

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Victim Support
Witness:	Ms Rebecca Falkingham
Committee member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
Page/s of transcript:	4

Relevant text: (copy and paste from transcript)

Mr D O'BRIEN: Secretary, the output summary by departmental objective states that the victim and community support services for this year will receive \$35.7 million. Can I please get a breakdown of how that is allocated within victim support? I do not know if you will have something as detailed as that right now.

Ms FALKINGHAM: We are happy to take that on notice, Mr O'Brien.

Answer:

To clarify, as per Budget Paper 3 (pg. 263), the 2019-20 output summary by departmental objectives for Victims and Community Support Services is \$75.7 million. Of the \$75.7 million, the Victims Support Agency received \$25.58 million.

Portfolio:	Victim Support
Witness:	Mr Ryan Phillips and Mr Ben Carroll
Committee member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
Page of transcript:	5

Relevant text: (copy and paste from transcript)

Mr D O'BRIEN: So just confirming, 8148 electronic referrals—is that calls and emails, website? Is that a combination of all of the above?

Mr CARROLL: Yes.

Mr D O'BRIEN: And that was per calendar year, was it?

Mr CARROLL: That was, yes, for the 2018 calendar year.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Could I get on notice an update of the figure for this year as well, if you do not have it there, so far?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Year to date?

Mr D O'BRIEN: Year to date, yes. Could I also ask how many of the calls or other contacts were longest unanswered?

Mr PHILLIPS: We do not have the details of that for you today, but we will take that on notice and then come back to you.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Sure. Likewise, how many of the calls were logged as ongoing—so whether they are continuing?

Mr PHILLIPS: Yes, sure.

Mr D O'BRIEN: You may be able to answer, Mr Phillips, what mechanisms are used to report and log these calls. Is it just a database?

Mr PHILLIPS: It is an internal database which we can provide you with more details on.

Mr D O'BRIEN: That would be great if you could do that. At the helpline, how many staff are actually employed?

Mr PHILLIPS: I will supply you with more details on that as well.

Answer:

From 1 January 2019 to 14 June 2019, the Victims of Crime Helpline received 3,593 Victoria Police electronic referrals. In relation to other electronic referrals, the Helpline also received 7,597 L17 Family Violence referrals during this period.

From 1 January 2019 to 14 June 2019, the Victims of Crime Helpline received 6,338 calls. It takes, on average, 11 seconds for the Helpline to answer a call.

The Victims of Crime Helpline is an intake, triage and referral service. The Helpline does not provide case management and therefore does not log calls as ongoing.

The systems used to record and log calls to the Victims of Crime Helpline are QMaster and Resolve Case Management System.

The Victims of Crime Helpline currently has a total of 18.7 FTE (maximum of five FTE per shift) and operates seven days a week including public holidays from 8am until 11 pm.

Portfolio:	Victim Support
Witness:	Ms Rebecca Falkingham
Committee member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
Page of transcript:	6

Relevant text: (copy and paste from transcript)

Mr D O'BRIEN: How many of those are there dedicated to this task of supporting victims at courts?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We can take that on notice in terms of individual jurisdictions. What I can say, though, is the additional court capacity initiative in the 18–19 budget provides for significant new investment for recruitment of new staff to meet rising demand for increased numbers of hearings and, more importantly, more specialised support services to reduce trauma for victims and their families. As you might know, Mr O'Brien, we are also trialling a number of family violence-related Navigator services for people experiencing the court system. But to have a number of staff court-by-court, happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

Mr D O'BRIEN: That would be great. And just finally, Minister, again, the coalition had a policy at the election to introduce a victims of crime compatibility statement with all justice legislation. Is that a policy you will consider adopting?

The CHAIR: Minister, you will have to take that on notice—

Mr CARROLL: Sure.

Answer:

Supporting victims at court

The Victims Assistance Program (VAPs) provide flexible case management support services to victims of crime against the person, including practical support and therapeutic interventions to manage the effects of violent crime. The VAPs also provide support to help victims navigate the criminal justice system, including providing court support at different courts.

Victims can also access the Office of Public Prosecutions' Witness Assistance Service for assistance before, during and after court. The Witness Assistance Service has 16 experienced social workers. There are also Court Network volunteers who provide support to people who attend court.

Victims of Crime Compatibility Statement

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to putting victims first and ensuring that victims have a voice throughout the criminal justice system.

The Government consults with victims on the development of all laws and policies that may have an impact on victims, including through the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee and by engaging with other victims' representatives. The department also provides policy

expertise on all reforms to ensure that they reflect victims' views. The independent Victims of Crime Commissioner also plays a key role in advocating for the needs of victims.

We are currently considering a range of reforms to ensure that victims have a voice throughout the criminal justice system, including through the introduction of legislative safeguards.