

## Finding support: Victims of terrorism in New South Wales

If you have been a victim of terrorism in New South Wales (NSW), you may be eligible for support under the Victims Support Scheme. This fact sheet provides information about what to expect and the support services available to you as a victim of a violent crime.

### How were you involved?

What support is available to you might depend on how you were involved in the act of terrorism or mass violence:

- A **primary victim** is someone who was at the scene of the attack and suffered physical and/or psychological harm, or was killed as a direct result of the attack.
- A **secondary victim** is someone who witnesses the attack that injured or killed a primary victim, and suffered physical or psychological harm.
- A **family victim** is someone who is an immediate family member of a primary victim who died as a result of the attack

If you are a primary victim, you may be able to access support, such as counselling, for the physical and/or psychological harm you suffered.

If you are a family victim, you may be able to receive a payment that acknowledges the trauma and loss of losing a loved one.

### Type of support you may need

The impacts of terrorism and mass violence are far reaching and may affect you in unexpected ways. The support you need may change depending on what harm you have experienced. If you were harmed:

- **Emotionally or psychologically**, you may need support from your general practitioner, a psychologist or through group therapy sessions.
- **Physically**, you may require physical therapy and mobility aids, or community transport.
- **Financially**, you may need financial assistance for medical bills and loss of employment.
- **Legally**, you may need a support person for any legal proceedings you may be involved in.

### What to keep in mind

#### Court proceedings

After an act of terrorism or mass violence, there may be a criminal justice proceeding – the alleged offender being charged and the case going to court. In some circumstances, you may need to provide evidence. If the alleged offender is killed, no charges can be laid.

This can be a very challenging experience, as you may need to recall the traumatic incident. It is important that you are supported during this time.

#### Inquiries

In some cases, the government may have a public inquiry. This is when issues are investigated through consultation with experts, specialists and the broader public. This may be because the issue had or has a significant impact on different groups within society, or is contentious or complex to assess. You may be asked to participate or prepare a submission for a hearing.

#### Coronial Inquest

When a person is killed in a terrorist attack, there may be a coronial inquest to determine the identity of the deceased and the date, place, manner and cause of death. This will be held by the Coroners Court, and the Coroner may call witnesses to give evidence about their knowledge of the circumstances of death.

The findings will be sent to the next of kin, and others at the Coroners' direction.

#### Media

After an act of terrorism or mass violence, the media may report widely on the story.

Engaging with the media may be a positive experience for some. For others it may be very stressful. Just remember, you do not need to speak to the press if you do not want to.

Victims Services has produced '[A guide to the media for victims of crime](#)' to help you think about your rights, assist you in dealing with the media, and to tell you about the positives and negatives associated with talking to the media.

## How we can help – Victims Services (NSW)

To be eligible for support from Victims Services, the terrorist attack has to have happened in NSW.

Victims Services is an agency of the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice, which is responsible for supporting victims of violent crime that occur in NSW. This is funded through the Victims Support Scheme.

Victims of crime will be provided with information, referrals to other services and ongoing advice to access services when they need them most. Victims Services representatives will assist clients to access the following supports:

- Information, referrals and advice
- Counselling
- Financial assistance for immediate needs
- Financial assistance for economic loss
- Recognition payment.

Victims Services currently maintains a register of Approved Counsellors who have received terrorism-related trauma training. These Approved Counsellors can provide you with specialised psychological support for your specific experience.

The Victims Access Line (VAL) is the single entry point for victims of crime in NSW to access services. More information on the Victims Support Scheme and specialised Approved Counsellors is available through the VAL:

Victims Access Line ..... 1800 633 063  
Aboriginal Contact Line..... 1800 019 123  
Web.....[www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au)

Each state has a victim support service. What each victim support service offers will differ according to that state. If you were a victim of a terrorist attack outside of NSW, you should contact the victim support service of the state it occurred in.

