

Appendix 4A: VOC participant information sheet and participant consent form



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



Julie Stubbs
Professor of Criminology
Institute of Criminology
Telephone: + 61 2 9351 0251
Facsimile: + 61 2 9351 0200
Email: j.stubbs@usyd.edu.au

Mail to: Fiona Tait - Research Student
Department of Criminology – Law Faculty
Law Building: F10/Level 3
University of Sydney
NSW 2006

RESEARCH STUDY:

An evaluation of the victim impact statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

I am conducting a study of the victim impact statement (VIS) process for victims of crime in NSW. The aim of the study is to gain information from victims of crime which will assist others who are considering making a VIS.

I am seeking your assistance, as I would like to talk to victims of crime, whether they have decided to make a VIS or not, in order to better understand how well making a VIS works. This study is the first to ask victims of crime in NSW for their views about this system.

I am conducting the study for a Masters of Criminology thesis through the University of Sydney Law School. Please be advised that all victims of crime participating in this study must be over 18 years.

The study has two parts; the first is a short telephone interview to be completed at a time convenient to you and the second is a face-to-face interview to discuss your experience in more depth. This interview is optional and should take approximately 30 minutes.

It is important to understand that whether you choose to be involved in this study or not will in no way impact on your proceedings and will have no effect on your entitlements and access to legal and support services. The study is run by the University and is totally independent of the court and prosecution services.

Included in this letter is an information sheet, which also highlights information about privacy and confidentiality. Please be aware that none of your personal details or details of your case have been provided to us, and again please note you are under no obligation to participate and can withdraw at any time.

Thank you for considering this request. If you would like to participate, please copy the **participant consent form**, complete it and either email it to: ftai3698@usyd.edu.au or post it to: Fiona Tait, Research Student, Department of Criminology, Law Building F10/Level 3, University of Sydney, NSW 2006. If you would prefer a hard copy to be sent to you to sign with a stamped addressed envelope, please request this by email or telephone: 0450 857 495.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Tait
Tel: [0450 857 495](tel:0450857495)
email: ftai3698@usyd.edu.au



Julie Stubbs
Professor of Criminology
Institute of Criminology
Telephone: + 61 2 9351 0251
Facsimile: + 61 2 9351 0200
Email: j.stubbs@usyd.edu.au

Mail to: Fiona Tait - Research Student
Department of Criminology – Law Faculty
Law Building: F10/Level 3
University of Sydney
NSW 200

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

RESEARCH STUDY:

An evaluation of the victim impact statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

Introduction

This letter is to introduce and seek your assistance with a research study being undertaken by Fiona Tait which will form the basis for a Masters of Criminology degree at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Professor Julie Stubbs, University of Sydney Law School.

Aim of the study

The aim of this research is to gain information from victims of crime who have made, or have decided not to make a victim impact statement and to evaluate this process from the victims' point of view. The purpose of the research is to pinpoint possible areas of need where victims of crime wishing to make a victim impact statement may be better supported.

We are hopeful that you will be interested to participate in this research.

What does the research involve?

Fiona would like to contact you by telephone to complete a short over-the-phone questionnaire. A form is enclosed to return to us should you agree to participate in the questionnaire.

How much time will it take?

The telephone questionnaires should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. We are happy to arrange a time to talk to you at your convenience, either during the day or in the evening.

If English is not my first language, can I still participate?

Victims of crime in NSW who come from different cultures and speak languages other than English are encouraged to participate in the study. Every effort will be made to conduct the interviews in your own language if that is your preference.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is completely voluntary—you are not under any obligation to consent and if you do consent you can withdraw at any time. Involvement or non-involvement in the study has no bearing on your case, and has no effect on your claims, entitlements, services or legal proceedings.

NSW VIS Study

What if I require further support resulting from my participation?

If you require further support as a result of your participation, Fiona will be able to refer you to support agencies that may assist you.

How will information given to the study be kept private?

No person participating in the research will be identified. Contact details will be known only to the researcher, and this data will be coded in order that data stored is not able to be identified by persons outside the research project. Within the study no names will be used, nor will details of crimes be described. Completed questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for a period of 7 years, after which the data will be destroyed. No individual participants will be identifiable in any publications from this research.

