



**ACT**  
Government

Justice and Community Safety



# Victim Support ACT

## Annual Report 2014-15

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## Omissions

The following items are reported in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate

- B.4 Risk Management**
- B.5 Internal Audit**
- B.6 Fraud Prevention**
- B.7 Work Health and Safety**
- B.9 Ecologically Sustainable Development**
- C.1 Financial Management Analysis**
- C.2 Financial Statements**
- C.3 Capital Works**
- C.4 Asset Management**
- C.6 Statement of Performance**

## Acronyms

|       |                                       |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| ALRC  | Australian Law Reform Commission      |
| CALD  | Culturally and linguistically diverse |
| DVPC  | Domestic Violence Prevention Council  |
| FAS   | Financial Assistance Scheme           |
| FVIP  | Family Violence Intervention Program  |
| VoCC  | Victims of Crime Commissioner         |
| VSACT | Victim Support ACT                    |

## A. Transmittal certificate



Mr Simon Corbell MLA  
Attorney-General  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
London Circuit  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Corbell,

I am pleased to submit to you this Annual Report that has been prepared under section 6(1) of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements under the Annual Report Directions. It has been prepared in conformity with other legislation applicable to the preparation of the Annual Report by the Victims of Crime Commissioner.

I certify that the attached Annual Report is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of Victim Support ACT during the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 has been included.

I hereby certify that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with Public Sector Management Standards, Part 2.

Section 13 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* requires that you cause a copy of the Report to be laid before the Legislative Assembly within 3 months of the end of the financial year.

Signed and dated by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hinchey', written over a light blue horizontal line.

John Hinchey  
ACT Victims of Crime Commissioner  
11 September 2015



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## B. Organisation Overview and Performance

### B.1 Organisational Overview

Victim Support ACT is an agency within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate that administers a range of services and programs for victims of crime and their families. The agency supports the independent statutory positions of Victims of Crime Commissioner and Domestic Violence Project Coordinator.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner position is established pursuant to section 7 of the *Victims of Crime Act 1994*. The Commissioner manages the victims services scheme and as such, is the agency head of Victim Support ACT.

The functions of the Commissioner are listed in section 11 of the *Victims of Crime Act 1994* and are as follows:

- a) to manage the victims services scheme and any other program for the benefit of victims;
- b) to advocate for the interests of victims;
- c) to monitor and promote compliance with the governing principles;
- d) to ensure concerns and formal complaints about non-compliance with the governing principles are dealt with promptly and effectively;
- e) to ensure the provision of efficient and effective services for victims;
- f) to consult on and promote reforms to meet the interests of victims;
- g) to develop educational and other programs to promote awareness of the interests of victims;
- h) to distribute information about the operation of this Act and the commissioner's functions;
- i) to ensure that victims receive information and assistance they need in connection with their involvement in the administration of justice;
- j) to encourage and facilitate cooperation between agencies involved in the administration of justice with respect to victims;
- k) to advise the Minister on the matters relating to the interests of victims;
- l) any other function given to the commissioner under this Act or another territory law.

By separate appointment, the Victims of Crime Commissioner also performs the statutory functions of the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator under the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986*. The Domestic Violence Project Coordinator provides assistance to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council. The functions of the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator are set out in the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* section 12 (Part 3) and are as follows:

- a) to monitor and promote compliance with the policies of the ACT and Commonwealth governments;

- b) to assist government agencies and non-government organisations involved in –
  - (i) law enforcement; or
  - (ii) the provision of health, education, crisis or welfare services to victims or perpetrators of domestic violence or otherwise relating to the incidence or prevention of domestic violence;  
to provide services of the highest standard;
- c) to assist and encourage the agencies and organisations referred to in paragraph (b) to provide appropriate educational programs;
- d) to facilitate cooperation among the agencies and organisations referred to in paragraph b);
- e) to assist in the development and implementation of policies and programs as directed by the [Domestic Violence Prevention] council;
- f) to carry out any other functions the council directs.

Victim Support ACT's mission and values are the guiding principles for the organisation. These principles inform the strategic priorities we apply to our endeavours. We seek to be responsive to the emerging needs of victims of crime within the ACT community and to develop strong and productive relationships with key individuals and stakeholders.

Victim Support ACT plays an active role in supporting victim involvement in, and reforms related to, the administration of justice. We advocate for victims of crime in the administration of justice.

Committed, dynamic and professional staff deliver the services of Victim Support ACT. We value, support and build staff capability. Our services are further strengthened by implementing innovative operational measures. The strategic plan for 2014-16 sets out how we intend to achieve our mission and goals.

## Mission

Victim Support ACT promotes and supports the rights and interests of victims of crime and their families in the ACT. Our mission is to deliver the victims services scheme according to the *Victims of Crime Regulation 2000* and to support the community awareness and justice advocacy functions of the Victims of Crime Commissioner.

## Vision

Victim Support ACT contributes to the vision of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate for a *fair, safe and peaceful community where people's rights and interests are respected and protected*.

## Our Values

Victim Support ACT applies the ACT Public Service values of *respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation* and these values are evident in our work practices and behaviours. We practice these values within our team, first and foremost, thereby building our capacity to reflect these values in our dealings with clients and stakeholders more generally.



## Respect

The value of respect is demonstrated within and outside Victim Support ACT by:

- valuing and acknowledging the diversity, experience and perspectives of those with whom we interact;
- valuing and acknowledging the contribution of our colleagues;
- ensuring staff who administer authority do so with a sense of service to others, recognising the inherent talents and equality of Victim Support ACT staff members; and
- relating to colleagues, clients and stakeholders in a fair, decent and professional manner.

## Integrity

The value of integrity is demonstrated within and outside Victim Support ACT by:

- being true to ourselves and each other;
- being willing to have honest and professional conversations with each other, even when these conversations are difficult;
- taking responsibility and being accountable for our decisions and actions;
- engaging genuinely with our clients and stakeholders; and
- advocating appropriately for the rights and needs of victims in the ACT.

## Collaboration

We work collaboratively by:

