

June 2011

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

This booklet has been written to help you understand your legal rights after sexual assault

Upholding **your**
right to justice
for **30** years

 **Victoria
Legal Aid**

Lawyers And
Legal Services

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

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Please ring us on 9269 0223 so we can talk with you about what you need.

Produced by Victoria Legal Aid, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre (a program of Community West Inc) and Victorian Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) Forum

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Changes to the law

The law changes all the time. To check for changes you can:

- call the Victoria Legal Aid Legal Information Service on 9269 0120 or 1800 677 402 (country callers)
- read the 'new law' section on the Victoria Legal Aid website at www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/newlaw.htm
- contact a community legal centre. Call the Federation of Community Legal Centres on 9652 1500 to find your nearest community legal centre.

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Victoria Legal Aid

Victoria Legal Aid is a leading and responsible force for community access to the legal system and for social justice.

We are a state-wide organisation that helps people with their legal problems. We focus on helping and protecting the rights of socially and economically disadvantaged Victorians.

We have lawyers in offices in most major metropolitan and country regions. We also fund private lawyers to provide legal services to the public.

We can help you with your legal problems about criminal matters, family breakdown, family violence, child support, immigration, social security, mental health, debt and traffic offences.

Call us to find out how we can help you on 9269 0120 or 1800 677 402 (country callers).

About this booklet



What this booklet covers

This booklet is mainly for people who are over 16 years and has been written to help you understand your legal rights after sexual assault.

Sexual assault can happen to anyone. It is hard to know how often sexual assault happens because people often feel too embarrassed, frightened, ashamed or guilty to talk about it. Only about one in 10 sexual assaults are reported to police.

Sexual assault and what happens because of an assault, is the responsibility of the whole community, including the government. We must keep pushing for ways to help victim/survivors of sexual assault.

'Victim' and 'survivor' are words often used to describe people who have been sexually assaulted. They show the reality of your experience as a victim and the strengths that will help you heal.

If you are under 18, or you are concerned about a child, contact one of the Centres Against Sexual Assault listed at the back of this booklet. You can also contact your local police station and ask to speak to someone from a Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team.

Getting more help

We have listed the details of agencies that offer information and support at the back of this booklet.

Changes to the law

The law changes all the time. To check for changes you can:

- call the Victoria Legal Aid Legal Information Service on 9269 0120 or 1800 677 402 (country callers)
- read the 'New law' and 'Legal information' pages on the Victoria Legal Aid website at www.legalaid.vic.gov.au
- visit a Victoria Legal Aid office or a community legal centre. See contact details at the end of this booklet.

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Using this booklet

To help you, we explain some words on the next two pages in 'What do these words mean?' These words are also bolded the first time they appear in each section.

Case study - Julie's story

We have a case study called 'Julie's story' in different parts of this booklet to show how the law can be used in real life. Julie's story starts on page 8. None of the characters used in Julie's story are real people.



What do these words mean?



accused – person charged with the crime, also called the defendant

adjourn – to put off a court case to a later date

bail – a promise that an accused person makes that they will go to court to face charges on a certain day. They may have to agree to conditions like reporting to the police, living at a certain place or having someone act as a surety for them

balance of probabilities – level of proof needed in civil matters based on which version of events is more likely to have happened. For example, is it probable or more likely (than not) that X assaulted Y? This is easier to prove than beyond reasonable doubt

barrister – a lawyer that specialises in appearing at court

beyond reasonable doubt – level of proof needed in criminal cases for a magistrate or jury to decide if the accused is guilty. This means if they have doubts about the accused's guilt and these doubts are reasonable, then they must acquit (say 'not guilty')

charge – when the police formally accuse a person of a particular crime. A person who is charged has to go to court

child – a person who is under 18

cognitive impairment – when your health is affected by mental illness, intellectual disability, dementia or brain injury

committal – the first part of a court case where a magistrate decides if there is enough evidence for the case to go to trial

community based order – when a court finds someone guilty and says they must do certain things instead of other penalties like going to prison or paying a fine

complainant – word used in court to describe the person who has made a complaint of sexual assault to police

consent – you agree of your own free will. The law may say you are not able to consent, for example, if you are a young child or have a cognitive impairment

contravention – breaking a law or court order

de facto – a person who is living with another person as if they were a married couple although they are not

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evidence – information that is used in court to help the court decide if the sexual assault happened. Evidence could be anything anybody saw or heard, documents or things like a weapon or drugs

forensic medical examination – this is an examination of your body to find evidence and assess if you need further treatment. This may involve taking body samples like blood, pubic hair, anal, genital or breast swabs, saliva, and mouth or dental impressions and taking notes about recent injuries. A specially trained doctor, nurse or dentist must do these procedures

independent third person – a trained person who sits with you while you make a statement to the police, if you have a cognitive impairment. The independent third person helps you and the police understand each other. They will also help you understand your rights. They do not give legal advice. It is best to have an independent third person who is not involved in your situation. However, you can suggest someone from your family, a friend or someone you trust

judge – manages the trial and makes sure that lawyers follow the rules

jury – twelve people whose job at a trial is to decide if the accused is ‘guilty’ beyond reasonable doubt

magistrate – manages and decides cases in the Magistrates’ Court. In a committal, decides if there is enough evidence for there to be a trial with a jury. Can also make intervention orders

Office of Public Prosecutions – responsible for prosecuting a case

party – a person who the court case is about, for example, the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator

perpetrator – person who sexually assaulted you. If a person has not yet been found guilty of assault, they are called the alleged perpetrator

procure – means to use effort to influence someone or get someone to do something. This includes using the internet, telephone or text messaging

prosecutor – a lawyer who appears in a criminal court case and presents evidence against the person accused of the sexual assault

statement – what you say about the events in your own words, in writing or on a recorded interview

subpoena – a document that says you must appear in court or give certain documents to the court

trial – a court case in front of a jury. The jury decides if the accused is guilty or not guilty

Victim Impact Statement – a form that you fill in about how the crime affected you

witness – a person who saw or heard something about your case (including yourself). They are called to give this evidence in court

Your rights as a victim



Everyone has the right not to be threatened or assaulted, and to be protected by the law. You also have certain rights if you become a victim of crime, including the crime of sexual assault. In Victoria, the law includes a Victims' Charter. This sets out how the criminal justice system and victim support agencies respond to victims of crime.

