



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Peter Cain MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Human Rights

Redirected to: Human Rights Commission

Reference: Victims of Crime Commissioner, ACT Human Rights Commission, JACS

Hearing: 19 February 2025

In relation to: Victims' Rights and Advocacy

Question received: 25 February 2025

Answer Due: 7 March 2025

[\[Insert details of question on notice\]](#)

(1) How does the CST monitor and resolve concerns raised under the Charter of Victim Rights?

(2) What are some common issues raised by clients?

(3) How does Victim Support collaborate with ACT Policing to address concerns raised by clients about their treatment during investigations?

Margie Rowe: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

37.1 How does the CST monitor and resolve concerns raised under the Charter of Victim Rights?

The Charter of Victim Rights (the Charter) commenced in January 2021 and is contained in the *Victims of Crime Act 1994*. The Charter protects and promotes the rights of victims of crime when they engage with justice agencies in the criminal justice system.

Where a victim of crime raises a victims' rights concern with the Victims of Crime Commissioner, the Commissioner or Victim Support ACT (VSACT) staff, including the Client Services Team (CST), will:

- Acknowledge and seek to understand the victims' rights concern raised and the outcomes sought by the victim;
- Provide information to the victim about the actions that VSACT staff can take to try and resolve the concern, and where appropriate, provide information about options for the victim to make a complaint to other relevant complaints bodies, eg the Disability and

Community Service Commissioner or the Australian Federal Police's Workplace Issues and Complaints Resolution team;

- Where the victim consents, take all reasonable steps to try and resolve the victims rights concern as soon as practicable. This may include seeking information from the justice agency involved and liaising with the justice agency to seek resolution of the concern;
- If the victims' rights concern cannot be resolved and the victim consents, make referrals to relevant complaints bodies, eg the Disability and Community Services Commissioner or the Australian Federal Police's Workplace Issues and Complaints Resolution team
- Record the victims' rights concern, including actions taken to resolve the concern, any referrals made and any recommendations for improvements to criminal justice processes or procedures.

VSACT and other justice agencies received permanent funding to meet their obligations under the Charter. This funding supports a part-time VSACT Victims' Rights Advocate who works directly with victims of crime, with VSACT staff including the CST, and with victim rights liaison officers in other justice agencies to ensure that victims' rights concerns raised with VSACT are resolved effectively and efficiently.

In the last two years VSACT staff including the CST have received justice advocacy training developed and delivered specifically for the team by Dr Robyn Holder from Griffith University and Professor Meg Garvin from the US National Crime Victim Law Institute. The training focused on building staff knowledge of the criminal justice system and developing skills related to protecting and promoting victim rights.

37.2 What are some common issues raised by clients?

In the last financial year, the most common areas of victims' rights concerns have been with respect to a justice agency not engaging with a victim respectfully and with appropriate regard to the victim's personal situation, needs, concerns, rights and dignity as required by s 14C of the *Victims of Crime Act 1994* (the Act) (100 victims' rights concerns raised), and ACT Policing not updating victims about the status of investigations as per s 16A of the Act (30 victims' rights concerns raised).

The third most common issue that victims raised with the Victims of Crime Commissioner in 2023-24, was that justice agencies did not ensure a victim is provided with, or is able to access any special requirement the victim is entitled to in relation to a proceeding for the offence under the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1991* and any aid or adjustment that is reasonably necessary to enable the victim to fully participate in the administration of justice for the offence as required by s 15A of the Act (20 victims' rights concerns raised).

37.3 How does Victim Support collaborate with ACT Policing to address concerns raised by clients about their treatment during investigations?

The majority of victims' rights concerns raised with the Victims of Crime Commissioner or VSACT are in relation to ACT Policing.

Where victims' rights concerns about ACT Policing are raised, VSACT staff will follow the steps outlined in response to 37.1 and work collaboratively with ACT Policing to seek to resolve the

concern as soon as practicable. To support this, VSACT has developed productive working relationships with ACT Policing, including with their Victim Rights Liaison Officer and the Victim Liaison Office team, in order to enhance VSACT's understanding of police procedures and priorities and to enhance ACT Policing's understanding of both their and VSACT's roles and responsibilities under the Charter. These close working relationships provide VSACT with effective pathways to seek information about specific victim rights concerns and to work together with ACT Policing towards timely resolution of victims' rights concerns.

The VSACT Victims' Rights Advocate in particular works very closely with the ACT Policing Victim Rights Liaison Officer. This includes facilitation of weekly visits by the ACT Policing Victim Rights Liaison Officer to VSACT in order to maintain and enhance the working relationship between VSACT and ACT Policing and to resolve victims rights concerns in a collaborative and coordinated way.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:



Date: **7/03/2025**

Margie Rowe - A/g Victims of Crime Commissioner