

The official newsletter of Victim Support Australia, the national association for member crime victim services in Australia.

From the Chair

Welcome to this first edition of Victim Support Nationwide. Victim Support Australia had its beginnings in 1994 as the Australasian Victims of Crime Association when state and territory victim service providers and advocates came together for the World Society of Victimology International Symposium held in Adelaide. Since that time the Association has gradually developed with membership drawn from both government and non-government agencies in each state and territory, and diverse other advocates, policy makers and academics.

Victim Support Australia was established as a professional association to encourage and assist development of consistent, high quality, equitable and accessible support services for people victimised by crime throughout Australia, and to represent the interests, needs and rights of victims of crime to key decision makers. With the support of a bequest we have been able to engage in a number of activities that support our aims as an organisation.

Traditionally we have used the Annual General Meeting as the means of disseminating information about our activities as an organisation and what is happening in our respective jurisdictions. The AGM is an occasion for discussing ideas, receiving feedback and setting priorities. We hope to produce the newsletter at least twice a year as a means of expanding our information sharing about activities and key developments occurring around the country.

This edition is being circulated to member agencies and to those of you we know of who are committed to the support to victims of crime in your communities across Australia. For those of you who might be interested in membership we have included membership information and an application form.

To members I hope you find updates on the Association's activities informative. To others perhaps it will encourage you to consider membership. Your involvement in the Association can only strengthen our voice in helping to address the needs and rights of victims of crime in the community.

National Conference and the AGM

Each year Victim Support Australia provides support and some financial sponsorship towards a national conference in conjunction with agencies in the particular state or territory.

This year the ACT is hosting the National Victims of Crime Conference - "[Participatory Justice and Victims](#)" - in Canberra at the Australian National University on 17 & 18 September.

This will be followed by the Annual General Meeting to be held on 19 September.



CONFERENCE
Participatory Justice & Victims
Achieving justice for victims in local, national and international settings
17 & 18 SEPTEMBER 2012
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA



Participatory Justice and Victims:
Achieving justice for victims in local,
domestic and international settings

An international conference
17 & 18 September 2012
Canberra, Australia

<http://law.anu.edu.au/coast/events/victims/conf.html>

International Symposium World Society of Victimology

15th WSV Symposium in 2015 in Perth

World Society of Victimology President, Prof Dr. Marc Groenhuijsen announced the 15th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology will be hosted by Perth, Western Australia.

Harvey Hatch, Manager, Victim Support and Child Services WA and Chair, Victim Support Australia, welcomed the announcement at the Closing Ceremony in the World Forum in The Hague.

More information will be available soon.

National Research

Victim Support Australia is an industry partner with Melbourne University in Australia's first nationwide survey of victim experiences of justice. The research examines the experience of people with procedural justice being the extent to which their voice was heard, their treatment by authorities, and their access to support and assistance. The first phase of the research was funded by the Australian Research Council and conducted over 2006-09. Victim Support Australia member services in South Australia, the ACT and Western Australia facilitated the access of participants to the survey.

A second phase of the research aims to encourage a wider group of respondents from other states and territories and from regional and remote communities. Through a communications strategy that targets local media, we hope to encourage those victims of crime who haven't accessed established victim support services.

To those of you supporting victims in the community we would encourage the promotion of this survey to your clients.

The online survey can be accessed on the VSA website at:

→ www.victimsupport.org.au

The report on the initial research is available to members of VSA. Please contact us if you would like a copy.

Roundtable on People Trafficking

Since 2003 VSA has made representations to the Federal Government on issues related to people trafficking. As one of the few truly national victim associations, VSA was an inaugural member of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking (est. 2008). The Roundtable is hosted by the Federal Attorney General's Department and involves key victim support, law enforcement and prosecution agencies.

Drawing on members' experience of supporting victims of all types of crimes and in advocating for their interests in justice, VSA has provided substantive expertise. In particular, the VSA Standards on Crime Victim Services (2002) was an important source for the development of national guidelines for non-government agencies supporting victims of people trafficking. The guidelines are available at:

→ <http://www.ag.gov.au/Documents/people%20trafficking%20doc.pdf>

Victim Support Australia was represented at the National Roundtable over 2011 in April (Canberra), June (Melbourne) and November (Canberra). Over the year a further community resource of relevant agencies and services was also produced from the Roundtable and can be found at:

→ <http://www.ag.gov.au/Peopletrafficking/Documents/Anti-Human+Trafficking+Community+Resource+-+PDF.pdf>

Victim Support Australia has made formal submissions to the Federal Government's consultations on: [Criminal Justice Responses to Human Trafficking \(Feb 2011\)](#), and on [Legislative Amendments to People Trafficking and Slavery Offences \(Jan 2012\)](#). Evolving issues relate to the scope of state and territory financial assistance schemes for victims and the responsibility of the Federal Government.

Victim Support Australia's involvement has ensured that the international rights instruments and standards for victims are used as a guide along with the expertise of members' experience. Victim Support Australia has taken the position that victims should receive support and assistance as victims and separate to their involvement (or not) with regard to law enforcement and prosecution. Our thanks go to Robyn Holder, Jane Caruana and Suzanne Whiting for their representation at the Roundtables and particularly to Robyn for her contribution in drafting VSA's submissions.

National Award for Recognition of an Outstanding Contribution to Advancing the Interests of Victims of Crime

Victim Support Australia invites nominations for this prestigious national award. The criteria and eligibility for the award are available from:

→ enquiries@victimsupport.org.au

The award is announced at the National Conference.

National Reforms Issue

Victim Support Australia has made submissions and representations in a number of key areas of national law and program reform. These have included:

- ◆ Submission on a Human Rights Charter for Australia (May 2009)
- ◆ Representations on a proposed Federal Charter of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime (May 2009)
- ◆ Representation to the SCAG Secretariat on a National victim Service Framework (May 2011)
- ◆ Submission on the Proceeds of Crime Act Evaluation (April 2012)
- ◆ Briefing to UN by Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms Rashida Manjoo (April 2012)

Copies of the submissions are available on the VSA website.

National Crime Prevention Advisory Committee

This year VSA was invited by the Federal Attorney General to provide a representative to sit on the National Crime Prevention Advisory Committee. With the first meeting being held in Sydney, Mandy Young, our Deputy Chair, represented the Association. As the only victims representative on the committee, we were able to ensure that victims are considered in the way that policy and funding options are developed.

This is an important acknowledgement of the contribution that we can make in again bringing a victims' perspective to the discussions.



Victims of Crime Clearinghouse

In February 2012, Victim Services, NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice established a victims of crime clearinghouse.

It is a valuable source of information on publications and research related to victims of crime. It not only provides a valuable resource in the latest publications available but also announces and provides links to events with a focus on victim's issues that may be happening.

NSW Victims Services also recently announced, through the Clearinghouse, applications for research projects to be conducted as part of the NSW Victims of Crime Research Fund.

There is a link to the clearinghouse on the VSA website or you can access it here:

→ www.victimsclearinghouse.nsw.gov.au

Share your news and views

Victim Support Australia welcomes information and news from members and friends.

Perhaps you would like to spotlight a particular person, service or program, or you have feedback and suggestions to the VSA Executive Committee.

We would like to hear from you. Contact us at:

→ enquiries@victimsupport.org.au

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