

Many victims of crime unhappy with criminal justice system

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A new study into victim's satisfaction with the criminal justice system has found many victims feel their involvement in the justice system adds to their feelings of loss and trauma.

The study is an Australian first with the University of Melbourne and Victim Support [Australia](#) joining forces to ask victims of crime their views and experiences with criminal justice. The researchers now want victims of crime across Australia to take part in phase two of the study via an [online survey](#) so they can get a broader cross-section of victims' experiences.

Dr Stuart Ross, from the University of Melbourne, said preliminary results showed many victims felt their interests and rights were either excluded or dealt with as secondary concerns in criminal justice processes. Victims were particularly concerned about lack of information about their case, being excluded from having a meaningful role, and not being consulted about decisions, especially about the charges laid against offenders.

"It's not all bad news for victims though - by far the most common factor mentioned by participants as a positive experience was dealing with victim support services. Most participants were also satisfied with their interactions with police," he said

Dr Ross said the aim of the research was to develop a blueprint to help reform the treatment of victims. "We want to understand what victims

want and how they experience their interactions as they make their way through the [criminal justice](#) system," he said.

A total of 107 people from South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT took part in the first phase of the study. Just over 60 per cent had experienced crime directly and the remainder responded in relation to a crime that had happened to a family member or friend.

Robyn Holder from Victim Support Australia said the research was vital to better understand what victims wanted from the [criminal justice system](#) and why so often they felt those needs weren't met.

"People who are [victims](#) of crime are very diverse with many different views and experiences – however there are a lot of ill-founded assumptions about them that can affect legal and service policy developments," she said.

The second phase of the study has just begun and researchers are keen to hear from anyone over 18 who has been a victim of [crime](#). Interviews are conducted online and take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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