The Victims' Charter says that you should be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity by the police, the **Office of Public Prosecutions** and victim support services at all times. If you feel that you are not treated this way, you can make a complaint. You can call the Victims' Charter Enquiries and Complaints line on 1800 118 728.

For information about the Victims' Charter, contact the Victims Support Agency on 8684 6700 or go to www.justice.vic.gov.au and visit the Victims of Crime interactive website under 'Victims'.

You also have rights, freedoms and responsibilities under Victoria's new Charter of Human Rights. The Victorian Government and its agencies must consider these rights and freedoms when they make laws and provide services to the public. This includes Victoria Police and the Office of Public Prosecutions. For more information about the Human Rights Charter go to www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au or call the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission advice line on 1300 292 153.

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What is sexual assault?



Sexual assault is an abuse of your rights. Women and children are most often the victims of sexual assault and men are almost always responsible (the **perpetrators**). Sexual assault includes rape, incest, child abuse, and unwanted sexual behaviour, for example, unwanted kissing and touching. It also includes behaviour that does not involve actual touching. For example, forcing someone to watch pornography or masturbation is also sexual assault. Some behaviours may or may not be criminal, such as unwanted sexual comments and staring.

Legal definitions of sexual offences in Victoria

Sexual offences are serious crimes. Maximum penalties are between five and 25 years in prison.

Rape

A person rapes if:

- they sexually penetrate you without your **consent** either:
 - while being aware that you are not consenting or might not be consenting
 - while not giving any thought to whether you are not consenting or might not be consenting
- after sexual penetration they do not withdraw after becoming aware that you are not consenting or might not be consenting
- they make you sexually penetrate (or not stop penetrating) them or another person. It does not matter if the person being penetrated consents to the act.

Sexual penetration means putting any part of the penis into the vagina, anus or mouth. It also means putting any part of an object or another part of the body, for example, finger or tongue, into the vagina or anus of another person. The penetration can be just the tip of the finger or penis and can happen for even a very short time. It does not matter if semen comes out or not.

Consent means free agreement of your own free will. Under the law you are not freely agreeing if penetration happens:

- because you were physically forced to do it or you feared someone else would be forced
- because you were scared of what might happen to you or someone else
- because you were unlawfully detained (held), for example, locked in a house or car.

Under the law you are also not freely agreeing if you:

- are asleep, unconscious or so affected by alcohol or drugs that you cannot freely agree
- are not able to understand the sexual nature of the act
- mistake the sexual nature of the act or think the person is someone else
- believe that the act is for medical or cleanliness purposes.

If you do not agree to the act, it is rape whatever the relationship between you and the other person. A man can be guilty of raping his wife or girlfriend.

Compelling sexual penetration

It is against the law to compel (force) another person to take part in an act of sexual penetration, including with animals. It is also against the law to compel someone to put an object into their vagina or anus, unless it is for a genuine medical or cleanliness purpose.

Indecent assault

Indecent assault covers sexual acts other than sexual penetration, such as touching your breasts or bottom without your agreement.

Incest

Incest happens when an act of sexual penetration is done with a close relative, for example, a father, step-father, grandfather or brother. It is still incest if you are under 18 and the person is your parent's de facto spouse. If you are forced to take part in incest against your will, you have not done anything against the law. Only the person who forces you has broken the law.

Sexual servitude (slavery)

Sexual servitude happens when a person forces you to be involved in prostitution (sex work) where you may:

- be being held against your will
- have to pay back a debt
- have been threatened, for example, with assault or deportation.

Sexual offences against children

These are offences that are committed against young people under 18. These include:

- sexual penetration of a child aged 12 or younger
- sexual penetration of a child aged between 12 and 16
- indecent act with a child under the age of 16
- persistent (continued) sexual abuse of a child under the age of 16
- sexual penetration or an indecent act with a child aged 16 or 17 by an adult who cares for, supervises or has authority over the child. This may include a teacher, employer, foster parent, sports coach and other roles
- **procuring** a child under 16 for sexual penetration or an indecent act by an adult
- procuring a child aged 16 or 17 for sexual penetration or an indecent act by an adult who cares for, supervises or has authority over that child
- possessing and producing child pornography.

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It does not matter if the child consented (agreed) to the act. However, a person may not have broken the law if:

- they had reasonable grounds (reasons) for believing the child was older than 16
- the accused person was no more than two years older than the child
- the accused believed they were married to the child.

See 'Mandatory reporting' on page 16.

Sexual offences against people with cognitive impairment

Cognitive impairment includes mental illness, intellectual disability, dementia and brain injury.

A person who provides medical or health services to a person with a **cognitive impairment** or who works or volunteers in a residential facility must not:

- take part in an act of sexual penetration
- take part in an indecent act with the person with cognitive impairment.

It is against the law even if the person agreed to the act.

Residential facilities include psychiatric institutions, supported accommodation and other residential services for intellectually disabled people.

Everyone's experience of sexual assault is different. A perpetrator can be someone you know or even someone in your family. Your experience may or may not be like Julie's. Julie's story is told to give you an idea of what could happen if you decide to report (or not to report) your sexual assault to the police. Deciding what to do is a personal thing. There is no right or wrong choice. It can be very hard. It is important to remember that when it gets tough it is not your fault. Talk to someone like a Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) counsellor/advocate.

Case study - Julie's story

Julie had been at an evening work barbecue and had quite a lot to drink. She was about to call a taxi to go home when John, one of her work colleagues, offered to drive her home. He said that he needed to stop at his house to pick up something. Julie went into the house with him. Her memories of what happened then are a bit unclear but she remembers John pushing her onto his bed and that she tried to push him away. She thinks she blacked out. Her next memory is waking up on his bed and feeling a bit sore. Her underwear had been removed. She grabbed her clothes and ran outside and rang her friend who found the number for the Sexual Assault Crisis Line in the phone book.

Getting support: Centres Against Sexual Assault



It can be very difficult to know what to do if you have been sexually assaulted. If you contact a Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA), a counsellor/advocate can help you decide what to do and work with you to help you recover from the effects of sexual assault.

There are 15 CASAs throughout Victoria including the Gatehouse Centre, which works with children and young people and their families. You can contact CASA by calling your local centre during the day or the Sexual Assault Crisis Line after hours (numbers are at the back of this booklet, at page 28).

