



PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

NSW Parliament • Parliament House, Macquarie Street Sydney 2000

Referred by: Australian Labor Party **Proposal No:** C1655
Date Referred: 13/03/2023 **Date Published:** 20/03/2023
Proposal Title: Support for victims of crime
Cluster: Stronger Communities

General Government Sector Impacts

	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	4 year Total \$'000
Expenses (ex. depreciation)	-	1,250	1,250	1,250	3,750
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-
Less: Offsets	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Net Operating Balance:	-	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,250)	(3,750)

Capital Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Offsets	-	-	-	-	-
Net Capital Expenditure:	-	-	-	-	-

Net Lending/(Borrowing):	-	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,250)	(3,750)
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Total State Sector Impacts

Net Lending/(Borrowing):	-	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,250)	(3,750)
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Notes and costing assumptions:

The policy proposes the NSW government will:

- fund Grace's Place with \$1.25 million each year;
- strengthen the support offered to victims of crime by appointing an Independent Victims Commissioner; and
- extend Victims Support Services to the families of victims killed by a road crime.

The policy specifies that the initiatives will start from 1 July 2023 and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and NSW Health will administer the initiatives.

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has costed the policy at \$3.75 million over the forward estimates.

Key Assumptions

Grace's Place

The PBO assumes funding for Grace's Place would be treated as a grant from the NSW Government. The funding of \$3.75 million to 2025-26, and the distribution of that funding across each year of the forward estimates, is as specified in the policy.

Notes and costing assumptions continued:

No escalation has been applied as the costing request specifies the set amounts to be provided each year.

The primary purpose of Grace's Place is to provide a unique place of healing and restoration for children who have lost a loved one from homicide.

It is currently being built in Doonside, on land made available by Blacktown City Council and Western Sydney Parklands Trust.

Independent Victims Commissioner

The policy specifies that the Independent Victims Commissioner and related extended counselling should be offset by existing resources available to DCJ and all other relevant departments.

The PBO notes that appointment of an Independent Victims Commission would be considered a Machinery of Government (MoG) change. The [NSW Machinery of Government Changes Guide](#) (NSW Government, November 2022) indicates on page 50 that "unless outlined as part of the MoG change, the implementation of changes will be cost neutral from a budget perspective." This means that unless a special provision is made, MoG changes generally do not affect the budget bottom line.

Extended counselling services

Victim Services offers 22 hours of free counselling which is available to family members of a homicide victim.

Under s 19 of the *Victims Rights and Support Act 2013*, a victim of road fatalities may not meet the criteria of victims eligible for the Victim Support Scheme. As a result, legislative changes may also be required to extend the counselling services to families of victim killed by a road crime. The PBO assumes that these changes would be made as required.

DCJ has advised that there will be costs related to extending the free counselling services to a greater number of victims. However, further planning and assessment will be needed to estimate these, which will be performed prior to implementing the policy.

The PBO considers that these administrative costs could be adequately covered by DCJ's recurrent budget (\$21.1 billion in 2022-23). DCJ advised that this can only be achieved by re-prioritising funding away from existing service delivery. The PBO notes that absorbing the costs of the policy could be difficult in practice and may affect the delivery of some services.