

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone 03 6165 7678
Email Barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



Mr Peter George MP
Independent Member for Franklin
By email: haprocedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

17 SEP 2026

Dear Mr George

Constituency Question - Simplified Pathway for Victims of Crime Compensation

Thank you for your question in Parliament on 19 August 2026 on behalf of a constituent requesting information about improvements to our Victims of Crime Compensation scheme.

Question

A constituent raises deep concerns about the delays and retraumatising treatment of victims of crime within Tasmania's justice system, particularly for survivors of family sexual abuse. Survivors are often required to repeatedly justify their experiences despite substantial evidence of harm. My constituent asks for a separation of victims of crime compensation matters into specialised streams to reduce delays and improve consistency; the creation of a simplified pathway for compensation claims arising from sexual abuse where there has been a criminal conviction to reduce lengthy and distressing assessment processes; and trained trauma-informed workers within the Justice Department to improve how victims and survivors are supported through the process, particularly in cases of sexual abuse. Will the Government commit to making these important changes to the system?

Response

The Department of Justice provides a range of trauma-informed services to support victim-survivors and their families. This includes the Victims of Crime service which assists victims to navigate the criminal justice system, including practical assistance with criminal compensation applications.

The *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* (the Act) provides a mechanism for compensation for victims of violent crime perpetrated by one person against another, excluding motor vehicles.

Under the Act, assistance available to victims includes for the payment of costs of medical bills, counselling and support services, as well as compensation for pain and suffering to victims of violent crime where the victim has suffered an injury or death.

As all violent crimes against the person are inherently traumatic and distressing, the Tasmanian Government acknowledges the seriousness of all such offences. All Criminal Injury Compensation Commissioners are experienced in working with victims of all types of violent crimes. To ensure best practice, all Commissioners and staff employed by the Department of Justice in the Victims Assistance Unit receive regular trauma-informed training to support the work they do. This is also consistent with recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

Our Government recognises that the criminal justice system can be a daunting prospect for victims of crime and we are committed to ensuring the process provides an appropriate level of support for victims. To that end, I have asked the Tasmania Law Reform Institute to undertake a review of the Act. Details of this review are still being finalised however the scope will include any potential reforms that would:

- improve the operation of the legislation and functions of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Commissioners
- identify desirable changes to jurisdiction, powers, practices and/or procedures under the Act and the Department's Victims Assistance Unit that would better serve the needs of victims of crime
- improve the management of applications
- make the operation of the scheme more trauma-informed
- any other related matter, including consideration of the needs of Tasmanians, and prioritising available resources and support to victims of crime in the most effective manner in a budget-constrained environment.

This review will be undertaken in consultation with stakeholders, and I trust it will identify reforms for the Government to continue to support victims of crime. Thank you for advocating for this on behalf of your constituent

Yours sincerely



Hon Guy Barnett MP
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