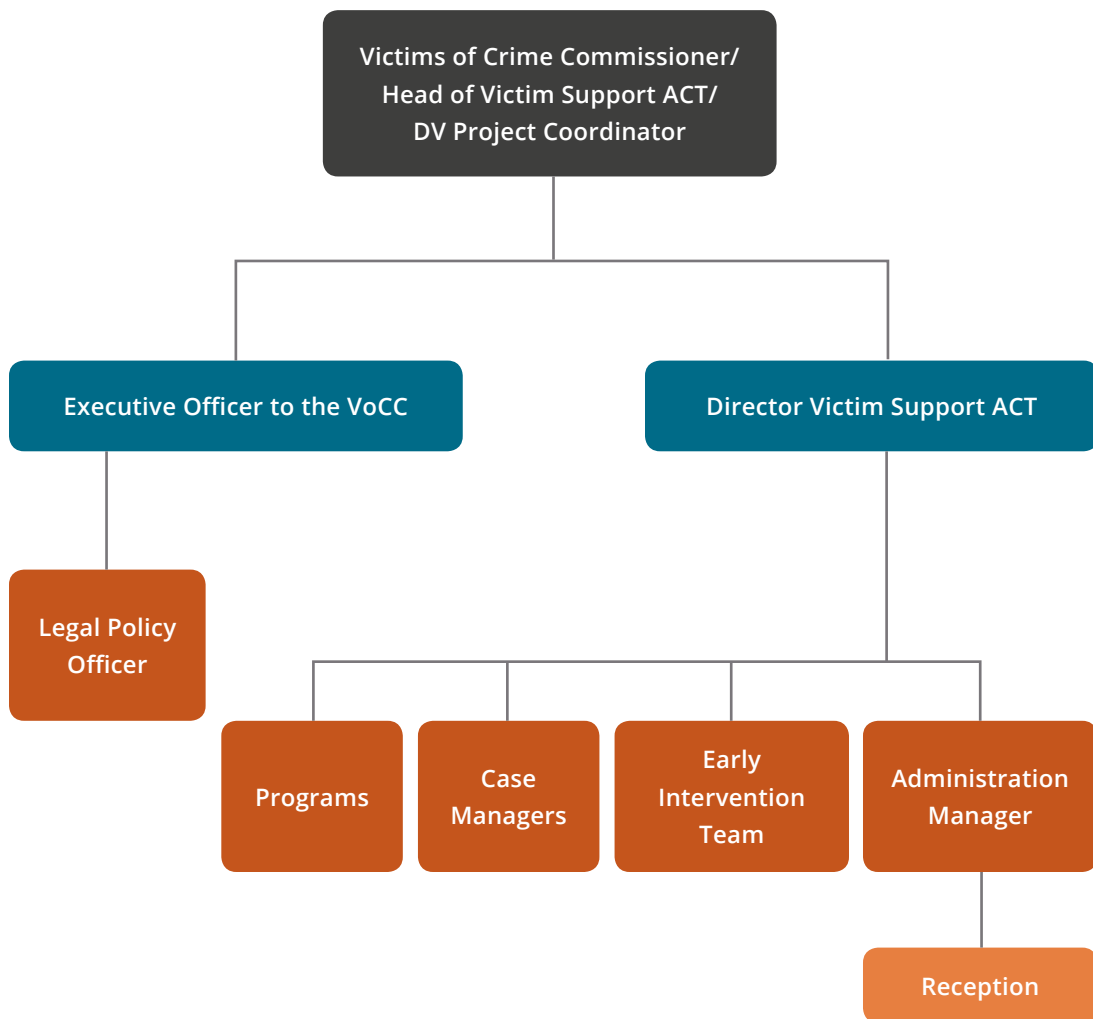
- working in partnership with each other, with clients and across agencies;
- recognising and supporting our shared goals within Victim Support ACT;
- recognising and supporting the goals we have in common with other agencies; and
- promoting open communication, discussion and feedback to facilitate problem solving.

## Innovation

We seek to be an innovative organisation by:

- looking for ways to continuously improve our services and skills;
- promoting creativity, reflection, flexibility and adaptation;
- responding to changing needs; and
- being open to learning, change, new ideas and multidisciplinary perspectives.

# Organisational Chart



## Outlook (priorities and challenges)

Our priorities for 2015-16 and beyond relate to the strategic goals in the Victim Support ACT Strategic Plan for 2014-16. The strategic plan is available on the Victim Support ACT website ([www.victimsupport.act.gov.au](http://www.victimsupport.act.gov.au)). Our strategic goals for 2014-16 are to:

1. Build a flexible, responsive and accessible service for all victims of crime.
2. Build relationships with key individuals and strengthen our stakeholder engagement.
3. Support the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Domestic Violence Project Coordinator.
4. Build and support staff capacity.
5. Improve systems and processes.

In 2012-13 an external consultancy was engaged to conduct an organisational review which identified a number of structural challenges and issues for Victim Support ACT. The review found that the statutory responsibilities of the Victims of Crime Commissioner / Domestic Violence Project Coordinator required additional support and that there was a significant gap in the leadership structure of the organisation.

During 2014-15, the structural issue was addressed by creating the position of Director, Victim Support ACT. After a merit selection process, I was pleased to appoint Ms Maret Rebane to the position in May 2015. Maret has a general nursing and mental health nursing background and has worked across a number of Government and community sector agencies in a variety of roles. More recently, Maret was employed as the Team Leader of Organisational Development with Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services. There she was involved in a broad range of roles including staff learning and development, workforce planning, staff health and wellbeing, introduction of the NDIS and consumer and carer participation activities.

The Director of Victim Support ACT will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of client service delivery. In 2015-16 the Director's priorities will include reviewing and updating policies and procedures; case management practices; promoting client feedback and preparing the organisation to administer the new victims of crime financial assistance scheme. I look forward to working with Ms Rebane to achieve our strategic priorities.

In 2014-15 I welcomed the Attorney-General's announcement relating to the outcome of the review of the victims of crime financial assistance scheme. The new scheme will be administratively based, rather than court based. The Victims of Crime Commissioner will be the decision maker for the scheme. I look forward to administering the new scheme, that I believe will better meet the interests of victims of crime in the ACT. Implementing the new scheme will be a major project for Victim Support ACT during 2015-16 and beyond.

In April 2015, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate released a discussion paper 'Designing a model for the effective protection of human rights'. The paper outlined a proposed new model to oversee the protection of rights in the ACT. The model proposes the co-location of the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT with a 'new Human Rights Commission' under the strategic direction of a President Commissioner. I [responded](#) to the Discussion Paper in June 2015 highlighting the potential advantages and challenges of the new model as it relates to victims of crime.

## B.2 Performance Analysis

### B.2.1 Strategic indicator

The strategic indicator for Victim Support ACT is the number of community members made aware of their rights. This strategic indicator is consistent with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate's Strategic Objective 5 – Promotion and Protection of Rights and Interests.

This indicator is measured by the number of information sheets that are provided to community members by Victim Support ACT. The target for 2014-15 was 700. The number of information sheets provided was 1194, exceeding the target by 70%.

**Table 1: Victim Support ACT performance against strategic indicator 2014-2015**

| Measure                                | 2014-2015 |
|--|-----------|
| Target                                 | 700       |
| Number sent to clients by VSACT        | 460       |
| Number handed out by volunteer program | 509       |
| Number provided to other services      | 225       |
| Actual - Total                         | 1194      |
| Variance on target                     | 70%       |

### B.2.2 Performance indicator

The performance indicator (accountability indicator) for Victim Support ACT is the percentage of referrals that are responded to within five working days. This performance indicator is consistent with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate's Accountability Indicators for Output 1.5 – Protection of Rights.

**Table 2: Performance against the accountability indicator 2012-2015**

| Measure            | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Target             | 80%       | 90%       | 90%       |
| Actual             | 96%       | 98%       | 100%      |
| Variance on target | 20%       | 9%        | 11%       |

## B.2.3 Strategic goal 1: build a responsive, accessible and flexible service for all victims of crime

### Client Service Delivery

This section provides a summary of statistics related to Victim Support ACT client service delivery in 2014-15.

Table 3 highlights the number of new enquiries responded to by Victim Support ACT and the outcome of those enquiries. Of 1054 new enquiries in 2014-15, 446 people required case management and were recorded as 'registered' clients. Those that required a less involved level of assistance, such as information, referral to more appropriate services or other one-off activities, were not categorised as being 'registered'.

Table 3 also highlights that 612 clients who were registered in previous years continued to receive case management during the 2014-15 reporting year.