Please be aware that none of your personal details or details of your case have been provided to us.

Outcome and Significance

While some studies have looked at the inclusion of victim impact statements within the criminal justice system, there have been few studies reflecting the actual experiences of victims of crime.

This research may improve the process of making and presenting a victim impact statement for victims of crime, as they engage with the court system. It may also highlight to those working within the criminal justice system, the specific needs of victims of crime, facilitating more effective practices to support victims of crime by victim support services and agencies.

Results

Summary results of the study, once completed, will be available to all participants in the study, should they wish to see them, with the full study available on request.

Participation

If you would like to participate in this study, please copy the consent form, complete it and email it to: ftai3698@usyd.edu.au or post it to: Fiona Tait, Research Student, Department of Criminology, Law Building F10/Level 3, University of Sydney, NSW 2006. If you would prefer a hard copy to be sent to you to sign with a stamped addressed envelope, please request this by email or telephone: 0450 857 495.

If you would like contact the researcher about any aspect of the study, please contact: **Fiona Tait: mobile: 0450 857 495 or email: ftai3698@usyd.edu.au**

Who can I contact if I have a complaint or concern about the study?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 8627 8176 (Telephone); (02) 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or human.ethics@usyd.edu.au (Email).

Please quote Ethics Approval Number: **9-2009/12149** in any correspondence.

Thank you.

This information sheet is for you to keep.



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



Julie Stubbs
Professor of Criminology
Institute of Criminology
Faculty
Telephone: + 61 2 9351 0251
Facsimile: + 61 2 9351 0200
Email: j.stubbs@usyd.edu.au

Mail to: Fiona Tait - Research Student
Department of Criminology - Law
Law Building: F10/Level 3
University of Sydney
NSW 2000

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

If you would like to participate in this research please copy this form, complete it and email it to: ftai3698@usyd.edu.au or post it to: Fiona Tait, Research Student, Department of Criminology, Law Building F10/Level 3, University of Sydney, NSW 2006. If you would prefer a hard copy to be sent to you to sign with a stamped addressed envelope, please request this by email or telephone: 0450 857 495.

RESEARCH STUDY
An evaluation of the victim impact statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

I agree to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that participating in the research will not affect any claims, services or entitlements due to me in any way, and that this research is separate from the court process. I understand I must be over 18 years to participate in the study.

I have read and understood the aims, significance, and confidentiality terms of this research project, and also understand the time required for me to participate in the telephone questionnaires.

I agree to be contacted by research student - Fiona Tait by telephone, and will supply a contact number and time I would prefer to be called.

NAME:.....

PREFERRED CONTACT NUMBER.....

PREFERRED TIME OF DAY TO BE CONTACTED.....

SIGNED.....

DATE.....

Appendix 4B: VOC telephone questionnaire: VIS makers



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



RESEARCH STUDY:
An Evaluation of the Victim Impact Statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS

This questionnaire has been adapted from the Annex 4 Questionnaire designed for the evaluative pilot study of Victim Statements commissioned by the Scottish Government 2007, with the approval of the study coordinators.

A). Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Fiona Tait from USYD. Thank you for allowing me to interview you at this time. As we discussed on the phone, I am carrying out a research study concerning the experiences of people who have been victims of crime and the process and expectations involved in making a Victims Impact Statement. The research is intended to explore victims' experience of the victim impact statement in terms of its therapeutic effect, with a view to improving the supports and assistance to better meet the needs of victims of crime. Is it convenient to talk to you now? (Or would you like to arrange an alternative time?) The interview usually takes no more than 30 minutes.

The questions I am about to ask you are intended to be unobtrusive and respectful. Please understand that you do not have to answer a question if you do not wish to. The questions are standardised with many requiring a simple answer. I will offer you alternative answers for some questions, and while you are free to elaborate, please do not feel you have to, if you do not wish to. Some questions require answers that ask for your understandings or thoughts.

As explained in our letter of introduction, the results of this conversation are confidential, and will only be available for the purposes of this research. Your details are coded and in a way to make it impossible for anyone outside the research team to know your identity.

