



## A brief overview of Victim Impact Statements (VIS)

A Victim Impact Statement (VIS) is a statement about the impact that a crime has had on the victim, once an offender has been convicted and is to be sentenced. A VIS can provide you with an opportunity to participate in the criminal justice process by informing the court about the effects of the crime on you. Please check with the prosecutor to see if you are able to write a VIS in your particular matter.

A Victim Impact Statement is voluntary. You do not have to make a VIS if you do not want to – the decision is yours alone. It is important to know that the court does not assume that because there is no VIS that there was little or no harm suffered as a result of the crime.

A VIS is given to the court after the offender has been convicted and before the offender is sentenced. You may wish to write your own statement or you can get some help from a family member or a friend. The prosecutor can also arrange for the VIS to be prepared by someone else. For example, if you have a counsellor you may prefer that person prepare the VIS or, if you are unable to write the VIS yourself then a professional report can be arranged.

If you want to have a VIS given to the court you must let the prosecutor know as soon as possible, particularly if a professional is required to write the report.

The VIS describes the direct effects of the crime on you. The court will only consider the effect of those offences of which the offender has been convicted. If the VIS refers to the effect resulting from

## ***VIS Information Package***

The Victim Impact Statement Information Package can provide you with more information.

If you are unsure about doing a Victim Impact Statement or want more information you can contact the Witness Assistance Service (WAS) of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) using the contact details below:



**Sydney** (02) 9285 8606  
**Toll Free** 1800 814 534



[odpp.nsw.gov.au](http://odpp.nsw.gov.au)

Alternatively, you can speak to the WAS Officer you have been in contact with previously.



other offences for which the offender was not convicted by the court, then those parts will not be included in the statement accepted by the court. If you are unsure about what is allowed to go in the VIS speak with the prosecutor.

The VIS must be accurate and detail the personal harm suffered (in the short or long term) as a result of the crime, including any physical injury or psychological/emotional harm. You can attach relevant medical reports that support your statement to the VIS.

The defence and accused are entitled to see a copy of the VIS prior to the sentencing. The defence is also entitled to cross-examine you or the author of the VIS about the contents in the

VIS. This may happen because the offender does not agree with parts of the statement.

Please be aware that the final decision about whether to submit the VIS, or parts of the VIS, to the court is made by the prosecutor.

Once a VIS has been given to, and is accepted by the court, the victim, or a member of their immediate family, or other representative of the victim, can read out all or part of the VIS to the court. If you wish to read your VIS to the court it is important to inform the prosecutor before the sentencing. The court will decide when the VIS can be read to the court and this will be sometime during the sentencing hearing.

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***If you would like to write a Victim Impact Statement please contact the prosecutor as soon as possible. The prosecutor will advise you on the required format for the statement if you wish to write your own or will make arrangements for a professional report.***

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