

# Child and Youth Witness Service



## What is the Child and Youth Witness Service?

The Child and Youth Witness Service (CYWS) is part of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS).

We support children and young people who may be required to give evidence in a criminal proceeding in Victoria.

### How does the CYWS support children and young people?

Our support includes:

- » Familiarising children and young people with the criminal justice process, including telling them about the people involved and what happens at court
- » Preparing children and young people for the role of being a witness by explaining what to expect while giving evidence and possible outcomes
- » Supporting them when they give evidence
- » Answering their questions about the criminal justice process or directing them to someone who can
- » Speaking with the police or prosecution, attending meetings with young people or on their behalf and assisting them to understand the discussion
- » Providing witnesses and their families with updates
- » Assessing children and young people's needs and identifying strategies to best support them
- » Referring them to counselling or other support services if they need them.

### Who can be referred to the CYWS?

Any person under 18 years of age when charges are laid, who may be a witness in a criminal matter anywhere in Victoria, can be referred to the CYWS. CYWS support is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time.

### When should a child or young person be referred?

It is important that a child or young person is referred to the CYWS as soon as possible after charges have been laid, even if a decision has not been made about them needing to give evidence.

An early referral provides an opportunity for the CYWS to address initial concerns and to provide timely information and support.

### How to make a referral

Anyone can refer a child or young person to the CYWS.

Victoria Police use the VP 1394 referral form, and the Office of Public Prosecutions has its own referral form.

A referral form for children and young people, families and other community agencies is available on our website.



## What information should be provided at the time of referral?

The following details should be provided on referral:

- » Child or young person's name, date of birth, gender, and any individual needs
- » Details of the child or young person's current caregivers
- » Contact phone numbers for the child and caregiver
- » Confirmation of consent for the referral from the child or young person's parent or other legal guardian
- » Name of accused, type of charges, and next court hearing date and location of the court.

## What happens after referral is made?

After a child or young person has been referred to the CYWS:

- » the referrer will be contacted to confirm information
- » the parent/ carer will then be contacted to arrange an appointment to meet with a CYWS practitioner.


## Where is the CYWS?


The CYWS provides support services across Victoria.

Garragarrak Victim and Witness Support Centre is located in the Melbourne CBD.

## How can I contact the CYWS?

You can contact the CYWS via:

 **Email:** [ChildandYouthWitnessService@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:ChildandYouthWitnessService@justice.vic.gov.au)

 **Phone number:** 1300 790 540  
(9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

 **Website:** Child and Youth Witness Service  
[victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au](http://victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au)



The Department of Justice and Community Safety is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. For more information visit [www.justice.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/child-safe-policy-interacting-with-children](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/child-safe-policy-interacting-with-children)

'We value diversity, inclusion and social justice. We are committed to treating people of all cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, bodily diversities, sexual orientations, ages, abilities, and religions with dignity and respect.'

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respects to them, their culture and their Elders, past and present.