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## Media Release

### CHANGES TO SPEED UP PAYMENTS TO VICTIMS OF CRIME

Changes to the Victims Support Scheme aim to significantly reduce the time it takes to deliver recognition payments to victims of crime, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) announced today.

“Improvements to the scheme last year mean victims of crime are now receiving urgent financial support for their immediate needs within 12 days and record levels of free counselling,” said Michael Coutts-Trotter, Secretary of DCJ.

“We want to build on the success of these changes to dramatically reduce how long it takes victim-survivors to receive recognition payments.”

The further changes, to be introduced on 1 July, will also empower victim-survivors to choose their own approved counsellor.

Victim-survivors seeking [recognition payments](#) will have up to 12 months to provide evidence of their injuries, from the time of making their application.

Victims Services is available to help any victim-survivor, including those with particular vulnerabilities, with their application.

Staff can provide guidance on the required supporting documents, which could include information from a doctor, dentist or counsellor, depending on the nature of the injuries.

“All of the improvements to the Victims Support Scheme are designed to help victim-survivors get the support they need faster and more effectively so they can focus on the healing process,” Mr Coutts-Trotter said.

Victims Services consulted with key stakeholders on the changes and considered their submissions and comments when developing and refining the new service model.

The changes will be reviewed after six months, in consultation with these stakeholders.

Recognition payments acknowledge the trauma suffered by victims due to violence. In 2019-20, more than 6,000 people have received recognition payments under the NSW scheme, totalling almost \$29 million. Over the same period, a total of more than \$41 million has been provided for victims’ [immediate needs](#) and [counselling](#).



“On average, it is now taking just 12 days to process an immediate needs application – compared to 73 days last year,” Mr Coutts-Trotter said.

“This means victims, including survivors of domestic violence, are able to quickly access funds for emergencies such as upgrading home security or undergoing urgent medical or dental work.

“The amount of free counselling hours provided to victims of violent crime has quadrupled since 2013.”

For more information or to apply for victims support, contact the Victims Access Line (VAL) on 1800 633 063 and the Aboriginal Contact Line on 1800 019 123 Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

Victims can also lodge forms online and access further information on the Victims Services website: [www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au).

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