

2024-25 Annual Report

Victims of Crime South Australia



Government of South Australia

Victims of Crime SA

Acknowledgement of Country

The Commissioner and VOCSA acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work across South Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, leaders, and respected persons past, present and future. We value the immense cultural knowledge of Aboriginal people and are committed to reconciliation.

Victim-Survivor Acknowledgement

The Commissioner and VOCSA acknowledges the experiences, knowledge and strength of all individuals who speak with us and share their personal experiences of crime and the criminal justice system. The work we undertake is always informed by their individual and collective voices.

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Date presented to Minister:

11 September 2025

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To:

The Honourable Kyam Maher MLC

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Attorney-General

Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector

This annual report will be presented to Parliament to meet the statutory reporting requirements of section 16F of the *Victims of Crime Act 2001* and the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular *PC013 Annual Reporting*.

This report is verified to be accurate for the purposes of annual reporting to the Parliament of South Australia.

Sarah Quick

Commissioner for Victims' Rights

Date: 11 September 2025

Signature:



From the Commissioner

This annual report reflects a year of continued dedication to ensuring that the voices of victims and survivors are not only heard but acted upon. As Commissioner for Victims' Rights, my role is to stand alongside those who have experienced crime - to listen, to challenge, and to advocate for meaningful change across the criminal justice system.

The past year has brought both progress and persistent challenges; moments of promise, as well as clear reminders of the work that still lies ahead. Through this report, I aim to demonstrate the achievements of my office and highlight what more must be done to place victims' rights and needs at the heart of justice.

A significant development was the commencement of the *Statutes Amendment (Victims of Crime) Act 2024* on 1 April 2025, which introduced important reforms to the *Sentencing Act 2017* and the *Victims of Crime Act 2001*. Victims now have greater freedom to express themselves in their own words when preparing a victim impact statement—without unnecessary pressure to edit or sanitise their experiences. These changes strengthen victims' voices in criminal proceedings, enhancing both recognition and a sense of procedural justice. In response, Victims of Crime SA (VOCSA) has revised the victim impact statement form and guidelines and developed a short video resource to further support victims in exercising this important right.

The Amendment Act also extended the initial application period for state-funded compensation from three years to five years. This is a reform I strongly advocated for, given that a three-year timeframe was often unrealistic when many criminal proceedings are not finalised within that period. This change provides victims with a fairer and more accessible pathway to seek financial recognition of the harm they have suffered.

I was also pleased to see the commencement of reforms to the terminology used in relation to the defence of mental incompetence under Division 2 of Part 8A of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935*. The previous finding of “not guilty by reason of mental incompetence” has been replaced with “conduct proved but not criminally responsible due to mental incompetence.”

Both I, and my predecessor, had long advocated for this reform in response to the concerns of victims. Many victims expressed distress with the former terminology, which they felt minimised the seriousness of the offence and their suffering and contributed to a profound sense of injustice. Language is powerful, and this change better reflects victims' experiences and their need for recognition and validation, while still appropriately acknowledging the defendant's mental health needs.

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Another significant milestone was the commencement of the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence. This marked a critical opportunity to examine systemic gaps, listen directly to the experiences of victim-survivors, and recommend reforms that will improve safety, accountability, and justice. I actively engaged with the Royal Commission, contributing written submissions and appearing as a witness on day two of the public hearings.

My office's submission addressed all four domains of prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing, with a primary focus on response and recovery. I emphasised the need for inclusive prevention strategies, expanded early intervention and behaviour change programs, better engagement of health professionals, and practical tools for people seeking to change harmful behaviours.

I raised concerns about persistent myths and misconceptions surrounding domestic, family, and sexual violence and their harmful influence on victims and within the criminal justice system. I recommended the development of toolkits for practitioners to counter misinformation, alongside greater access to independent advocates or advisers to support victim-survivors in navigating the justice system. I also noted the need for more inclusive and holistic support services, better resourcing to address court delays, and reconsideration of practices such as the use of good character references for convicted offenders.

I stressed that recovery is long-term and requires secure housing, financial independence, and consistent, connected services. Victim-survivors need stability and strong referral pathways, not fragmented or transitory supports.

My submission highlighted the unique needs of people with disability, First Nations peoples, and victim-survivors from culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTQIA+ communities. I emphasised the importance of culturally safe and inclusive services, stronger use of communication support for people with disability, and ensuring voices of First Nations peoples remain central to reforms.

Finally, I called for investment across all four domains, not just crisis and justice responses, and urged a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to ensure sustainable reform.

Last year, I discussed a downward trend in complaints from victims of crime, expressing concern about possible under-reporting which would likely obscure important issues. This year, I am encouraged to see an increase compared with 2023-24. While numbers alone do not tell the full story, they indicate that more victims are finding their voice and exercising their right to complain.

I remain committed to building on this progress—pursuing new ways to raise awareness and ensuring that the complaints process is visible, straightforward, and genuinely accessible to all who need it.

It is important to note that victims may lodge complaints directly with criminal justice agencies such as the South Australia Police or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. If a complaint is satisfactorily resolved between the victim and the agency, it is unlikely that I, as Commissioner, would become aware of it. There is a strong case for requiring criminal justice agencies to report annually to the

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Commissioner for Victims' Rights on their compliance with victims' rights and complaints resolution.

Changes have also been introduced to the way complaints are captured and reported, providing greater detail on complaint outcomes.

This year, VOCSA commenced a dedicated project to enhance the accessibility and cultural relevance of information for Aboriginal victims of crime. The initiative aims to ensure Aboriginal people are informed of their rights and the services available to them, while also strengthening engagement with Aboriginal organisations and service providers. Douglas Clinch was appointed as project manager, undertaking extensive consultation before developing a series of recommendations including commissioning Aboriginal artwork to reflect a victim's journey, creating a tailored information booklet and postcard with QR code linking to a new Aboriginal-specific landing page on the VOCSA website, and equipping service providers with culturally appropriate resources.