B). The offence and its impact

- 1). As a result of this crime, have you suffered from any physical or medical problems, such as injuries or illness

Yes 1 _____ Answer Q2
No 2 _____ Go to Q3

- 2). Would you describe these physical or medical problems as serious or not serious?

Serious 1
Not Serious 2

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

- 3). As a result of this crime, have you suffered from any emotional or psychological problems, for example anxiety or depression?
- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | Answer Q4 |
| No | 2 | Go to Q5 |

- 4). Would you describe these problems as serious or not serious?
- Serious 1
- Not Serious 2

- 5). Did the crime cause you any financial loss at the time, or after the offence
- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | Answer Q6 |
| No | 2 | Go to Q7 |

- 6). Would you describe this loss as serious of not serious
- Yes 1
- No 2

C). Awareness of victim impact statement

- 7). Can you remember how you first heard about the possibility of making a Victim Impact Statement?

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Letter from WAS | 1 |
| The police | 2 |
| VCB Victims package | 3 |
| Lawyer/solicitor | 4 |
| Through Victim Support | 5 |
| Through media coverage | 6 |
| Other (write in) | 7 |
| Not sure | 8 |

D). Supporting documents

- 8). Do you recall receiving written material, for example, a letter or package, explaining what a victim impact statement is, and how to complete it?
- | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | Answer Q9 |
| No | 2 | Go to Q14 |
| Not sure | 3 | |

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

- 9). How easy was the information to understand?
- | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------|
| Very easy | 1 | Go to 12 |
| Quite easy | 2 | Go to 12 |
| Not very easy | 3 | Answer 10 |
| Very complex | 4 | Answer 10 |
- 10). Can you explain why it was not easy? (write in)
- 11). What might have made it easier? (write in)
- 12). Would you say that you read...
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| All or almost all of the information | 1 |
| Most of the information | 2 |
| Some of the information | 3 |
| Did not read it | 4 |
- 13). Did reading the information package help you make up your mind whether or not to make a victim impact statement?
- | | |
|----------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Not sure | 3 |

E). Discussion of purpose and expectations with regard to making a victim impact statement

- 14). Can you give me your understanding of the reasons why Victims Impact Statements are made. What Purposes they might serve? (write)
- 15). Were you prepared to make a Victim Impact Statement?
- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | Go to Q17 |
- 16). Why did you decide to make a victim impact statement? (write)
- 17). Did you know how your victim impact statement would be used in court? (write)

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

- 18). What did you hope would happen as a result of making a victim impact statement? (write)
- 19). For you personally, what were the most important consequences of making a victim impact statement? (write)

F). Production of the victim impact statement (VIS)

- 20). Did you prepare your VIS yourself
- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------|
| Yes | 1 | Go to Section F |
| No | 2 | Go to Q21 |

- 21). Who helped you prepare your VIS

Family or friend	1
WAS officer	2
Lawyer	3
Victim Support worker	4
Social worker or therapist	5
Other (write)	6

- 22). What kind of help did they give you? (write)

- 23). How much influence would you say they had on what you said in your statement?

a lot of influence	1
some influence	2
no influence	3

G). Personal reflections of making the VIS

- 24). Thinking about the experience of making the VIS would you say that this was upsetting in any way?

Yes	1	<u>Answer Q25</u>
No	2	Go to Q26

- 25). Could you tell me about that upset, and the things about making the VIS that distressed you? (write)

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

- 26). Was making the VIS a positive experience for you
Yes 1 Answer Q27
No 2 Go to Q28
- 27). In what ways was it positive? (write)
- 28). Could you tell me why making the VIS was not such a positive experience for you?(write)
- 29). Do you have any suggestions of how it could have been a more positive experience for you? (write)
- 30). Did you have any expectations about how your VIS would be handled by the court? (write)
- 31). Were those expectations met?
Yes 1 Go to Q 34
No 2 Answer Q 32
- 32). Why was that? (write)
- 33). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 34). Were you aware that the accused would see your VIS?
Yes 1
No 2
- 35). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 36). Was your VIS accepted by the court?
Yes 1
No 2
- 37). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 38). Was your VIS required to be edited after you had written it?
Yes 1 Answer Q39
No 1 Go to Q42
- 39). Who edited your VIS
Judge/magistrate 1
Prosecution lawyer 2
Defence lawyer 3
WAS 4

