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Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce

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## Submission to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce

The Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland is the peak body for older Queenslanders. COTA has advanced the rights, needs and futures of older Queenslanders since 1957. COTA advocates for government policies and programs that enable more supportive community attitudes towards ageing and older people. COTA helps foster social change by providing leadership and expert advice on ageing issues, working with other stakeholder groups across Queensland. Central to the work of COTA is health care reform to help ensure that older Queenslanders can access better healthcare throughout their life course.

COTA Queensland strongly supports the need to legislate against coercive control as a form of domestic and family violence and the establishment of a new offence **commit domestic violence**. The discussion paper notes: ***Anybody can be a victim of domestic and family violence and both men and women can be perpetrators. However, the vast majority of victims are female, and the vast majority of perpetrators are male. This is particularly so in relation to coercive control.***<sup>1</sup>

COTA accepts that this is the situation and that some of those women impacted are over 65 years of age. However, the Taskforce when considering how to strengthen the legal protection for this group should also ensure that all elder abuse victims impacted by coercive control and other forms of domestic violence are also afforded protection under the proposed reforms.

The focus on partner abuse is clearly understood given its prevalence in domestic violence situations and the severe physical, emotional, social and financial impact it can have on the victim and any children involved. However, other victims of coercive control and domestic violence also need increased protection. The British Adult Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Guidelines note that *'Domestic abuse approaches historically have had an emphasis on partner violence. More focus now needs to be given to family and inter-generational abuse and the way in which it may be different from partner violence, for example if the perpetrator is the victim's (adult) sibling, child or grandchild.'*<sup>2</sup>

COTA Queensland requests that the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce gives strong consideration on how all victims of coercive control and domestic violence can be provided with stronger legal protections when preparing its recommendations for the Queensland Government.

  
Mark Tucker-Evans  
Chief Executive

<sup>1</sup> The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. Options for legislating against coercive control and the creation of a standalone domestic violence offence. Discussion Paper 1. 2021.p12

<sup>2</sup> Local Government Association. Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse A guide to support practitioners and managers. [adult-safeguarding-and-do-cfe.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#). 2015

