



Guide to writing an impact statement

in civil law matters

AN IMPACT STATEMENT IS ...

a written or oral statement that allows you to tell a commission, court or other parties how an incident has affected you.

WHEN TO WRITE AN IMPACT STATEMENT

You might be asked to provide an impact statement during mediation, hearing or conference, particularly in cases involving discrimination and sexual harassment.

You might also be asked to provide this information as your instructions to a lawyer in preparation for a case, or to help them determine what compensation you might be able to receive.

In employment law or workplace matters, you might have an opportunity to read your impact statement at a conciliation conference.

PURPOSE OF AN IMPACT STATEMENT

An impact statement is your chance to explain how an event (or series of events) has affected you.

It helps decision makers understand the emotional, psychological and financial impact on your life.

This guide is focused on civil law cases, such as workplace discrimination claims.

There are [specific resources for 'Victim Impact Statements'](#) used in criminal proceedings that are particular to that context.

NOTICING THE IMPACT OF WRITING AN IMPACT STATEMENT

Writing down the impact that an event has had on you can be therapeutic and it can also be challenging.

If you are finding this process difficult, we recommend working with someone to help and support you. It is very common to want and need support, whether it is by typing or writing down as you speak, or by taking your dot points and helping to turn them into sentences with you. Sometimes just having someone sit with you can help.

You could give this document to your support person as a guide to how to help you.

If your legal advisor or case worker has asked you to write an impact statement, make sure you know when you need to have it ready, so that you are not rushing it.

If you find the process too distressing, remember even just one paragraph will be beneficial.

REFLECTING ON YOUR UNDERLYING NEEDS OR INTERESTS

It is common for people to fixate on an outcome that they want. However, this can be problematic, primarily as you have no control over the precise outcome.



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Instead, try to reflect on your underlying needs and interests for undertaking this process. What else is important beyond things like compensation or an apology?

Although financial compensation, closure, systemic change or a sense of justice may be motivating factors for you, it is helpful to remember that through sharing your impact statement, your voice is heard by those who may have contributed to the harm.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR IMPACT STATEMENT

Introduction

Start by introducing yourself and your role in the case.

Clearly state that the purpose of your impact statement is to describe the impact of the events on your life.

Summary of Events

Overview—provide a concise overview of the events leading to the civil action.

Details—include specific details like dates, locations and individuals involved, keeping the focus on factual accuracy.

Detailed Impact on Your Life

Emotional and Psychological Impact—describe your emotional and psychological state or overall mood before and after the events.

Mention any feelings of anxiety, depression, stress or other emotional difficulties caused by the events.

Explain if you have had to seek counselling or therapy as a result.

Explain if there has been a change (compared with before the incident) in difficulty sleeping,

ongoing fear, reduced sense of safety or reduced sense of self-worth.

Has your motivation been affected?

Physical impact

If the events caused physical harm or exacerbated existing conditions, describe these impacts.

Include any ongoing treatment or limitations resulting from physical injuries.

Has your sleep been affected?

Has your day-to-day functional ability been affected?

Financial impact

Detail financial losses such as lost wages, medical expenses or costs associated with recovery.

Include any future financial implications, like ongoing therapy or reduced earning capacity.

Social impact

Explain how the events have affected your relationships with family, friends or colleagues.

Mention any changes in your ability to participate in social or community activities.

Ongoing and Future Impact

Long-term effects—discuss any long-term impacts such as ongoing emotional distress, physical limitations or financial strain.

Future concerns—mention any concerns you have about the future such as the need for continued treatment or challenges in returning to normal life.

Conclusion

Summarise the key points of your statement.

You may wish to include something general about your overarching interests for example



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hopes for closure, recognition of what is happening or understanding to help you move forward.

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR IMPACT STATEMENT

Getting started

It can be hard to get started, so some people like to take some voice notes or ask someone to write down their thoughts.

Write a first draft, and then take time to edit your draft

There can be a therapeutic benefit in writing down all your thoughts and feelings that you might want to express. When it comes to an impact statement, you might want to do that first, and then think about the bits that are appropriate to include in the final draft.

Be honest and specific

Provide an accurate account of how the events have affected you. Avoid generalisations.

Keep it clear

Use straightforward language and avoid unnecessary details.

Be structured

Use clear headings and bullet points to organise your statement.

Respectful tone

Maintain a respectful tone throughout, focusing on your experience rather than assigning blame.

Seek support

Consider discussing your statement with a trusted person, a social worker or legal advisor for feedback.

Use your own words.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If you need help writing your impact statement, you can refer to the sample impact statement below, or consider reaching out to a legal professional or a support organisation.

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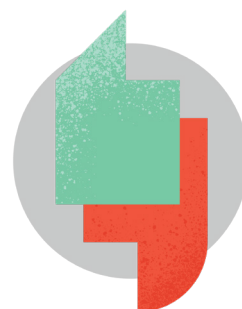
Turbot Place
Level 23, 179 Turbot Street

P (07) 3214 6333

F (07) 3846 7483

W caxton.org.au

This information is current at February 2025.



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SAMPLE IMPACT STATEMENT

Introduction

My name is [name]. I am writing this statement to describe the impact the workplace discrimination has had on my life.

Events

On [date], I was subjected to repeated hurtful, discriminatory comments by my supervisor. This behaviour led me to feel unsafe, disrespected and nervous in the workplace on a daily basis. I was constantly worried about the unwelcome comments and how to deal with it. I was so afraid to speak up in fear of being blamed or losing my job. I have always felt competent in my job and capable of the tasks expected of me. This experience has made it difficult for me to concentrate at work and to complete tasks without feeling anxious about scrutiny. I am constantly on edge and feel I am being watched.

Emotional impact

The stress caused by this situation has led to me developing severe anxiety. My personal relationships have been affected. Previously, I loved seeing friends, going to gatherings and seeing family, but now I struggle to attend anything. I feel embarrassed to see friends and family because I do not want them to know what is happening. This has impacted my confidence, not just in a workplace setting, but in many areas of my life. I have difficulty sleeping, often having nightmares or flashbacks of the incidents. I am constantly overwhelmed, angry, anxious, stressed and feel that my personal and professional character has been misrepresented. This experience has destroyed my identity, how I see myself and how I perceive others to see me.

Financial impact

After the incident, I was encouraged by my GP and psychologist to take some time off work to recover from the stress. I quickly ran out of money and had to take unpaid leave. As a result, I lost \$[amount]. My medical appointments have really added up too. I have spent about \$[amount] on various appointments to support my recovery. I have been encouraged to seek therapy and social supports to help with recovery, but I cannot afford them.

Future Impact

I am regularly seeing a therapist and have been since the incidents occurred. I have been told that I will likely need to continue to do so for some time. This is expensive and it takes a lot of time and energy. I am constantly having to relive the experience and often feel drained and angry I am left to pick up the pieces. I am concerned about whether I can return to work. I worked hard to get into the position I was in. I never imagined I could ever experience this kind of treatment in a professional setting. I have lost trust in future employment environments.

Conclusion

Overall, I feel that this incident impacted every aspect of my life. My hope for going through this process is to be able to be heard and understood, so that I can move forward with my life.