



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

Reference: Attorney-General

Hearing: 19/02/2025

In relation to: Victim Support ACT

Question received: 25/02/2025

Answer Due: 05/03/2025

1. How successful has Victim Support been in recruiting practitioners who specialise in working with priority groups such as children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and culturally diverse communities?
2. What gaps remain in these services?
3. Given the 88% increase in client numbers since 2018–19, has there been a corresponding increase in funding for Victim Support to ensure adequate service delivery?

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Therapeutic services to children under 12 years old are best provided face to face. There is a limited number of providers with both the required qualifications and skills to work with children under 12 years old and who can provide face to face services in the ACT. Victim Support ACT (VSACT) currently has less than 10 providers who can work with children under 12 years of age and generally these providers will only take limited numbers of clients.

In the last financial year VSACT has recruited two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers to provide specialist therapeutic services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and to supplement the work of other providers who have a strong, professional background in working with the community. VSACT currently has three identified positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who work closely with the community and assist in identifying and recruiting practitioners with specialisation in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

VSACT currently has approximately 120 practitioners who work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and we maintain focus on recruiting practitioners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Where we are not able to access a practitioner

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with particular language skills TIS services will be used, and our multicultural officer provides tailored support to victims of crime from multicultural backgrounds.

2. There is a significant gap in availability of providers with the required qualifications and skills to work with victims of crime under 12 years old and who are able to provide face to face therapeutic services. There are early signs that providers in general are becoming less willing to provide face to face therapeutic services and this is expected to exacerbate this gap.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have successfully gained trust in the community which has resulted in increased engagement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of crime with VSACT. However, while many practitioners work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of crime there is a gap in both identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers and providers with the specialist skills and cultural knowledge to gain the trust of the community.

3. The increase in demand for the Victims Services Scheme (VSS) service delivery has necessitated additional funding over several years. The 2021/22 Budget provided additional ongoing funding for an additional two FTE to manage the increased demand and an additional \$500,000 per annum for VSS service provider payments. In the 2022/23 Budget Review, the government allocated recurrent funding of \$1.615m over four years to provide services to family members of victims whose death resulted from a motor vehicle offence and the implementation of PAVER (Project Assisting Victims Experience and Recovery Review) recommendations which include work to improve delivery of client-centred services. In the 2023/24 Budget, an additional three FTE were provided for the VSS over 2 financial years to progress outstanding recommendations made in the Project Assisting Victims' Experience and Recovery (PAVER) Review. In the 2024/25 Budget, \$1.057m was allocated over four years (indexed and ongoing) for the VSS to increase the amount paid to psychologists and social workers providing counselling under the scheme to \$200 per hour and to supplement base Victim Support Scheme funding. This response does not include additional funding for the Financial Assistance Scheme or ICT solutions for Victims Support ACT.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:



By the Minister for Human Rights, Ms Tara Cheyne MLA

Date:

7/3/25