With the project manager's role now completed, it is important to continue this work. As such I intend to appoint an Aboriginal Engagement Officer, ensuring the initiative is sustained and embedded within VOCSA's ongoing engagement and support for Aboriginal victims.

I wish to acknowledge and thank all members of my office for their dedication over the past year. Despite its small size, the team has made a significant impact, assisting countless victims of crime in meaningful and tangible ways. VOCSA continues to prioritise the empowerment of victims, supporting them through information, advocacy, complaints resolution, and the preparation of victim impact statements.

I take this moment to recognise the courage of those who contact my office to recount their experiences of crime and the criminal justice system, and who champion change. Their lived experiences are the cornerstone of my work, ensuring it is both informed and deeply responsive to the realities they face.



Sarah Quick

Commissioner for Victims' Rights

Victims of Crime SA

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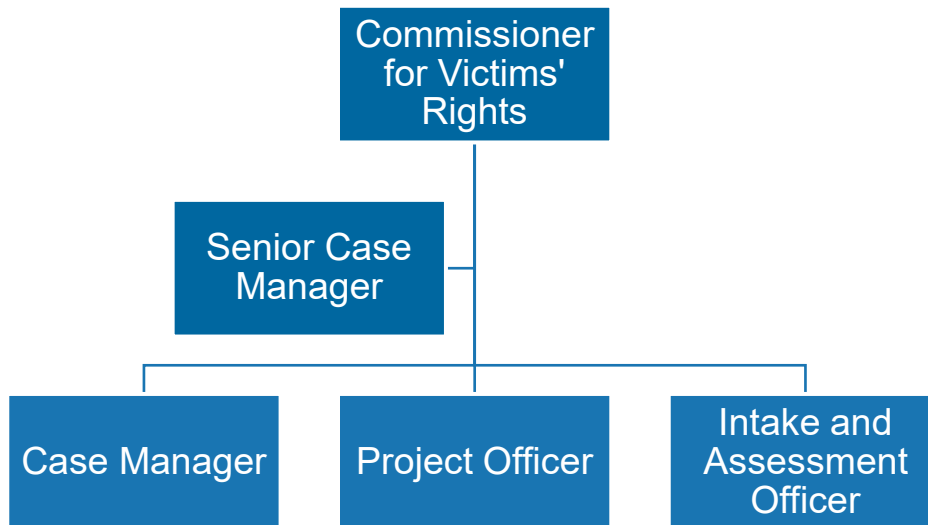
Overview: about the agency

The office of the Commissioner for Victims' Rights (the Commissioner) is known as Victims of Crime South Australia (VOCSA).

Our strategic focus

Our purpose	The Commissioner for Victims' Rights is appointed under the <i>Victims of Crime Act 2001 (SA)</i> to promote and protect the rights and interests of victims of crime in South Australia.
Our vision	Victims are empowered, respected and supported throughout the criminal justice system. All public agencies and officials respect and uphold victims' rights, ensure victims voices are heard and provide trauma-informed support to victims of crime.
Our values	<p>Empowerment</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Equity</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>Trustworthiness</p> <p>Collaboration</p>
Our functions, objectives and deliverables	<p>Pursuant to section 16(3) of the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to marshal available government resources so they can be applied for the benefit of victims in the most efficient and effective way; b) to assist victims in their dealings with prosecution authorities and other government agencies; c) to monitor and review the effect of the law and of court practices and procedures on victims; d) to carry out any other functions related to the objects of this Act assigned by the Attorney-General; e) if another Act authorises or requires the Commissioner to make submissions in any proceedings – to make such submissions (either personally or through counsel); f) to carry out any other functions assigned under other Acts.

Our organisational structure



Our Minister

The Hon Kyam Maher MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, and Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, is the State's principal legal advisor to the government and responsible for exercising certain powers and regulating and administering a range of legislation.

The Attorney-General is a member of Cabinet and is responsible for:

- specific legislation and the state's legal system
- developing and implementing policy
- legal action relevant to the state government.

Our Executive team

Nil – the Commissioner is a statutory appointment.

Legislation administered by the agency

Victims of Crime Act 2001 (SA).

The agency's performance

Performance at a glance

The Commissioner upholds the principles governing how victims of crime are to be treated by public agencies and officials.

VOCSA also helps victims recover from the physical and psychological effects of criminal offending and provides resources to benefit victims in the most efficient and effective way.

Victims of Crime SA in 2024-25



Information and support provided to victims across

2797 cases

More than **13152**

contacts across all cases



Supported victims in



85 parole cases

with over 985 contacts



31

Speeches and presentations given

Agency specific objectives and performance

Victim enquiries

Enquiries are matters where VOCSA have provided information, advice, and referrals for a diverse range of issues.

Total enquiries by year

Year	Total number	Number of contacts
2023-24	1,968	7,623
2024-25	1,932	6,112

Enquiries by type during 2024-25

Enquiry type	Total number
Criminal Justice Sector	648
Counselling	86
Court Support Referral	1
Ex-Gratia Payment	13
Parole*	27
Redress	5
Restitution	182
State Funded Compensation	504
Uncategorised	29
Enquiry with 2 or more enquiry types	437
TOTAL	1,932

*Parole enquiries are questions from victims or agencies about the parole process that are not related to formal parole submissions or breaches of parole conditions.

Enquiries about the Criminal Justice Sector (648) and State Funded Compensation (504) comprise nearly 60% of all enquiries, demonstrating dominant areas of need. A substantial number of enquiries (437) require cross-category assistance reflective of victims' multiple and complex needs.