**Table 3: Enquiries and supports by Victim Support ACT in 2013-14 & 2014-15**

| Measure   | 2013-14     | 2014-2015   |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Registered clients</b>                             |             |             |
| New clients registered for case management            | 499         | 446         |
| Existing clients with new episodes of victimisation   | 46          | 41          |
| Existing clients referred more than once              | 113         | 157         |
| <b>Unregistered enquiries/referrals</b>               |             |             |
| Client declined service                               | 74          | 103         |
| Unable to be contacted *                              | 100         | 108         |
| One off activity or referred to alternative service   | 89          | 111         |
| Ineligible **   | 49          | 29          |
| <b>Enquiry only</b>                                   |             |             |
| Advice or information only                            | 71          | 59          |
| <b>Total number of new enquiries/referrals</b>        | <b>1041</b> | <b>1054</b> |
| <b>Ongoing service</b>                                |             |             |
| Existing registered clients ongoing service           | 477         | 612         |
| <b>Total people referred or provided with service</b> | <b>1518</b> | <b>1666</b> |

\* Victim Support ACT makes three attempts to contact clients following referral. We try calling or SMS as appropriate. Failure to make contact after three attempts is considered to be a 'soft refusal' from the client to establish contact with our service.

\*\* The Victims of Crime Regulation 2000 contains eligibility criteria for our services.

Clients who are registered for case management receive ongoing services from Victim Support ACT, including assessment, goal planning, support with resolution of concerns and complaints, court support, advocacy, psycho education, and higher-level advocacy with the Victims of Crime Commissioner as appropriate. Many clients of case management will also receive therapeutic services including counselling and/or physical therapies. Counselling may be provided directly by Victim Support ACT case managers or by external health professionals under the victims services scheme depending on the needs and wants of each individual.

Clients of Victim Support ACT may come to the service in a variety of ways. Table 4 highlights that the majority of referrals to Victim Support ACT are received from police, either directly or through Supportlink. Victim Support ACT will work with people whether they have reported the crime to police or not. Clients who self referred were the agency's second highest referral source in 2014-15.

**Table 4: Referral sources 2014-15**

| Referral source                                       | 2014-15 |
|---|---------|
| <b>ACT Policing and Supportlink* referral program</b> | 40%     |
| <b>Self</b>   | 28%     |
| <b>Family</b>   | 5%      |
| <b>Domestic Violence Crisis Service</b>               | 8%      |
| <b>Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions</b>  | 4%      |
| <b>Wraparound</b>                                     | 4%      |
| <b>Other</b>  | 11%     |

\* Supportlink is an online referral tool used by police.

Data is collected from registered clients relating to the time from the crime incident to their referral or first contact with Victim Support ACT.

**Table 5: Time from incident to referral 2014-15**

| Days from incident to first contact or referral | 2014-15 |
|---|---------|
| <b>Within 1 month</b>                           | 47%     |
| <b>Within 6 months</b>                          | 14%     |
| <b>Within 1 year</b>                            | 9%      |
| <b>Within 2 years</b>                           | 9%      |
| <b>More than 2 years after the incident</b>     | 21%     |

Table 5 highlights that people who are harmed by crime often take some time to report the crime that has been committed against them or to seek support to manage the impacts of the crime.

The gender and cultural diversity of victims who were registered clients of Victim Support ACT in 2014-15 are outlined in tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6: Client gender distribution 2013-14 & 2014-15**

| Gender | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|--------|---------|---------|
| Female | 72%     | 65%     |
| Male   | 28%     | 35%     |

**Table 7: Cultural diversity of clients 2014-15**

| Ethnic Identity   | 2014-15 |
|---|---------|
| Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander                    | 4.7%    |
| Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background | 17%     |
| Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander or CALD   | 70%     |
| Unspecified   | 8.3%    |

Victim Support ACT also seeks to provide support to witnesses and family members of victims of violent crime.

**Table 8: Type of victim 2014-15**

| Type of victim | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Primary        | 83 %    | 73%     |
| Witness        | 5 %     | 5%      |
| Related        | 12 %    | 22%     |

While the majority of our clients are those who have been directly harmed by the incident of crime (primary victims), a sizable minority of our clients are the family and friends (related victims) of the primary victim. Table 8 highlights that Victim Support ACT supported a higher proportion of related victims during 2014-15 compared to 2013-14. This difference is understood to reflect the number of related victims who were supported after homicide.

Victim Support ACT captures information about the crime types using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC) see table 9.

**Table 9: Offence types – all victims compared with primary victims 2014-15**

| Type of crime  | All Victims* | Primary Victims |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Abduction, harassment and other offences             | 6%           | 3.5%            |
| Acts intended to cause injury - assault              | 29%          | 25%             |
| Acts intended to cause injury – domestic violence    | 24%          | 19.5%           |
| Dangerous and negligent acts                         | -            | -               |
| Homicide and related offences                        | 13%          | 2.5%            |
| Offences against government – breach order           | 1.5%         | 1.5%            |
| Robbery, extortion and related offences              | 4%           | 3.5%            |
| Sexual assault and related offences                  | 18%          | 13.5%           |
| Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter | 4%           | 3.5%            |
| Other  | 0.5%         | 0.5%            |

\* includes related victims and witnesses

It can be seen that the majority of people making contact with Victim Support ACT are victims of personal crimes, primarily assault, domestic violence and sexual offences. A high proportion of these clients knew the person who harmed them. Table 10 indicates that during 2014-15, almost half of all our clients experienced the crime at the hands of a family member, a current partner or an ex-partner.

**Table 10: Relationship to Offender 2013-14 & 2014-15**

| Relationship to Offender | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Family Member            | 15%     | 20%     |
| Ex partner               | 20%     | 20%     |
| Partner                  | 4%      | 5%      |
| Known others             | 25%     | 26%     |
| Neighbour                | 4%      | 3%      |
| Not known                | 30%     | 25%     |
| Unspecified              | 2%      | 1%      |



## Supporting and engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of crime: Reconciliation in action

During 2014-15, Victim Support ACT staff members participated in and contributed to a number of activities and events in order to strengthen the profile of the agency among the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

- In October 2014, two staff members attended a workshop on Indigenous Language and Pronunciation facilitated by Doug Marmion, a linguist from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
- In January 2015, we hosted a morning tea to meet with Aboriginal counsellors from the Dhunlung Yarra Service at Relationships Australia Canberra and Region.
- In October 2014, February 2015 and April 2015, we visited Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Centre to provide information about Victim Support ACT and the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme.
- In March 2015, we formed a Reconciliation subcommittee to organise events and activities for National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week 2015. This led to the formation of an ongoing Reconciliation Working Group whose objectives are to organise quarterly meetings for all staff with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus.
- This year we commissioned a banner incorporating artwork by Rachele Kelly, a local Aboriginal artist, to highlight our commitment to reconciliation.
- Five staff members attended the National Sorry Day march across Commonwealth Bridge on 23rd May 2015 proudly carrying our new banner (image 1).
- We began National Reconciliation Week 2015 by creating a popup resource library (image 2) with topical information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT and across Australia. Staff from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate library assisted us to curate a display of various print media to promote discussion and raise awareness amongst staff.
- We celebrated the end of National Reconciliation Week 2015 by hosting a morning tea with a distinct Aboriginal flavour. Guest speaker Euroka Gilbert, Aboriginal Liaison Officer from ACT Heritage, shared his knowledge about local culture and heritage with us. His talk sparked discussions and reflection on our reconciliation journey as an agency. The event was also an opportunity to highlight the work of Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) and make a collective donation towards their work.
- Our case managers attended a clinical meeting on 10th June 2015 to watch a TED talk and reflect on the issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Here we discussed how we can better build trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of crime and ensure we are providing useful and relevant services.
- We participated in the JACS directorate BBQ and information sharing stall for National Reconciliation Week on 27th May 2015.



