



Policy, Reform & Legislation
Department of Communities and Justice
Locked Bag 5000
Parramatta NSW 2124
Via email: policy@justice.nsw.gov.au

11 July 2022

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Statutory Review of Victims Rights and Support Act 2013

I write on behalf of Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA) to request consideration be given in the above Act for the inclusion of occupational therapists as a profession approved to provide counselling services and support under the Victims Support Scheme (VSS) to assist victims to recover from the psychological and emotional impacts of crime.

OTA is the professional association and peak representative body for occupational therapists in Australia. Occupational therapists are allied health professionals whose role is to enable their clients to engage in meaningful and productive activities (occupations).

Mental health service provision is a longstanding and core area of practice in occupational therapy. Occupational therapists work across the full spectrum of mental health services, providing services to people with relatively common conditions, such as anxiety and mood disorders, as well as those which require more targeted interventions, such as trauma-related disorders and complex presentations. Further, occupational therapy is one of the five key mental health professions recognised by the federal government under the Better Access to Mental Health scheme.

Given the unique capabilities of occupational therapists working in mental health and focus on 'occupations', their skills are of high value in providing services to eligible victims of crime to support them both in the time of initial crisis and in the longer term to facilitate engagement in meaningful 'occupations' (activities), minimise social isolation and enhance social connectedness.

The opportunity to discuss further the inclusion of occupational therapists to provide approved counselling services and support as part of the VSS would be welcomed.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature]

Karen Brown
NSW /ACT Divisional Manager
Occupational Therapy Australia