24 hour crisis care

If you have been sexually assaulted in the last two weeks most CASAs can help you to see a counsellor/advocate immediately. This will usually happen at a public hospital where CASA have rooms for their use. The counsellor/advocate can give you support.

This includes:

- helping you decide if you want to make a report to police
- giving you information about your legal and medical options
- arranging medical care, including a **forensic medical examination** if you do report to police. A forensic medical examination is a medical examination to find evidence and assess if you need treatment
- helping you to get emergency housing or other crisis care if you need it.

Ongoing counselling and support

You can contact a CASA for ongoing counselling and support if:

- you have been recently sexually assaulted
- you are dealing with the effect of a past sexual assault
- a friend or family member has been sexually assaulted.

Information and referral

CASAs can give you information about your legal rights and information that might help your partner, friends or family understand how they can help you. If you want a particular type of counselling or therapy or have other needs, a counsellor/advocate can refer you to another service.

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Advocacy

Sexual assault can affect how you feel at school, work and home. CASAs can help you take control and make your own choices by helping you get the support you need at school, work, with your health, the police or in the legal system.

All CASA services are confidential and free of charge. Call 1800 806 292.

Julie rings the Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Julie rang crisis line at 1am and spoke to Pam, a counsellor/advocate. Julie told Pam what happened. Pam offered Julie the option of attending a crisis care unit at a hospital near where she lived. Julie decided she would do that and Pam organised a taxi to take Julie to the hospital. Pam contacted a local CASA and arranged for Michelle, a counsellor/advocate, to meet Julie at the hospital. When she got there, Michelle checked how Julie was coping and if she needed medical care. She explained to Julie that she was there to help her decide what she wanted to do and explained the process of reporting to the police. Michelle explained that if Julie reported, the police would want her to have a medical examination to look for evidence. She also explained other support available to Julie and asked if there was anyone Julie wanted to call. Julie rang her friend who came to the unit.

Michelle arranged for Julie to visit CASA for ongoing support and counselling. Over the next few days, Michelle helped Julie develop ways to cope with seeing John back at work. Julie was worried he might harass her. Michelle explained the process for making a complaint about sexual harassment at work and gave her some information about intervention orders, if she gets harassed.

You can do different things after a sexual assault. You can report the assault to the police or you can choose not to. If you have a relationship with the perpetrator (the person who assaulted you) you may be able to take out a family violence intervention order. If you are being stalked you can also ask for an intervention order. An intervention order can order the perpetrator to stay away from you.

See 'Intervention orders' at page 18.

Every situation is different and it is always your choice.

Deciding whether to report to the police



You need to think about whether you want to report the sexual assault to police. It is important that you make the decisions, rather than having them made for you. Think through your options and talk to the counsellor/advocates at CASA.

You do not have to report the sexual assault immediately. You can take some time to decide what you want to do. However, the sooner a crime is reported the easier it is for the police to investigate it. This can make it more likely for the perpetrator to be **charged** and brought to court.

If you decide to report within three days of the sexual assault, a **forensic medical examination** may find **evidence** that will support what you are saying. In the case of a sexual assault by a stranger, an examination may also help to identify who the person is.

Reporting to police

People often decide to report sexual assaults to the police:

- for protection
- to protect other people from the perpetrator
- to have the perpetrator held accountable for their actions
- to make the community more aware of the problem
- because their family and friends encourage them to.

If you do not report to police you may not be able to get some forms of financial help, compensation and counselling. See 'Compensation and financial help' at page 24.

Not reporting to police

Most sexual assaults are not reported to police. Many people decide not to report because they:

- think it will not do any good
- feel guilty about what happened
- think they will not be believed by the police
- are afraid of the person who assaulted them
- do not want friends or family to find out about the assault
- feel worried about going to court.

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Scenario A

Julie decided she did not want to report the sexual assault to the police but she wanted to see a doctor. Michelle arranged for a doctor to check Julie's health. The doctor gave Julie emergency contraception to reduce the risk of pregnancy. She also tested Julie for sexually transmitted infections. Julie was very concerned about going back to work and wanted a couple of days to think about what she would do. The doctor gave Julie a medical certificate.

Scenario B

Julie decided to make a report.

What happens after I report?

What police should do

The Victoria Police has a code of practice, which lists what the police should do when investigating sexual offences. The aim of the code is to reduce the trauma of the investigation and court case for the victim.

The code says that:

- All police involved in the investigation of sexual assaults must be sympathetic and supportive.
- You should get immediate crisis care after reporting a sexual assault to the police or at least within two hours of police arriving.
- You should be allowed as much control over the situation as possible so you can decide what happens next.
- A police officer from the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team should be responsible for taking your **statement** (story). The officer should be the same sex as you and should let you describe what happened in your own words without interruption.
- You should be given a copy of your statement as soon as possible after it has been completed.
- If a child is involved, the police officer must notify the Department of Human Services, where this is needed.
- If your first language is not English, the police officer must arrange an interpreter of the same sex as soon as possible.
- If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, police Aboriginal liaison officers will be involved where available. The police officer can also involve the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal service and Elizabeth Hoffman House if you want this to happen.
- If you have a disability, the police officer must be aware that you may need help with communication and getting to and from police and medical facilities.
- If you have a **cognitive impairment an independent third person** must be with you while you make a statement or recorded interview to the police. The Office of the Public Advocate may be able to help.

See 'Sexual offences against people with cognitive impairment' at page 8.

Most police who work with sexual assault cases are from the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team. They have had special training to understand how sexual assault affects people. Most will treat you with respect, understanding and sensitivity. You can make a complaint about the police if you are unhappy with the way they have treated you. Get advice from a counsellor/advocate at a CASA or a lawyer before deciding to complain.

Julie reports the sexual assault to the police

Julie decided she did want to report the sexual assault to the police. Michelle contacted a Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit. Two police officers came to the CASA unit and asked Julie what happened. They also asked for John's address so detectives could go to his house and look for evidence. They also asked Julie to have a forensic medical examination. She agreed. The doctor explained to Julie what she would do and that Julie could stop the process at anytime if she felt uncomfortable. She asked Julie to go into the examination room and take off all her clothes and put them in a paper bag. Julie then put on a hospital gown and the doctor checked her for signs of physical force and to see if there was evidence of sperm. She found bruises on Julie's arms and thighs and, with Julie's permission, took photos of them and swabs. She gave Julie emergency contraception and discussed sexually transmitted infections. She referred Julie to her own doctor for testing. Julie said she was very concerned about going back to work and wanted a couple of days to think about what she would do. The doctor gave Julie a medical certificate. The police took the samples the doctor provided. They explained that the detective had been to John's house and taken his bed sheets. They arranged for Julie to come to the station the next day to make a full statement.