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

- 40). Were you involved in the editing process, or was your VIS amended without your involvement?
- 41). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 42). Were you aware you might be cross-examined on your VIS?
- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | |
- 43). Were you cross-examined on your VIS
- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| Yes | 1 | <u>Answer Q44</u> |
| No | 2 | <u>Go to Q45</u> |
- 44). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 45). How long was the gap from the time of the crime committed against you until sentencing? (write)
- 46). At what stage were you aware you would be able to present your VIS to court? (write)
- 47). How long were you given to prepare your VIS before sentencing? (write)
- 48). Was the time to prepare your VIS adequate?
- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| Yes | 1 | <u>Go to Q50</u> |
| No | 2 | <u>Answer Q49</u> |
- 49). How much time would you have preferred? (write)
- 50). Is there anything you can suggest that would have helped support you during the court/sentencing process? (write)
- 51). How are you coping now? (write)
- 52). Do you think that making a VIS has had an impact on how you are feeling since the conclusion of your matter? (write)

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

53). If you were to make your VIS again now, do you think that what you would say about how the crime affected you would be

more or less the same	1	<u>Go to Section G</u>
or different in some way	2	Answer Q54

54). In what way might it be different? (write)

55). Why would that be, do you think? (write)

H). BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR DATA ANALYSIS

56). May I also ask your date of birth? (write)

57). Is English the language spoken at home	<u>Yes</u>	1 go to Q23
	No	2 go to Q22

58). Were you born in Australia?	<u>Yes</u>	1 go to Q 60
	No	2 go to Q59

59). May I ask where you were born? (write)

60). May I ask your family of origin? (write)

61). Could you tell me your post code?

62). Finally may I ask you the nature of your matter?

- a) robbery
 - b) assault
 - c) assault and robbery
 - d) sexual assault
 - e) domestic violence
 - f) other (write)
-

Thank you very much for talking with me today, in what I understand are difficult circumstances. I will be doing some face-to-face interviews to further discuss the experience, expectations and impact of making a VIS. Would you be interested in being interviewed in person?

<u>Yes</u>	1	<u>Go to ii)</u>
No	2	Go to i)

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – VIS MAKERS – cont.

i)

I do understand, and thank you for your assistance today. The information you have given to me will be very useful in terms of recommendations for better supports for victims of crime. (If appropriate ask) ... Are you aware of victim support services

available to you? if not would you like me to give you some contact details? (give contacts and telephone numbers if requested).

Would you like to be contacted with the results of the study?

Yes	<u>1</u>
No	2

Thank you once again. I wish you well for the future.

ii)

Thank you. Are you happy to arrange a time for the interview now or would you prefer me to call again when you have considered your continued involvement in the study. (continue as appropriate. Have dates and locations ready). (If appropriate ...) Are you aware of victim support services available to you? If not would you like me to give you some contact details? (give contacts and telephone numbers if requested).

Thank you once again. We very much appreciate your assistance and look forward to meeting you/speaking with you on ... (tba)

Appendix 4C: VOC telephone questionnaire: non-VIS makers



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



RESEARCH STUDY:

An evaluation of the victim impact statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Non-VIS MAKERS

This questionnaire has been adapted from the Annex 4 Questionnaire designed for the evaluative pilot study of Victim Statements commissioned by the Scottish Government 2007, with the approval of the study's coordinators.

A). Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Fiona Tait from USYD. Thank you for allowing me to interview you at this time. As we discussed on the phone, I am carrying out a research study concerning the experiences of people who have been victims of crime and the process and expectations involved in making a victim impact statement. The research is intended to explore victims' experience of the victim impact statement in terms of its therapeutic effect, with a view to improving the supports and assistance to better meet the needs of victims of crime. Is it convenient to talk to you now? (or would you like to arrange an alternative time?) The interview usually takes no more than 30 minutes.

