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| **Graphics** | **Script** |
| Acknowledgement | The following video has been filmed on Kaurna Land. We acknowledge this is the traditional country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay respect to Elders past and present. We recognise their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and respect that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today. |
| Words on screen | Recognising the rights of victims |
| Words on screen | Right to information **Victim Contact OfficersSouth Australia Police** |
| Filmed interview | My name’s Sergeant Victoria Lewis and I’m currently in a Victims of Crime Coordinator role, trialling that since the first of June, and I’m from SAPOL. My name’s Debbie Gibson, I’m a Constable, but I’m a Victim Contact Officer at Major Crime Investigation Branch and I’ve been there since 2007.  |
| Words on screen | **Tell us about what you do** |
| Debbie Gibson | My role is to look after the victims. Being at Major Crime, we only deal with homicides, murders, manslaughters. In the other areas within SAPOL in the districts we have Victim Contact Officers as well – their role is slightly different to mine, but the role for all of us is to look after the victims and to provide whatever help they need to get them through what they’ve gone through. |
| Words on screen | **What is a Victim Contact Officer?** |
| Debbie Gibson | Victim Contact Officers were first created in 1992, so it’s 29 years now that we’ve had victim contact officers and obviously the numbers have grown. At first it was just in a few areas and then it went to the country locations, so it is something that’s expanding all the time.  |
| Vicky Lewis | There’s at least two VCOs in each district – northern, southern, western and eastern - and we have a victim contact officer in every region.  |
| Words on screen | **Tell us about your role as Victim of Crime Coordinator**  |
| Vicky Lewis | This particular role that we’ve put together is to support the victim contact officers out there with training, training holistically across the organisation - that’s going to be one of the goals that we’re looking at achieving - and really addressing and reinforcing those victims’ rights through the investigation process.  |
| Words on screen | **Why are VCO’s important for victims?**  |
| Debbie Gibson | The victim contact officer can be the liaison between the detective and the victim. It frees the detectives up to actually have the time to investigate the cases. Detectives are humans as well, and they actually are affected by a lot of the crimes, but they have to sort of get the emotion out of it to be able to investigate it properly and to deal with the defendant and lock them up and hear what’s happened.  |
| Words on screen | **When do you usually meet victims?** |
| Debbie Gibson | In my role at Major Crime, I get involved with the families as soon as they have been declared not suspects in the investigation. I explain to them my role, and I tell them that I’m a police officer but not a detective, and that they’ve got me realistically from the very beginning to the very end of any court proceeding, and further on if that’s what they need. If it’s very early in the investigation – which it usually is – I’ll probably contact them 3 or 4 or 5 times during that day. You get to know the families very quickly, I’ll often get them to go on speakerphone so I can speak to the whole family. I get a family tree fairly early as it’s important we know – especially with split families, it’s very important we know and include everyone.I really just do whatever I can to make it easier for them.  |
| Words on screen | **What do victims need when they come to you?** |
| Debbie Gibson  | They’re looking for everything and every case is different. Pre-COVID they probably wanted a hug, to be honest. They really just want to know that you’re a human and that you’re there for them. That you’re going to do what you say you’re going to do – which in our case we don’t stick to the normal hours of a 9-5 role because they’re not sleeping, it doesn’t work like that. So you’re really just to reassure them that you’re there for them and they can ask whatever they’d like to. I’ll be honest and say if I can answer I will, if I can’t, I’ll find out and if I can’t tell you for investigational reasons, I’ll tell let you know that as well.  |
| Words on screen | **Why is this helpful for victims?** |
| Vicky Lewis | I think the hardest part for victims, particularly if you’ve never encountered the criminal justice system before, and the expectation of police is not really what you see on television. Forensics, processing of evidence does not happen overnight.  |
| Debbie Gibson | They have an idea of court that’s very different from what our system is, so I tell them it’s not like Judge Judy. We’re not going to solve in an hour with ads and sometimes fast-forward to three years later.  |
| Vicky Lewis | If victims are informed and they understand and we communicate, then they’re ultimately only going to feel safer with the process and less frustrated.  |
| Words on screen | **What’s your advice to victims of crime?** |
|  | Probably the most important thing is be kind to yourself. Realise that we’re not meant to or expect to go through what they’re going through and that there is no normal to it. And also to take all the help that’s being offered. I think that all the services that are available for victims actually really work well together. They are out there for victims so if a victim ever feels that they’re not getting help, all they need to do is ask. And they can ask any one of the agencies and they’ll be referred to the right area.  |
| Closing card  | **Have you been the victim of a crime?****You have rights** |
|  | **Find out more at** **Victims of Crime SA**[**www.sa.gov.au**](http://www.sa.gov.au)  |