providing Legal Assistance online training.

The free online training is a first-of-its-kind national initiative developed by organisations with decades of combined frontline expertise.

The training equips lawyers with the skills to recognise when a client may be experiencing coercive or controlling behaviour, engage with them safely and provide support.

This training is an important step to strengthening the legal system by making it more trauma-informed and culturally responsive.

Content is grounded in real legal practice and informed by the expertise of people with lived experience.

Training for every lawyer, not just family law specialists

Coercive and controlling behaviours can affect clients across a broad range of legal issues – from criminal law and migration to banking and property.

The courses are aligned with the National Principles to Address Coercive Control and draw on decades of trauma-informed, culturally responsive legal service delivery experience.

The training comprises two free courses available to all legal practitioners nationwide:

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- **Foundational course**, available to legal practitioners in every Australian jurisdiction and across all areas of law.
- **Family law-specific course** for legal practitioners working in family law nationwide.

Both courses are self-paced and designed to count towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements in all states and territories.

Built on deep frontline expertise

Women's Legal Service Victoria and First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence have co-developed the training.

Extensive consultation and testing underpinned the development process, including consultation with legal practitioners across private practice, the legal assistance sector and First Nations communities.

The training's First Nations-specific content reflects the unique cultural and legal context facing First Nations clients. First Nations content was developed by First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence, incorporating commissioned artwork from Kamilaroi artist KC Rae and guidance from Community.

Voices from the Consortium

Women's Legal Service Victoria

"Women's Legal Service Victoria has spent decades working with clients experiencing coercive control. We know what safe, effective legal practice looks like, and we have built that knowledge into the training. We are proud to offer this training to lawyers across Australia, in every practice area."

— **Claudia Fatone, CEO, Women's Legal Service Victoria**

First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence

"First Nations women experience family and domestic violence at disproportionate rates, and coercive control is often at the heart of that harm. This training ensures that lawyers, wherever they practice, are equipped to respond in culturally safe and informed ways. The involvement of First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence, the Family Violence Prevention & Legal Services (FVPLS) sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors in developing this content has been central to getting that right."

— **Kerry Staines, CEO, First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence**

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National Legal Aid

"Legal Aid lawyers across Australia encounter clients experiencing coercive control every day – not just in family law, but in tenancy, criminal law, and beyond. This training equips our lawyers, and all lawyers nationwide, with the knowledge to recognise those situations and respond effectively. National Legal Aid is proud to be a consortium partner in bringing this training to scale across the country."

– **Yvette D'Ath, Executive Director, National Legal Aid**

Women's Legal Services Australia

"Women's Legal Services Australia members see first-hand the devastating impact of coercive and controlling behaviour on women, gender diverse people and their families. The launch of this training is a significant step for the legal profession. All lawyers should be able to identify and respond to coercive control, which is why this training was designed to be accessible to all lawyers. In doing so, we are working towards a future in which knowledge about coercive control becomes a baseline competency for the whole legal sector."

– **Adrienne Walters, Executive Director, Women's Legal Services Australia**

Access the training via the National Legal Aid website: <https://nationallegalaid.org.au/national-training/understanding-coercive-control>

About the consortium

Women's Legal Service Victoria and First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence co-developed the Understanding Coercive Control when Providing Legal Assistance training as part of a consortium partnership with Women's Legal Services Australia and National Legal Aid. This is a national project funded by the Australian Government.

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