The questions I am about to ask you are intended to be unobtrusive and respectful. Please understand that you do not have to answer a question if you do not wish to. The questions are standardised with many requiring a simple answer. I will offer you alternative answers for some questions, and while you are free to elaborate, please do not feel you have to, if you do not wish to. Some questions require answers that ask for your understandings or thoughts.

As explained in our letter of introduction, the results of this conversation are confidential, and will only be available for the purposes of this research. Your details are coded and in a way to make it impossible for anyone outside the research team to know your identity.

B). The Offence and its impact

- 1). As a result of this crime, have you suffered from any physical or medical problems, such as injuries or illness

Yes 1 _____ Answer Q2
No 2 Go to Q3

- 2). Would you describe these physical or medical problems as serious or not serious?

Serious 1
Not Serious 2

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Non-VIS MAKERS cont.

- 3). As a result of this crime, have you suffered from any emotional or psychological problems, for example anxiety or depression?

<u>Yes</u> 1	<u>Answer Q4</u>
No 2	Go to Q5

- 4). Would you describe these problems as serious or not serious?

Serious 1
Not Serious 2

- 5). Did the crime cause you any financial loss at the time, or after the offence

<u>Yes</u> 1	<u>Answer Q6</u>
No 2	Go to Q7

- 6). Would you describe this loss as serious of not serious

Yes 1
No 2

C). Awareness of victim impact statement

- 7). Can you remember how you first heard about the possibility of making a Victim Impact Statement?

Letter from WAS	1
The police	2
VCB Victims package	3
Lawyer/solicitor	4
Through Victim Support	5
Through media coverage	6
Other (write in)	7
Not sure	8

D). Supporting Documents

- 8). Do you recall receiving written material, for example, a letter or package, explaining what a victim impact statement is, and how to complete it?

<u>Yes</u> 1	<u>Answer Q9</u>
No 2	Go to Q14
Not sure 3	

- 9). How easy was the information to understand?

Very easy	1	Go to 12
Quite easy	2	Go to 12
Not very easy	3	Answer 10
Very complex	4	Answer 10

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Non-VIS MAKERS cont.

10). Can you explain why? (write in)

Page 2 of 7

11). What might have made it easier? (write in)

12). Would you say that you read ...

All or almost all of the information	1
Most of the information	2
Some of the information	3
Did not read it	4

13). Did reading the information package help you make up your mind whether or not to make a victim impact statement?

Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

E). Discussion of purpose and expectations with regard to making a victim impact statement.

14). Can you give me your understanding of the reasons why Victims Impact Statements are made. What Purposes they might serve? (write)

15). What are the factors that made you decide not to make a victim impact statement? (write)

16). What were your expectations of how a victim impact statement would be used in court? (write)

F). Personal reflections of the VIS

17). Thinking about the decision whether to make a VIS would you say that this was upsetting in any way? Yes Go to Q18
No Go to Q 20

18). Could you tell me about that upset, and the things about the VIS that distressed you? (write)

Page 3 of 6

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Non-VIS MAKERS cont.

- 19). Do you have any suggestions of how the process of could be made more effective? (write)
- 20). Did you have any expectations about how a VIS would be handled by the court?
Yes 1 Answer Q21
No 2 Go to Q23
- 21). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 22). Where did your expectations come from? (write)
- 23). Were you aware that the accused would see your VIS?
Yes 1 Answer Q24
No 2 Go to Q27
- 24). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 25). Were you concerned your VIS might not be accepted by the court?
Yes 1 AnswerQ26
No 2 Go to Q27
- 26). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 27). Were you concerned your VIS might be edited after you had written it?
Yes 1 Answer Q28
No 1 Go to Q30
- 28). Who did you think might edit it
Judge/magistrate 1
Prosecution lawyer 2
Defence lawyer 3
WAS 4
- 29). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 30). Were you aware you might be cross-examined on your VIS?
Yes 1 Answer Q 31
No 2 Go to Q32

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Non-VIS MAKERS cont.

