

Questions taken on notice

Portfolio:	Victim Support
Witness:	Ms Peta McCammon
Committee member:	Mr David Limbrick
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Relevant text:

Mr LIMBRICK: Okay. On page 98 of budget paper 3 under the item ‘Sustainable delivery of prosecution services’ there is a reference to funding for the OPP to provide support for victims and witnesses. Could you please clarify what that support entails?

Ms HUTCHINS: It specifically says the OPP, does it? I might have to ask the Secretary to supplement the answer to that.

Ms FALKINGHAM: I think the Deputy Secretary is going to take this one on notice.

Ms McCAMMON: I think we might have to take that on notice, because I understand that is in the A-G’s portfolio.

Answer:

The Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP) supports victims and witnesses via a multidisciplinary model where social workers in the Victim and Witness Assistance Service (VWAS) work collaboratively with solicitors to provide:

- Consultation throughout the prosecution processes, including early engagement and allocation of a VWAS social worker to each case for ongoing support
- Information on general court processes, including providing general information about processes such as Victim Impact Statements
- Conferencing with victims and witnesses, for example, to obtain their views on certain prosecution decisions and to provide reasons for those decisions
- Arranging court tours and court hearing support from Court Network
- Debriefing after court hearings
- Remote witness facility support to assist victims and witnesses in giving evidence by video-link
- Referrals to other support services, including the Child Witness Service and the Victim Assistance Programs, particularly for regional matters
- Access to the OPP Court Support Dog Program.

The support the OPP provides to victims and witnesses is conducted in accordance with its obligations under the *Director’s Policy* and the *Victims’ Charter Act 2006*, including to:

- treat victims with courtesy, respect, dignity and sensitivity

- establish an early relationship with the victim
- address the individual priorities of a victim and not make assumptions about what is in the victim’s interests
- proactively explain the prosecution and resolution process to the victim and provide timely information
- seek the views of victims before making some prosecution decisions
- provide information about the outcome of bail applications.

Portfolio:	Victim Support – Consumer Affairs Liquor, Gaming and Dispute Services
Witness:	Ms Rebecca Falkingham
Committee member:	Mr David Limbrick
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Relevant text:

Mr LIMBRICK: *Oh. Okay. All right. Thank you. On page 309 of budget paper 3, under the heading ‘Victims of family violence assisted with financial counselling’, it says that the target was 3750 but the expected outcome was only 2400. What were some of the factors that played into this, and what other options were considered and used in order to help ensure the service was accessible for victims?*

Ms HUTCHINS: *I just need a minute. I think what we will try and find is the figures that you have just referred to. If I could just say on the family violence assistance front, certainly not all of the cases that are brought to our attention get followed through in the processes that we would ideally like to see. Unfortunately so many people pull out. But I might throw to the Secretary.*

Ms FALKINGHAM: *Thanks, Mr Limbrick. This matter actually falls within the minister for consumer affairs’ portfolio, but we are happy to provide you that data offline.*

Answer:

The family violence financial counselling service was available to victim survivors of family violence through the entirety of the lockdowns.

The anticipated 2020-21 expected outcome was lower than the target due to a variety of factors related to COVID-19, resulting in decreased client presentation for services.

The financial year actual result is now available for 2020-21. In total 3,178 victims of family violence were assisted with financial counselling, against a target of 3,750. There was an increase in the client presentation numbers following the lifting of restrictions.