Making a statement to police

If you decide to report a sexual assault to the police they will take a statement from you about your experience. This means going over every detail of the sexual assault. It can take a few hours. The police will use your statement, along with other things, to investigate the sexual assault. You can have a support person, such as a friend, with you during police interviews.

Julie makes a statement to the police

The next day Julie and her friend went to the police station and met the policewoman who had been there the night before. The policewoman asked her to tell her what happened and asked questions about the rape. Julie found it quite difficult and had to have a couple of breaks because she was very upset. It took about four hours to finish the statement. At the end Julie rang Michelle (from CASA) and told her what it had been like to make the statement. Michelle arranged for Julie to come to the CASA the next day.

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Charges

The police must tell you if the perpetrator has been found or **charged**. They should regularly tell you what is happening, particularly when they interview the perpetrator or if they decide to stop the investigation.

If the police arrest and **charge** the perpetrator they may be held in custody or released on bail or summons. Bail or summons means they are released and must come to court on a particular date. The police must tell you the outcome of any bail application and any bail conditions that are meant to protect you from the perpetrator.

Many reports of sexual assault do not end up with the perpetrator being arrested and charged. This can happen even if you want the perpetrator charged.

If police decide not to lay charges it is usually because they:

- could not work out who the perpetrator is
- could not find the perpetrator
- believe there is not enough evidence
- cannot prove that sexual assault has happened.

It can be upsetting and frustrating if you report and the police decide not to lay charges. The police should tell you if they decide this. It is important to remember that this does not mean they do not believe you were sexually assaulted. You can ask the police to write down their reasons and send this to you.

The police will usually work closely with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) office to decide whether or not to charge the perpetrator. If the police decide not to charge the perpetrator, the DPP can look at that decision. However, the DPP can only say that they think that charges should be laid. The police make the final decision. Sometimes the DPP will decide to directly charge someone in the County or Supreme Court. See 'Prosecutions' at page 17.

Scenario A

Police stop the investigation.

The police meet Julie and Michelle (from CASA) and explain that after interviewing John they think there is not enough evidence to proceed with charges against him. Michelle and Julie question this decision with the DPP and ask for the reasons to be put in writing.

Scenario B

Police continue with the investigation.

The police decide there is enough evidence to continue with charges against John. The policewoman who took Julie's statement tells her what is happening and gives her the date of the committal hearing.

See 'Committal' at page 19.

Criminal proceedings

If the police decide there is enough evidence they can start criminal proceedings (the court case). Your role is as a witness. There are advantages and disadvantages to going to court.

These depend on many things, such as:

- how the sexual assault happened
- if you have friends, family and services to help you
- how you are coping.

Talk to a counsellor/advocate at a CASA or a lawyer if you need help to decide.

Advantages of court

- The police investigate the crime and the government pays the costs of the court case.
- People found guilty of a crime can be dealt with severely by the courts, including being sent to prison.
- Criminal convictions, particularly for sexual offences, can mean people are not allowed to work in many kinds of jobs. This can help protect vulnerable people.
- Your story is heard by people who can investigate it further.

Disadvantages of court

- As a witness you are not in control of the police investigation or court case. Some people will feel that their feelings are not recognised enough.
- Police investigations and court proceedings are often very upsetting.
- In criminal cases, the perpetrator has to be found guilty **beyond reasonable doubt**. It is often difficult for juries not to have reasonable doubts. As a result people charged with sexual offences are often found not guilty after **trial**.

Deciding not to go ahead with the court case

After reporting to police you can decide not to go ahead with police involvement. Having a medical examination, making a statement and helping police with their investigation can be very upsetting. You can choose to make a statement that you wish no further action. You can do this at any stage of the investigation. Usually there will be no other police involvement once this statement has been made.

If the police think there is enough evidence to continue with the case, they can do so. You may then have to give evidence in court about what happened. However, it is rare for the police to do this if you do not want the court case to go ahead.

If you decide you no longer want the police involved you may not be able to get some types of financial help and compensation.

See 'Compensation and financial help' at page 24.

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Getting extra help to report

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people from the country and people with disabilities may face extra difficulties when they want to make a report to the police. If you belong to one of these groups you may need support if you decide to report. You can get this support from a CASA or from another worker you feel comfortable with.

Time limits on reporting

You usually do not have to report the assault within a specific time for criminal charges to be made. If you were sexually assaulted as a child it is not unusual to report many years later. People can sometimes be charged with serious crimes many years afterwards. Get legal help no matter when you were sexually assaulted.

See 'Time limits and extensions' at page 25 and 'Where to get help' at page 27.

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is when the law says something has to be reported. All adults share responsibility to make sure young people are safe from sexual assault. The law says that police, doctors, nurses, primary and secondary school teachers have to report cases of suspected sexual assault of people under 18.

Police must also be notified of a sexual assault where the person is:

- in psychiatric care in a 24 hour residential setting
- living in a residential service directly managed by the government.

CASAs do not have to report sexual assaults. However, CASA workers have a 'duty of care' to make a report to the police or child protection if they believe there is an ongoing risk to your safety or someone else's safety. Generally they will talk to you about this. A duty of care means a relationship where one person has to care for another (such as a doctor and their patient). If someone reports to the police that you have been sexually assaulted, you can still choose not to take part in the police investigation. In rare cases, the police may still prosecute the offender even if you do not want them to.



Prosecutions



The police investigate a complaint of sexual assault and decide whether or not to **charge** a **perpetrator**. If charges are laid, the Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP) usually brings the case to court. The OPP will work closely with the police who investigated the case.

You do not have your own lawyer representing you in a criminal court case. The OPP lawyers who bring the case to court, represent the state or the Crown (the Crown is the head of state in Commonwealth countries). They do not represent you personally. However, if you are called as a **witness** in the case you can ask for your own lawyer, to find out your rights.

