

Legislative changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

Richard Faulks, Canberra



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The ACT Government introduced a Bill into the Legislative Assembly which would significantly reduce the benefits available to victims of crime under the scheme.

The Bill effectively abolished pain and suffering payments supposedly to divert funds into creating a victim's assistance scheme to provide counselling and other support to victims. There was no consultation about the Bill with any members of the legal profession. Further, the Bill had

a retrospective provision arbitrarily back-dating the changes to 23rd June 1998 when a budget announcement was made.

Canberra members of APLA have joined forces with the Law Society to lobby strongly against the changes through the media and by approaching the other members of the Legislative Assembly. As a result of those efforts, and despite significant criticism of the profession by the Attorney-General, the Bill has

been referred to a committee for further consideration. A meeting is to be convened in mid-January to develop appropriate strategies for making representations and providing other information to the committee. ■

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