Image 1: Victim Support ACT staff members with new banner at Sorry Day Walk



Image 2: Reconciliation week pop-up library

## Recognition of Service Manager

The acting Service Manager, Prashant Munro, received special recognition for her customer service. This came in the form of a Justice and Community Safety Director-General Award on 27 March 2015. Congratulations to Prashant for her high level of responsiveness to victims of crime in the ACT.

## Crisis Services Project: supporting victims of domestic violence with disabilities

In 2014-15, Victim Support ACT sought to better assist people with disabilities experiencing sexual or domestic violence.

The ACT Disability and Community Services Commissioner provided a report to government in June 2014 – *Developing an ACT crisis response to women with disabilities who experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault*. The report made recommendations for enhancement of the ACT crisis response to women with disabilities requiring special assistance to escape violence.

In response to the report, Victim Support ACT and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding – clarifying Victim Support ACT's commitment to providing funding to meet immediate medical and care needs of women with disabilities escaping violence. Staff from Victim Support ACT, Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre attended a workshop facilitated by the ACT Human Rights Commission relating to the crisis services response.

This year, five women with disabilities in the ACT were assisted with care and other needs to escape domestic violence as a result of the Crisis Services Project. Victim Support ACT will continue to fund this project into 2015-16 to build on the momentum gained this year and to gauge the need within the community for this service.

## Side by Side volunteer program

Victim Support ACT contracts Communities@Work to deliver a volunteer program. The program:

- provides court support to victims of crime who are registered clients of Victim Support ACT;
- assists victims of crime to apply for financial assistance through the ACT Government's financial assistance scheme;
- provides practical assistance to victims of crime and administrative assistance to the Victims of Crime Commissioner as agreed in writing between parties; and
- conducts a community awareness raising program to promote the interests of victims of crime.

**Table 11: Number of persons provided with court support by Side by Side**

| Measure  | June-Dec 2014 | Jan-June 2015 |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Number of clients supported  | 30            | 32            |
| Number of occasions*   | 33            | 35            |
| Number of hours face to face   | 116.5         | 128           |
| Number of telephone contact hours between Side By Side manager and clients | 12            | 52            |

\* some clients attended court on more than one occasion.

Side by Side volunteers also provided assistance to Victim Support ACT clients to prepare applications for the ACT Government's financial assistance scheme.

**Table 12: Number of people assisted in preparing applications for financial assistance**

| Measure                     | June-Dec 2014 | Jan-June 2015 |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Number of clients supported | 4             | 8             |
| Number of hours             | 10.5          | 10.33         |

**Table 13: Number of people provided with information about the rights of victims by the Side by Side volunteer program**

| Measure            | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Target             | 500     | 500     |
| Actual             | 528     | 509     |
| Variance on target | 6%      | 2%      |

**Table 14: Number of people provided with 'Protecting your Home' guide**

| Measure            | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Target             | 500     | 500     |
| Actual             | 534     | 515     |
| Variance on target | 7%      | 3%      |

This year, 15 volunteers attended the Side by Side training including court orientation. Three of the volunteers also attended Accidental Counsellor training through Lifeline.

## Support for victims of crime making applications to the Financial Assistance Scheme

Applications for victims of crime financial assistance are made to the ACT Magistrates Court under the *Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 1983*. The ACT Government Solicitor's Office is responsible for assessing applications and making a recommendation to the court about awards.

Victim Support ACT assists clients to access information and provides non-legal, procedural assistance to clients to make applications under the ACT Government's Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS). For example, we assist clients by:

- providing information about the scheme and clarifying the requirements of the application process;
- making referrals for legal assistance and supporting clients to engage with legal support;
- assisting them complete application paperwork;
- lodging application paperwork;
- attending out of time and settlement hearings at the ACT Magistrates Court;
- attending conferences at the ACT Magistrates Court;
- advocating on their behalf of to the ACT Government Solicitor's Office and the ACT Magistrates Court; and
- supporting them to process distressing material such as medical notes and/or psychological assessments.

In the reporting period, 69 new clients were sent information about the FAS scheme. Of the 293 Victim Support ACT clients that received some kind of FAS-related assistance during 2014-15, 61% were female and 39% were male.

Victim Support ACT works with Legal Aid ACT, the Women's Legal Centre and Clayton Utz, who all provided legal advice to FAS applicants. Victim Support ACT values the support these organisations provide to victims of crime.

## B.2.4 Strategic goal 2: strengthen stakeholder engagement

### Participation in national activities

Victim Support ACT and the Victims of Crime Commissioner made contributions to activities at the national level. We provided secretariat support for Victim Support Australia (VSA) and sponsorship for the 15th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology (July 2015), hosted by Victim Support Australia.

We provided ongoing input to the projects that sit under the National Framework of Rights for Victims of Crime 2013-2016.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner also sat on the advisory group for the Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) project 4.1 'Domestic and family violence protection orders in Australia: an investigation of information sharing and enforcement'.

## B.2.5 Strategic goal 3: support the role and function of the Victims of Crime Commissioner and the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator

### Key Issue: Domestic violence recognition and reforms

Tragically, during the reporting period, the ACT community experienced the loss of several community members as a result of alleged family and domestic violence homicides. These losses have impacted enormously on surviving loved ones, as well as the community as a whole. We at Victim Support ACT extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of those who lost their lives.

These incidents occurred alongside the recognition of Rosie Batty as Australian of the Year 2015. In Canberra, this resulted in long awaited community, media and government recognition of the pervasive extent and impact of domestic and family violence.

Since early 2015, the impetus for resourcing prevention of and responses to domestic violence has grown. This year, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council worked with key agencies and the community to identify a reform agenda, and the ACT Government has responded by flagging increased funding, law reform and a commitment to whole-of-government responses.

As the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator for the ACT I have been pleased to work with a broad range of community members, government and non-government agencies in seeking reforms that reduce the prevalence of domestic and family violence and improve responses to those who experience violence.

The Domestic Violence Project Coordinator has a number of functions in relation to domestic violence (a full list is available at section 12 of the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986*) including:

- monitoring and promoting compliance with policies of Government;
- assisting government and non-government organisations to provide high quality services, including law enforcement, education, crisis or other services that relate to domestic violence;
- facilitating cooperation between government and non-government organisations in relation to domestic violence; and
- assisting the Domestic Violence Prevention Council in the development of policies and programs and other functions as directed.

The Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) consists of the Coordinator and 12 other members who are appointed by the Minister. This year I assisted the Domestic Violence Prevention Council with a range of activities, the main ones being a domestic and family violence review, the development of a domestic and family violence data collection framework and the holding of an extraordinary meeting to examine how the ACT community can better respond to the incidence of domestic and family violence, including sexual assault.



