



**Hon. Robert McClelland MP**  
Attorney-General

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **STRONG RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE BILL CONSULTATION**

Attorney-General Robert McClelland today said there has been a strong community response to the Gillard Government's draft Family Law Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2010.

Mr McClelland said more than 400 submissions were received during the public consultation process on the draft Family Violence Bill.

A total of 73 per cent of respondents expressed support for the measures and a further 10 per cent made no specific comment on the Bill but offered information about personal experiences.

"The public interest generated by the Family Violence Bill demonstrates that family violence is a significant concern within the Australian community," Mr McClelland said.

"The Bill has received significant backing from the community and key stakeholders in the family law system.

"The level of interest and support from the community around these changes indicate two things – that the Government is responding to a clear need to improve and strengthen aspects of Family Law, and that the overwhelming majority of the community supports the Bill as it stands."

The Family Violence Bill proposes amendments to the Family Law Act 1975 to provide better protection for children and families at risk of violence.

Submissions were received from key stakeholders in the family law system, individuals, peak bodies, academics, judicial officials and organisations.

The majority of submissions supported measures to protect children in the family law system, broader definitions of family violence and child abuse, the removal of the mandatory costs orders provision and changes to the 'friendly parent' provision.

"I would like to thank those individuals and organisations who contributed their views on the Bill," Mr McClelland said.

"There were a range of views and perspectives put forward, including a number of personal accounts of experiences with the family law system.

“The Government will consider this input and outline its response in due course.

“This Government takes the issue of addressing and responding to violence very seriously, and the draft Family Violence Bill sends the clear message that family violence and child abuse are unacceptable.”

The Family Violence Bill complements a range of other measures implemented by the Australian Government to strengthen the family law system’s response to family violence and child abuse including:

- The development of a multidisciplinary training package for lawyers, judicial officers, counsellors and other professionals working in the family law system, to improve consistency in the handling of family violence cases;
- A pilot of coordinated family dispute resolution for families experiencing violence;
- The development of minimum guidelines for screening and risk assessment for family violence; and
- Improving collaboration between the Federal family law and the State and Territory child protection systems.

“The Gillard Government is also working with the States and Territories to develop a national recognition scheme for domestic and family violence orders,” Mr McClelland said.

“The scheme will include a national database for orders to assist the enforcement of orders by State and Territory Police.

“Governments will consider a detailed proposal for the establishment of the scheme and database when the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General meets next month.

“There are huge advantages of having a central system where information about domestic violence and family violence orders can be accessed by law enforcement agencies, rather than require victims of violence to take steps to register violence orders when they move from one state to another.”

The consultation paper and draft Family Violence Bill are available on the Attorney-General’s Department website at [www.ag.gov.au/familyviolencebill](http://www.ag.gov.au/familyviolencebill).

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