Information requests

Information requests by type

Individual court document requests

Year	Number of requests	Number of contacts
2023-24	20	166
2024-25	29	274

Lawyer information requests

Year	Number of requests	Number of contacts
2023-24	200	656
2024-25	219	777

Individual court document requests

VOCSA can obtain copies of some court documents for victims of crime. These documents are provided to victims free of charge on the basis that they are for personal use only.

Documents include:

- a record of the court outcome
- the complaint or 'information'
- remarks on the verdict
- remarks on the penalty or sentence.

Lawyer information requests

VOCSA receives requests for information from lawyers acting on behalf of victims of crime in respect to applications for state-funded compensation.

VOCSA provides lawyers with information such as police report numbers to facilitate the progress of a victim's application for compensation.

Helping victims

VOCSA helps victims in their dealings with prosecution authorities and government agencies and officials. The Commissioner also monitors and reviews laws and court practices on victims.

Advocacy

Some victims require assistance to understand and navigate the legal system and to access support.

Advocacy involves providing victims with comprehensive information about their rights, assisting them to exercise their rights and addressing their individual needs.

The Commissioner can consult with agencies and officials, and advocate on behalf of victims to ensure their rights and interests are observed and considered.

The extent of advocacy is determined by the needs of individual victims.

Victims' rights – advocacy

Year	Total cases	Contacts
2023-24	193	NA
2024-25	112	777

Case study

Coronial inquest into the death of Baby Kobi Shepherdson

During the coronial inquest into the deaths of baby Kobi Shepherdson and her father, media outlets requested permission to publish audio recordings of phone calls between Kobi's mother and Mr Shepherdson. It was proposed that only Mr Shepherdson's side of the conversation be released to demonstrate the extent of his manipulation and coercion.

Recognising the differing views put to the Court, the Coroner adjourned proceedings to allow the Commissioner for Victims' Rights to provide input. Conscious that each victim's needs and experiences are unique, the Commissioner consulted with relevant victims before making a submission.

The Commissioner submitted that the audio should not be released, emphasising that victim privacy must remain a primary consideration under section 14 of the *Victims of Crime Act 2001*. While the recordings might not directly identify Kobi's mother, their release would constitute an unnecessary intrusion into her privacy and carry the risk of retraumatising her.

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The Commissioner expressed concern that the permanent availability of the audio could disrupt recovery, while also noting the broader risk of harm to other victims of domestic and family violence who may be triggered by such material.

The Commissioner further acknowledged the important role of the media in educating the community about domestic violence but noted this could be achieved through reporting on the content and nature of the calls without releasing the recordings themselves.

After reading the Commissioner's written submission, the Coroner phoned the Commissioner and stated he "was grateful for what was a very fruitful and constructive conversation between us". Following consideration of the Commissioner's submission and the wishes of Kobi's mother, the Coroner decided not to release the audio recordings.

Some victims have a strong desire to use their personal experiences and difficulties to advocate for law and policy reform. Their perspectives are invaluable.

The Commissioner is committed to assisting victims to share their views with appropriate government agencies and officials.

Victims' rights - complaints

Year	Total cases	Contacts
2023-24	15	NA
2024-25	27	263

Some victims of crime have complaints about the criminal justice system and how they have been treated or supported. The Commissioner can assist victims where complaints relate to a failure to comply with the requirements of the Declaration of Principles Governing the Treatment of Victims (victims' rights).

Victims are, in the first instance, encouraged to raise complaints with the relevant agency. If a victim remains dissatisfied, they may raise a complaint with the Commissioner. The Commissioner may consult with a public agency or public official regarding the victim's complaint.

If after consultation, the Commissioner is satisfied that the public agency or public official has failed to comply with victims' rights and has not apologised or dealt with the failure in a satisfactory way, the Commissioner may, by notice in writing to the public agency or official, recommend that the agency or official issue a written apology to the relevant victim.

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Reporting as per s.16A(4) *Victims of Crime Act 2001*

Year	Apologies recommened	Apologies received
2024-25	3	3

Number of apologies recommended by Commissioner as per s.16(A)(2) of the *Victims of Crime Act 2001*

All three recommendations for an agency or official to issue a written apology were issued to South Australia Police. Rather than indicating a disproportionate wrongdoing this reflects the high level of contact and responsibility police have in victims' experiences.

Complaint outcomes

	Year
Complaint outcome	2024-25
Resolved according to Act	5
Written apology provided	3
Refusal to provide apology	0
Complaint not founded	2
Unresolved	7
Discontinued by victim	6
Matter open at 30 June 2025	1
Not in scope	15
Referred to other agency	3
Advocacy on behalf of victim	3
Information or advice provided	9
Total number of complaints	27

See Appendix 1 for complaint outcome classification

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Of the 9 matters with ‘Information or advice provided’ recorded as an outcome:

- The Commissioner provided feedback on a victim’s draft letter to an authority.
- An authority contacted the victim to discuss their concerns.
- An authority acknowledged failures in its process, and as a result of the complaint, process improvements were made.
- A victim felt validated after having outlined their experiences to the Commissioner and wanted no further action.
- The Commissioner offered practical support to help manage the challenges caused by late notification of court adjournments.
- The Commissioner liaised with an agency and information, or advice was provided to the victim on 3 occasions.

In 2024-25, grievances to the Commissioner increased by 80% compared with the previous year, alongside 263 victim contacts—evidence of growing awareness and trust in the complaints process. The matters raised reflected core victims’ rights concerns, including being kept informed, consulted, and involved, as well as timely progression of cases. While formal outcomes varied—ranging from apologies and unfounded grievances to matters outside scope—the Commissioner’s interventions often delivered broader impacts. These included process improvements by agencies, direct engagement with victims and media, and validation of victims’ experiences. The rise in grievances demonstrates both the willingness of victims to speak out and the continuing need for systemic improvements across the criminal justice system.

