

Northern Territory Charter of Victims' Rights







The Northern Territory Government puts the rights of victims first, by ensuring they have a stronger voice in our justice system with better protections and access to vital services.

The Charter of Victims Rights clearly directs that every reasonable resource will be used to support the safety and welfare of victims, their families and their property.

Access to simple and quick services in a coordinated and respectful manner is critical to victims of crime and their families. Providing opportunities for victims to be more involved in the justice process also acknowledges the interests of victims of crime and their integral role in the criminal justice system.

The Northern Territory Government's key principles:

1. Victims' rights are a priority.
2. The safety and welfare of victims, their families and their property is our number one concern.
3. Every reasonable resource will be used to support victims.
4. Access to services will be simple, quick, coordinated and respectful.
5. Victims have a right to be heard by the justice system.

If you need help translating this document, call 13 14 50
If you need an interpreter, you can phone the Aboriginal Interpreter Service 1800 334 944

Northern Territory Charter of Victims' Rights

The Northern Territory Government supports victims of crime. This Charter identifies victims' rights in the justice system and states to all government agencies and contracted service providers engaged with victims how they must provide their services and contact with victims. All processes are to be quick, fair, cost-effective and accessible.

Courtesy, compassion and respect

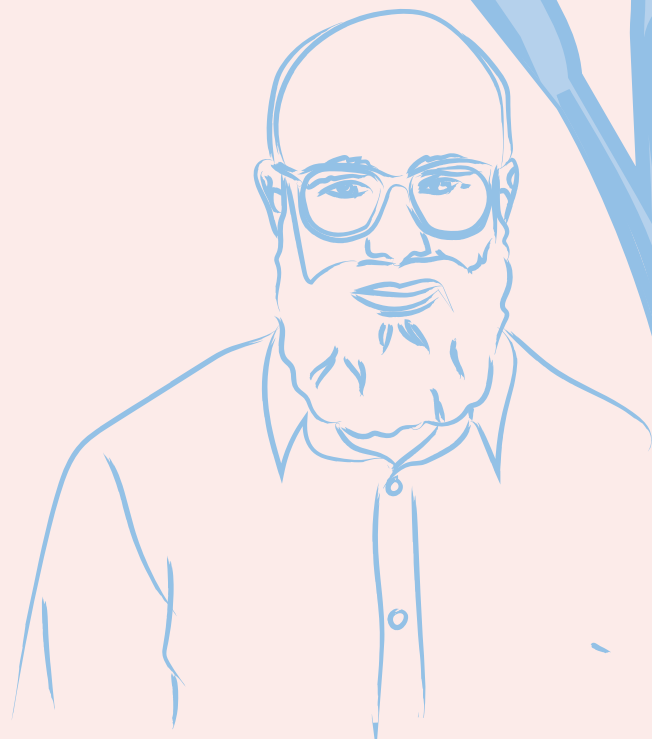
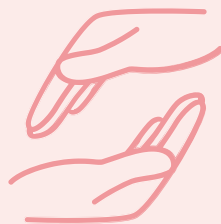
We will treat you with courtesy, compassion and respect.

We will treat you in a way that is trauma-informed and promotes cultural safety.



Your needs

Your needs are important. This includes Aboriginal or cultural background, location, sex or gender identity or sexual orientation, language and literacy, disability, religion and age.





Protecting your identity

We will keep your address and contact details confidential, except for when we are legally required to disclose information. If this happens, we will tell you what information we are disclosing and why we are disclosing it.



Protecting you from the accused

We will tell you at the earliest opportunity about how you can be legally protected against violence and intimidation by the accused.

The Police and Courts will consider you and your family's personal protection when bail applications are decided.

You will be protected from unnecessary contact with the accused and defence witnesses during hearings. This can include vulnerable witnesses giving evidence by closed circuit television or from behind a screen, and with a support person.



Information about services and support

We will tell you at the earliest opportunity about welfare, counselling, health, medical, legal services and support, and financial assistance you can access, as well as any limitations that might apply.



Information about the investigation of the crime

If you want, the Police will tell you about the progress of the investigation, unless sharing this information could jeopardise its progress, in which case you will be informed of this circumstance.