Reasonable chance of conviction

The OPP will usually work with the police to help the police decide whether or not to charge the perpetrator. This is because the OPP will generally only prosecute the charges in court if there is sufficient evidence. This means the OPP needs to decide if a jury is likely to decide that the accused is guilty of the offence. The jury has to be sure that the accused was guilty beyond reasonable doubt. This can be hard to prove.

If the OPP decides to go ahead with the case, a lawyer will prepare the case and give the police information to a **prosecutor** (a specialist lawyer). The prosecutor is trained in sexual assault matters and will present the case in court.

If the OPP decides not to go ahead with the case and you do not agree with this decision, you can ask to meet with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to discuss it. However, you have no formal right to **appeal** the decision.

Giving you information about your case

Before any court case, the OPP should meet with you. This meeting is to give you information about the court process. The OPP has a Witness Assistance Service, which supports victims of crime. If you are under 18, the Child Witness Service can give you support and information.

How long prosecutions take

The investigation and court process can take time. Court cases about sexual assault are given priority. The community and the courts know how hard this process is for victims, and how delays can make this worse. There are rules that children or people with a **cognitive impairment** get to court and can give evidence within a strict time limit. However, for adults who do not have a cognitive impairment there can be delays and in country courts the case can sometimes be adjourned (put off) more than once. The OPP should tell you if your case is going to be delayed.

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Intervention orders



You can apply for a family violence intervention order if a family member or someone close to you sexually assaults you. Currently, you can also apply for an intervention order against a non-family member who is stalking you.

The law is changing in this area. Soon you will be able to apply for a 'Personal safety intervention order' against a person who is not a member of your family or extended family. This order can protect you against serious threats, assaults (including sexual assault), harassment, stalking and other behaviour. Contact Victoria Legal Aid on 9269 0120 for more information.

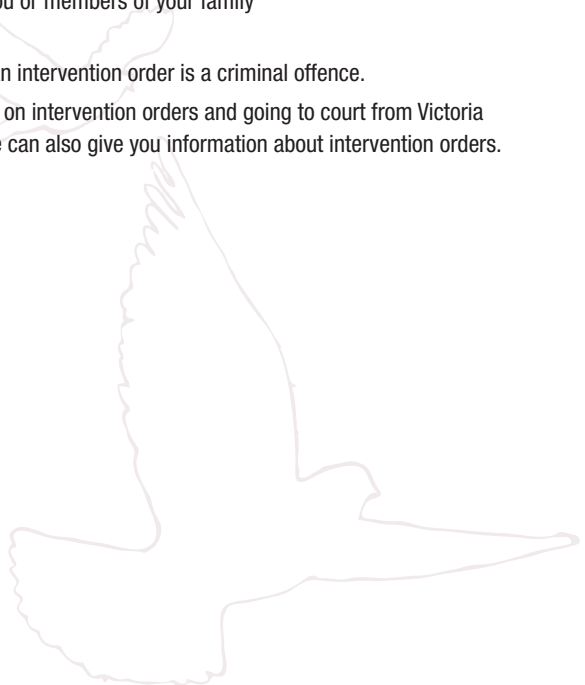
You can choose to seek an order instead of reporting the sexual assault to police or you can make a report as well. The police may choose to apply for an order or take other action on your behalf.

The court can make a number of orders, for example, that the perpetrator must not:

- go within a certain distance of your home
- go near other places, for example, where you work
- make threats, harass or assault you or members of your family
- call or send you text messages.

A **contravention** (breaking a rule) of an intervention order is a criminal offence.

You can get more detailed information on intervention orders and going to court from Victoria Legal Aid. A CASA counsellor/advocate can also give you information about intervention orders.



Going to court



You will not usually have to go to court if the **accused** pleads **guilty** (admits) to sexually assaulting you. However, you have the right to be there and can have support in court if you choose to go.

If the accused is pleading not guilty, you usually have to give **evidence**. You are usually the main **witness** for the **prosecution**. You have the right to give evidence by closed circuit television or you can choose to give it in the courtroom.

When you give evidence, you are cross-examined. This means the accused's lawyer asks questions to test your evidence. Sometimes you will have to give evidence and be cross-examined twice, first at the **committal** hearing and then at the trial. You will not be cross-examined at the committal if you are under 18 or have a **cognitive impairment**. If there is an **appeal** you may have to give evidence more than twice. The law is changing on this. You will soon be allowed to use your recorded evidence from the first trial, at the next trial.

See 'Committal', 'Trial' and 'Cross-examination' at pages 19, 20 and 21.

To get a guilty 'verdict' (decision) the prosecution must convince a jury (or magistrate) that the evidence proves **beyond reasonable doubt** that the accused sexually assaulted you.

Which court?

Some sexual offences can be dealt with in the Magistrates' Court without a jury. In these cases the magistrate will hear all of the evidence, reach a verdict and, if guilty, decide on a sentence. Courts deal with sexual assault hearings separate from other hearings. These types of cases are specially managed as going to court can be hard for victims.

Committal

If a case is to be heard in the County Court (a court for more serious offences), a committal hearing is usually held before trial.

Committals are heard at a Magistrates' Court. The purpose of a committal is to decide if there is enough evidence to go to trial. The magistrate makes this decision after finding out what evidence there will be. If the accused is pleading guilty, there is no need for you to give evidence but the committal still happens.

The committal hearing should happen within three months of charges being laid. There are often delays for a number of reasons.

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Julie's case goes to a committal hearing

Julie and Michelle meet with the OPP and the Witness Assistance Service a few days before the committal so Julie will understand what happens in court. They go to see the court and give her a chance to ask questions. At the committal, she gives evidence by closed circuit television and the defence lawyer asks her lots of questions. Julie has to answer these and tell her story in great detail. Julie is very upset by this and the magistrate orders the court to take a break.

Scenario A

The magistrate decides there is not enough evidence for the case to go to trial.

Scenario B

The magistrate decides there is enough evidence to go to trial. Six months later Julie gets a subpoena (a court order) telling her to go to court and give evidence.

Trial

A trial is a court case which takes place before a judge and jury at the County Court. The judge's role is to make decisions about the law, including what evidence can be heard, and tell the jury about the law. It is up to the jury, not the judge, to decide if the accused is guilty or not.

Giving evidence

There are limits to the sort of questions defence lawyers can ask, to help lessen your stress when giving evidence. You can give evidence by:

- using closed circuit television
- having support people standing or sitting beside you
- having screens placed so you cannot see the accused.

