ACTCS

Victim Involvement with Transitional Release Decisions

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The Sentence Planning Group

The Sentence Planning Group is responsible for assessing and determining a prisoner"s security classification. It also approves and reviews a prisoner"s rehabilitation plan and possible participation in the Alexander Maconochie Centre transitional release program.

Victims who have been placed on the ACT Victims Register are invited to make a submission to the Sentence Planning Group when an offender is being considered for a transitional release security classification and placement in the transitional release community.

Transitional release

At some point, the majority of prisoners will be released from custody into the community. Transitional release aims to provide prisoners approaching the end of their non-parole period or expiry of their total sentence with the skills and information necessary to facilitate their reintegration into the community.

Placement in the transitional release community at the Alexander Maconochie Centre gives prisoners a chance to experience a gradual return to community life. Offenders are able to participate in unsupervised external leave programs, such as work release or education leave, and access personal support services during their time in the transitional release community.

To be considered for placement in the transitional release community, an offender must submit an application to the Sentence Planning Group. After considering a range of issues, including potential risks to the community, the Sentence Planning Group must then decide whether the offender is suitable for transitional release.

Victims that have requested placement on the ACT Victims Register will be invited to make a submission to the Sentence Planning Group about an offender"s possible placement in the transitional release community and participation in unsupervised external leave programs.

What is a submission?

A submission is a statement written by or on behalf of a victim. Its purpose is to inform the Sentence

Planning Group of the likely effect the offender"s possible unescorted leave in the community may have on the victim or their family. The submission also provides the victim with an opportunity to request that certain conditions be placed on any unsupervised external leave granted to the offender.

It is important to understand that a victim submission forms one part of the Sentence Planning Group"s deliberations. A broad range of information, including reports on the offender"s behaviour and progress in custody, will be considered by the Sentence Planning Group when deciding the appropriateness of an offender"s placement in the transitional release community. The Sentence Planning Group cannot change the sentence imposed by a court, nor can it refuse unsupervised external leave because there is a perception that the sentence imposed was lenient. Decisions regarding an offender"s placement in the transitional release community will be based on a balanced assessment of the best interests of the offender and the risk the offender may pose to the safety and well-being of victims and the broader community.

Providing a victim submission to the Sentence Planning Group is voluntary.

Who can make a submission?

The opportunity to make a submission regarding an offender"s possible placement in the transitional release community and/or participation in unsupervised external leave is limited to victims that have requested placement on the ACT Victims Register.

Should it be the case that you are not eligible to register as a victim but would like the opportunity to express your concerns regarding an offender"s possible presence in the community, please contact the Victim Liaison Officer of ACT Corrective Services.

What should I write about in my submission?

A submission should provide the Sentence Planning Group with information about how you feel about an offender"s proposed presence in the community. As there are no rules as to what information can, or cannot, be included in a submission, the following is provided as a guide:

- The likely effect the granting of unescorted leave may have on you or your family;

- Any concerns you or your family may have about the need to be protected from violence or harassment should the offender be granted unsupervised external leave;

- Any matters that you feel should be brought to the Sentence Planning Group"s attention (such as adverse contact you may have had with the offender since the commission of the offence); and
- In the event that the Sentence Planning Group decides to place the offender in the transitional release community, any conditions you would like placed on the offender"s unsupervised external leave.

Will the offender have access to my submission?

The Sentence Planning Group will not allow the offender, or any other person, to see a victim submission. Information about a victim"s registration and/or decision to make a submission to the Sentence Planning Group will not be disclosed to an offender.

Can I attend the Sentence Planning Group"s meeting and provide an oral submission?

Proceedings before the Sentence Planning Group are closed to the public. Attendance at Sentence Planning Group meetings is strictly limited to a small number of authorised correctional staff, professionals and vocational, health and community representatives.

There is no provision for victims to provide an oral submission to the Sentence Planning Group.

Who can I contact for assistance or further information?

Should you require further information and/or assistance in the preparation of a written submission, please contact the Victim Liaison Officer of ACT Corrective Services on:

Telephone: (02) 6207 0836
Facsimile: (02) 6207 5246
Email: victims.register@act.gov.au
Postal Address: GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601

It is important to note that, although located within ACT Corrective Services, the Victim Liaison Officer does not deal or interact with offenders.