

# CVSU FACT SHEET - General

## **What does the Crime Victims Services Unit (CVSU) do for victims of crime?**

If you have suffered physical or psychological injury or financial loss because of a violent act, CVSU can award you financial assistance and free counselling. We don't arrange medical treatment for injuries. For medical treatment, see your GP.

## **Who can apply for financial assistance?**

You can apply for financial assistance if you have been the victim of a violent crime, you have been the witness or rescuer to a violent crime, or you are a dependant or family member of a victim of a violent crime.

## **How soon can I receive counselling?**

You can receive counselling within 2 days of contacting CatholicCare NT on 1800 899 855.

## **How many free counselling sessions can I receive?**

You are entitled to receive as many counselling sessions as you need.

## **How long will it take before I receive financial assistance?**

Applications can take up to 4 years to finalise. Most take around 2 years to finalise. If you are experiencing financial hardship, the process can be faster.

## **Why does it take so long?**

Obtaining any police reports, having your injuries assessed, waiting for your injuries to stabilise, waiting for the resolution of a criminal proceeding and CVSU case loads, can affect the time it takes to finalise your application.

## **How much financial assistance will I receive?**

You can claim up to \$10,000 for actual or anticipated financial loss and up to \$40,000 if you were injured as a direct result of a violent act (however the total financial assistance is capped at \$40,000). The maximum payment of immediate financial assistance is \$5,000. Only financial loss can be claimed in an application for immediate financial assistance. If a person dies as a direct result of a violent act, a family member is entitled to apply for funeral expenses and financial support.

## **How do I apply for financial assistance?**

You can find application forms on our website. You can also contact the CVSU by email at [cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au](mailto:cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au) or call on Free call 1800 460 363 or (08) 8924 4080.

## **What will happen after I lodge my application?**

You will be assigned a case manager who will contact you if more information is needed. Their role is to receive and process the information necessary for a lawyer to assess and decide your application.

## **What information do I need to provide to CVSU?**

You will need to fill out the authority in the application form so that CVSU can obtain police, medical and other records. However, if you have information that supports your claim, please provide it to CVSU. Receipts and payslips will be required if you are claiming out of pocket expenses or loss of earnings. To obtain an immediate payment of financial assistance, you will need to show that you are experiencing financial hardship and that you have suffered (or will incur) financial loss as a direct result of a violent act, for example medical costs and loss of earnings.

## **Will my information remain confidential?**

Yes - your information will only be shared with the assessor and, if required, a health practitioner whose opinion is sought about your injuries.

## **When should I lodge my application for financial assistance?**

You have 2 years from the date of the violent act, injury or death to lodge an application. The Director may accept a late application if there are good reasons why you failed to make an application within the time limit.

## **What could affect my application for financial assistance?**

Your application may be refused or the award reduced if –

- (i) You did not report the violent act to police within a reasonable time or you did not assist police in the investigation or prosecution of the offender(s);
- (ii) The assessor is satisfied that you helped the offender commit the offence;
- (iii) The injury or death occurred when you were committing a serious offence;
- (iv) Your injury is work-related or was caused by a motor vehicle accident;
- (v) You already had a medical condition;
- (vi) You didn't seek proper medical treatment or follow medical advice for your injuries;
- (vii) The offender is likely to benefit from the award;
- (viii) You have received or will receive a payment for the violent act, injury, death or loss, eg. court compensation or an insurance payment.

## **What if I'm not satisfied with your decision regarding my application for financial assistance?**

If you are not satisfied with our decision, you can appeal to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

## **What if I want to know when the offender is released?**

If you are the victim of a violent offence, you can apply to CVSU to be placed on the Victims Register. If you are eligible, you can be kept informed of the offender's movements including his or her impending release, escape or change in security classification.

## **What are my rights as a victim of crime?**

If you have been the victim of a violent act, you have rights under the Northern Territory Charter for Victims of Crime.

## **How do I make a complaint about my treatment as a victim of crime?**

If you think that your rights under the Charter have been breached, contact the Director, Crime Victims Services Unit on 1800 460 363 or email [cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au](mailto:cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au).