You can also ask for the courtroom to be closed, or for certain people not to be allowed in the courtroom, in some circumstances.

The judge decides which of these arrangements will be made.

Child victims or those with a cognitive impairment give evidence at a special hearing which is recorded by video. This evidence is presented later to the court at any hearing. The accused will not be in the same room as you when you do this unless you choose to give evidence in court. You may also be able to give evidence directly to the court if you want to. The judge can direct that screens be placed between you and the accused. They may also direct that a support person be beside you, whether you give evidence in court or by video. As the evidence is video recorded, it can be used in future hearings, so if you are a child or have a cognitive impairment you should only have to give evidence once. If you are under 18 you can also get support and information from the Child Witness Service. It is best to contact them as soon as possible.

Cross-examination

Cross-examination is usually the most upsetting part of the court case. You will be asked questions to test the evidence. Many questions are designed to make your story look doubtful, or sometimes, wrong. The judge can stop you being asked 'improper' questions, for example, questions that are meant to confuse, annoy, or insult you. If you are under 18 or have a cognitive impairment, the judge must not allow these types of questions.

Cross-examination can last for several hours or even days.

Generally you cannot be asked about your past sexual history, including past sexual activities with the accused. There are strict rules which apply before the judge can allow this type of question.

The judge can declare that you are a 'protected witness'. A protected witness cannot be personally cross-examined by the accused, but the judge can order that a lawyer cross-examines you on behalf of the accused.

Because it is up to the prosecution to prove the case, the accused does not have to give evidence. If the accused does decide to give evidence, they will be cross-examined by the prosecutor.

Defence and prosecution lawyers in Victoria have recently agreed to a code of good conduct called 'The Charter of Advocacy'. This tells them how they should behave and what they should consider and do, in sexual offence court cases. The Charter may help you understand what to expect in court. You can find the Charter at www.justice.vic.gov.au by using the search function.

Consent

Consent is a major issue at many sexual assault trials. For example, the accused may agree that sexual activity happened but says that you consented (agreed) to it.

If relevant, the judge must tell the jury that:

- if you did not say or do anything to show that you agreed to a sexual act, this is enough to show that the sexual act happened without your agreement
- it does not mean that you agreed to a sexual act because you:
 - did not say no or protest
 - did not try to stop the accused
 - did not have any physical injuries
 - had agreed to have sex or do sexual acts with the accused, or anyone else, in the past.

The verdict

A not guilty verdict (final decision) means that the jury (or magistrate) was not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the accused sexually assaulted you. It does not mean the court has found that you were not telling the truth. It does mean that the accused will not face a criminal penalty. If the accused is found guilty, the judge or magistrate will sentence them. A sentence is an order that sets out a suitable punishment for the crime. It can be several weeks before a sentence is handed down.

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Sometimes the jury cannot make a decision. Then the case will either be heard again before a different jury or stopped altogether. If your case needs to be heard again, your recorded evidence from the trial may be used, or you may need to give evidence again.

Sentencing

The judge or magistrate decides on a sentence after a plea hearing. At the plea hearing, the perpetrator's lawyer asks for certain things to be taken into account when the judge or magistrate makes a sentence. For example, how the perpetrator has behaved since the assault and about their family background.

Most people found guilty of sexual offences are sentenced to prison but a non-custodial sentence is possible. A non-custodial sentence means a sentence served outside a prison. The law is changing in this area. Suspended sentences can no longer be made for serious offences, including serious sexual offences. Soon, there will be other changes to non-custodial orders. For more information, call Victoria Legal Aid on 9269 0120 or visit www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

You can make a **Victim Impact Statement** about how the crime affected you. The judge or magistrate may take this into account when sentencing. Your statement can also include photos, drawings, poems and other material. The perpetrator or their lawyers will get a copy of the statement. You can read it out aloud to the court, or choose someone else to do this. You may be cross-examined about what you wrote but this is rare.

You can choose to:

- use closed circuit television
- have screens placed between you and the accused so you cannot see them

when you read, or are asked questions about your Victim Impact Statement.

Because crimes are considered offences against the whole community, other things will be looked at. These include:

- if the perpetrator is likely to sexually assault other people
- if the perpetrator has broken the law before
- if rehabilitation will help the perpetrator so they are unlikely to assault again
- the need to stop people in the community from sexually assaulting others.

Julie goes to court to give evidence

A few days before the trial, Julie and Michelle (from CASA) meet with the OPP and the Witness Assistance Service. Julie has decided to give evidence in the courtroom and not by closed circuit television. They explain that Julie cannot sit in the court while other people are giving evidence. She can only go into court when she gives evidence. Julie has asked for a screen to be placed in court so she will not have to see John when she gives evidence. Michelle will be beside her to give support.

Scenario A

John is found not guilty.

Scenario B

John is found guilty. After this Michelle and the OPP help Julie write a Victim Impact Statement for the judge to consider when the sentence is decided. Julie asks for compensation from John. See 'Compensation order in the criminal court' at page 26. The judge sentences John to five years in prison and orders him to pay Julie compensation for her pain and suffering.

Appeals

The perpetrator can appeal against the sentence and the conviction. An appeal is an application to change a court decision because the perpetrator thinks a mistake has been made. Successful appeals against conviction can mean another trial where the whole process is repeated, except that your recorded evidence may be used.

The OPP can appeal against the sentence if they think it is too light. It cannot appeal against a verdict of not guilty.

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Compensation and financial help



If you have been sexually assaulted, you may be able to get compensation and financial help.

There are three main ways of doing this. You can:

- apply for financial help from the government through the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal
- seek compensation from the perpetrator and possibly others by taking civil action
- apply to the criminal court for an order that the perpetrator pay you compensation. You can only do this if the perpetrator has been convicted of a criminal offence.

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal

The tribunal was set up to help victims of crime. If you have been sexually assaulted you can apply to the tribunal for financial help. You can get a lawyer to help you with your application. The tribunal will usually pay for the lawyer's costs and any other application expenses. Usually you do not have to pay anything to apply.

You can get an award of up to \$60,000 from the tribunal for:

- expenses for reasonable counselling services
- medical expenses that you have had or may have
- loss of earnings when you could not work because of the assault. This can only apply to lost earnings within two years of the sexual assault (up to \$20,000)
- loss or damage to clothing
- safety related expenses, including home security or the cost of moving house
- in exceptional circumstances, anything that might help you recover from the effects of sexual assault. This may include help with education or travel.

