



Victim Impact Statements

A Victim Impact Statement (VIS) is a chance for you to tell the court about the impact the crime has had on you. It's different to your police statement - you can think of it as a letter to the Judge. It's used at the sentencing stage of the criminal justice process.

Sometimes, writing a VIS can be hard, so you may want to ask someone to help. If you need help writing or reviewing your VIS, you can call VictimConnect on 1300 318 940 or PACT on 1800 449 632.

You don't have to provide a VIS if you don't want to.

What is a Victim Impact Statement

A Victim Impact Statement or a VIS is your opportunity to talk about how the crime has affected you.

It will help the court to understand the impact the crime has had on you before a sentencing decision is made.

A VIS will only be used in court if the person who was charged with the crime is found guilty or pleads guilty.

How to write a Victim Impact Statement

There is no set style for a VIS, but it must be in your own words.

You can include bullet points, photos, poems or drawings in your statement to help tell your story.

There are no rules about how long or short it should be. You can hand write or type your statement, and you will need to sign and date it.

How to submit your Victim Impact Statement

The VIS need to be given to the correct court **before** sentencing.

- **Magistrates Court** – you will need to give your statement to the arresting officer from Queensland Police Service.
- **District or Supreme Courts** – you will need to give your VIS to the Victim Liaison Officer at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Who will read or hear a Victim Impact Statement?

The VIS will be read by the defence lawyer, the defendant, the prosecutor and the magistrate or judge.

Sometimes one of the lawyers, the judge or the magistrate might read parts of your VIS when talking to the court.

If your VIS is read aloud in open court, everyone in the court will hear it and it will be recorded in the court transcript.

If you want your Victim Impact Statement read in court

If you would like your VIS read in court, you can contact the **Director of Public Prosecutions** on **1800 673 428**.

You can:

- ask to read it yourself - in person, by video or by phone. You can have someone with you for support if you need.
- ask for the prosecutor to read your statement to the court for you.

Do you need to go to the sentencing hearing?

No, you don't have to go if you don't want to.

It's your choice.

Sometimes sentencing happens straight after the defendant is found guilty or enters a guilty plea, and sometimes the sentencing hearing may happen later.



Things you can include in your Victim Impact Statement

When writing your VIS, think about:

- How the crime made you feel at the time
- How the crime still makes you feel
- How your life has changed since the crime
- Any physical injuries and how they have affected you, for example:
 - Problems with sleep or pain
 - Medical treatments
- The emotional and psychological impact on you, your family or loved ones, such as:
 - Changes to your enjoyment of life
 - Feelings of anger, fear, sadness, shame, anxiety or low self esteem
- If the crime has impacted your social relationships, you could talk about your:
 - Friendships and/or family relationships
 - Work, study or lifestyle
- The financial impact for you due to the crime, such as:
 - If you were unable to work and earn an income
 - Any costs for counselling and medical appointments or treatments
- Any other information about the impact of the crime that you think is important and relevant.
- If the crime resulted in the death of a loved one, you may wish to talk about them and their life.

If you need support, you can call **Queensland Homicide Victim Support Group** on **1800 774 744**.

Do not include:

The prosecutor will review your VIS before it's given to the judge. They will remove:

- × Details of the crime itself or other crimes committed by the defendant
- × Medical conditions without supporting documents (for example, a medical report)
- × Anything that is not true or correct
- × Your opinion about the defendant or what sentence you think they should receive
- × Swear words or bad language

If you need support

There are victim support services available to help victims of crime recover.

Learn more about **victim support services** at:

www.qld.gov.au/victimsupport

Financial assistance for victims of violent crime

If you have experienced a violent crime or your close relative was a victim of homicide in Queensland, you may be eligible for financial assistance.

Learn more about **Victim Assist Queensland** at:

www.qld.gov.au/victims

Definitions

Defendant

The person charged with the crime.

Prosecutor

A person who tells the court the Police version of what happened.

Defence lawyer

The lawyer who represents the person charged with the crime in court.

Judge or Magistrate

The Judge or Magistrate oversee and lead the court. They listen to the evidence and decide the sentence for a guilty person.

Sentence

This is the penalty that's given to the person who committed the crime if they are found guilty.

Court Transcript

This is a written record of what is said in court.

