

Presentation title:

## Informed and safe, or blamed and at risk: Examining the outcomes of victim-survivor engagement with domestic violence disclosure schemes

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Clare's Law, the first domestic violence disclosure scheme internationally, was implemented across England and Wales in March 2014. The scheme was introduced following the killing of Clare Wood in February 2009 by a man with a history of violence whom she had met on an internet dating site. The scheme aims to prevent the perpetration and escalation of violence between intimate partners through the provision of information about prior histories of violence. Similar schemes have also been adopted in Scotland, Ireland, some Canadian provinces, New Zealand and some Australian states. In Australia domestic violence disclosure schemes (DVDS) aim to strengthen the ability of the police and other multi-agency partnerships to provide appropriate protection and support to victims at risk of domestic violence; to reduce incidents of domestic violence through prevention; and to empower individuals to make informed choices about their safety in their relationship. The extent to which these objectives are achieved are the subject of debate, and to date there has been no research undertaken with victim-survivors who have access to the scheme in Australia to understand the degree to which it improves safety outcomes. Drawing on the findings from a study conducted with victim-survivors of intimate partner violence in Australia, this presentation explores the outcomes of victim-survivor engagement with domestic violence disclosure schemes from the lived experience perspective. Connecting to emerging work from the UK, the presentation examines the value of a DVDS for connecting victim-survivors with early interventions and safety planning information, alongside recognised emerging risks of victim-blaming and responsabilisation. The findings from this research are relevant to jurisdictions that have implemented a DVDS, as well as those currently contemplating this policy reform.