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Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2025-26 Budget Estimates

Hon Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Victims

Thursday 5 June 2025



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Delivering on our commitments

Supports for victims from 1 July 2024 - 30 April 2025



17,877

Calls were made to the Victims of Crime Helpline for support (including call backs)



9,647*

Victims were supported by the Victims Assistance Program

*as of 31 March 2025



548

Requests for assistance through the Intermediary Program



1,181

Children and their families were supported by the Child and Youth Witness Service



1,579

Total active registrations on the Victims Register



18,508

Family violence matters referred to the Helpline, including 17,511 L17 male victim referrals from Victoria Police

Delivering on our commitments to support victims of crime

Legal support through the Victims Legal Service since commencement of 14 March 2023:



As of 31 March 2025:

- 6,678 enquiries responded to by the VLS Helpline
- 587 referrals to VLS providers for ongoing assistance.



As of 31 December 2024:

- Victoria Legal Aid and Community Legal Centres provided over 3,123 services to over 2,497 victims.



Victim Support 2025-2026 Budget overview

Victims Legal Service

- The Victims Legal Service (VLS) launched on 14 March 2023 to provide legal assistance to victims of crime.
- The 2025-26 Budget provides \$3.2 million for the Victims' Legal Service.
- In March 2024, the service expanded under an Australian Government pilot program to provide support to victims seeking to protect their confidential communications and to Aboriginal women wanting support in reporting sexual violence to police.
- The Australian Government recently committed further funding to extend and expand the pilot program for the next 4 years.

Financial Assistance Scheme 2025-26 Budget Overview



The 2025-26 Budget provides
**\$284.2 million in 2025-26 for
continued operations**

(\$70.0 million per year for awards and
\$4.2 million in 2025-26 for operations)

This latest investment sees more than \$470 million invested in the establishment of the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) and transition from the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal.

The FAS has transformed the way victims of violent crime apply for, and access, financial assistance, providing a streamlined and trauma-informed approach that helps victims recover.



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Financial Assistance Scheme

Key features



Increased maximum amounts of financial assistance

Doubled up to \$20,000 or \$25,000 for primary victims



Timeframe expansion

Adult victims have up to three years to make an application or ten years for sexual or family violence offences



Guided application process

Access to a portal to view status, communicate with FAS and submit variation requests



Authorised representatives

Can submit applications on a victim's behalf and can be someone who has a personal or professional relationship



Expanded definition of primary victim

Now includes children exposed to an act of violence.



Recognition statements and meetings

Acknowledge the effects of the act of violence on the victim and express the State's condolences

Financial Assistance Scheme

Key features (cont.)



Definition of close family member

Recognises close personal relationships



No pooling of financial assistance

For related victims of homicide



Connected to wider victim-support system

Referrals to other victim services for extra support



Specialist Aboriginal Support pathway

With a dedicated phone line and specialist staff trained on best practices for working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



Expanded definition of relevant offence

To include more sexual offences, such as image-based sexual offences

Spotlight: Financial Assistance Scheme



Enhancements made to the FAS based on stakeholder feedback

- Removal of identity verification requirements for legal representatives and their clients.
- Direct service provider payment process.
- Continued engagement with stakeholders and establishment of a FAS Advisory Group.
- Additional resources for the Contact Centre and intake and triage.
- Review of FAS Guidelines.



Thank you

