

Authorised Report Writers (ARW): A guide for applicants



**Victims
Services**
Justice & Attorney General

An ARW is an independent clinical psychologist or psychiatrist who prepares an objective medico-legal report when you are claiming compensation for a psychological or psychiatric disorder. The role of the ARW is to diagnose any psychological or psychiatric injury and assess any disability resulting from the act of violence

The compensation assessor determines, with the assistance of the ARW report, whether the injury you have claimed is established.

Can I change my allocated ARW?

If you have not seen the ARW and wish to change to a different one, you need to let us know the reasons why and we will allocate a new ARW.

How long should it take to get an appointment once I have approval?

The ARW should provide you with a suitable time for an appointment within two (2) months of you contacting them.

When should I make the appointment?

You may make the appointment at any time after receipt of the approval letter.

However, the Tribunal requires an interval of at least six months after the act of violence for an adequate assessment of a chronic psychological or psychiatric disorder. An ARW appointment should be at least six months after the incident(s). The severity and duration of any psychological or psychiatric injury and the outcomes of any counselling or treatment that you may be receiving may become clearer after this period of time.

Can I claim for the cost of a missed appointment?

We will not pay for the cost of missed appointments. If you miss an appointment or know you are going to miss an appointment you should contact the ARW and discuss the matter with them.

When you make your appointment, the ARW may discuss with you any policies they have in relation to missed appointments.

What if I need an interpreter?

Victims Services can arrange and pay for an interpreter to attend your ARW assessment. When you make an appointment please let the ARW know if you need an interpreter and the ARW will contact Victims Services to make the arrangements.

The Appointment

What should I bring to the appointment with the ARW?

It would help if you bring our approval letter, a copy of your police statement, and any other relevant documentation that you or the ARW think necessary.

In addition evidence of any impact on your day to day activities arising from your claim should be provided. For example:

- ♦ Reports from your school, TAFE or university may show a fall in grades, absences or withdrawal from study.
- ♦ A letter from your employer, or reports from a workplace rehabilitation provider may help to show how your work has been affected.
- ♦ Reports from your counsellor, doctor or treating practitioner may show the course of any symptoms and treatment you have received.
- ♦ Statutory declarations from your family or friends that can indicate the effects of the act of violence on your social life and close personal relationships.

You can also provide the names and contact details of people who would be willing to talk to the ARW and discuss the effects that the act of violence has had on your life.

It may assist your claim if you also send in to the Tribunal copies of any additional documents shown or given to the ARW.

Costs

Who will pay for the ARW report?

The cost of the ARW report is \$550 (plus GST where applicable). We will pay the ARW directly for an approved report.

The cost of the report is deducted from the total allowance for disbursements when your claim is finalised. The maximum allowed for disbursements is \$1,100 (plus GST where applicable).

What are disbursements?

Disbursements are reasonable amounts you have had to pay in connection with lodging your application. They include the cost of the ARW report and the cost of obtaining any medical reports or records you provide.

Disbursements will be considered at the time your application is finalised.

Can I claim for the costs associated with the ARW report, such as travelling?

Ideally you should not have to travel a great distance to your ARW. You can make a claim for reasonable costs of travelling to the ARW as part of your disbursements.

You should provide documentation to support any costs you have incurred, for example receipts, or bus or train tickets. The compensation assessor will consider payment of these when your application for compensation is finalised.

The ARW Report

How long does it take to get the report once I have seen the ARW?

The ARW should provide the report within ten (10) working days of your last appointment.

Who receives a copy of the ARW report?

The ARW will give a copy of the report to us and to your solicitor, if you have one. If you are not legally represented, the ARW will give you a copy of the report.

What can I do if I am not happy with my ARW report?

If you have any general concerns, regarding the ARW or their report you may discuss them with your solicitor, the ARW or us. You may write to us explaining why you are unhappy with the report and you can write to us if you wish to correct any factual errors such as dates or background information.

Can I get a second ARW report?

The legislation only provides for one ARW report to be prepared and the Chairperson has issued a guideline which states that "it is appropriate that the expenses of ONE authorised report only should be allowed."

The compensation assessor may consider any evidence you provide when your claim for victims compensation is being determined. However, the compensation assessor is not required to have regard to any report other than the approved ARW report to assess your claim for the injury of 'psychological or psychiatric disorder'.

What if I have a complaint?

If you have a specific complaint about an ARW, you, or your solicitor, should write to the Director of Victims Services. The Director will investigate your complaint and this may involve writing to the ARW for a response. You will be informed of the outcome of your complaint.

Further information

Please contact Victims Services on:

Phone: (02) 8688 5511
1800 069 054 (*Freecall - except from mobiles*)

TTY: (02) 8688 5575 (*for hearing impaired*)

Victims Support Line:
(02) 8688 5400
1800 633 063 (*Freecall - except from mobiles*)

Address: Level 1, 160 Marsden Street Parramatta

Post: Locked Bag 5118, Parramatta NSW 2124

DX: 8232 Parramatta

Email: vct@agd.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/vs