

10.6. Council partnership with DV Safe Phone - response to Council resolution

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ATTACHMENTS	Nil
CSP LINK	Outcome 2 – A connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued S1. Deliver and increase awareness of community events, programs and activities that strengthen and enrich meaningful connections Outcome 8 – An effective, accountable and sustainable Council that serves the community G2. Put community needs at the core of everything we do and deliver excellent customer service

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to address a Council resolution of 28 July 2025 regarding the DV Safe Phone initiative and propose ways in which Council could be involved in this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- DV Safe Phone collects, refurbishes, and distributes donated mobile phones (with SIM cards and chargers) to domestic violence (DV) survivors through a national network of trained support agencies.
- Refurbished phones are an essential and private communication line that assists survivors of domestic violence to access emergency services, support networks, and rebuild their lives.
- Many Councils across Australia act as collection points and supporters of the DV Safe Phone initiative, and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) endorses local government involvement.
- Common locations at Councils for drop-off points include administrative buildings, libraries, and recycling or waste transfer stations.
- As of 2025, the impact of the initiative has been significant, with 42,342 phones donated at over 1,200 phone drop-off locations. Over 15,000 mobile phones have been distributed to DV survivors through 514 agency partners.
- Given Council's ongoing commitment to addressing domestic and family violence and its continued participation in the Lower North Shore Domestic and Family Violence Network, it is recommended that Council become a partner with DV Safe Phone and set up

collection points at Stanton Library, Council's Administrative Building, and The Coal Loader.

- It is further recommended that Council encourage the public to donate phones or funds by using Council's communication and social media channels to spread the word.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council become a collection partner for DV Safe Phones and encourage the public to donate phones or funds to the initiative.

2. THAT Council establish Stanton Library, Council's Administrative Building, and The Coal Loader as DV Safe mobile phone collection points.

3. THAT Council provide information through communication and social media channels to the public about DV Safe Phone and their services, such as volunteer opportunities, fundraising, and awareness raising.

4. THAT Council continue its ongoing participation in the Lower North Shore Domestic and Family Violence Network and support opportunities to collaborate with organisations to strengthen support for victim-survivors and identify and address service gaps.

Background

At its meeting of 28 July 2025, Council resolved:

- 1. THAT North Sydney Council looks to partner with DV Safe Phone to collect used phones that are then refurbished and donated to agencies that assist survivors of domestic violence.*
- 2. THAT a report comes to Council that includes consideration of collaboration with other organisations including the Mercy Foundation.*

[DVSafePhone](#) is an Australian not-for-profit charity founded in 2020. The organisation's mission is: *To empower domestic violence victims to live safe, connected lives through sustainable technology solutions.*

DV Safe Phone collects, refurbishes, and distributes donated mobile phones (with SIM cards and chargers) to DV survivors through a national network of over 514 agency partners, including DV agencies, police stations, hospitals, and safe houses across Australia. Corporate partners provide funds for the work and organisations can volunteer to become a collection point. For example, a network of Rotary Clubs collaborates with DV Safe Phone to collect phones. Both North Ryde and Northbridge Rotary in the northern Sydney area report they act as collection points.

When refurbished and distributed, the phones are an essential and private communication line for victim-survivors, often a critical tool in their "escape plan" to access emergency services, support networks, and rebuild their lives, especially when victims' personal devices are destroyed, monitored, or confiscated by abusers. DV Safe Phone does not give phones directly to victims; instead, it works through trained professionals.

Report

Local Government Involvement

In January 2023, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) invited councils to partner with DV Safe Phone. Councils were invited to become a 'Registered Phone Drop Location', with locations placed on an [Australia-wide map](#).

The following include examples of partner Councils in both NSW and other Australian states:

- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Wollondilly Shire Council
- Penrith City Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Orange Shire Council
- Cumberland City Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Whitsunday Council
- Corangamite Shire Council
- Hepburn Shire Council

- Burnside Library
- Cardinia Shire Council

Common locations at Councils for drop-off points include administrative buildings, libraries, and recycling or waste transfer stations. The Coal Loader already collects disused phones, so these could be donated to DV Safe Phone.

Impact of DV Safe Phone initiative

The impact of the initiative has been significant, with to date, 42,342 phones have been donated at over 1,200 phone drop-off locations, and over 15,000 mobile phones have been distributed to DV survivors through 514 agency partners.

Alternative Providers and Funding Connections

Member organisations of the Lower North Shore Domestic and Family Violence (LNS DFV) Network report using DV Safe Phone and the Women's Services Network ([Wesnet](#)) to source phones. Wesnet's Safe Connections Program provides free smartphones (with credit) donated by Telstra to survivors of domestic violence and trains frontline workers in tech safety. With funding supplemented by the Australian Government's Safer Technology for Women initiative, Wesnet supports over 290 DV services nationally.

Collaboration

Organisations that are either partners of DV Safe Phone or affiliated with Wesnet, for example Women and Children First (accommodate local women and children on Sydney's Northern Beaches and North Shore), have accessed philanthropic grants from organisations such as the Mercy Foundation. In 2025, Women and Children First received a Mercy Foundation grant for the "Fast Track to Independence" initiative supporting families escaping domestic violence.

Council is an active member of the LNS DFV Network, which meets six times a year. Established in the 1990s, the Network provides a vital forum for DV practitioners and related services to:

- discuss emerging issues affecting clients;
- share information to improve practice;
- develop strategies to raise community awareness; and
- collaborate to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic violence in the region.

The network brings together diverse sectors - community organisations, health, legal, housing, education - offering collective expertise, strong referral pathways, and a collaborative approach that strengthens support for victim-survivors and helps identify and address service gaps. Given Council's ongoing commitment to addressing DV, continued participation in the Network is essential, with it being a central point of contact for Council's collaborations.

Benefits

- DV Safe Phone is a provider of refurbished phones through a trusted network and is used by local organisations like Mary's House.
- Council will join other Councils and centres that host collection points to become part of a national safety net, amplifying their reach and impact of the DV Safe Phone initiative.
- The community will meaningfully contribute by donating phones which are either refurbished or responsibly recycled, reducing e-waste and giving old devices a second life
- The phones are a tangible way for individuals and organisations to contribute without needing new funding or infrastructure.
- For many victim-survivors, the mobile phone becomes an important lifeline to call for help, access support services, or stay connected without being tracked.
- Hosting collection points in visible spaces like the library sparks community conversations about domestic violence, safety, and inclusion. Stanton Library has the added benefit of hosting a regular Lifeline Counselling service.
- Council is positioned as a safety aware, DV friendly and proactive supporter with visible leadership in the community.
- Being part of this initiative demonstrates leadership in gender equity and community safety, consistent with Council's Social Inclusion Strategy.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

Financial/Resource Implications

The cost and resourcing to Council is minimal: signage, setting up collection points at two additional locations, and promotion of the initiative. These costs can be incorporated into existing budgets and resourcing via existing Council communication channels. There will also be a modest cost borne by Council for posting mobile phones for repurposing to DV Safe Phone in Mooloolaba QLD.

Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to this report.

- The Telecommunications (Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Consumer Protections) Industry Standard 2025, sets out enforceable obligations for telcos to support victim-survivors of domestic violence.
- The Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) in protecting the personal information collected (e.g. for logistics or partnerships). All data is to be handled in compliance with the Privacy Act. DV Safe Phone is committed to wiping clean any traces of previous personal data on donated phones.