- 31). How did that make you feel? (write)
- 32). How long was the gap from the time of the crime committed against you until sentencing? (write)
- 33). At what stage were you aware you would be able to present a VIS to court? (write)
- 34). Was the preparation time need to make a VIS a factor in deciding not to make one?
- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------|
| Yes | 1 | <u>Go to Q35</u> |
| No | 2 | Answer Q36 |
- 35). How much time would you have preferred? (write)
- 36). Is there anything you can suggest that would have helped support you during the court/sentencing process? (write)
- 37). How are you coping now? (write)

F). BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR DATA ANALYSIS

- 38). May I also ask you your date of birth? (write)
- 39). Is English the language spoken at home Yes 1
No 2
- 40). May I ask your family of origin?
- 41). In what area of NSW do you reside?
- 42). Finally may I ask you the nature of your matter?
- a) assault
 - b) assault and theft
 - c) sexual assault
 - d) domestic violence
 - e) other (write)

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – Non-VIS MAKERS cont.

Thank you very much for talking with us today, in what we understand are difficult circumstances. We will be doing some face-to-face interviews to further discuss the experience, expectations and impact of the VIS process. Would you be interested in being interviewed in person?

Yes	1	Go to ii)
No	2	Go to i)

i)

We do understand, and thank you for your assistance today. The information you have given to us will be very useful in terms of recommendations for better supports for victims of crime. (If appropriate ask) ... Are you aware of victim support services available to you? if not would you like me to give you some contact details? (give contacts and telephone numbers if requested).

Would you like to be contacted with the results of the study?

Yes	1
No	2

Thank you once again. We wish you well for the future.

ii)

Thank you. Are you happy to arrange a time for the interview now or would you prefer us to call again when you have considered your continued involvement in the study. (continue as appropriate. Have dates and locations ready). (If appropriate ...) Are you aware of victim support services available to you? If not would you like me to give you some contact details? (give contacts and telephone numbers if requested).

Thank you once again. We very much appreciate your assistance and look forward to meeting you/speaking with you on ... (tba)

Appendix 5A: VSP participant information sheet and participant consent form



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



Dr Rita Shackel
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Law
New Law Building F10
Eastern Avenue
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia

T + 61 2 9351 0368
F + 61 2 9351 0200
rita.shackel@sydney.edu.au

STUDY:

An evaluation of the victim impact statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

Dear ...

I am currently undertaking research that seeks to evaluate the victim impact statement (VIS) process for victims of crime in NSW. The aim of the study is to gain information from victims of crime which will assist others who are considering making a VIS, and to explore the therapeutic consequences of the VIS process as experienced by victims of crime.

Victims of crime who responded to the study have now been interviewed.

This letter is to invite you to participate in an interview regarding the VIS process as a professional assisting victims of crime required to attend court. You have been selected for interview because of your expertise in this area. The interviews with victim service professionals are intended to give a broader context to the respondent interview data.

The interviews will be face-to-face, lasting approximately 30–40 minutes, and can be conducted within a group setting within your agency/service, or individually within your work setting or outside work, based on your preference.

The study is being conducted in conjunction with the University of Sydney and is totally independent of the court and prosecution services.

Included with this letter is an information sheet about the interview, which also highlights information about privacy and confidentiality. Also included is an outline of the type of questions I would like to ask you. Please note you are under no obligation to participate and that if you agree to be interviewed you can withdraw at any time

Thank you for considering this request.
Yours sincerely,

Fiona Tait
Masters by Research Student: NSW VIS Study
Department of Criminology: fitai3698@uni.sydney.edu.au



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



Dr Rita Shackel
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Law
New Law Building F10
Eastern Avenue
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia

T + 61 2 9351 0368
F + 61 2 9351 0200
rita.shackel@sydney.edu.au

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS: Professional Service Providers

RESEARCH STUDY:

An evaluation of the victim impact statement process in NSW with regard to the therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

Introduction

This letter is to re-introduce and seek your assistance to be interviewed for a research study being undertaken by Fiona Tait which will form the basis for a Masters of Criminology degree at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Rita Shackel, University of Sydney and Professor Julie Stubbs, University of New South Wales.

