



Media Statement

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

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In 2017 the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* made recommendations 40-43 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Criminal Justice Report, Parts III to VI, 2017).

In 2018, the ACT Government provided a fulfilment grant of \$200,000 through the Confiscated Assets Trust Fund for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to carry out the very complex task of both developing a set of policies that put the recommendations into effect, and synchronising the approach in the ACT with that of other jurisdictions around Australia. This included extensive consultation with other stake holders such as the Victims of Crime Commissioner.

We have now completed this work and have put these very important recommendations into effect, with the introduction of a raft of policies falling under four main pillars:

1. Comprehensive victim guidelines, published on a dedicated victims' portal on our web page, ensuring victims know their rights in relation to all crucial prosecutorial decisions affecting them;
2. A formal victims' right to seek a review of crucial decisions affecting their case;
3. A formal documentation system providing a record of all key decisions, including both the review process and victims' engagement process;
4. An internal audit process ensuring compliance with the policies, the results of which will be published yearly in the DPP Annual Report

The central document on our external website at www.dpp.act.gov.au, under the "Witnesses and Victims" / "Your rights as a Victim" link is the - **Decisions to Discontinue Prosecutions – Victims' Right of Review Director's Guideline**

This document outlines all victim's rights relating to prosecutorial decisions, including a right to request a review, and the circumstances under which an automatic review will be commenced. At the end of the guideline is an easy to follow flow chart outlining all relevant timelines.

This guideline is supported by two new Director's Instructions also located on our website at www.dpp.act.gov.au, "Publications" / "Victim Policies";

Director's Instruction No. 14.1: Review of a Decision to Discontinue a Prosecution.

Director's Instruction No. 14.2: Reviewable Decisions to Discontinue – Contact with Complainants, Review Processes and Auditing.

There has also been a review and upgrade of a number of other policies and instructions, also published under our "Victims Policies" link including:

Director's Instruction No. 1: Discontinuing prosecutions and significantly amending Statements of Facts in the Supreme Court.

Director's Instruction No. 2: Causing prosecutions to be brought to an end and significantly amending statements of facts in the Magistrates Court and Children's Court.

Director's Instruction No.7: Charge negotiations in the Supreme Court.

Director's Instruction No. 13: Guidelines for contact with complainants in sexual offence matters.

This raft of Director's Instructions to prosecutors have been published on our external web page to provide transparency of all internal working documents relating to the making, documentation, review and audit of all key prosecutorial decisions.

The witness and victim portal on our external internet web page at www.dpp.act.gov.au provides a one stop shop for victim engagement with both our office and the broader criminal justice system.

In addition to the easy to follow flow chart that walks victims through each stage of the process, we have also developed a series of videos to inform victims and witnesses on their journey through the court process from arrival at court, through to the trial process itself. These are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at www.dpp.act.gov.au, under the "Witnesses and Victims" / "Attending Court" links.

These measures go a significant way towards placing victims of crime at the centre of the decision-making process in their criminal cases. This combined with the informational videos also assists in relieving the stress and uncertainty often associated with engagement of both victims and witnesses with the criminal justice system.