



4 May 2021

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights  
PO Box 6100,  
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600  
Via online submission

**Letter to the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights re: ParentsNext**

Dear Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights,

I am writing on behalf of the Centre for Women's Economic Safety to endorse the submission of Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic) and Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV) to the inquiry into ParentsNext: Examination of Social Security (Parenting payment participation requirements – class of persons) Instrument 2021.

**About the Centre for Women's Economic Safety (CWES)**

The mission of the [Centre for Women's Economic Safety](#) (CWES) is to raise awareness and understanding of intimate partner economic abuse and to advocate for social changes that support women's economic safety and opportunity.

CWES is an unincorporated organisation operating on a not-for-profit basis, nationally. It is auspiced by Domestic Violence NSW Service Management, a registered charity and public benevolent institution endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR).

**Commentary to the ParentsNext Inquiry**

The compulsory nature of ParentsNext undermines human dignity and personal autonomy. For the many women who have experienced domestic violence and economic abuse, this mirrors their experiences of power and control by their former partner thereby amplifying the harm caused by the program, rather than supporting them to regain individual agency and control.

The government's treatment of non-compliance endangers the economic safety of victim-survivors trying to rebuild from domestic violence and economic abuse.

The existing exemption is not sufficient, nor workable. It places too great a burden on victim-survivors to reveal their situation to people who may not have a good understanding of the impacts of family violence. By only providing exemptions for limited periods of time, it also fails to recognise the long-lasting and ongoing consequences of abuse.

CWES echoes DV Vic/DVRCV's opposition to the ParentsNext program and its negative human rights implications - especially on victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. The continuation of the program is in direct contradiction to the Senate Inquiry Recommendation that 'the program should not continue in its current form'.

Your sincerely,

Rebecca Glenn

Founder, Centre for Women's Economic Safety