

# Media Release

**Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

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## **STRONGER LAWS TO ADDRESS FAMILY VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS**

Women will be further protected from family violence with stand-alone offences criminalising non-fatal strangulation coming into effect this weekend.

The *Crimes Amendment (Non-fatal Strangulation) Act 2024*, includes two new offences to crack down on perpetrators and help the justice system better identify and deal with an incredibly dangerous act of violence – often taken against women.

These laws, which have been referred to as Joy’s Law, would not be coming to effect without the tireless advocacy of the family of Joy Rowley whose life was cut short in her own home – where she should have been safe.

Research shows that victims of non-fatal strangulation are seven times more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner than other family violence victims.

Perpetrators who intentionally injure their victim will face up to ten years in jail – ensuring there are serious consequences for this violent and intimidating behaviour.

The second offence, which carries a maximum five-year sentence, applies even when no injury has occurred. This ensures better protection for victims who may not have visible injuries.

These laws will not apply when the non-fatal strangulation occurs in the context of sexual activity and consent is freely and wilfully given.

These reforms are part of the Allan Labor Government’s work to improve the justice system’s response to women’s safety and family violence.

In May, the Labor Government announced further reforms with the Women’s Safety Package which will include new initiatives to stop violence before it starts.

These changes will include changes to the service of Family Violence Intervention Orders so that protection can start sooner, putting a stop to perpetrators who deliberately avoid being served.

### **Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes**

*“Non-fatal strangulation is rarely an isolated event, it often reveals an ongoing and escalating pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour – especially when it occurs in family violence circumstances.”*

*“We must do everything we can to address violence against women – and these new laws will help keep more women safe.”*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence Vicki Ward**

*“We’re leading the nation in our work to keep women and children safe, including improving the justice system’s response to women’s safety – because every Victorian has the right to feel safe and secure.”*