

## Question on Notice

No. 481

Asked on Thursday, 30 March 2006

Mr SEENEY asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mrs Lavarch) -

### QUESTION:

With reference to the *Criminal Offence Victims Act 1995* –

- (1) How many victims of crime have been paid out for the past three years and the year to date (reported separately)?
- (2) How long did it take for each of their claims to be processed and what was the cost of these claims for the past three years and the year to date (reported separately)?

### ANSWER:

The Beattie Government provided \$17.2 million to victims of crime under the criminal injury compensation process in 2004/05 and \$22.9 million in 2003/04. This is two and three times more respectively than the \$8.4 million paid in 1997/98 under the Borbidge Coalition Government.

On 30 March 2006 I announced that extra resources had been provided to process ex gratia payments for crime victims under the *Criminal Offence Victims Act 1995 (COVA)*.

This announcement included advice that five extra staff had been appointed, including four new staff since January 2006, and new procedures adopted to streamline the approvals process for criminal injury compensation claims.

As well as new staff and streamlined processes, further improvements are being made with respect to upgrading the computer system which tracks compensation claims.

The Opposition's six questions on notice, that they have lodged since 28 February 2006 are not assisting victims of crime to receive their claims more quickly. The Department needs to divert resources from processing claims to responding to these queries.

Since I made the announcement on 30 March 2006, I have approved payments totalling \$1,942,010 to 102 victims.

Victims of crime and/or families of victims of crime can be compensated in accordance with the *Criminal Offence Victims Act 1995 (COVA)*, under sections 32, 33, 34, 35 or 46.

The following information which responds to these questions is relevant as at 28 April 2006.

- (1) For the past three years (period 1/07/02 – 30/06/05) – 2,892.

For the year to date (period 1/07/05 – 28/4/06) – 376.

\* Statistics are not recorded for section 35 of COVA matters.

- (2) In respect of claims, to provide complete and accurate detail on the exact number of days for completion of applications over the periods requested would require a manual examination of all relevant files from 1 July 2002 to 28 April 2006 and reference to over 3,000 individual timeframes. However, the current criminal injury compensation database can extract the average number of days from the date when all relevant information is received to the date a decision is made.

The average number of days for the period 1/7/02 to 28/4/06 is 142.

The cost of these claims is as follows:

Year	Total amount paid
1/7/02 to 30/6/03	\$24,476,000 (including \$606,000 for section 35 matters)
1/7/03 to 30/6/04	\$23,360,000 (including \$441,000 for section 35 matters)
1/7/04 to 30/6/05	\$17,663,000 (including \$439,000 for section 35 matters)
1/7/05 to 28/4/06	\$9,082,696.60 (including \$236,000 for section 35 matters)