

Victims of Crime Services

If you have been the victim of domestic violence, you may be able to receive counselling and/or compensation or other support from NSW Victims Services, through the Victims Compensation Tribunal.

The information provided below outlines the services available.

Victims Support Line

The Victims Support Line provides 24 hour information, referral and support to victims of crime.

Victims Support Line staff can provide confidential emotional support, in addition to practical information on how to access the Approved Counselling Scheme, or how to access other groups and services that may assist you in your recovery. Victims Support Line staff will also give you information on your rights as a victim of crime.

All support and information can be provided in community languages via an interpreter or by using the TTY machine.

Victims Support Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Phone: **(02) 8688 5400** (Sydney metropolitan area only) or

Phone: **1800 633 063** (Freecall)

TTY: **8688 5575** (for people who use a TTY machine)

Counselling and support

The Approved Counselling Scheme provides free face to face counselling to victims of violent crimes that have occurred in New South Wales.

A written application needs to be made for this service. Contact **8688 5511** or visit the Victims Services website below for more information about the counselling scheme and application forms.

http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/pages/VS_counselling_approved

Compensation

If the domestic violence happened in New South Wales you may be eligible to receive victims compensation. Generally an application for compensation needs to occur within 2 years of the offence.

You can lodge the application yourself if you wish or be represented by a solicitor. The Law Society can provide you with names of solicitors in your local area who will



An Australian Government Initiative

assist you in completing your application. The number for the Law Society is **(02) 9926 0300 or 1800 422 713** (Toll Free Call outside metropolitan area).

For more information about the referral service visit the Law Society website:
http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/pages/VS_compensation

Incidents of domestic violence which may result in eligibility for victims compensation and counselling include violent criminal acts that cause injury, such as an assault, sexual assault, intimidation or harassment. You can also claim the compensable injury of *Domestic Violence* if you were injured as a result of intimidation or stalking in apparent contravention of an apprehended violence order.

Not every incident may be viewed as domestic violence and will result in an award of victims compensation. For example, if the act of violence does not constitute a criminal offence, compensation will not be awarded.

Compensation for the compensable injury of *Domestic Violence* ranges from \$7,500 to \$10,000.

The Domestic Violence page on the Victims Services website can give you more information about eligibility criteria and applying for compensation. The following case study is from the website.

Case Study: Domestic Violence

Ms MN was a 42 year old woman assaulted by her ex-defacto partner as he was returning the children from weekend access. The victim sustained a large laceration to her forehead and needed seven stitches. To support her injuries the victim provided copies of the hospital clinical notes and a number of recent colour photographs showing the scarring. The offender was charged with Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and the court took into account the report from his psychologist and the Probation and Parole Service and sentenced him to 200 hours community service.

Eight months after Ms MN lodged her claim she applied for an Interim Award, due to her financial circumstances. The Assessor awarded her \$2,500 as an Interim award.

In the final determination the Assessor awarded the victim "Facial: scarring (significant disfigurement)": \$8,400. This sum was reduced by the amount of the interim award made earlier, leaving \$5,900. As the claim was less than \$20,001 a deduction of \$750 was also applied. In addition, solicitor's costs of \$825 (including GST) and disbursements of \$32 (for cost of hospital clinical notes) were awarded.

Further information

You can also find information on the Victims of Crime website: This site gives practical support and information and links to people who can help victims of crime. Areas covered include safety, road trauma, court processes, victim impact statements, dealing with the media, victims registers, and support for victims outside NSW.

<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/voc>