

Foreword

This report breaks new ground in that it brings together what is currently known about crime victimisation in Australia. Victims are often the forgotten component in the analysis of crime. Reporting the impact of victimisation, responses to victims of crime, and the development and description of victims services in Australia, this report lays the basis for policy opportunities.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has been in the forefront of work on victims of crime and has conducted pioneering research on victim compensation and restitution. Our focus on violence against women, including sexual assault and intimate partner violence, helped place these issues on the public agenda. The first Australian research on national surveys of crime victims was published by AIC staff.

In 1982, the AIC and the Government of South Australia co-convened the first National Symposium on Victimology held in Australia. Two years later, AIC researchers prepared discussion papers on victims of crime for the Australian Delegation to the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. It was at this Congress that Australia's contribution to victimology received international recognition. Later, it helped form the basis for the recognition of crime victims by the UN General Assembly.

Ten years ago, the National Committee on Violence, for which AIC staff provided research support, continued to advance the interests of crime victims in its landmark report *Violence: Directions for Australia*. In 1994, the AIC co-produced the 8th International Symposium on Victimology in Adelaide, and published the symposium's proceedings.

The present publication continues the AIC's long record of contributions to research and services for victims of crime in Australia. It is our most comprehensive national overview to date of knowledge on, and policy for, victims of crime. It is fitting that we dedicate this volume to a person who has made a lasting contribution to Australian victimology—Ray Whitrod.

Adam Graycar
Director, Australian Institute of Criminology
August 1999