



**Gladys Berejiklian**  
Premier

**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **TOUGHER LAWS TO COMBAT ONLINE ABUSE**

New laws will prevent people from using modern technology to stalk or intimidate their victims, Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Attorney General Mark Speakman have announced.

The changes are designed to protect people from serious online abuse, ranging from serious cases of cyberbullying and trolling, through to the stalking and harassment of victims of domestic and personal violence.

The NSW Government will introduce legislation amending the law to make it clear that the definitions of 'stalking' and 'intimidation' in the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act* explicitly includes activities conducted online or via text messages that are designed to instill fear of physical or mental harm.

The amendments will also confirm that courts have the power to make Apprehended Violence Orders in response to serious online abuse. This will ensure that perpetrators stop their abusive online behaviour or face arrest and possible imprisonment.

People who stalk or intimidate using modern technology will face a maximum five-year prison term under the NSW Government's amendments.

"The change we are announcing today recognises that online abuse can cause victims significant psychological trauma and have potentially devastating, even tragic consequences," said Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

"These changes are not aimed at policing free speech. They are aimed at preventing abuse."

Examples of abuse that these amendments aim to tackle include:

- posting threatening or hurtful messages, images or videos online;
- repeatedly sending unwanted messages online; and
- sending abusive emails.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the reforms address an emerging trend of offenders threatening and harassing victims on social media.

"This activity can make its victims feel scared, powerless and depressed. The NSW Government is committed to protecting domestic violence victims and other members of the community from new threats that arise with advances in technology."

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