## **Domestic Violence Prevention Council Extraordinary meeting**

In March 2015, the ACT Opposition Leader Jeremy Hanson called for a roundtable discussion to be held on domestic violence in the ACT. In response to Mr Hanson's proposal, the ACT Government agreed to take a bi-partisan approach to addressing domestic and family violence and requested that the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) hold an Extraordinary meeting. The meeting held on 2 April 2015 brought together a range of participants from diverse areas in the ACT to present advice to Government about domestic and family violence prevention, interventions and responses; with a focus on areas for improvement. A [report](#) was developed and provided to the Attorney-General outlining a number of recommendations for addressing domestic and family violence, including sexual assault, in the ACT. I look forward to working with Government, the Opposition, the DVPC and other stakeholders on the implementation of a range of recommendations made in the report.

## **ACT Domestic and Family Violence Death Review – DVPC activity**

During 2014-15, the Government provided funding to the DVPC to conduct a domestic and family violence death review (the Death Review). This was called for under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022*. The Death Review seeks to provide a robust and independent picture of domestic and family violence in the ACT, particularly the areas where lives are at risk. Homicides that occurred in a domestic violence context, after 2000, will be reviewed. It is anticipated that the Death Review report and recommendations will be provided to the Attorney-General in December 2015.

Ms Emma Henderson was appointed as the Principal Research Officer for the Death Review. Ms Henderson works from Victim Support ACT under the direct supervision of the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator. This important project has required extensive input and cooperation from a variety of ACT Government agencies and non-Government organisations. Without their support the project would not be possible.

## **ACT Domestic and Family Violence Data Collection Framework – DVPC activity**

In March 2015, in my role as Chair of the Family Violence Intervention Program Coordinating Committee, I referred the issue of domestic and family violence data collection to the DVPC. The DVPC has a function under the Domestic Violence Agencies Act for the collection, standardisation and sharing of statistical information relating to domestic violence offences; and collecting statistical and other information relating to domestic violence offences. In years past the FVIP Coordinating Committee has been the coordinating body that collects and reports on domestic and family violence in the ACT.

In March 2015, the Attorney-General announced that the Confiscated Assets Trust Fund would provide \$100,000 for an ACT Family and Domestic Violence Data Collection Framework. The funding is available to the DVPC during 2015-16 to oversee the data collection project – to be based in the office of Victim Support ACT under the project management of the Domestic Violence Project Coordinator. The ACT Family and Domestic Violence Data Collection Framework will seek to engage key stakeholders to develop a core set of meaningful domestic and family violence data sets to provide a framework for simplified and effective measurement of domestic and family violence in the future.

## Family violence law reform – ACT Government initiative

In April I welcomed the Attorney-General's announcement that government would work to propose legislative amendments aimed at addressing some of the key issues affecting victims of domestic and family violence within the criminal justice system. Several of the issues to be addressed were previously raised by the Family Violence Intervention Program Coordinating Committee and the ACT Director of Public Prosecutions.

Proposed amendments include the following.

- Introduction of a new strangulation offence with a lower threshold than the existing offence 'when a person intentionally and unlawfully chokes, suffocates or strangles another person so as to render that person insensible or unconscious' (s27 in the *Crimes Act 1900*). It is my understanding that the new offence will not require that a person is rendered insensible or unconscious. In effect, this reform recognises that strangulation is a very particular and personal form of violence common in partner violence, used by perpetrators to exercise power and control.
- Altering the definition of domestic and family violence in the *Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act 2008* to specifically recognise that children witnessing violence are also victims.
- Development of a mechanism that will allow a court to extend the term of an interim domestic violence order where there are related criminal charges or proceedings. This proposal will facilitate a more efficient and less burdensome process for victims of family violence seeking safety through the civil protection orders system.
- Amendments to evidence provisions that allow police to record a complainant's (victim's) statement for use as the primary evidence for that person at a subsequent criminal hearing.

These reforms are important steps in addressing the way our criminal justice system deals with domestic and family violence offences.

## Family violence funding – ACT Government initiative

In June the ACT Government made budget announcements for 2015-16 relating to additional funding for anti-domestic violence measures.

- An additional \$250,000 to be shared between the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Canberra Men's Centre to manage the increase in demand for services.
- The allocation of \$650,000 to provide enhanced social and emotional learning programs that integrate respectful relationships modules.
- Funding for the ACT Domestic Violence Data Framework and the Domestic Violence Prevention Council.
- Funding for women's safety grants administered through the Community Services Directorate.



I welcomed those announcements but stress that funding for additional activities should not divert funding from crisis services. We need security of funding for women's specialist domestic violence and sexual assault services. They have the skills and knowledge to provide the specialist support and advocate most vocally for women. We must keep their voice alive to maintain the prominence they give to women's issues in our community.

### **Appointment of the Coordinator General for Domestic and Family Violence – ACT Government initiative**

In response to calls for greater coordination by government in relation to Domestic Violence contained in the DVPC Extraordinary Meeting report, the ACT Government appointed a Coordinator-General for Domestic and Family Violence in June 2015. This appointment sits with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate Deputy Director-General Vicki Parker.

The Government's intention is that the Coordinator-General will be responsible for the implementation of the Government's response to the DVPC's Extraordinary Meeting report and the monitoring of government commitments made under the Second Implementation Plan for the ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017.

The Coordinator-General will also undertake other activities that support whole-of-government approaches to the prevention of and responses to domestic and family violence. I look forward to supporting the Coordinator-General in this capacity.

### **Commonwealth Finance and Public Administration References Committee – Domestic Violence Inquiry**

I was pleased to accept an invitation to give evidence at the public hearing of the Finance and Public Administration References Committee's Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia on 15 October 2014. I provided an overview of challenges face by the Family Violence Intervention Program including the complexities of collecting useful data related to domestic and family violence in the ACT. The transcript from the public hearing is available on the Australian Parliament website ([www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au)).

### **Policy position: additional reforms for domestic and family violence**

While I commend the recent Government and community recognition of and commitment to reducing the prevalence of domestic and family violence in our community, I stress that much more needs to be done, now and into the future to make a substantial and sustainable difference. Areas for ongoing reform include prevention, early intervention, crisis intervention and post-crisis support for victims. In addition, more needs to be done to reduce recidivism by men who use violence, including evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs and identifying the important elements of effective programs and community responses.

We need long term investment in primary prevention initiatives at a national level aimed at addressing underlying attitudes and beliefs that support male entitlement. In March 2015, the Commonwealth Government announced a \$30 million jointly-funded national awareness raising campaign – how this money will be spent remains to be seen.

Governments at all levels, the private sector and community must continue to recognise the link between gender inequality, gender stereotypes and domestic and family violence. Simply put, women continue to suffer high rates of violence because there has not been a change to the social, political, cultural and economic factors that play a large part in both causing and maintaining the conditions under which violence against women occurs. We need to address some fundamental structural issues in order to have a serious chance at reducing and preventing domestic violence.

I acknowledge that men are also victims of domestic or family violence at times and there is a need for these men to have access to non-judgemental and appropriate support. However, I continue to use language focusing on violence against women because men make up the majority of perpetrators of physical violence against women and of physical violence generally. Fear, intimidation and injury are also more likely to be a consequence for the victims of violence perpetrated by men.

We need to ensure that women escaping domestic and family violence have access to safe and affordable housing options and ongoing support post-crisis. The Domestic Violence Crisis Service Report *Staying at Home after Violence* (2014) identified a shortfall in services for women post-crisis. Women who remained in their homes, after the perpetrator had been removed with the assistance of a Domestic Violence Order, were found to be at high risk of becoming homeless. Their risk of homelessness peaked at 12 months post-separation. All the women also continued to struggle with a range of issues, including trauma symptoms, parenting issues, difficulties at work, financial hardship, ongoing safety concerns and legal issues.

