



Victims of Crime NT

Newsletter April 2009

Mission Statement:

To support survivors of crime whilst creating a broader awareness of the need for this community to assist victims to rebuild their lives

Victims of Crime NT is funded by the **Department of Justice**. As well as providing this funding the Department of Justice assists us with an operating premises and invaluable advice. This on-going support allows us to continue to provide a crucial support, information and referral service to crime victims in the Northern Territory. This agency extends its thanks to the Northern Territory Government and the Department of Justice.

Victims of Crime NT receives sponsorship from **Fort Knox Locksmiths**. Our partnership allows us to respond quickly to the needs of victims of break and enter and to ensure that their premises are professionally re-secured in a cost efficient manner. This agency extends its thanks to Troy and the staff of Fort Knox Locksmiths for their on-going support.

Managers Report



The dry is here.
The clouds are fading.
Dragonflies fill the air.
Doonas are making their way out of the hallway cupboard.

Further south the mornings are becoming brisk and the wind is picking up over the desert.

At VOCNT we are looking to the new season with positive anticipation and renewed energy. Numerous changes are afoot and many of these changes are set to benefit crime victims across the Territory.

Recent legislative changes have led to the introduction of a Crime Victims Register. Under this scheme people and the families of people who have been victims of serious personal crime will be given information about the post incarceration movements of the perpetrator. It will also allow them to have input into such forums as Parole Board hearings. For many families this information will ease their fears and allow them to plan for their own well-being.

At an operational level Corrections are working with this and other agencies to develop release

procedures which recognize the welfare issues of those crime victims and help to alleviate their anxieties.

Our partners the Department of Justice are developing a restorative conferencing programme which aims to provide victims with a voluntary post court avenue to participate in the justice process. The programme also provides opportunity, where appropriate, for offenders to restore all or part of the harm that they have caused. Such a programme, implemented with absolute care for the welfare of participating victims, has the potential to provide a great deal of healing.

At a national level Victim Support Australasia is working to unify and improve supports across services with such initiatives as research projects, networking forums and recently, a commitment to examine the issue of service provision to victims in remote communities.

Our best wishes to all crime survivors, our industry partners, the law enforcement sector and finally, but always importantly, our wonderful victim support volunteers.

Mike Campbell
Manager
VOCNT



From the Coordinator



Welcome to the April Quarterly edition of the Victims of Crime NT Newsletter! In this edition we look at some of the counselling services available to people who have experienced a crime as the primary victim as well as those affected by their experiences. We talk about crime prevention strategies as well.

Who is "Victims Of Crime NT"?

Victims frequently tell us that they were referred to us in their time of desperation by a friend who had heard of us. As such, please keep us in mind in case you or a friend needs help. VOCNT are here to make sure you are not alone in the system and we have great relationships with

other useful organisations as well as a pool of professionally trained and dedicated volunteers 24hrs per day!

If you have had your home broken into, VOCNT has been funded to re-secure your home any time of the day or night. Simply put, we can arrange (and pay up to \$250 for) our professional contractors to ring you to make an urgent visit to repair windows, doors or replace locks. You do not have to wait until office hours - just ring our freecall number 1800 672 242.

We are also keen to hear from anyone who would like to be trained to assist victims of crime and participate in our after hours roster. Please ring us and we can chat and send you an information package.

Chris Fearn

NT Charter for Victims of Crime.

The Charter sets out clear and concise guidelines and principles, outlining a way in which victims of crime are to be treated in the Territory's criminal justice system. It also lists support services available for victims and provides details about how to contact them.

- It applies to all agencies working with crime victims including WAS (Witness Assistance Service), VOCNT (Victims Of Crime NT), Ruby-Gaea Centre, SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre), NT Police, Government Departments – NT Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Dept. Of Justice (DOJ).
- It was developed with the Victim being the central focus and aims to ensure their rights are protected and interests served.

The focus of the NT Charter for Victims of Crime

is the Victim's circumstances, where rights are acknowledged, respected and protected while enabling the process of reparation. The principles recognise the Victim's potential vulnerability to the extent of when an application for bail is being decided the physical protection of the victim and their family is taken into account. They are advised to tell the Police if they have any concerns. As a victim of a crime you have the right to know how the police investigation is going and whether any charges have been laid. If so, what are the charges? If not, why not? Has the accused offender been bailed? What are those conditions? When does the matter go to court? Any plea bargains? What was the outcome of criminal proceedings if it has already been to court? If you would like more information an informative five page booklet is available at the above organisations or visit the DPP website below, or ring Victims Of Crime NT on 1800 672 242 24 hours.

Adapted from the DPP Website, Guidelines, Appendix E: http://www.dpp.nt.gov.au/justice/dpp/html/guidelines/appendix_e.shtml



Courtesy NT Police Fire and Emergency Website



In your home

- The Territory's climate means doors and windows are often left open – locked security doors and security screens on windows provide a barrier but allow air flow.
- Ask for identification of trades, sales people or strangers before opening your door.
- Do not keep a weapon in the home for protection. It could be used against you.
- Keep doors locked, even when at home or in the garden, but don't deadlock yourself inside in case you need to leave in a hurry.
- Install smoke alarms and check them regularly.
- Keep cash in the home to a minimum.
- Make sure you know the identity of your children's friends and acquaintances, or others, who visit your home.
- Don't leave car keys or other keys lying around or in obvious places.
- Don't leave keys hidden outside the house - leave spares with trusted friends or neighbours.
- Don't leave tools that could be used to break into your home, outside.
- Dogs are a deterrent to prowlers.