I continue to explore strategies to raise awareness of the right to lodge a complaint and to ensure that this process remains visible, transparent, and accessible to victims of crime.

Case study

Denied opportunity to tender a victim impact statement and seek restitution

A victim of assault contacted VOCSA seeking clarification about why the Magistrate had not made an order for offender-paid compensation.

The victim had been assaulted by an unknown female offender while waiting at a bus stop. She was punched in the back of the head, causing injury and damage to her eyeglasses. When providing her statement to police, the victim clearly expressed her wish to submit a victim impact statement (VIS). She repeated this request each time she contacted police for an update. Police advised her that she would be contacted when her VIS was required.

However, court proceedings were finalised without the victim ever being given the opportunity to submit her VIS. This meant she was unable to describe the personal impact of the crime or seek restitution for the damage to her glasses. The loss of this opportunity left the victim feeling that her voice had not been heard and her sense of justice diminished.

SAPOL acknowledged that both a VIS and a request for restitution should have been pursued under the Declaration of Victims' Rights and issued an apology to the victim for this oversight.

It should be noted that this occurred prior to the implementation of the VIS amendments. New subsections (1a) and (1b) of section 16 of the Sentencing Act require the court, in certain circumstances, to adjourn sentencing proceedings to provide a victim with a reasonable opportunity to prepare a VIS.

Case study

Treatment of male victim of family and domestic violence

Chris, a male victim-survivor of family and domestic violence perpetrated by his male partner, was referred to VOCSA after raising concerns about how he was treated as a victim of crime. Chris explained that despite calling police on multiple occasions, he felt the abuse was minimised because it occurred in the context of a same-sex relationship. He was also concerned about the limited support available to him as a male victim of family and domestic violence.

Chris reported that he had raised these concerns through various avenues, including directly with SAPOL, but felt the responses were inadequate. He expressed that in many ways he felt more traumatised by the failure of the system, which he believed left him in unsafe situations.

In sharing his experiences with VOCSA, Chris emphasised that his goal was to share his experience and highlight the points where he believed the system failed him, “not just as a gay man or as a male victim, but as a victim, full stop”.

The Commissioner acknowledged that Chris’s recommendations were both insightful and constructive, and assured him that his experiences would inform ongoing education and advocacy. Chris later responded:

“Thank you for your incredibly validating words... I felt a sense of peace and a significantly lighter emotional load from these incidents by simply being heard. Whilst my trust has, of course, been shattered, first by my ex and then by SAPOL and other victim services, I do genuinely see and respect those who continue to carry the fight for positive change in a system that is, respectfully, very broken.”

This case demonstrates the importance of victims being believed, heard, and validated. Meaningful acknowledgment and advocacy can play a powerful role in restoring trust and supporting recovery, even where systemic failures have occurred.

Two complaints were received in relation to VOCSA. One was determined to be out of scope. In the other, the victim expressed concerns about the advice provided. The advice was reviewed and found to be appropriate in the circumstances. As no further contact was received from the victim, the matter was finalised.

Discretionary payments

Under section 31(2) *Victims of Crime Act 2001* the Attorney-General has an absolute discretion to make payments from the victims of crime fund to (or for the benefit of) victims of crime that will, in the Attorney-General's opinion, help them to recover from the effects of crime or advance their interests in other ways.

This discretion is delegated to the Commissioner. In exercising this discretion, the Commissioner must be guided by the Objectives of the *Victims of Crime Act 2001*.

VOCSA receives requests for discretionary payments directly from victims and from various agencies and services on behalf of victims. Applications are assessed before a determination is made by the Commissioner. Assessment often includes consultation with SAPOL and other agencies.

Discretionary payment applications

Year	Received	Total approved
2023-24	512	297
2024-25	361	214

For the 2024-25 period there have been 361 applications to the Commissioner for discretionary payments, of which 214 were approved. Whilst discretionary payment applications decreased by 29% the approval rate remained steady at around 58-59%, indicating that while demand was lower, the criteria and likelihood of approval were unchanged.

The remaining applications were either not approved, funded from a more appropriate source or were not eligible.

Discretionary application by type during 2024-25

Funding type	Number received	Total approved	Number of contacts
Ambulance	36	27	293
Counselling	59	43	672
Forensic clean	13	11	60
Essential items	16	10	92
Funeral	16	13	185
Other	36	14	207
Relocation	6	3	76
Security	105	47	1155
Travel & accommodation	50	32	613
Treatment	24	14	217
TOTAL	361	214	3570

See Appendix 2: Discretionary payment categories for more information about the payment categories

Legal funding

In some circumstances the Commissioner will fund independent lawyers to provide victims with legal assistance to represent their interests. Legal funding also includes cases where the Commissioner has engaged a lawyer to present a community impact statement.

The majority of requests for legal funding continue to be for the purpose of representing victims’ interests in applications to vary licence conditions as per s.269 of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935*.

The Commissioner also funded legal counsel to assist a victim apply for funds quarantined under the *Correctional Services Act 1935*. This matter has not yet been finalised.

Legal funding requests

Year	Number received	Total approved	Number of contacts
2023-24	32	25	366
2024-25	18	15	265

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Three requests for legal funding were not approved, one matter was discontinued as funding was no longer required, in one the victim disengaged, and one request was formally rejected by the Commissioner.

Parole Board submissions

VOCSA assists victims and co-victims in making submissions to the Parole Board in relation to:

- applications for release on parole
- breaches of parole for life-sentenced prisoners
- applications to vary parole conditions for life-sentenced prisoners.

The Commissioner is legislated to assist co-victims of life sentenced prisoners (those convicted of murder) but also assists victims of manslaughter and cause death matters. VOCSA will assist victims of other crime types as requested.

