

## What happens next?

Once you have made your Victim Impact Statement you need to give it to the Victims Support Service as least five days prior to the expected sentencing. They will check your statement to make sure that it does not contain material that cannot be read to the court and will help you make any required changes.

The Victims Support Service will ensure that your Victim Impact Statement is complete and then provide it to the Court.

Your Victim Impact Statement can be read out in court prior to sentencing of the convicted person. You can choose to read it out or the Court will arrange this to be done by another person. You may be asked questions in court about the contents of your Victim Impact Statement by the judge or magistrate. This does not happen very often.

Once your statement has been read out in court, it can be reported by the media in the same way that most information provided in open court can be reported. In cases involving sexual offences, information cannot be reported that would identify a child as a victim.

## Getting help

For further information or assistance with making a Victim Impact Statement, please contact:

### Victim of Crime Service

1300 300 238 (local call cost only)

### Victims Assistance Unit

email: [victims@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:victims@justice.tas.gov.au)

You can also speak to the Police Officers involved in your case or the prosecutor who can arrange for you to see a Victims of Crime worker in Hobart, Launceston or Devonport to assist you to make your Victim Impact Statement.

## contact us

### Victims Support Service

Level 1 54 Victoria Street  
Hobart 7000

Toll Free: 1300 663 773

Email: [victims@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:victims@justice.tas.gov.au)

[www.justice.tas.gov.au/victims](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/victims)

Victims Support Service  
Department of Justice



# Having your say

## Victim Impact Statement Form



Victims Support Service  
Department of Justice



## A chance to have a voice

It is common for victims of crime to feel powerless and without a voice in the criminal justice system. You can now be heard through a document called a Victim Impact Statement. It is your chance to tell the court about the effect that the crime has had on you – physically, emotionally and financially. You can even choose to read your Victim Impact Statement to the court.

You can make a Victim Impact Statement if you have been the victim of an indictable crime. Tasmania Police, the Victims of Crime Service or the Victims Support Service can tell you whether a crime is an indictable crime.

## The benefits to you and the justice system

While every situation is different, victims have found that making a Victim Impact Statement is helpful in coming to terms with the effects of crime. Some victims find that while writing a Victim Impact Statement can be challenging, it can also be healing because it helps them acknowledge the reality and extent of the impact of the crime.

By making a Victim Impact Statement, the court will know what the effects of the crime have been on you and will be able to take those into account when sentencing the convicted person.

The Victim Impact Statement is entirely voluntary and if you choose not to make one, the court will not assume that because there is no statement there was little or no harm suffered. If you want to make one, you will need to ensure that it gets to the Victims Assistance Unit at least five days prior to the expected sentencing of the convicted person. You can also make changes at any time prior to it being read to the court.

## Making a Victim Impact Statement

A Victim Impact Statement must be written or typed. You can use the Victim Impact Statement form, or you can write or type your own.

As Victim Impact Statements detail the physical, financial and emotional effects suffered by you as a result of a crime, it can sometimes be very hard to put these feelings and effects into words. Be patient, it might take a few attempts to get it right.

You can also get help to write it. If you are seeing a counsellor, psychologist or someone from a support service, you can ask them to help you. You can get help from the Victims of Crime Service or the Victims Support Service. Contact details are on the back of this brochure.

## What do I write?

There are a few rules about making a Victim Impact Statement. You should include information about the effects of the crime:

- If you suffered physical injuries, a description of those injuries, including any pain suffered, and any treatment you have had or may still be having, together with a statement about how those injuries have impacted on your life.
- If you suffered financial loss, details of the loss and how the loss has impacted on your life and lifestyle.
- If you have suffered emotional or psychological harm, a description of how you have suffered (including any treatment) and any impacts on you, your relationships and family, your work, and your lifestyle.
- Any other effects that you believe are important and should be considered by the court.

You should not include:

- Any detailed description of the crime. The prosecutor will provide this information to the court
- Any abuse or vilification of the convicted person
- Offensive language
- Comments on the police, court or justice systems
- An opinion on the sentence that the court should give.

Concentrate on how the offence has affected you and your family.

Where you are making a Victim Impact Statement as a result of the unlawful death of a family member, you might wish to include a description of your loved one – who that person was to you, the life they led, your relationship with them, whether you were dependent on them for emotional, financial or physical support and how your life has changed as a result of the death.