The tribunal can also make awards of Special Financial Assistance of up to \$10,000.

Other people can get financial assistance. For example, someone who:

- tries to stop a sexual assault or rescue a victim
- witnesses a sexual assault
- is a parent of a child who is sexually assaulted.

They may be entitled to compensation as a victim too, or get their medical and counselling expenses paid. In special circumstances, financial help may be available for loss of earnings.

How does the tribunal work?

If the perpetrator was convicted of a criminal offence, usually they will not be told of your application and will not be part of it. It is very unlikely that you will have to answer any questions about the actual sexual assault. You can ask to have your application decided without having to go to any hearing at all.

If the perpetrator was not charged or convicted, you can still apply to the Tribunal for assistance. The Tribunal will decide whether to accept the assault happened based on the evidence you give. The Tribunal does not have to be satisfied to the extent required in a criminal trial. Instead, you must prove the assault happened on the **balance of probabilities**. This means that it is more probable than not, that what you say is true. A police report made reasonably soon after the assault and evidence of physical and/or psychological injury is usually sufficient.

The perpetrator may be told about your application and may be invited to attend the hearing. You have the right to ask that they not be told or invited, but it is up to the tribunal. You can also stop your application at any time if you change your mind and do not want to go ahead.

If you do not know who the perpetrator was you can still apply. The tribunal must accept that the assault happened.

Time limits and extensions

There is a general rule that you must apply for victims of crime compensation within two years of the crime. You can, however, apply to the tribunal for more time if it happened over two years ago. The Tribunal often gives more time in sexual assault cases. If the Tribunal does not give you more time, you cannot get compensation.

Other issues

Sometimes the tribunal will not make an award, for example, if it is satisfied that:

- the sexual assault was not reported to the police within a reasonable time
- you did not give reasonable help in the investigation and prosecution of the sexual assault.

If you did not report to the police because of special circumstances, the tribunal can order compensation. Special circumstances can include that you were a child when it happened, you have a disability or you were intimidated by the perpetrator.

Civil actions

You may be able to sue the perpetrator for damages (compensation) in a civil action. A civil action is a court case that can be started by a person themselves (and not by the police). Civil cases usually have to happen within three years of the sexual assault. However, sometimes they can happen many years after the assault. You can start a civil action whether or not the police bring criminal charges.

In a civil action you are asking for money to compensate you for:

- not being able to work
- pain and suffering
- loss of enjoyment
- any other losses or injuries which happened because of the sexual assault.

A third **party** (another person or organisation) can also be sued if they were responsible in some way for the assault. For example, some church leaders could be seen as partly responsible for sexual assaults by priests because they did not act after finding out about the assaults.

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Civil actions have some advantages over criminal proceedings:

- you are a party to the action, not just a **witness**, and have your own lawyer and more control over the process
- it is easier to prove that the sexual assault happened. In civil cases, you only have to prove that the assault happened on the balance of probabilities
- large sums of money can be given as compensation in a successful civil action.

Civil actions also have some disadvantages:

- the **perpetrator** will not get a criminal conviction (so it will not go on their record) even if you are successful in a civil action
- you usually have to pay your own legal costs and this can be very expensive. However, if you win your case, the other party usually pays most of your legal costs
- you usually have to pay the perpetrator's legal costs if the case is unsuccessful
- the perpetrator may not have to pay anything if they cannot afford it.

Some lawyers offer a 'no win, no charge' arrangement (usually only if your case is likely to succeed). No win, no charge means you do not have to pay your lawyer's legal costs unless you win the case.

Compensation order in the criminal court

When sentencing the perpetrator, the court can order them to pay you compensation for your pain and suffering, and damage to property. The prosecution usually makes the application. The perpetrator is given a chance to argue against paying. The judge can consider a Victim Impact Statement when deciding an application for compensation.

See 'Sentencing' at page 22.

Discrimination and sexual harassment

Victims of sexual assault may also be able to make a complaint of sexual discrimination or sexual harassment under anti-discrimination law. This would include during:

- employment, such as between an employer and employee. Employers can sometimes also be held responsible for sexual harassment that their employees have done
- education, such as between a teacher and an adult student
- the delivery of goods and services
- accommodation being given
- membership or access to clubs
- certain sporting activities.

If you wish to complain, apply within 12 months of the sexual assault. You may be able to get a time extension. There is no fee for making a complaint to a human rights and equal opportunity commission.

See 'Legal help' in 'Where to get help' at page 27.

Where to get help



If you need an interpreter:

Call the Translating and Interpreting Service for an interpreter to help you speak to any of the agencies in this section. Ask the interpreter to put you through to the agency you need. This is usually free.

Tel: 131 450



If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment:

Use the National Relay Service to phone any of the agencies (including Victoria Legal Aid) in this section. This is free. For more information about the NRS visit www.relayservice.com.au

TTY users: Call 133 677 and then ask for the phone number you need. Include the area code.

Speak and Listen users: Call 1300 555 727 and then ask for the phone number you need. Include the area code.

Internet relay users: Connect to www.iprelay.com.au/call/index.aspx and then ask for the phone number you need. Include the area code.

Victoria Legal Aid

Legal Information Service

Tel: 9269 0120 or 1800 677 402 (country callers)

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Arabic | 9269 0127 | Persian (Farsi) | 9269 0123 |
| Croatian | 9269 0164 | Polish | 9269 0228 |
| Greek | 9269 0167 | Serbian | 9269 0332 |
| Italian | 9269 0202 | Ukrainian | 9269 0390 |

Monday to Friday, 8.45 am to 5.15 pm

You can also get an interpreter from the Translating and Interpreting Service if you speak another language. Call 13 14 50 and ask to be put through to Victoria Legal Aid.

Local offices

We have offices all over Victoria. See the back cover for office locations and phone numbers.

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Sexual assault

Statewide Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Confidential telephone counselling, information and referral. 5.30 pm – 9 am weeknights, 24-hour service on weekends and public holidays

Tel: 9349 1766 or 1800 806 292

Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

You can contact a CASA 24 hours a day, seven days a week for crisis counselling, support, information and advocacy on 1800 806 292.