VOCSA assists victims to present their views via submissions to the Parole Board and keeps victims informed throughout the parole process. On occasion the office supports the victim at the parole board hearing.

All submissions must meet strict timelines to be considered by the Parole Board. Following the Parole Board determination, victims are contacted and advised of the outcome and any conditions imposed.

In the case of life-sentenced prisoners the Commissioner must, once notified of the Parole Board's decision to release a prisoner, consider whether to ask for a review by the Parole Administrative Review Commissioner.

VOCSA also frequently has contact with SAPOL, Department for Correctional Services (DCS) Victim Services Unit and the Parole Board in relation to the parole submissions.

Parole requests during 2024-25

Parole support type	Total cases	Number of contacts
Parole application	23	629
Parole breach	22	220
Variation requests	40	136
TOTAL	85	985

In 2024-25, we received notification of 28 offenders who made 40 requests to vary parole conditions, resulting in 136 contacts.

Victim impact statements (VIS)

The decrease in individual victim impact statements reflects a change in counting rules, with VIS enquiries now recorded under Criminal Justice Sector enquiries. The individual VIS figures shown here represent only cases where a victim required active assistance to complete their statement.

VOCSA is focused on empowering victims to write their own statements wherever possible. Rather than actively drafting statements for victims, staff provide links to relevant information and resources to support them in preparing their own. Where this level of assistance is provided, the matter is recorded as an enquiry.

Neighbourhood impact statements increased from 1 to 5, and social impact statements rose from 6 to 7. While the overall numbers remain small, these increases indicate a growing awareness and utilisation of these statement types as tools for communicating the broader effects of crime on communities and society.

Impact statements by statement type

Victim impact statements	Individual VIS	CNIS	CSIS
2023-24	26	1	6
2024-25	2	5	7

Individual VIS - as per s.14 *Sentencing Act 2017*

Community neighbourhood impact statement (CNIS) - as per section 15(2)(a) of the *Sentencing Act 2017*

Community social impact statements (CSIS) - as per section 15(2)(b) of the *Sentencing Act 2017*.

Neighbourhood impact statement

A neighbourhood impact statement is a statement about the effect of the offence, or offences on the same kind, on people living or working in the location in which the offence was committed.

Case study

R v Jayden Stimson

A neighbourhood impact statement was presented in the matter of R v Jayden Stimson after Mr Stimson admitted to the objective elements of the murder of Brevet Sergeant Doig and the attempted murder of Sergeant Michael Hutchinson.

The statement was made on behalf of the community of Lucindale in the Limestone Coast region in relation to the death of Brevet Sergeant Doig.

The statement highlighted that Brevet Sergeant Doig was not only a highly respected police officer but also a much-loved member of the Lucindale community and that his involvement in the community extended well beyond his official policing duties.

Community representatives described Brevet Sergeant Doig as reliable, practical, kind and deeply human. He was a generous man with a passion to make the next day just that little bit better for those around him – whether a stranger, colleague, or friend.

His tragic death left a profound impact on the community, which continues to honour his memory and contributions.

Social impact statement

A social impact statement outlines the effects of an offence, or similar offences, on the wider community. They give the court insight when individual victims are unidentified or choose not to provide statements, highlight emerging crime trends, challenge myths, and detail the broader impact of crimes.

Case study

R v Michael Terrence Trainer

In the matter of R v Michael Terrence Trainer, the Commissioner tendered a social impact statement following the defendant's guilty plea to possessing child exploitation material (CEM). Police investigations revealed the defendant held more than 162,000 images and videos, one of the largest collections ever prosecuted in South Australia.

The statement emphasised that CEM offences are neither "victimless" nor "harmless." Each image represents the documented trauma of a child, with lifelong consequences for victim-survivors and their families. The creation, distribution, and viewing of such material perpetuates ongoing harm and exploitation.

It was noted that offenders often attempt to rationalise their behaviour by claiming CEM is "just an image" or at the "lower end" of harm. The statement rejected these notions, stressing that the harms are real, significant, and enduring.

The statement also outlined the broader social and economic costs, including strain on law enforcement, justice systems, and community wellbeing.

In Sentencing His Honour stated:

"I have also had regard to the community impact statement. It outlines many of the matters which have already been acknowledged by the courts. However, it also highlights the size of the problem and some of the more far-reaching consequences for victims. The impacts of child exploitation are so broad and extensive that it is almost impossible to calculate the true personal, social and economic cost of this criminal behaviour."

Training and presentations

Training and presentations during 2024-25

Training/presentation type	2023-24	2024-25
SAPOL Recruit training	9	9
SAPOL Prosecutor training	1	1
DV Investigator training	4	2
SAPOL Victim Contact Officer Training Day	1	1
Regional Visits	2	2
Presentation (agencies, conferences and community)	4	14
Memorial / Remembrance Days	2	2
TOTAL	23	31

The Commissioner remains committed to supporting criminal justice agencies, professionals, and the broader community through targeted training and presentations. Training ensures agencies understand their obligations to victims of crime, the support services available, the principles of trauma-informed care, and the role of the Commissioner for Victims' Rights. The Commissioner also actively engages with community groups to raise awareness of victims' rights and avenues for assistance.

In 2024-25, the number of training sessions and presentations increased from 23 to 31. While core training delivery to SAPOL recruits, prosecutors, victim contact officers, and during regional visits remained steady, there was a notable rise in presentations to agencies, conferences, and community groups (from 4 to 14). This reflects a growing emphasis on public engagement and community awareness, complementing the Commissioner's ongoing work with the criminal justice sector.

