

**Office of the  
Director of Public Prosecutions**



# Information for victims of sexual offences

## Information for victims and their families

If you have been the victim of a sexual offence and you are going to give evidence in court, you may be feeling anxious about what you have to do. There are a number of special procedures that may apply in sexual offence cases to help you feel more secure while you give evidence.



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## Will I have privacy in the courtroom?

In most sexual offence cases, the courtroom will be closed while you give evidence at the committal or the trial. This means that members of the public, including the media, will not be allowed into the courtroom.

Generally, no-one is allowed to publish anything that could identify you or where you live or work. This means that the accused cannot be named if there is a possibility that doing so could identify you. It is possible for a court to allow some publication, but this is quite rare and would be unlikely to relate to details which would identify you.

Remember, even if the court is closed, the jury will be present at the trial.

## What if I'm frightened to give evidence in front of the accused?

As a victim of a sexual offence, special provisions may apply so that you do not have to give evidence in front of the accused. This can only happen if you are declared a special witness.

The prosecutor will need to make an application to the court to have you declared a special witness and it is up to the judge or magistrate to make the final decision.

If you are the victim of a domestic violence offence, you are automatically considered a special witness.

## Can I have someone in the courtroom to support me?

Yes. However, the prosecutor will still need to ask permission from the magistrate or judge for this person to be allowed into the courtroom.

You can have a friend, relative or someone from a support agency as your support person in court while you give evidence, provided they do not have to give evidence at the trial.

## What special provisions may apply if I am declared a special witness?

Although the court prefers that evidence be given in the presence of the accused, there are some special provisions that may be available to a special witness. For example, the court may allow:

- pre-recording your evidence before the trial or hearing date
- giving evidence from a remote witness room (or CCTV room) so you are unable to hear or see the accused
- putting up a screen in the courtroom so you are unable to see the accused

However, these special provisions are not always possible and the final decision will be made by the judge or magistrate. You should discuss with the prosecutor the possibility of pre-recording your evidence, giving evidence from a remote witness room, or having a screen if you feel it would help you.

## Will I be asked about my previous sexual experiences?

The defence lawyer is generally not allowed to question you about any previous sexual experience you have had with anyone including the accused.

However, the magistrate or judge can allow such questions if it can be shown that they are necessary for the defence case. Defence will need permission from the court to do this and the prosecutor will inform you if they have been granted permission.

## How many times will I have to say in court what happened to me?

It is difficult to say, as it will depend on the particular circumstances of the case.

However, if your matter is yet to proceed through committal, it is possible that the prosecutor and the defence lawyer at committal may ask you questions about your statement. You may have to give details about what happened.

If the matter then proceeds to trial, you will have to give detailed evidence and you will be questioned by the prosecutor and the defence lawyer.

## What support services are available?

There are sexual assault support services available around the State. Some of these organisations are listed in this brochure. Please contact your victim liaison officer if you would like the contact details for your local sexual assault support service.



## Support for victims of sexual offences

### Victim Assist Queensland

P: 1300 546 587

E: [victimassist@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:victimassist@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Statewide Sexual Assault Helpline

Freecall: 1800 010 120

### Victims Counselling and Support Services

P: 1300 139 703

### Living Well

P: (07) 3028 4648

### Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service

P: (07) 4775 7555

### Cairns Sexual Assault Service (CSAS)

P: (07) 4031 3590

### Gold Coast Centre against sexual violence

P: (07) 5591 1164

### Service Against Sexual Violence (Ipswich)

P: (07) 3816 3000

### Laurel Place (Maroochydore)

P: (07) 5443 4711

### Women's Health Queensland (Rockhampton)

P: 1800 017 382

### Kobi House (Toowoomba)

P: (07) 4616 6446

### WWILD Sexual Violence Prevention Association

For people with an intellectual or learning disability who have been victims of sexual violence or exploitation.

P: (07) 3262 9877

W: <http://wwild.org.au/>



## Further information

If you have any questions or need help, contact the ODPP in your region.

### Freecall

P: 1800 673 428

### Brisbane

P: (07) 3035 1122

[DPPVictimLiaisonSupervisor@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:DPPVictimLiaisonSupervisor@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Beenleigh

P: (07) 3081 2300

[ODPPVLOBeenleigh@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOBeenleigh@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Cairns

P: (07) 4038 5731

[ODPPVLOCairns@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOCairns@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Ipswich

P: (07) 3470 7419

[ODPPVLOIpswich@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOIpswich@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Maroochydore

P: (07) 5376 5200

[ODPPVLOMaroochy@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOMaroochy@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Rockhampton

P: (07) 4921 6227

[ODPPVLORockhampton@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLORockhampton@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Southport

P: (07) 5675 7000

[ODPPVLOSouthport@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOSouthport@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Toowoomba

P: (07) 4591 4758

[ODPPVLOToowoomba@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOToowoomba@justice.qld.gov.au)

### Townsville

P: (07) 4781 8934

[ODPPVLOTownsville@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:ODPPVLOTownsville@justice.qld.gov.au)

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