The provision of appropriate support for these women and their children must, therefore, involve a range of agencies willing to work together, including health services, legal services, housing services and the education system. Support needs to be available long-term, and workers need to have a sound understanding of the dynamics, complexities and impacts of domestic and family violence on women and their children.

## **A National Response**

We need to strengthen our national response to domestic violence. I acknowledge the good work being done under the action plans for the *National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. However, more can be done. We could build on that Plan by focussing our attention on the recommendations made in the Australian and New South Wales Law Reform (ALRC) Commissions' *Family Violence - a National Legal Response*.<sup>1</sup> The ALRC details an important and courageous law reform agenda for the Australian Government, states and territories. All jurisdictions should be making it a top priority to implement these recommendations and to report publicly on progress against those recommendations.

Of the 186 recommendations contained in the Report, there are 97 recommendations which affect only the States and Territories. These recommendations have been left up to each jurisdiction to consider. I believe we can do more to hold ourselves accountable for progress against those recommendations, especially if we are to move toward a national recognition scheme

<sup>1</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission and NSW Law Reform Commission, 2010, *Family Violence - A National Legal Response* (ALRC Report 114), Australian Government.

for Domestic Violence Orders. Each jurisdiction should, at the very least, report publicly on an annual basis regarding what actions/activities have taken place to consider and progress these recommendations.

The ACT Government has made a considerable effort to consult broadly on the recommendations and a large number of stakeholders have participated in a number of roundtable discussions on how to progress those recommendations.

## **Key issue: Promoting reforms to meet the interests and needs of victims of crime**

### **Issues and Position Papers**

I have begun a process of preparing and releasing a series of position papers on issues affecting victims of crime. These papers are intended to raise awareness, promote discussion and be a catalyst for change.

The first position paper I released in March 2015 made recommendations for reforming the framework for applying for a Domestic Violence Order in the ACT. I urged the government to be courageous and to pursue fundamental shifts in the way our civil and criminal justice systems respond to, and support, women experiencing violence.<sup>2</sup>

I will release further papers in 2015-16 on topics that are relevant to victims of crime and require public discussion. The papers will be placed on our website <http://www.victimsupport.act.gov.au/>

### **Key Activity: Contribution to the Financial Assistance Scheme Review**

The current victims of crime financial assistance scheme has been in place since 1998. The ACT Government commenced a major review of the scheme in early 2013. A Government issues paper published in April 2013 identified a wide array of issues with the existing scheme. Victim Support ACT joined a working group with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to consider the responses to the issues paper.

In April 2014, the Government published a proposed model, along with a PriceWaterhouseCooper review of the financial modelling for the proposed new approach. My responses to the issues paper and the proposed model are available on the Justice and Community Safety Website ([www.justice.act.gov.au](http://www.justice.act.gov.au)).

In April 2015, the Attorney-General announced the Government's intention to prepare a Bill to develop a more modern and user-friendly victims of crime financial assistance scheme, to be administered by Victim Support ACT with the Victims of Crime Commissioner as the decision maker. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate and Victim Support ACT committed significant resources to the development of new scheme during 2014-15. The proposed bill for the new scheme will seek to include the following important features:

- An administrative (rather than court-based) framework recognising that victims of crime financial assistance scheme applications should be processed in a timely manner and that efforts should be made to minimise additional distress for applicants.
- Payments for urgent needs will be available, with an abridged application process and

<sup>2</sup> Media release – Victims of Crime Commissioner welcomes family violence legislation proposals.  
2 April 2015

shorter timeframes for decision-making.

- Victims of property crime in a domestic violence context will be eligible for urgent needs payments to assist them with costs relating to safety measures, relocation costs and counselling. This group of people have not been able to access assistance through the current scheme.
- Lump sum recognition payments for people who experience a wide range of violent offences.

## Key Activities: Commenting on law reform processes

### Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Inquiry into Sentencing (ACT)

In October 2014, I attended the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Inquiry into Sentencing public hearing as a witness. I spoke to issues that I raised previously in my September 2013 written submission to the Inquiry, which is available on the Legislative Assembly website. I welcome the March 2015 report and 45 recommendations. I gave particular support for the following recommendations:

- Sentencing Council: (1) create a council (2) with responsibility to conduct research on sentencing, recidivism and related matters in the ACT; draw on, analyse and produce publications using data from the ACT sentencing database; engage and educate the ACT community on matters relevant to sentencing and criminal justice; and provide policy advice to Government relevant to sentencing and criminal justice. The Council (3) should be an independent body modelled on the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council.
- Sentence Administration Board: (40) Amend the *Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005* so that its sets out the circumstances in which parole can be revoked. (41) Require the Sentence Administration Board to publish its decisions as a matter of course.
- Bail and remand: (45) Services and programs available to sentenced prisoners be made available to accused persons on bail and prisoners on remand on a voluntary basis.

### Restorative Justice – Welcoming phase 2 (ACT)

A number of recommendations from the Inquiry related to expanding The ACT Restorative Justice program to adult offenders. The Government has since announced the implementation of phase two – a major reform that will benefit victims of crime in the ACT. I welcome the allocation of funding to the implementation of the second phase of the *Crimes (Restorative Justice) Act 2004* in the June budget announcements. I have advocated for the implementation of phase two for a number of years in a variety of forums.

I congratulate the ACT Government for enabling the expansion of the restorative justice scheme, one of the broadest and boldest restorative justice schemes in the world. Restorative justice offers significant benefits to victims and their families and friends but also offers hope and new beginnings to those who have harmed others.

## Justice Reform Strategy – ACT Government initiative

In June 2015 I provided a submission on the ACT Government Justice Reform Strategy *First stage report into a new community based sentencing option for the ACT*. I raised the following issues in my submission:

- Lack of certainty and available evidence about the effectiveness of current perpetrator programs. There must be relevant, evidence-based therapeutic programs for offenders and clear consequences for non-attendance if the new sentencing option is to be successful.
- A need for a sentencing advisory board or counsel to review and meaningfully assess sentencing outcomes.
- A need for a rigorous review after five years of operation.

I submitted that the new community based sentencing option:

- needs to have conditions that are real, significant and sufficiently clear;
- should have a range of conditions available to allow the Court to tailor orders to address the individual offender risk profiles;
- must have clear, timely and consistent enforcement of breaches;
- should be limited to a maximum of two years and a minimum term of six months;
- should exclude child sex offences;
- must, if domestic violence offences are included, have perpetrator programs that, as a minimum, are intensive, evidence based, adequately resourced and regularly evaluated; and
- should include offences where there would be a benefit in requiring the perpetrator to undergo treatment and intensive therapeutic interventions.

My participation in the Justice Reform Strategy and the advisory group will continue in 2015-16.

## Alcohol related violence and the Liquor Act Review

In September 2013, a review of the impact of the reforms to the *Liquor Act 2010 (ACT)* (the Act) was completed.

While the majority of stakeholders considered the Liquor Act to have made a positive contribution to community safety, there remain a number of outstanding issues relevant to community safety that permeates throughout the sector:

- There remains a persistent level of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour that is unacceptable to the community. This offensive behaviour persists despite the reforms included in the Act to specifically address this issue.
- There is a concern among health services about young people needing ambulance treatment for alcohol-related problems and an increasing level of acute alcohol-related emergency department presentations.
- Stakeholders reported a culture of preloading alcohol in the ACT. Given research that indicates preloading is a major barrier to minimising alcohol-related harms, the incidence of preloading will ultimately limit the effectiveness of the Act and its supporting measures.