Your call will be directed to the CASA in your region

CASA website www.casa.org.au

Metropolitan and Regional CASAs:

CASA House – Tel: 9635 3610 9635 3620 (TTY office hours) 9344 2744 (TTY after hours)

Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault – Tel: 9870 7330

Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault – Tel: 9496 2240

South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA) – Tel: 9594 2289

The Gatehouse Centre for Assessment and Treatment of Child Abuse – Tel: 9345 6391

Western Region Centre Against Sexual Assault – Tel: 9687 5811

Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault – Tel: 5320 3933

Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault (Bendigo) – Tel: 5441 0430

Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault (Geelong) – Tel: 5222 4802

Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault – Tel: 5134 3922

Goulburn Valley Centre Against Sexual Assault (Shepparton) – Tel: 5831 2343

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit (Mildura) – Tel: 5025 5400

South Western Centre Against Sexual Assault (Warrnambool) – Tel: 5564 4144

Upper Murray Centre Against Sexual Assault (Wangaratta) – Tel: 5722 2203

Wimmera Centre Against Sexual Assault (Horsham) – Tel: 5381 9272

Domestic violence

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

Support and information for community workers whose clients are victim/survivors of domestic violence and/or incest

Tel: 9486 9866 (country callers can reverse the charges)

www.dvrcv.org.au

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Crisis support, information, referral to safe accommodation for women experiencing abuse in their relationships

Tel: 9322 3555 (24 hours) or 1800 015 188 (country callers)

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

Culturally sensitive information and other help for women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Tel: 1800 755 988 or 8413 6800

www.iwdvs.org.au

Victim support

Visit www.justice.vic.gov.au and click on 'Victims' for more information on victims support services and 'Courts (Going to court)' for information on victims and the court process

Court Network

Support, information and referral for people going to court. Specialist volunteer service available for victim/survivors of sexual assault

Tel: 1800 681 614

Child Witness Service

Provides support and information about court for children and young people under 18 who give evidence in serious criminal cases

Tel: 1300 790 540

Victims of Crime Helpline

Tel: 1800 819 817

Victim Support Agency

Tel: 8684 6700

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal

Tel: 9628 7855 or 1800 882 752 (toll free)

www.vocat.vic.gov.au

Witness Assistance Service

Available to all prosecution witnesses and victims of crime involved in cases handled by the Office of Public Prosecutions

Tel: 9603 7422 or 1800 641 927 (country callers)

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Disability

Office of the Public Advocate
24-hour service for people with disabilities
Tel: 1300 309 337
www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

Disability Discrimination Legal Service
Tel: 9654 8644 or 1300 882 872
TTY: 9654 6817
www.communitylaw.org.au/ddls

Legal help

Women's Legal Service Victoria
A statewide community legal centre run by women for women
Tel: 9642 0877 or 1800 133 302 (toll free)

Federation of Community Legal Centres
Community legal centres give free legal advice, information and advocacy
Tel: 9652 1500 for your local centre
www.communitylaw.org.au/find_a_clc.php

Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service
Legal advice and help for Koori people
Tel: 9419 3888 (24 hours) or 1800 064 865 (toll free)
www.vals.org.au

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria
Provides legal services to Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault
Tel: 9244 3333 or 1800 105 303 (free call)
www.fvpls.org

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
For complaints about sexual harassment and discrimination
Tel: 1300 292 153
www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigations Team
Contact your local police station and ask to speak to someone from the team in your area

More information

Victoria Legal Aid has free booklets for the public with legal information on topics such as intervention orders, police powers, family law and going to court. Some publications are available in other languages.

Visit www.legalaid.vic.gov.au to order or download or telephone 9269 0223 to find out more.



Family violence intervention order publications

How to respond to a family violence intervention order (booklet)

Safe at home: how to get a family violence intervention order (booklet)



You and family law A short guide

This booklet is for anyone who is thinking about or going through separation and needs basic information on family law

Sexual assault

The law, your rights as a victim

Victoria Legal Aid

Legal Information Service

Tel: 9269 0120

Country callers: 1800 677 402

Offices

MELBOURNE

350 Queen St

Melbourne VIC 3000

Tel: 9269 0120

Country callers: 1800 677 402

Suburban offices

BROADMEADOWS

North western suburbs

Level 1, Building 1

Broadmeadows Station Centre

1100 Pascoe Vale Rd

Broadmeadows VIC 3047

Tel: 9302 8777

DANDENONG

Westernport region

Level 1, 9-15 Pultney St

Dandenong VIC 3175

Tel: 9767 7111

FRANKSTON

Peninsula region

Cnr O'Grady Ave & Dandenong Rd

Frankston VIC 3199

Tel: 9784 5222

PRESTON

North eastern suburbs

42 Mary St

Preston VIC 3072

Tel: 9416 6444

RINGWOOD

Outer eastern suburbs

23 Ringwood St

Ringwood VIC 3134

Tel: 9259 5444

SUNSHINE

Western suburbs

1/474 Ballarat Rd

Sunshine VIC 3020

Tel: 9300 5333

Regional offices

BALLARAT

Central Highlands region

Area A, Level 1

75 Victoria St

Ballarat VIC 3350

Tel: 5329 6222

Toll free: 1800 081 719

BENDIGO

Loddon–Campaspe region

424 Hargreaves St

Bendigo VIC 3550

Tel: 5448 2333

Toll free: 1800 254 500

GEELONG

Barwon region

Level 2, 199 Moorabool St

Geelong VIC 3220

Tel: 5226 5666

Toll free: 1800 196 200

HORSHAM

Wimmera region

29 Darlot St

Horsham VIC 3400

Tel: 5381 6000

Toll free: 1800 177 638

MORWELL

Gippsland region

Cnr Chapel & George St

Morwell VIC 3840

Tel: 5134 8055

BAIRNSDALE

Gippsland region (branch office)

101A Main St

Bairnsdale VIC 3875

Tel: 5153 1975

SHEPPARTON

Goulburn region

36-42 High St

Shepparton VIC 3630

Tel: 5823 6200

Toll free: 1800 119 918

WARRNAMBOOL

South Coast region

185 Fairy St

Warrnambool VIC 3280

Tel: 5559 7222

Toll free: 1800 651 022

Publication orders

To download or order our publications in English or other languages go to www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

If you need help ordering online please call Victoria Legal Aid on 9269 0223