Information for victims of crime

Website statistics

Year	Visitors	Page views
2023-24	64,000	183,000
2024-25	64,714	174,502

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Top 3 most visited pages during 2024-25

Web page	Visitors
State-funded compensation	20,351
After court/compensation	17,619
Offender-paid compensation	8,313

Other than the home page, the 3 most visited pages during 2024-25

Video views during 2024-25

Video	Page views
Compensation - Injuries and psychological harm	1,505
Compensation - property loss, damage and stolen money	484
Your right to services and support - Yarrow Place	180
Your right to services and support - Homicide Victim Support Group	6
Your right to services and support - Victim Support Service	1
Your right to services and support - Road Trauma Support Team	27
Your right to information - Forensic Mental Health Service	43
Your right to information – Victim Services Unit – DCS	52
Your right to information - Youth Justice Victims Register	9
Your right to information - Victim Contact Officers	6
Preparing a victim impact statement	24
Your right to participation and consultation - Submissions to the Parole Board	14

The website data shows that pages and videos related to compensation remain the most accessed resources, with state funded compensation (20,351 visits) and videos on injuries and psychological harm (1,505 views) leading. In contrast, content about victims' rights and support services received relatively few views, suggesting strong demand for practical guidance on financial redress, while highlighting an opportunity to raise awareness of other resources and support options.

Publications

Information for Aboriginal people as victims of crime

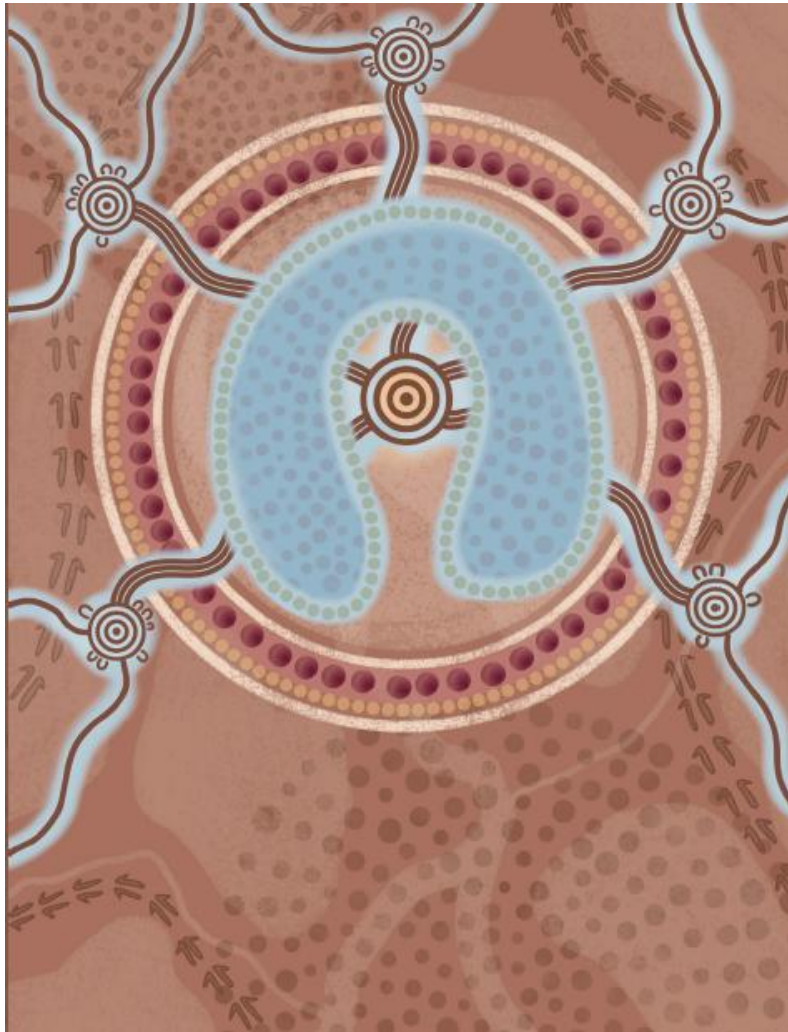
A project was commenced to ensure Aboriginal victims of crime receive relevant information in culturally appropriate language and formats, informing them of their rights and the services available. The project also aims to increase awareness of VOCSA among Aboriginal organisations and service providers, and to equip them with resources to support Aboriginal clients.

Following the appointment of a project manager and extensive consultation, recommendations were developed to:

- Commission Aboriginal artwork reflecting a victim's journey and available supports.
- Develop a tailored information booklet incorporating Aboriginal artwork.
- Create an Aboriginal-specific landing page on the VOCSA website.
- Produce a postcard with a QR code linking directly to the landing page.

All recommendations have been progressed. The information booklet, postcard, and website are now drafted and in the design phase.

Ochre Dawn were commissioned for the artwork and our thanks go to Marie Maurer, Director of Projects and the artist Kalli-Jade Wall.



Artwork by Kalli-Jade Wall (Arrente, Jingilli)

ARTWORK STORY

After dedicating more than 18 years to Youth Work, supporting vulnerable young people— many of whom were victims of crime—it was a privilege to be asked to create a piece of artwork for Victims of Crime South Australia. Through my experience, I deeply understand how crucial it is for victims to feel safe, supported, and respected when they disclose their experiences, as it is one of the most vulnerable moments in their lives.

This artwork was created with the intention of balancing a sense of calm with a feeling of strength and resilience. At the heart of the piece is a U-shape, a powerful First Nations symbol representing the individual. This central figure is illuminated— bold, brave, and standing in their own power—embarking on a journey that only they can take. Surrounding them are pathways that twist and turn, symbolising the complexities of their experience. Along the way, they encounter meeting places, represented by small circles, where they connect with support networks and organisations, depicted by smaller U-shapes.

The background of the piece is inspired by the colours of Country, grounding the journey in cultural strength and connection. Woven through it are the tracks of those who have walked this path before, a reminder that no one is alone, and that healing is a journey shaped by those who have come before and those who walk alongside.