- If confronted in your home, stay calm, comply with the intruder's instructions, leave the house if possible and contact police.
- Display house numbers prominently to make your home easy to find in an emergency.

On the phone

- Use a male voice for answering machines.
- Never reveal that you will be going away or that you are not at home.
- Never provide your name or address.
- Hang up on nuisance callers.
- Key in emergency, family and friendly neighbour numbers.
- Install your phone, or an extension, in the bedroom.
- With mobile phones activate the PIN and security code – making it useless to others if stolen or lost.
- Don't leave your mobile phone unattended in public, particularly pubs, clubs or cafes.

A call for Volunteers 1800 672 242

Victims of Crime NT provides 24 hour support, counselling and information services to victims of crime in the Northern Territory. Currently we are looking for volunteer support workers in the Darwin and Alice Springs regions. Our volunteers are valued, fully trained and professionally supported. Be a part of our unique, dynamic and crucial team!

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

The Darwin Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) provides counselling to both adults and children who may have experienced any form of sexual assault. Sexual assault can range from verbal harassment, unwanted touching or exhibitionism, to a violent attack. If you have or suspect that you have been sexually assaulted please contact SARC as quickly as possible. **(08) 89 227 156**

Crimestoppers

If you have information which may assist police in the investigation of a crime, please call Crime Stoppers at any time or any day on. If matter is urgent or life threatening, call 000



1800 333 000.



Victims of Crime NT

Neighbourhood Watch



A new initiative of Neighbourhood Watch

Borne out of the Community Spirit that embodies Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) is a new service operated by NHW volunteers. Neighbourhood patrols will operate Friday – Sunday nights in the Northern suburbs of Anula, Marrara and Wulagi, and Thursday – Saturday nights in Alice Springs. They consist of two or more NHW volunteers who patrol a selected area in a vehicle, colloquially dubbed ‘Neighbourhood Watch on Wheels’.

The patrols operate as ‘eyes & ears only’ for Police. From the confines of the vehicle, they observe and report suspicious activity to the relevant authorities. Neighbourhood patrols are local active residents willing to take responsibility for their community. They are vetted by the Police, undergoing a criminal history check. They receive training and are also required to adhere to a strict Code of Conduct.

With the support of the Police, Council, business, the community and other stakeholders they will do more than a local citizen would do in the same circumstances while also being useful to Police, stakeholders, business and their local community.

Among their valuable duties they will not just be providing information to Police but they will also identify fresh graffiti to Councils and other private businesses; report broken street lights to Power and Water; report abandoned shopping trolleys and report on community safety issues to local NHW groups.



Centacare NT is a social services agency operating under the auspices of the **Catholic Diocese of Darwin** and is a member of **Catholic Social Services Australia**, a national body representing the Catholic Welfare Sector in Australia. They are located in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Melville, Bathurst Island and Port Keats. All staff members are qualified and experienced.

Centacare provides free counselling to victims of assault as well as other crimes that may leave victims distressed. People affected by a crime can experience a number of emotions including dissary, anger and depression. It is important to work through these common reactions and talking with a qualified professional as well as having support from family and friends can aid recovery.

Centacare’s website lists services available to the community and is worth a visit. Services include: gambling, drug and alcohol programmes, children’s contact centre, various employment programmes (including disability employment), family support programmes (including pregnancy help) and Youthlinx (ages 11 to 16).

There are three types of men in the world
Those that understand math and those that dont

In life I’ve learned two important things.
1/ Dont tell them everything you know.



Victims of Crime NT

Victims of Crime NT Inc. provides information, support and understanding to victims in order to help them feel safe and to assist in enabling them to try and regain control of their lives.

A group of concerned citizens who felt that offenders were getting more rights than victims of crime started Victims of Crime NT (formerly known as VOCAL) in 1995. As a community organization, the NT Government in 1996 gave us funding to operate an office manned by volunteers and the organisation became an incorporated body. It was then in February 2004 that the name change occurred and Victims of Crime NT Inc. was 'born'.

Since those early days the organization has become a 24-hour, 365 days a year service, and last year expanded yet again with a part-time coordinator being engaged in Alice Springs to develop a response service for the region.

Victims of Crime NT Values Statement

Respect: Respect for the inherent value of all humans in pain and in need to receive social justice as valued members of this community.

Integrity: To behave in a manner expected of us by the community.

Care: Acting with empathy and sympathy toward all victims of crime and others affected by crime by supporting all victims to regain where possible the strengths and resources they had before they were affected by a crime.

Commitment: A commitment to the provision of support and advocacy to all victims of crime and to our volunteer network.

Equality: Treating all victims of crime in accordance with their needs, irrespective of race, religion, gender.....

Professionalism: A commitment to life-long learning for our staff and volunteers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver the services and support required to meet the needs of all victims.