



Writing your Victim Impact Statement (VIS)



Writing a Victim Impact Statement

Writing a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) is your opportunity as a victim of a crime to tell the court how the crime has affected you. Writing a VIS for the court is voluntary.

You can get some help to write your VIS from a family member, friend or counsellor, as long as it is in your own words and you write about the impact the crime has had on you. If you are unable to write your own VIS special arrangements can be made for someone else to write the VIS.

There are a number of different ways of writing a VIS, depending on what is easiest for you. The VIS can be written in paragraphs or dot points, in letter style or using headings such as physical injuries and emotional impact. You may also be able to attach relevant reports to the VIS.

You can only write about what has changed in your life as a result of the offences for which the offender has been convicted and being sentenced for.

The crime itself and the impact of crime are different for everyone. This is why the VIS must be written in your own words.

Impacts of the crime you may wish to tell the court about could include:

- Physical injuries, impact on health, medical treatment
- Emotional impact and wellbeing
- Psychological or mental health impact
- Changes in your behaviour, attitudes, or how you think about things
- Changes in your normal coping skills
- Changes in your social life or impact on relationships with others
- Impact on your financial or housing situation; education or employment

These are just a few suggestions to think about. You may write about how the crime impacted on you at the time of the offence and/or any ongoing effects on your life. Some people may write a bit about their history, and then compare their life before and after the crime. The thoughts, feelings



and experiences must be your own as the victim of crime, rather than those of others.

The VIS is not an opportunity to express your feelings towards the offender, and it is not a letter to the offender. It is also better not to write about the facts of the case, make assumptions regarding the offender's behaviour, or discuss court outcomes in your VIS.

It is important to speak with the prosecutor about what you can and can't include in your VIS and what can be attached to your VIS.

Please try to get the VIS to the prosecutor at least 1 week before the sentence date. This gives the prosecutor time to let you know if any changes are needed or if anything needs to be taken out.

The VIS must be on A4 paper and may be up to 20 pages long. Statements commonly range from being a short paragraph to a few pages long. Be aware that your VIS will be read by the prosecutor, judge, defence and offender. Your VIS may also be read out loud in court by you or your representative if you wish. Think about the impact for you if reading the VIS at court.

The Witness Assistance Service (WAS) Officer at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) can assist with further information about writing a VIS and can help you arrange court support on the day of sentencing if required.

Remember to sign and date your VIS or the form attached to your VIS. (The form can be found at the back of the VIS Information Package). Do not include your address/phone details in your VIS.

If you need to discuss your Victim Impact Statement or need help with writing it, please do not hesitate to call the WAS or the ODPP Solicitor on (02) 9285 8606 or Toll Free on 1800 814 534.
