

November 2017

Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission: Review of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996

Victims of Crime Assistance League

- It would be our recommendation that the compensation process be by a qualified panel. This panel would be headed by a victim, to ensure the panel displays empathy and understanding towards the victim. I mentioned at our meeting that it should be a legal person, on reflection and discussions with others, the legal person is considered in this instance to be an unsuitable candidate.
- Prior to the hearing by the panel the victim should be interviewed to understand the needs of the victim, it may be their needs could be addressed by other agencies.
- The existing forms are too arduous and complicated, remember victims are RAW and struggling to make any sense of what has happened to them, this is not a natural process for them.
- Assistance by volunteers managed by a victim who has been through the process and located at the courts, to assist victims to fill in the forms. If this was accepted I would recommend Jenny Newman as the candidate I would put forward, Jenny is not only a victim but is running her own business,
- The amount of assistance should be flexible, it should match the needs of the victims.
- The current and existing system is devoid of communication. Parties are left in the dark for many months receiving no communication.
- The system should allow for ongoing assistance, such as respite, counselling and financial. Our VOCAL house concept should be a reality to enable Victims to feel fully supported and heard.

Jenny Newman & Brian O'Donnell

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