

Statement for Launch of ‘Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women’ Report

(Parliament House, 12 August 2026)

This report is confronting because it exposes the real-world impact of online abuse. The harm is real. The impact is real. And the people targeted are real. The abuse directed at Collective Shout did not stay online. It affected real people and continues to do so.

As Australia’s Human Rights Commissioner and Sex Discrimination Commissioner respectively, we want to be clear: the behaviour documented in this report must be unequivocally condemned. Threats, harassment, doxxing, deepfakes and misogynistic abuse are not part of healthy public debate. They are not harmless online behaviour. They cause real harm to real people.

We should also reject the claim that any attempt to address this kind of targeted abuse is an attack on free speech. It is not. Freedom of expression should never be used as a shield for conduct designed to intimidate or threaten people.

What happened to Collective Shout is not an isolated incident. It is part of a broader pattern of online abuse, misinformation and misogyny that is undermining democratic participation and making our online spaces less safe, particularly for women who speak out and engage in public life.

We want to thank the Online Hate Prevention Institute for bringing these experiences into the light, and to acknowledge the courage of the women from Collective Shout for continuing to speak out despite the abuse they have faced.

Creating safer online spaces is not optional. It is urgent. And it is a responsibility we all share.

Dr Anne Cody, Sex Discrimination Commissioner

Dr Lorraine Finlay, Human Rights Commissioner