Information about the prosecution of the accused

If you want to, you will be informed by Police or Prosecutions in a timely manner about:

- The charges laid against the accused.
- The court process, your rights in relation to attending any trial or hearing and your role in the justice system, including as a witness for the Prosecution.
- The outcome of any bail application by the accused, and any bail conditions imposed to protect you and your family members from the accused.
- Options regarding court-ordered restitution or compensation.
- The time, date and place of any court dates.
- Any substantial changes to the charges.
- Any reasons for not laying charges, accepting a plea of guilty to a lesser charge or not prosecuting the accused.
- Where practicable, your views about accepting a plea of guilty to a lesser charge will also be sought and taken into account. The Prosecutor will make the final decision.
- The outcome of the criminal proceeding, including any sentence imposed and any conditions that are set, and what it means.
- An appeal being made, the grounds of the appeal, and the result of the appeal.
- The release or escape from custody of the accused, including before trial and when the accused is returned to custody.



Giving evidence

In particular circumstances, you may be able to object to giving evidence as a witness for the Prosecution, and have your objection decided by the Court.



Victim impact statement

If you want to, you can tell the Court about the impact of the crime on you in a victim impact statement.

There are services that can provide you with information and support to help you prepare a statement.





Restorative justice

You can participate in restorative justice options such as victim-offender conferencing, where appropriate and available as decided by the Police or court.



Return of your property

If any of your property is held by Police or Prosecutions for the investigation or evidence, your property will be returned to you at the earliest opportunity.



Information about offenders that can be provided to victims

If you are eligible to be placed on the Victims Register, you can receive various information about the offender, including:

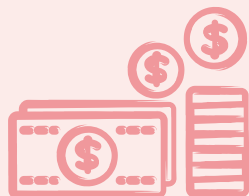
- the offender's release date, this includes conditional release.
- the offender's security classification.
- which Correctional Centre the offender is held in and if they apply/or are transferred to another Correctional Centre.
- the dates the Parole Board considers a release on parole, conditions of parole and the revocation of parole.
- dates of release under suspended sentence, including the conditions of the suspended sentence.
- if the offender escapes, and their recapture.

The Crime Victims Services Unit can assist with your application to be placed on the [Victims Register](#).

Financial assistance for victims of crime

If you have been the victim of a violent crime, you can make a claim for financial assistance under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006* and you are entitled to have the claim determined in a timely way.

If you are a relative of the victim or a witness to a violent crime, you may be eligible to make a claim too.



Appendix

Services for victims

Police

If you would like to receive information from NT Police, contact:
Phone: 131 444
Website: pfes.nt.gov.au

Director of Public Prosecutions

If you would like to receive information from the Director of Public Prosecutions, contact:
Darwin: (08) 8935 7500
Alice Springs: (08) 8951 5800
Katherine: (08) 8973 8813
Website: dpp.nt.gov.au

Legal services

Legal services assist with legal advice, information, advocacy, court support and referrals.

Legal services may provide specific assistance to you relating to your rights under the Charter, including assisting you to communicate with police, Victims Register applications, applications for financial compensation, preparing documents including Victim Impact Statements, as well as assistance in making complaints if you think the Charter has not been observed.

Victims Register

The Crime Victims Services Unit is able to provide registered victims and concerned people with information about offenders. The Victims Register enables registered victims to receive information relating to the offender after they have been convicted, they may also provide their views regarding relevant offenders, including in relation to the offender's potential release from custody. A registered victim can make written submissions to the Parole Board.

Information provided to the Victims Register remains strictly confidential and is limited to staff for work purposes.

Further details including application forms are available from the Coordinator, Victims Register, Crime Victims Services Unit on:
Free call: 1800 221 372
Email: victims.register@nt.gov.au
Website: nt.gov.au/law/crime/offender-information-for-victims

How to make a complaint

If you think the Charter has not been observed, you should contact the relevant agency or government department to lodge a complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you can lodge a complaint to the Ombudsman NT:
Phone: (08) 8999 1818
Website: ombudsman.nt.gov.au

Support for victims

Victims of Crime NT (VoCNT)

VoCNT is a non-government agency funded by the NT Department of the Attorney-General and Justice that offers practical and emotional wellbeing services for healing and recovery:

- crisis counselling and support
- information, advocacy and referral to other specialist services
- Courthouse support program
- ongoing support for victims to participate in the criminal justice service
- property crime programs
- prevention activities

VoCNT can provide a support person for victims feeling traumatised or overwhelmed by the court process.

