



Safety-Related Expenses

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal

Financial assistance for safety-related expenses

From 1 July 2010, the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996* (the Act) will include a category of financial assistance for safety-related expenses actually and reasonably incurred, or reasonably likely to be incurred in the future, by a primary victim as a direct result of an act of violence (see section 8(2)(e) of the Act). This means that the Tribunal may award financial assistance for reasonable safety-related expenses without requiring exceptional circumstances to be established (pursuant to section 8(3) of the Act). Financial assistance for safety-related expenses is **only** available to primary victims.

A primary victim is a person who is injured or dies as a direct result of an act of violence committed against him or her. A person may also be a primary victim if he or she is injured or dies while trying to arrest someone, trying to prevent the commission of an act of violence, or trying to rescue a victim of an act of violence.

The Tribunal may make awards of financial assistance for safety-related expenses from 1 July 2010, irrespective of whether the application for assistance was lodged before that date.

Awards of financial assistance for safety-related expenses comprise part of the financial assistance that may be awarded to a primary victim for expenses incurred, or reasonably likely to be incurred, up to the maximum statutory limit of \$60,000.

How to apply for financial assistance for safety-related expenses

VOCAT's *Application for Assistance* form and *Primary Victim Statement of Claim* form have been amended to include financial assistance for safety-related expenses as a category of assistance that may be claimed by an applicant.

The *Application for Assistance* form and the *Primary Victim Statement of Claim* form are available from VOCAT's website at www.vocat.vic.gov.au or by calling any venue of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria. Contact details for Magistrates' Court venues are available at www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au or in the Government listings section of the White Pages.

Applications for financial assistance for safety-related expenses should be supported by invoices/receipts for the expense (if the expense has already been incurred), or by quotes (if the expense has not yet been incurred).

Urgent financial assistance for safety-related expenses

Applicants requiring urgent financial assistance for safety-related expenses are encouraged to apply to VOCAT for an interim award of financial assistance. Applications for interim financial assistance must be made in writing, setting out the reason for the request, and can be considered at any time prior to the final determination of an applicant's application for assistance.

Applicants who are attending the Magistrates' Court for the purposes of obtaining an interim intervention order under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* may be eligible to apply to VOCAT for an interim award of financial assistance for safety-related expenses. Applicants should speak to a registrar at the Magistrates' Court or their legal representative if this situation applies to them.

Further information

For further information about financial assistance for safety-related expenses contact your nearest venue of the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and ask to speak to the VOCAT Registrar.

For information about how to apply to VOCAT for financial assistance, please refer to VOCAT's website at www.vocat.vic.gov.au.