Aim of the study

The aim of this research is to gain information from victims of crime who have made, or have decided not to make a victim impact statement and to evaluate this process from the victims' point of view. The purpose of the research is to pinpoint possible areas of need where victims of crime wishing to make a victim impact statement may be better supported. The perspectives of professionals and service providers who work with victims of crime are also important for this study.

What does the face-to-face interview involve?

You have been selected to be interviewed as part of this study because of your expertise. If you consent to do so, Fiona would like to discuss your experiences with and understanding of the process of making, or not making a victim impact statement. from the perspective of clients utilising your service. Fiona will arrange a date, time and location which is convenient to you for the interview. If more than one professional from your service/agency has agreed to be interviewed, you will be given the option of a group interview in the interests of convenience. However, if you feel you would prefer to be interviewed individually as that is a more convenient option for you, please let Fiona know when she arranges the appointment. A consent form is enclosed for you to complete should you agree to participate in the interview.

Are the interviews recorded?

If you consent to audio recording, Fiona will record the interview on computer audio file. However, if you prefer, Fiona will take written notes of your responses. Any notes or recordings will be coded so that your interview will not be able to be identified by anyone other than the researcher to comply with the terms of confidentiality and privacy outlined below.

Will my identity or that of my organisation be revealed?

As an expert in this area, you may wish your name, title and organisation to be attributed to you in any reports that result from the research. You may also choose not to be identified. The consent form allows you to indicate if you agree to be identified, and in what way.

Can I have a copy of my interview?

A copy of your interview on CD can be sent to you if you wish.

How much time will it take?

The interview is designed to take around 40 minutes; however, the interview may be longer or shorter based on your experiences.

What sort of questions will I be asked?

Within this package is an outline of the type of questions you will be discussing.

Do I have to answer a question if I do not want to?

You are not obliged to answer any question(s) you do not want to, and you are free to stop the interview at any stage, should you wish to.

Where will the interview take place

If agreeable with you, Fiona will come to your offices to perform the interviews, or at another location should that be your preference.

Can I still withdraw from the study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary—you are not under any obligation to consent and if you do consent you can withdraw at any time

How will information given in the interview be kept private?

Data with regards to the face-to-face interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for a period of 5 years, after which the data will be destroyed. No individual victims of crime participating in the study will be identifiable in any publications from this research. All information discussed during the face-to-face interviews with victim service professionals will be confidential and data will be transcribed in such a way that it will be impossible to link information presented during the interview to an identifiable case or to any client in your service. It is understood that the anonymity of your clients will be maintained and the confidentiality of their matters respected and upheld within the data collection, storage and research publication. As discussed above, you may choose to remain anonymous in reports arising from the research if you wish.

Outcome and Significance

While some studies have looked at the inclusion of victim impact statements within the criminal justice system, there have been few studies reflecting the actual experiences of victims of crime.

This research may improve the process of making and presenting a victim impact statement for victims of crime, as they engage with the court system. It may also highlight to those working within the criminal justice system, the specific needs of victims of crime, facilitating more effective practices to support victims of crime by victim support services and agencies.

Results

Summary results of the study, once completed, will be available to all participants in the study, should they wish to see them, with the full study available on request.

If you would like contact the researcher about any aspect of the study, please contact: **Fiona Tait on telephone number: 0402 988 601**

Who can I contact if I have a complaint or concern about the study?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

Please quote Ethics Approval Number: **9–2009/12149** in any correspondence.

Thank you.

This information sheet is for you to keep.



Dr Rita Shackel
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Law
New Law Building F10
Eastern Avenue
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia

T + 61 2 9351 0368
F + 61 2 9351 0200
rita.shackel@sydney.edu.au

PARTICIPANT CONSENT SHEET
FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS: Professional Service Providers

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therapeutic consequences for victims of crime

I agree to be interviewed in person to discuss the victim impact statement process through my
understanding of the experiences of my client base for the above research project. I understand
that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent to be interviewed at any
time. If I feel uncomfortable during the interview, the interview will be terminated immediately.

I have read and understood the aims, significance, and confidentiality terms of this research
project, and also understand the time required for me to participate in the interview.

