



CatholicCare NT

CatholicCare NT Response to the Discussion Paper for Victims of Crime Reform April 2019

CatholicCare NT is an established organisation in the NT with 17 operational sites. We are a significant provider of counselling services, with the biggest reach in the NT, this currently includes the victims of crime counselling service. We currently have clinical counselling positions based in Darwin, Palmerston, Wadeye, Tiwi Islands, Daly River, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. We also have offices in Maningrida, Yirrkala, Jabiru, Santa Teresa, Finke, and Titjikala that provide a range of other support services. CatholicCare delivers a range of specialist services in addition to these counselling positions, this includes:

- Remote and Urban AOD Services
- Specialist Youth AOD Programs
- Men's Violence Counselling and Programs
- Men's Healing Programs
- Kids in Focus (Specialist children's counselling for children living with parents with AOD and mental health issues)
- Supporting Children After Separation (specialist children's counselling)
- School Counselling
- Community Mental Health
- Personal Helpers and Mentors (Mental Health Recovery)
- Intensive Family Preservation programs
- Financial Capability and Wellbeing
- Safe Houses
- Youth Mental Health

Scope of this Submission

This submission responds predominantly to reform in the areas of case management and counselling. CatholicCare NT has contributed to a range of other submissions relating to the discussion paper and in particular supports submissions made by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Networks and Crime Victims Advisory Committee.

Counselling and Case Management

The Victims of Crime Counselling & Support Service works with victims of crime to help reduce the ongoing negative impacts of trauma. Evidence demonstrates that crime victims who have access to appropriate counselling and support services prevent the development of subsequent persistent traumatic disability.

Our counselling service is tailored to meet the needs of the client. This includes brief one off interventions through to clinical counselling of up to 8 sessions. Our service tailors interventions to link into expert assistance, for instance people who are victims of domestic violence will be linked into our specialist domestic violence programs, or child victims will be linked into our children's counselling programs. Victims who have compensation claims will be linked into financial counselling services to help support financial decision making.

Program Objectives and Activities

Objective 1: To ensure that victims of crime have access to quality crisis counselling services that allows them to work through the impacts of the crime and to develop a sense of stability and resolution in their lives.

Objective 2: To ensure that victims of crime have timely access to information, support and referral services that can assist them in recovering from the impacts associated with the event.

Objective 3: Build community awareness about the counselling scheme through community education.

Objective 4: Deliver the service in regional centres and remote areas to ensure that those who need the service have the best possible chance of accessing it.

Current funding provides for 2 counsellors to service the whole of the NT, given the objectives of program and the complexity of servicing NT's remote and diverse population there are limitations to achieving the objective of the program.

CatholicCare NT believes there would be advantages to further developing the counselling and case management components of the scheme so that place-based responses could be developed that ensure that victims have access to timely, practical and therapeutic support when they need it. Crime victims in the NT often have co existing and complex needs such as homelessness, low income and substance abuse issues, people with complex trauma histories. Services to this client groups needs to be integrated with other services, trauma informed, co designed and comprehensive. The need for specialist crime victim counsellors with Domestic Violence specialisation is important. While existing Domestic Violence services exist in the community they are limited and are not easily accessible for victims in remote areas.

While we support the reform agenda, we are concerned that given the fiscal environment that resources may be directed to areas that will not directly benefit victims. When basic services such as case management and counselling remain underdeveloped and under resourced it seems premature to be looking at expanding the program to offender conferencing or introducing a Commissioner that will be resource intensive.

CatholicCare NT supports a staged approach that looks at a fair and user-friendly compensation scheme, and victim led counselling and case management as the priority area for reform.