VoCNT can assist with restorative justice processes and preparing documentation including applications for financial assistance and victim impact statements.

VoCNT can provide small amounts of financial assistance to contribute towards securing residences after an unlawful entry, or to cleanup after a violent crime. Assistance is also available for resecuring vehicles, subject to eligibility.



VoCNT also administers the Business Resecure program to help small businesses resecure their business premises after a break-in.

Darwin/Katherine: (08) 8941 0995

Alice Springs/Tennant Creek: (08) 8952 4466

Freecall: 1800 672242

Website: victimsofcrime.org.au

Counselling

CatholicCare NT – Victims of crime counselling

Free call: 1800 899 855; (08) 8944 2000

Website: catholicarent.org.au

Kids Helpline

Free call: 1800 55 1800

Website: kidshelpline.com.au

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service

Free call: 1800 737 732

Website: 1800respect.org.au

Ruby Gaea (Darwin)

Phone: (08) 8945 0155

Website: rubygaea.net.au

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Darwin: (08) 8922 6472

Alice Springs: (08) 8952 6075

Katherine: (08) 8971 0777

Tennant Creek: (08) 8962 4100

Website: health.nt.gov.au/sexual_assault_services

Financial assistance

Crime Victims Services Unit (CVSU)

The CVSU administers applications for financial assistance under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006*. You may be eligible to receive financial assistance for injuries and/or financial loss suffered as a result of a violent act that occurred in the Northern Territory. The CVSU may also be able to assist with funeral costs where a person has died as a result of a criminal act.

Free call: 1800 460 363

Website: nt.gov.au/law/crime/financial-help-for-victims-of-crime

Witness support

Witness Assistance Service (WAS)

WAS is a unit in the NT Director of Public Prosecutions Office that supports victims of crime and witnesses who need to appear in Court to give evidence.

WAS can also assist with preparing victim impact statements.

Free call: 1800 659 449

Website: dpp.nt.gov.au/witness-assistance/Pages/default.aspx

Home security upgrade services

YWCA Darwin

Victims of domestic and family violence in Darwin and Palmerston may be eligible to receive free safety planning and home security upgrade services.

Tel: (08) 8932 9155

Website: ywcaofdarwin.com.au

Victims of Crime NT

VoCNT offers a Security Improvement Program, which provides free home security assessments to all Territorians, and financial assistance for security upgrades to those who are most at risk of unlawful entry or domestic violence.

Free call: 1800 672 242

Website: victimsofcrime.org.au

Legal services

Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit

Free call: 1800 088 884 (Alice Springs)

1800 068 830 (Tennant Creek)

Website: caafllu.com.au

Central Australian Women's Legal Service (Alice Springs and Tennant Creek)

Free call: 1800 684 055

Website: cawls.org.au

Darwin Community Legal Service

Free call: 1800 812 953

Website: dcls.org.au

Domestic Violence Legal Service (Darwin)

Phone: (08) 8999 7977

Website: dvls.nt.gov.au

Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service

Free call: 1800 620 108

Website: kwils.com.au

North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service

Free call Darwin: 1800 041 998

Katherine: 1800 184 868

Website: naafls.com.au

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

Free call Darwin: 1800 898 251

Katherine: 1800 897 728

Alice Springs: 1800 636 079

Tennant Creek: (08) 8962 1332

Website: naaja.org.au

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

Free call: 1800 019 343

Website: ntlac.nt.gov.au

Top End Women's Legal Service (Darwin)

Free call: 1800 234 441

Website: tewls.org.au

Other useful contacts

Centrelink

Phone: 132 850

Website: humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink

NT Police Domestic and Family Violence Unit

Phone: 131 444

Website: pfes.nt.gov.au



Definitions

Bail

Bail allows the accused to be released into the community instead of being in custody while court proceedings are underway.

Bail can be granted by either the Police or the Court, and may be subject to certain conditions.

Restorative justice

Restorative justice generally means a process where people affected by a crime can work out issues arising from the crime together with the offender, usually helped by an impartial third party.

