



What is the role of the Witness Assistance Service?

The CDPP understands that being a victim or witness may be stressful and confusing. To help you navigate the criminal justice system, we established the Witness Assistance Service (WAS) in 2008.

Our WAS staff have social work backgrounds. The service works closely with prosecutors to make sure victims of crime, and vulnerable witnesses, have access to the following:

- » general updates concerning the prosecution case
- » information/explanations concerning the legal process and court procedures
- » information concerning policy entitlements and avenues for review or complaint
- » information concerning the role of a witness
- » a consistent point of contact within the CDPP for the duration of the prosecution process
- » support during meetings with prosecutors
- » court familiarisation tours
- » support at court and during the trial
- » referrals to counselling and other services in the community
- » information about Victim Impact Statements.

The work carried out by the WAS and other prosecution staff is guided by the CDPP's Victims of Crime Policy.

Who does the WAS work with?

The most vulnerable witnesses and victims of crime are referred to the WAS. These include matters involving identifiable child victims of crime, victims of slavery, sexual servitude, and forced marriage offences.

The WAS may help victims of crime involved in prosecutions concerning terrorism, violent and sexual offences that occur on aircraft/at sea, and offences that involve the loss of significant amounts of money.

Prosecutors refer people to the WAS according to the WAS Referral Guidelines.

How do I contact the WAS?

WAS staff are located in the CDPP offices in Sydney (02 9321 1100) and Melbourne (03 9605 4333). However, the WAS is a national resource and provides assistance to witnesses and victims in whichever state or territory you are located. When you phone, tell reception you'd like to speak to someone from the Witness Assistance Service.

Will the WAS help my child?

Our WAS staff provide information and support to child victims of crime, young people, as well as their carers and support people throughout the prosecution process.

They help them understand and cope with the prosecution process, and prepare for giving evidence in court if they need to appear as a witness.

WAS staff are professionally-qualified with social work backgrounds.