Understanding mental impairment

The booklet *Understanding mental impairment* was updated to reflect the legislative amendment replacing the terminology used in relation to the defence of mental incompetence under Division 2 of Part 8A of the *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935*. In particular, a finding of "not guilty" by reason of mental incompetence is replaced with a finding of "conduct proved but not criminally responsible due to mental incompetence".

Going to Court An Important Job

A thorough review was undertaken of the *Going to Court – An Important Job* booklet, which supports young children required to give evidence as victims and witnesses in the District Court. The revised booklet was developed in consultation with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) Witness Assistance Team and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, with valuable feedback also provided by Judge Kudelka.

In the coming year, companion resources will be developed for caregivers of children attending court, as well as for older children and young people required to give evidence.

Victim impact statement resources

The VIS form was revised to incorporate recent legislative amendments. An accompanying informational video was also developed and published on the VOCSA website (www.voc.sa.gov.au) to enhance victim understanding of the VIS process.

Submissions

Submissions by type

Submission type	2023-24	2024-25
Commenting on legislation	12	12
Media	26	27
Ministerial	n/a	3
Other	n/a	6
Systemic advocacy	7	15
TOTAL	45	63

Commenting on legislation

The Commissioner made submissions on a range of proposed legislative changes affecting victims of crime, providing commentary on the proposed amendments, their commencement, and potential impacts on victims' rights and services.

Media

The Commissioner received 27 requests for media comment and provided responses in 21 cases, though not all were published or broadcast. In some instances, the Commissioner chose not to comment following consultation with the relevant victim.

The views and wishes of victims are the Commissioner's primary consideration when making comment.

Ministerial matters

The three ministerial matters involved cases where victims either approached the Attorney-General directly or escalated their concerns, with the Commissioner providing advice on the support that had been, or could be, offered.

Other matters

Other matters included providing written and oral submissions to the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, as well as liaising with and making submissions to other agencies supporting victims.

Systemic advocacy

Systemic issues are issues of policy or procedure impacting on victims of crime. The Commissioner may collaborate and consult with agencies and victims to realise changes to practices, policy, and legislation.

The Commissioner has made submissions on a number of important initiatives affecting victims and the delivery of services to assist them in their recovery.

Systemic advocacy saw a significant rise from 7 to 15 instances, reflecting an increased focus on addressing broader issues impacting victims of crime.

Victim notification of new-non parole period

A gap was identified in the process for notifying victims when a life-sentenced prisoner breached parole conditions and was required to apply for a new non-parole period. Uncertainty existed as to which agency was responsible for advising victims of the hearing date and their right to provide a VIS. Through collaboration between the Commissioner's staff and the ODPP, a clear process was established to ensure victims are contacted in a timely and consistent manner. This improvement reduces confusion and ensures victims receive accurate and coordinated advice without duplication from multiple agencies.

Finalisation of Coroner's reports

An individual grievance highlighted delays in finalising a police report required by the Coroner. It was identified that the Police Coronial Investigation Section was not routinely advised of the conclusion of criminal proceedings, resulting in avoidable delays which hindered timely report preparation.

Following the Commissioner's advocacy, a process was established for the ODPP to provide monthly reports to the Coronial Investigation Section. This systemic improvement facilitates more timely reports, reducing delays for victims and families awaiting outcomes.

Victim notification letter

During my first term as Commissioner, I began liaising with SAPOL to review the victim notification letter generated through SAPOL's database when a first court date is entered. While the letter is a key mechanism for informing victims of case progress and enabling them to exercise their rights, its format created confusion by being issued on the Commissioner's letterhead. Victims and SAPOL officers often assumed enquiries could be directed to the Commissioner's office, leading to frustration when this was not the case. Following advocacy, the letter was amended to provide clearer contact information, improving system navigation and reducing confusion for victims and officers.

Evidence provided to the media

Concerns were raised about media access to body-worn camera footage that had been entered into evidence, and the distress this caused the victim. The release of this footage occurred due to a misunderstanding, as the prosecutor believed the media application related to CCTV footage that did not depict the victim.

The Commissioner for Victims' Rights liaised with the ODPP, who conveyed sincere apologies to the victim. The ODPP will now ensure prosecutors refer to evidence by exhibit number to avoid similar confusion in future.

The Commissioner also encouraged prosecutors to consider whether victims should be consulted before the release of any material, even where the evidence does not directly depict the victim, given the potential for indirect impact.

Media



South Australian crime victims' distress compounded hit by Australia's worst court delays

"Court delays and backlogs are major issues for victims of crime, compounding their emotional distress and delaying justice."

"Too often victims perceive timeframes as dictated by the needs of defendants not their needs." – The Advertiser Online, 11 March 2025

Andrew Donald Steele paid for Filipino woman's phone repairs so he could sexually abuse her child, court hears

"Ms Quick said offending of this type caused "devastating, long-term impacts" and the electronic distribution of child abuse material meant children subjected to abuse were continually victimised.

"All forms of child abuse and exploitation cause significant harm and are associated with a wide range of adverse outcomes for victims," she said.

"These are crimes that that destroy innocence, strip children of their dignity and treat them as a commodity. It is offending that disrupts families."

She said such offending would not end until demand for the material ceased."
– ABC News, 14 October 2024

Fewer conditions on Snowtown accomplice's freedom

SA Commissioner for Victims' Rights Sarah Quick said the extended supervision order confirmation has given the victims an increased sense of safety and reassurance, particularly as Haydon is prohibited from contacting them.

"The extended supervision order supports victims' healing and reinforces their trust in the justice system," she said. – In Daily, 28 May 2025

Grieving mother who was denied chance to read victim impact statement pushing for SA law change

"Victims' Rights Commissioner Sarah Quick said the amendments affirmed the importance of voicing the suffering victims' families endure.

