



The Law
Society
OF TASMANIA

Media Release

Victims Changes Unfair

30 July 2007

Law Society President Neil Readett, today expressed the Society's strong opposition to the Government's proposed changes to the Victims of Crime Compensation Scheme.

He described the proposal to remove or severely limit the entitlement of victims of criminal conduct to the modest compensation provided for under the Scheme as mean spirited and simply unfair.

He said the current Scheme went some way to spreading the significant financial impact of serious criminal conduct throughout the community rather than ensuring that it remained with the person unfortunate enough to be the actual victim of the offence.

'The current Scheme provides only modest compensation and is already subject to strict controls. All awards of compensation or costs have to be approved by a Commissioner.'

Where a victim is injured by a wealthy person, the law has long recognised an entitlement to recover compensation from the wrongdoer. But where the offender has no assets or income, the victim is simply unable to recover any compensation other than through the current Scheme.

'That someone assaulted by a rich person can recover compensation but a person assaulted by a person with out means cannot, is obviously unfair', he said.

It was particularly disappointing that the Government had taken the decision to make such wholesale and drastic changes to the scheme without consultation with the relevant stakeholders including the various victims' support groups, Mr Readett added.

Mr Readett called on the Government not to reduce the funding for the Scheme particularly 'when the expected savings of up to \$2.5 million are minor compared to a state budget of \$3.2 billion'.

He said the Society remained willing to discuss with the Government any perceived difficulties under the current scheme.

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