The ACT government will be releasing an issues paper for comment in 2015 looking at options to address these issues. I will continue to make submissions about this issue in 2015-16.

### **Proposed Amendments to ACT Child Sex Offender Laws**

I welcome progress on the proposed amendments to the current *Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act 2005*, aimed at assisting ACT Policing to improve its capacity to monitor offenders and protect the safety of children within the ACT, particularly in relation to expanding the search and entry powers for police in relation to registered offenders. Expanding police powers to verify details or ensure compliance with the offender's obligations under the Act is a useful option for preventing further victimisation and protect the community from sexual offenders.

### **Welcoming other reforms and Government activities**

In my last annual report I advocated for the introduction of legislation aimed at prohibiting sexual offences involving the use of cameras and other recording devices. Reforms that related to voyeurism offences were passed in February 2015. The reforms make it an offence to observe, record or live-stream sexual or other private acts without the consent of the person observed or filmed. I welcome the criminalisation of this behaviour.

The amendment bill also made it explicitly possible for victims of crime to provide victim impact statements in the form of a drawing or picture.

## **Key Activities: Education and other programs to promote awareness**

### **International Women's Day presentation**

On 6 March 2015, I was delighted to be invited to be one of three speakers at the International Women's Day event held by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. My speech focussed on my concern about the incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault across the country. I spoke about the gendered nature of domestic violence, common misconceptions about domestic violence and the alarming rise in the rate of domestic violence related homicides. I raised serious concerns about impending cuts to vital front line services across the country and called for a national legal response to domestic violence and the implementation of the recommendations made in the ALRC report *'Family Violence – a National Legal Response'*.

### **Media engagement and media strategy**

In 2014-15, I worked to build a stronger media profile to raise awareness of issues relevant and important to people who have been affected by crime. I have also used the development of issues and position papers and formal media releases to advocate and drive change for victims of crime.

The above strategies have been combined with an active twitter presence. I now maintain a regularly updated twitter profile aimed at raising awareness and promoting discussion on important issues that affect victims of crime.

During 2014-15 Victim Support ACT commenced planning a transition to the ACT Government single public interface website template. I hope that the new website will improve access to our services and enhance the profile of Victim Support ACT.

## Family Violence Intervention Program Coordinating Committee

The ACT Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) is an integrated and coordinated criminal justice and community program designed to respond to family violence incidents that come to police attention and proceed to prosecution. The FVIP integrates the activities of the police, prosecution, courts and corrections within the criminal justice system, and coordinates externally with other key agencies such as domestic violence advocacy services.

The FVIP Coordinating Committee partner agencies include:

- ACT Policing
- Officer of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- ACT Law Courts and Tribunal
- ACT Corrective Services
- Legislation, Policy and Programs, Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- Division of Women, Youth and Children, Health Directorate
- Care and Protection Services, Community Services Directorate
- Victim Support ACT
- Victims of Crime Commissioner (FVIP Chairperson)
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- Legal Aid ACT

During 2014-15, the FVIP Coordinating Committee (the Committee) progressed a number of the strategic planning priorities that were developed in June 2013 in response to the *ACT Family Violence Intervention Program Review* (2012) recommendations.<sup>3</sup>

### Strategic priority 1: review and renewal of case tracking

A case tracking process was established under the FVIP in the 1990s. This process was designed to facilitate interagency collaboration in response to family violence victims and perpetrators where an incident involving family violence offences is being prosecuted.

At the strategic planning meeting of the FVIP Coordinating Committee for 2013-14, it was agreed that case tracking should be reviewed to ensure that victim safety is addressed appropriately. The Committee also investigated the possibility of acquiring a new risk management tool to be used by ACT Policing when assessing intimate partner violence. The introduction of a new tool will continue to be explored in 2015-16.

### Strategic priority 2: review of data collection and use

In 2013-14 the FVIP Coordinating Committee commenced a review of data collection and its use. Historically, the Chair of the Committee has collected family violence related data from participating FVIP partner agencies to contribute to reviews of the FVIP's activities and outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> T Cussen & M Lyneham, *ACT Family Violence Intervention Program Review*, 2012, Australian Institute of Criminology.

During 2014-15 the FVIP Coordinating Committee referred data collection to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council.

### **Strategic priority 3: specialist family violence magistrate**

The FVIP Coordinating Committee has made it a priority to lobby for the continuation of the appointment of a specialist family violence magistrate to the family violence court list. The FVIP Coordinating Committee believe that a specialist family violence magistrate is an important element of the FVIP.

### **Strategic priority 4: review of protection order processes, including service and enforcement**

This priority has been progressed through briefings made by the FVIP Coordinating Committee to the Attorney-General. In 2014, the Attorney-General received a letter from a Canberra-based solicitor raising serious concerns about protection order processes, with a number of recommendations for reforms that would improve the experience for applicants. The Attorney-General referred the letter to the FVIP Coordinating Committee to consider. The Committee prepared a detailed briefing for the Attorney-General on the recommendations, and other measures needed to address the needs of victims of domestic violence.

As a result of these recommendations, and the subsequent Domestic Violence Prevention Council Extraordinary meeting, Government committed to introducing a Bill in late 2015 to address some critical issues in domestic and family violence legislation and application procedures in the ACT.

### **Strategic priority 5: Australian Law Reform Commission and New South Wales Law Reform Commission joint report recommendations**

The FVIP Coordinating Committee has agreed prioritise contributing to the ACT's response to the NSW and Australian Law Reform Commissions report *Family Violence – A National Legal Response* (2010). The 131 recommendations put forward in the report are a sound platform from which to pursue a national response to domestic violence.

On 2 April 2015 the ACT Government announced that it would be progressing first stage reforms to address key ALRC recommendations in early 2016. The Committee welcomes the opportunity to make submissions on proposed reforms.

### **Strategic priority 6: develop a formal relationship with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council**

In 2013-14 the FVIP Coordinating Committee approached the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to suggest developing a collaborative agreement. The collaborative agreement was signed off by the Chair of the FVIP Coordinating Committee and the Chair of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council on 4 February 2015. It specifically addresses data collection and community awareness raising as areas for collaboration.



## B.2.6 Strategic goal 4: build and support staff capability

### Staff Development

Victim Support ACT case managers attended in-house training on clinical supervision in October 2014. The program was facilitated by Dr Elizabeth Anne Riley from Peoplesmart Consulting. Engaging in clinical supervision is a core component of ongoing professional development for case managers. It aims to provide a venue for the case manager to reflect and review clinical situations with the aim of improving practice and supporting the clinician in their professional environment.