## Interstate services for victims of crime

### Victims Support ACT (Australian Capital Territory)

Phone ..... 1800 8222 72 / (02) 6205 2066  
Web ..... [www.victimssupport.act.gov.au/](http://www.victimssupport.act.gov.au/)

### Crime Victims Services Unit (Northern Territory)

Phone ..... 1800 460 363 / (08) 8924 4080  
Web ..... [www.justice.nt.gov.au/justice-services/crime-victims-services-unit](http://www.justice.nt.gov.au/justice-services/crime-victims-services-unit)

### Victims Assist Queensland (Queensland)

Phone ..... Victims Linkup – 1300 546 587  
Web ..... [www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/victims-of-crime/](http://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/victims-of-crime/)

### Commissioner for Victims' Rights (South Australia)

Phone ..... (08) 8204 9635  
Web.....[www.voc.sa.gov.au/](http://www.voc.sa.gov.au/)

### Victims Support Services Tasmania (Tasmania)

Phone.....1300 663 773 / (03) 6165 7524  
Web.....[www.justice.tas.gov.au/victims](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/victims)

### Victims of Crime Victoria (Victoria)

Phone.....1800 819 817  
Web.....[www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/](http://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/)

### Victims of Crime Western Australia (Western Australia)

Phone ..... 1800 818 988  
(08) 9264 1600 / (08) 9425 2850  
Web.....[www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au/](http://www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au/)

## Support if you are a victim of a terrorist attack while overseas

If you are a victim of a terrorist attack while overseas, you may be eligible for support from the Australian Government, including:

- Australian Victims of Terrorism Overseas Payment (AVTOP), and
- Medicare Better Access to mental health care.

Depending on where the attack was, there may also be support schemes available. You may want to check with the relevant embassy through the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(DFAT\)](#).

### Australian Victims of Terrorism Overseas Payment (AVTOP)

If you are a victim of terrorism which occurs overseas and you are an Australian citizen or permanent resident, you may be eligible for the AVTOP.

The AVTOP scheme provides financial assistance of up to \$75,000 for Australian residents who are harmed and/or whose close family member is killed as a direct result of declared terrorist acts, both past and future.

To be eligible, the Prime Minister needs to determine that the attack was a 'declared overseas terrorist act' under Australian law.

The Australian Government Department of Human Services is responsible for processing claims for AVTOP. More information on applying for financial assistance through the AVTOP scheme is available through the Department of Human Services:

Phone..... 1800 040 226  
Web..... [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

### The Medicare Better Access initiative

The Better Access initiative provides better access to mental health practitioners through Medicare. If you have a mental disorder diagnosed by a doctor, and you have a mental health care plan, you will be entitled to Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual or 10 group appointments with some allied mental health services in a year. See Australian Government Department of Health:

Phone ..... 132 011  
Web ..... [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)  
Web ..... [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)

See also a published [fact sheet](#) which may help.

## Disaster Recovery Payment

A one-off, non-means tested emergency payment for those who have been adversely affected by a major disaster or terrorist incident either in Australia or overseas.

Phone 180 22 66

### NSW Service for the Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)

If you are a victim of terrorism overseas, and have come to Australia as a refugee, you may not be eligible for other support schemes, including AVTOP and Medicare. Support may be provided to you through the NSW Service STARTTS.

Phone.....02 9646 6700  
Web ..... [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au)

## Contact list

### Government/international organisations

#### Victims Services (NSW)

Victims Services helps victims of crime in NSW access information, support and financial assistance to assist in their recovery

Victims Access Line.....1800 633 063  
Aboriginal Contact Line.....1800 019 123  
Web ..... [www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au)

#### Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Commonwealth)

24-hour consular assistance

Within Australia ..... 1300 555 135  
Outside Australia ..... +61 2 6261 3305  
Web ..... [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)

#### United Nations Victims of Terrorism Portal

Provides information on support to victims of terrorism in a number of United Nations countries

Web ..... [www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/en](http://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/en)

#### Department of Human Services (Commonwealth)

Social and health payments and services, including the Australian Victims of Terrorism Overseas Payment.

Phone ..... 1800 040 226  
Web ..... [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/help-in-an-emergency](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/help-in-an-emergency)