



Media release

Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry to consider recommendations for responding to coercive high-control groups

On Monday 1 December 2025, the Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee will hold the next public hearing for its inquiry into the recruitment methods and impacts of cults and organised fringe groups.

The hearing will be livestreamed on the [Committee's website](#) from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Witnesses presenting evidence will include Mary Hughes, who has lived experience, and Patrick McIvor, lead author of a joint submission prepared by advocates against coercive high-control groups which puts forward ideas and suggestions to help address harmful group behaviours.

Leigh Bartlett, Executive Officer of BATForce (Barwon Adolescent Task Force), will also speak to the Committee. BATForce has worked with people who have left coercive high-control groups to develop a survivor-informed support board and to identify opportunities to improve service access.

“This is another important hearing for the Committee as it will allow us to explore in detail some of the proposals that stakeholders are making to us about actions that need to be taken to address the coercive practices of high-control groups,” Committee Chair Ella George said.

“We appreciate the effort that people have gone to in making their submissions to the inquiry, and this will be an opportunity to examine how some of their suggestions could work in practice.”

The Committee has already held seven days of public hearings and so far has published over [250 submissions](#). It also conducted an [anonymous questionnaire](#) that had 317 responses.

It is due to report to Parliament by September 2026.

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