



Media release

Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry examines coercion by cults and other groups

The harmful tactics used by some cults and other groups to control their members are the primary focus of a [new parliamentary inquiry](#) which has opened for input from the community.

The Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee is looking into the methods used to recruit people and the impacts of coercive behaviours.

“This inquiry is not about judging or questioning anyone’s beliefs, religious or otherwise,” Committee Chair Ella George said.

“Many groups, including new religious movements, provide individuals with a sense of belonging, shared belief, and meaningful support. However, some employ practices that can cause significant emotional, psychological, financial, or even physical harm.

“These behaviours are not confined to religious groups, they can occur in any setting. This inquiry is focused on the actions, not the beliefs behind them.”

Ms George said recent events in the state have led to the probe.

“There are legitimate concerns about the techniques being used by certain groups to attract and retain members, and whether they amount to coercion that should be criminalised,” Ms George said.

The Committee is [calling for submissions](#) from the public who wish to have their say.

It is also giving people the option to share their personal experience by filling out a short [anonymous questionnaire online](#).

Public hearings are expected to start later this year and a final report is due in September 2026.

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