# Explanatory Notes – Victims of Crime Helpline

The Family Violence Database (FVDB) presents statistics about the characteristics of phone calls and referrals received by the Victims of Crime Helpline (Helpline) and recorded in their records management system. The following explanatory notes are designed to provide additional information about the data received from the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR) regarding the Helpline, including how it is processed and how to interpret the summary statistics.

Data source

The family violence measures produced from the FVDB are derived from administrative by-product information recorded by the Helpline, which is operated by the Community Operations and Victims Support Agency (COVSA) within the Department of Justice and Regulation.
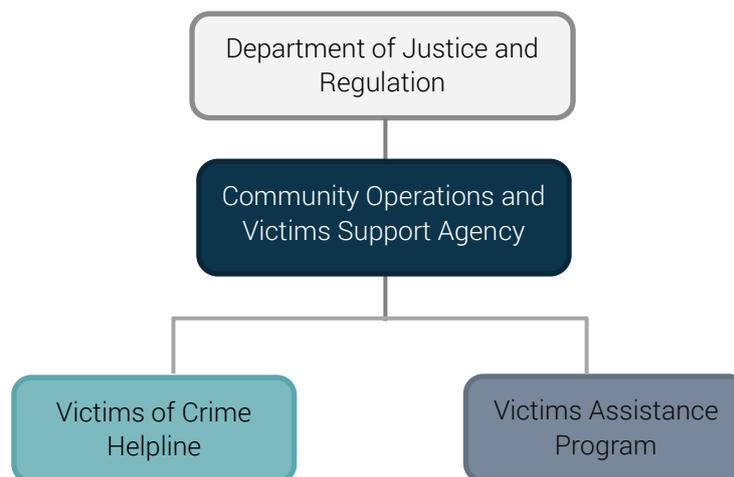
1.1 Organisational structure of services delivered to victims by COVSA[1]

As the Helpline data is stored in a live operational data system and is updated frequently, the data presented reflects only the information in the database at the date and time of extraction. This means that as additional iterations of the FVDB are released by the CSA, the data relating to previous periods may change as data is updated.

Scope and coverage

The Victims of Crime Helpline is a free telephone service that provides information, advice and referrals to help victims manage and recover from the effects of crime.

The service assists a broad range of people from the Victorian public, regardless of whether a crime has been reported to police. The scope and coverage of the data, however, is not representative of all individuals in Victoria who have sought assistance in response to family violence. A victim will only be included in this

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[1] Please note this does not represent the full suite of services delivered by COVSA.

dataset if they have sought assistance from the Helpline.

Male victims of family violence are referred to the Helpline by law enforcement and community agencies, while female victims are mostly referred to DHHS funded family violence services As a result, males are highly represented as victims of family violence in the Helpline data.

Counting methodology

Telephone calls and e-referrals to the Helpline

Each record in the Helpline data represents one phone call or e-referral received by a Helpline Victim Support Officer within the relevant reference period. Therefore, measures produced from this dataset are a count of the number of calls and e-referrals that were received by the Helpline and not a count of how many unique individuals sought assistance.

Due to system enhancements and changes in data recording procedures, and the introduction of a dedicated state wide family violence L17 e-referral pathway by police, the financial year 2013-14 shows a sharp increase in records. Prior to 2013-14, only cases being referred to the Victims Assistance Program were recorded in the data management system and the Helpline did not receive L17 e-referrals directly from police or state wide. As of financial year 2013-14, all incoming Helpline calls and e-referrals are recorded. Therefore, this increase does not reflect an increase in the number of calls received by the Helpline.

It should be noted that male victims of family violence are referred electronically (via the L17 portal) to the Victims of Crime Helpline by police, and women and children are mostly referred via the L17 pathway to the Department of Health and Human Service family violence services.

Financial year

Records are compiled on the basis of the date that an individual called for service. Therefore, financial year refers to the financial year in which a phone call was made to the Helpline.

Family violence indicator

In the Helpline's record management system, Victims Support Officers can flag a record with a family violence indicator to denote that a caller is telephoning regarding a family violence incident. This indicator is used to identify calls from victims of family violence.

Definitions

Victims Assistance Program:
The Victims Assistance Program provides practical support and a range of therapeutic interventions for eligible victims of crime via a flexible case management model. The VAP service model is funded by DJR to support victims of crime against the person. DJR procures these services on fixed term agreements with non-government agencies.