

Your rights as a client of our service

Are you a victim of crime?

A victim of crime is a person negatively affected by a crime, including victims' family members and people who have witnessed a crime.

Barwon Community Legal Service is a prescribed agency under the *Victims Charter Act 2006*

This means we have specific responsibilities to clients who have been victims of crime and come to us for help.

The key principles of the Victims of Crime Charter are:

- Ensuring respect and diversity
- Proactively provide information and referrals
- Ensuring access to justice
- Respecting communication preferences and needs
- Protecting personal information
- Having a transparent complaints process

Respect and Diversity

We are committed to:

- Treating all individuals with respect
- Recognising and valuing diversity when providing services
- Prioritising the specific needs of victims of family violence, elder abuse, and crime

Proactive Information and Referrals

We are committed to:

- Providing information and appropriate referrals to support services in a proactive way
- Ensuring victims have access to the resources needed to navigate their unique situations

Access to Justice

We will make sure:

- Victims can participate in the criminal justice system regardless of their location
- Help and support is provided to overcome obstacles in accessing our services

Communication Preferences and Needs

We will:

- Respond to victims' diverse communication preferences and needs
- Utilise accessible language
- Employ interpreters or other communication aids as required

Personal Information Protection

We will:

- Prioritise the protection of victims' personal information
- Ensure confidentiality and that privacy laws and standards are followed

Transparent Complaints Process

We will:

- Inform people negatively affected by crime about the complaints process
- Maintain an accessible and transparent system to uphold victims' right to make a complaint

You have a right to lodge a complaint if you feel that we have not followed the Charter

You may lodge a complaint in the following ways:

- Talk to the relevant staff member. If you are unable to do that, feel uncomfortable about it, or aren't happy with the response, you can ask to speak with the Principal Lawyer Ph: 1300 430 599
- Submitting a completed Feedback and Complaints form to reception. The form is available in hard copy at the office and online at www.barwoncommunitylegal.org.au
- Sending an email outlining your complaint to: bcls@barwoncommunitylegal.org.au
- Sending a letter to: PO Box 571, Belmont Vic 3216
- Any other alternative means

What will we do with your complaint?

We will:

- Consider your complaint in line with our Complaints Management Policy and the Victims Charter
- Let you know that your complaint has been received, the process and time frame
- Record details of the complaint in our Complaints Register
- Investigate the complaint
- Respond to you as soon as possible with the outcome and any reasons

Your appeal rights

As a victim or witness of crime, if you feel we have treated you unfairly, not acted as expected or failed to effectively address your concerns, you can make a complaint to the Victims of Crime Commissioner by:

- Calling: 1800 010 017
- Visiting: <https://victimsofcrimecommissioner.vic.gov.au/making-a-complaint>

To make an appointment complete our online form

<https://www.barwoncommunitylegal.org.au/contact-us/request-an-appointment/>

or call 1300 430 599

Free Interpreter Service phone 131 450 and ask them to call 1300 430 599

