

Victims of Crime Help Card

Assistance for Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
victims/survivors of crimes
caused by family violence
and/or sexual assault.



**Aboriginal Family
Violence Prevention
& Legal Service Victoria**
**Standing Firm Against
Family Violence**

How can the justice system help victims of crime?

The Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) can help victims/survivors to recover from the impacts of the crime including family violence and sexual assault. There are time limits and the victim must apply within two years of the crime occurring. However in certain circumstances exceptions may be made to this rule.

Who can apply for assistance?

You can apply to VOCAT if:

- a crime occurred in Victoria and you were the direct victim of a crime, or
- the parent of a child who was the victim of a crime, or
- if you were injured by

witnessing or trying to prevent a crime.

How can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people apply for assistance?

In Victoria there is a special Koori list within VOCAT. The Registrar who manages this list is aware of the types of issues that affect our community and tries to manage cases in a way that responds to those issues.

Always get legal advice before applying to VOCAT about your specific situation and whether VOCAT is likely to assist. FVPLS lawyers will help with preparing the application, getting supporting documentation, and organising representation (if required).

What type of assistance can be provided?

Assistance can include:

- financial support,

- funeral expenses,
- reimbursement of medical expenses,
- loss of wages,
- access to counselling,
- safety expenses, and
- other forms of assistance which may help you with recovery.

When deciding the type and amount of assistance provided, VOCAT will take into consideration matters such as:

- the type of crime,
- the extent to which it affected you, and
- the evidence available to support your case.

What type of evidence is required?

VOCAT must be satisfied that the crime occurred, and that you had a physical or psychological injury as a result. Where there is no criminal

conviction, evidence could include police records, hospital records, or evidence from witnesses or support workers (i.e. a family violence worker).

VOCAT might ask for a report from a counsellor about how the crime affected you psychologically, a doctor about the extent of the injuries and what types of assistance will assist your recovery. VOCAT will usually cover the cost of these reports.

VOCAT requires victims of crime to report the crime to police. If this has not been done, there is an opportunity to explain to VOCAT why a police report was not made. You should understand that VOCAT may decide not

provide assistance unless a police report has been made.

VOCAT is able to access your criminal history and may require you to answer questions about it.

Will I have to go to a hearing?

VOCAT can make an order “on the papers” based on the documentation provided, or you can choose to attend to explain in person how the crime affected you.

In some situations VOCAT might call for witnesses or other parties to attend a hearing. An FVPLS Victoria lawyer can give you advice about this.

How long will the process take?

VOCAT can make an urgent award but generally awards are made up to 12 months or longer depending on the amount of additional information VOCAT requires.

Useful Contacts

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal:

1800 882 752

Victims of Crime Helpline: **1800 819 817**

FVPLS Victoria: **1800 105 303**

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service:

1800 064 865

Sexual Assault Crisis Line (CASA house):

1800 806 292 (24hrs)

Aboriginal Women’s Family Violence
Crisis Accommodation & Support

• Elizabeth Morgan House: **03 9482 5744**

• Meminar Ngangg Gimba (Mildura):

03 5022 5000

• Orana Gunyah (Morwell): **03 5120 0600**

Safe Steps Family Violence Response
Centre: **1800 015 188** (24hrs)

Men’s Referral Service: **1800 065 973**

Women’s Information and Referral

Exchange: **1300 134 130**

Lifeline: **131 114**

Police or Ambulance: **000**



FVPLS Victoria

**Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention
& Legal Service Victoria**

Standing Firm Against Family Violence

Servicing Victoria with offices in:

Melbourne

Warrnambool

Bairnsdale

Mildura

1800 105 303

The information in this card is general information only. It is not legal advice. You should contact a lawyer for legal advice.

The information is current at time of publishing in March 2017 but may change without notice.