"I think these amendments are incredibly important and are amendments victims have asked for, so it's fantastic to see those concerns have been listened to by the government," – ABC News, 14 October 2024

Vlassakis lodges application for release on parole

"News of Mr Vlassakis' application for release on parole has been distressing for the victims. Time has not diminished their pain or trauma and many have expressed concern for their personal safety and the safety of the community if Mr Vlassakis is released". – Channel 7 News, 2 May 2025

Note: Some comments are presented as provided to the media and may differ from how they were reported.

Committees

The Commissioner participated in the following committees, working groups and workshops:

- Public Advocate Clients and Family Domestic Violence Working Group
- National Victims of Crime Working Group
- Criminal Justice Ministerial Taskforce
- Regional Responses to Sexual Assault Steering Committee
- Combined Statutory Authority Group
- Psychology Program Advisory Board
- Youth Court Stakeholder meeting
- Intervention Programs Consultative Committee
- Victims of Crime Network Meeting (convened by Commissioner)
- People with Disability in the Justice System (convened by Commissioner)
- YACCA Stakeholder update and workshop.

Other reporting requirements under s.36(1) of the *Victims of Crime Act 2001* appear in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Corporate performance summary

VOCSA is a business unit of the Attorney-General's Department (AGD). Information on corporate performance appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Employment opportunity programs

Information on employment opportunity programs appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department

Agency performance management and development systems

Information on performance management and development systems appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Work health, safety and return to work programs

Information on work health, safety and return to work programs appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Financial performance

Financial performance at a glance

Information on financial performance appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Attorney-General's Department.

Consultants disclosure

Information on consultants disclosure appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Attorney-General's Department.

Contractors disclosure

Information on contractors disclosure appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Attorney-General's Department.

Risk management

Risk and audit at a glance

VOCSA is a business unit of the Attorney-General's Department. Information on risk and audit appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Fraud detected in the agency

Information on fraud detection appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud

Information on strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Public interest disclosure

Information on public interest disclosure appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Reporting required under any other act or regulation

VOCSA is not required to report under any other act or regulation.

Public complaints

Number of public complaints reported

Information on public complaints appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.

Service Improvements

Information on service improvements appears in the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department.










Compliance Statement

Victims of Crime SA is compliant with Premier and Cabinet Circular 039 – complaint management in the South Australian public sector	Y
Victims of Crime SA has communicated the content of PC039 and the agency's related complaints policies and procedures to employees.	Y

Appendix 1: Complaint classification table

Complaint outcome	Explanation
Resolved according to Act	Complaint relating to a failure to comply with requirements of Part 2 of <i>Victims of Crime Act 2001</i> where compliance would have been practicable and agency or official has not apologised or otherwise dealt with the victim in relation to the failure in a satisfactory way (s.16A(2)(a) & 16A(2)(b))
Written apology provided	As per s.16(A)(2) <i>Victims of Crime Act 2001</i>
Refusal to provide apology	As per s.16(A)(2) <i>Victims of Crime Act 2001</i>
Complaint not founded	After consultation with a public agency or official the Commissioner is not satisfied the public agency or official failed to comply with requirements of Part 2 of <i>Victims of Crime Act 2001</i> where compliance would have been practicable and agency or official has not apologised or otherwise dealt with the victim in relation to the failure in a satisfactory way (s.16A(2)(a) & 16A(2)(b))
Unresolved (other)	The complaint could not be finalised under s.16A of the <i>Victims of Crime Act 2001</i> as of 30 June 2025
Discontinued by victim	The victim has chosen not to continue with their complaint. Either the victim has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formally advised that they no longer wish to proceed; or stopped engaging with VOCSA, which means the complaint cannot progress further
Matter open at 30 June 2025	Complaint investigation is ongoing
Not in scope	The complaint is not covered by section 16A of the <i>Victims of Crime Act</i> because it either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not involve a breach of Part 2 of the Act, or Does not relate to the conduct of a public official or agency.
Referred to other agency	Another agency has more appropriate authority to address complaint
Advocacy on behalf of victim	VOCSA supports or represents the victim in raising their complaint but does not make a formal determination. E.g. Helping the victim communicate their concerns to the relevant agency or authority.
Information or advice provided	Assisting the victim to understand their rights and options.

Appendix 2: Discretionary payment categories

Payment categories		Explanation
	Ambulance	Payment for attendance or transportation by ambulance where a victim is unable to pay the account and later seeks reimbursement through compensation or restitution.
	Counselling	Where support through the government funded victim counselling program is not appropriate for the victim's needs or location.
	Forensic clean	Funding for forensic cleaning as requested by police. Funding is to ensure victims and co-victims are not traumatised when returning to the location of the crime.
	Essential items	Discretionary payments do not cover property loss or damage unless the property is an item essential to a victim's daily functioning such as eyeglasses.
	Funeral	Funding for funerals for homicide victims.
	Other	Other expenses deemed appropriate in assisting victims to deal with the effects of crime and to assist their recovery.
	Relocation	The costs associated with relocating a victim. This may be for reason of physical safety or to ensure a victim is closer to necessary social and emotional supports.
	Security	Security upgrades where the victim is at risk of further harm.
	Travel & accommodation	Costs associated with travelling to Adelaide for funerals, court (limited) or treatment.
	Treatment	Includes all treatment addressing physical injuries (e.g. medical, dental).

Appendix 3: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
CEM	Child exploitation material
CNIS	Community neighbourhood impact statement
The Commissioner	Commissioner for Victims' Rights
CSIS	Community social impact statement
DCS	Department for Correctional Services
ODPP	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
SAPOL	South Australia Police
VIS	Victim impact statement
VOCSA	Victims of Crime SA

Appendix 4: Audited financial statements 2024-25

Please refer to the 2024-25 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department for audited financial statements.



**Government
of South Australia**

Victims of Crime SA