I understand I can elect to have the interview recorded by audio, or in writing, and that the
interview will be coded to comply with the terms of confidentiality and privacy outlined in the
participant information sheet (attached), I understand that my details, identity and that of my
agency will not be identified in any reports arising from the research without my consent.

I understand that all information discussed during the interview will be confidential and that data
will be transcribed in such a way that it would be impossible to link information presented during
my interview to an identifiable case or to identify any client of the service. It is understood that
the anonymity of my clients will be kept and the confidentiality of their matters respected within
the data collection, storage and publication.

I understand that the interview will be organised at a date, time and location convenient to me.

NAME:.....

SIGNED.....

I consent / do not consent (delete as appropriate) to my interview being recorded by audio

Or:

I consent / do not consent (delete as appropriate) to my interview being recorded in writing

I consent / do not consent (delete as appropriate) to having any of my responses in my interview attributed
to me in any reports arising from the research.

And/Or:

I consent / do not consent (delete as appropriate) to having any of my responses in my interview attributed
to the organisation /victim support service I represent in any reports arising from the research.

SIGNED.....DATE.....

Appendix 5B: VSP face-to-face interview questionnaire



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law



Question Guide for Professional Service Providers for Semi-Structured Interview

Note: These questions form a guide and prompt to the researcher. Participants may answer a number of questions in one response, and the researcher will adapt the interview questions posed as necessary.

1. Could you tell me what you understand the purpose of VIS to be in terms of Policy Rationale?
2. Could you tell me your understanding of why Victims of Crime (VOC) choose to present a VIS?
3. Could you tell me your understanding of why VOC choose not to present a VIS?
4. In your experience, what percentage of your clients eligible to make a VIS would actually make one?
5. In your experience how many clients read out their VIS?
6. In your experience how many clients require assistance to prepare their VIS?
7. What type of assistance do they usually require?
8. Do you provide templates of VIS/past VIS for your clients to look at?
9. In your experience, are there types of matters where victims are more likely to want to make a VIS?
10. In your experience, are there types of matters where victims are less likely to want to make a VIS?
11. In your experience are there any factors that can make it more difficult for victims when considering making a VIS (*societal, educational, cultural, previous experience of court, etc.*)?
12. Do you feel VIS have any effect on the type of penalty given and its severity?
13. In your experience are VIS always accepted by the court?
14. In your experience, what reasons do the courts give for rejecting a VIS?
15. In your experience are VIS often edited?
16. In your experience, who is responsible for editing the VIS?
17. In general how do your clients feel if their VIS is edited?

18. Are you aware of clients being cross-examined on their VIS?
19. Do you feel the opportunity to make a VIS is important to your clients?
20. What do you feel are the consequences of VIS for your clients?
21. In general how important to your clients is the reaction of the judge/magistrate to their VIS?
22. In general how important to your clients is the reaction of the court to their VIS?
23. In general how important to your clients is the reaction of the defendant to their VIS?
24. In your experience what gives your clients most satisfaction during the Sentencing process?
25. In your experience what are the most usual complaints made by VOC with regard to the Sentencing process?
26. In your experience how well do you feel your clients understand the purpose of the VIS?
27. In your experience how useful is the information given to VOC regarding VIS?
28. In your experience, who do you find your clients rely on most for information regarding their court matters?
29. In your experience, how well served are your clients by the opportunity to make a VIS?
30. In your experience how significant do you find the VIS to be as part of the total court process/experience for your clients?
31. Have you noticed any gender differences in your clients in terms of their experiences with VIS?
32. Have you noticed any cultural differences in your clients in terms of their experiences with VIS?
33. In your experience does a client's level of literacy have any significance regarding their experiences with VIS?
34. How well does the VIS process work, in your experience?
35. In your experience, do you have any recommendations towards any improvements that could be made to the VIS process for your clients?
36. In your experience do judges always treat VIS in the same way?
37. In your experience do Prosecuting solicitors always treat VIS in the same way?

In summing up include...

Thank you for your participation in the interview today.

Your insights have been most useful to the study.

Would you be interested in being kept informed of the study findings?