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‘WORLD FIRST’ PROJECT TO REDUCE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The NSW Government is greatly expanding the pilot of an innovative service to help Aboriginal defendants comply with an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO), Attorney General Mark Speakman, Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Pru Goward and Member for Murray Adrian Piccoli announced today.

Mr Speakman and Mr Piccoli today met with the Department of Justice’s Aboriginal Service Unit in Griffith to announce an extension of the pilot of the *What’s Your Plan?* service to cover 46 court locations across NSW, expanded from seven at the moment.

“This is a world-first voluntary project aimed at reducing domestic violence within Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal defendants unfortunately account for a quarter of all breaches of ADVOs, even though Aboriginal people make up only three percent of the NSW population,” Mr Speakman said.

Defendants who volunteer for *What’s Your Plan?* will meet with an Aboriginal Client and Community Support Officer to develop a tailored strategy to comply with their ADVO. They will be offered SMS reminders to help them stay on track and a follow up call to check on progress.

The pilot is a joint initiative of the Department of Justice’s Aboriginal Services Unit and the Department of Premier and Cabinet’s Behavioural Insights Unit. The NSW Premier has prioritised reducing the proportion of domestic violence perpetrators reoffending by 25 per cent by 2019.

“Research shows projects with a similar structure to *What’s Your Plan?* have been successful in reducing alcohol consumption and smoking and improving relationships, but this is the first time the approach has been tested in the context of ADVOs,” Ms Goward said.

“The service will be evaluated by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and the outcomes will contribute to global evidence.”

Mr Piccoli said he backed any program that would help protect victims of domestic violence and reduce reoffending in the Murray region. “*What’s Your Plan?* is about making sure local Aboriginal defendants understand their ADVO, address obstacles that prevent them from complying and take positive steps to change their behaviour,” Mr Piccoli said.

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