**Table 15: Staff training attended in 2014-15**

| Case manager training                              | Participants |
|--|--------------|
| Act Mindfully                                      | 2            |
| Interpersonal Violence – Effective Responses       | 1            |
| Mental Health and Wellbeing for Young People       | 2            |
| Strengthening Families                             | 1            |
| Clinical supervision – in-house                    | 11           |
| Transforming Childhood Trauma                      | 1            |
| Trauma Informed Training for Workers               | 1            |
| The Body Keeps Score                               | 1            |
| General, management & administration training      |              |
| Disability Discrimination and Disability Awareness | 12           |
| Fraud and Ethics Awareness                         | 8            |
| Privacy Act  | 1            |
| Risk Management                                    | 2            |
| Records Management                                 | 1            |
| Recruitment and Staff Selection                    | 3            |
| Respect Equity and Diversity                       | 2            |
| Working with Ministers                             | 1            |
| Conferences  |              |
| Future Thinking Symposium                          | 1            |

## **B.2.7 Strategic goal 5: improve systems and processes**

The Victim Support ACT client database runs off a Microsoft Access platform. This year, an IT specialist was engaged and a staff member trained in Access to identify specific tasks and functions that could be streamlined using the database. Below is a description of some of the most useful changes that were made to the database functionality.

- An invoicing interface was developed resulting in a more efficient and quicker turnaround time for the processing of invoices.
- A human resources interface was developed to monitor staffing resources, training, leave and other administrative requirements.
- Additional letter templates were created in the client database.

## **B.3 Scrutiny**

During 2014-15, the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT were not subject to commitments made for action through:

- comment on Auditor-General or Ombudsman reports; or
- Government Response / Submission to a Legislative Assembly Committee report

## **B.4 Risk Management**

Information (where relevant) regarding risk management is contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

## **B.5 Internal Audit**

Information (where relevant) regarding internal audit arrangements are contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

## **B.6 Fraud Prevention**

Information (where relevant) regarding fraud prevention activities are contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

## **B.7 Work Health and Safety**

Information (where relevant) regarding work health and safety are contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

## **B.8 Human Resources Management**

Additional information (where relevant) regarding human resource management are contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate and section B.2.6 of this annual report.

The tables below outline some key information relating to the staffing at Victim Support ACT.

**Table 16: Victim Support ACT full-time equivalent (FTE) and headcount by gender 2014-15**

| Measure             | Female | Male | Total |
|---------------------|--------|------|-------|
| FTE by gender       | 16.3   | 2    | 18.3  |
| Headcount by gender | 18     | 2    | 20    |
| % of workforce      | 90%    | 10%  | 100%  |

**Table 17: Victim Support ACT headcount by classification and gender 2014-15**

| Classification group         | Female    | Male     | Total     |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Administrative officers      | 2         | 0        | 2         |
| Health professional officers | 11        | 1        | 12        |
| Senior officers              | 5         | 0        | 5         |
| Statutory office holders     | 0         | 1        | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>18</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>20</b> |

**Table 18: Employment category by gender**

| Employment category | Female    | Male     | Total     |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Casual              | 1         | 0        | 1         |
| Permanent full-time | 12        | 0        | 12        |
| Permanent part-time | 3         | 0        | 3         |
| Temporary full-time | 2         | 2        | 4         |
| Temporary part-time | 0         | 0        | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>18</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>20</b> |

**Table 19: Ethnic profile of staff**

|                  | Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander | Culturally & Linguistically Diverse | People with a Disability |
|------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Headcount        | 0                                      | 4                                   | 0                        |
| % of Total Staff | 0%                                     | 20%                                 | 0%                       |

## B.9 Ecologically Sustainable Development

Information (where relevant) regarding ecologically sustainable development is contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

## C. Financial Management Reporting

### C.1 Financial Management Analysis

Information (where relevant) regarding financial management analysis is contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

### C.2 Financial Statements

Financial statements are contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

### C.3 Capital Works

Information (where relevant) regarding capital works is contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

### C.4 Asset Management

Information (where relevant) regarding asset management is contained in the Annual Report of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

### C.5 Government Contracting

#### Approved Service Providers

A procurement process was undertaken in 2014-15 resulting in three new service providers being approved and registered with Victim Support ACT. Currently there are 33 approved service providers on Victim Support ACT's register. An additional 16 authorised exception providers were approved to deliver services to people victimised in the ACT but reside elsewhere.

The fee schedule for approved providers increased by 5% at from 1 July 2014 – see table 20 for the full fee schedule for 2014-15.

**Table 20: approved service provider fees from 1 July 2014**

| Discipline                                 | Rate per hour per unit of service            |
|--|--|
| <b>Psychologist</b>                        | \$136 per hour ie \$34.00 per 15 minute unit |
| <b>Counsellor</b>                          | \$136 per hour ie \$34.00 per 15 minute unit |
| <b>Social Worker</b>                       | \$136 per hour ie \$34.00 per 15 minute unit |
| <b>Physiotherapy – GST free</b>            | \$124 per hour ie \$31.00 per 15 minute unit |
| <b>Massage Therapy</b>                     | \$91 per hour ie \$22.75 per 15 minute unit  |
| <b>Occupational Therapy</b>                | \$124 per hour ie \$31.00 per 15 minute unit |
| <b>Acupuncture</b>                         | \$91 per hour ie \$22.75 per 15 minute unit  |
| <b>Chiropractor</b>                        | By negotiation on case by case basis         |
| <b>Naturopathy</b>                         | \$124 per hour ie \$31.00 per 15 minute unit |
| <b>Educational Assessment<br/>Tutoring</b> | \$161 - total<br>\$70 per hour               |

In 2014-15, clients were provided with approximately 1966 hours of private professional service under the Victims Services Scheme. The total cost of these brokered services was \$257,483.

## **Communities@Work Contract**

One of the functions of the Victims of Crime Commissioner under the *Victims of Crime Regulation 2000* is to develop and maintain a volunteer program (s22 (j)). Communities@Work is contracted to deliver the Side by Side volunteer court support program at a cost of \$173,000 (exclusive of GST) per annum.

## **C.6 Statement of Performance**

The annual statement of performance for Victim Support ACT and the Victims of Crime Commissioner is provided in the Annual Report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. Additional information relating to the performance of Victim Support ACT and the Victims of Crime Commissioner is available in section *B.2 Performance Analysis* from page 8.

# Compliance Statement

The Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT annual report must comply with the 2015 Annual Report Directions (the Directions). The Directions are found at the ACT Legislation Register: <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/annual/2015.asp>

The Compliance Statement indicates the subsections, under the five Parts of the Directions, that are applicable to Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT annual report and the location of information that satisfies these requirements:

## Part 1 – Directions Overview

The requirements under Part 1 of the 2015 Directions relate to the purpose, timing and distribution, and records keeping of annual reports. The Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT annual report complies with all subsections of Part 1 under the Directions.

In compliance with section 13 Feedback, Part 1 of the Directions, contact details for the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT are provided within the front cover of the annual report to provide readers with the opportunity to provide feedback.

## Part 2 – Agency Annual Report Requirements

The requirements within Part 2 of the Directions are mandatory for all agencies and the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT comply with all subsections. The information that satisfies the requirements of Part 2 is found in the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT Annual Report as follows:

- A. Transmittal Certificate, see page 3
- B. Organisational Overview and Performance, inclusive of all subsections, see pages: 5-33
- C. Financial Management Reporting, inclusive of relevant subsections, see page 33

## Part 3 – Reporting by Exception

The Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT have nil information to report by exception under Part 3 of the Directions for the 2014-15 reporting period.

## Part 4 – Agency Specific Annual Report Requirements

No subsections of part 4 of the 2015 Directions are applicable to the Victims of Crime Commissioner and Victim Support ACT.

ACT Public Service Directorate annual reports are found at the following web address: [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/report/annual\\_reports](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual_reports).

