



Office of the
Public Advocate

MEDIA RELEASE

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LAUNCH OF Independent Third Person Program DVD

The Acting Public Advocate today launched a new DVD explaining the benefits to police of utilising the Independent Third Person Program.

The program provides volunteers with the Office of the Public Advocate who attend police interviews for alleged offenders, victims or witnesses with a cognitive disability or a mental illness.

The DVD was funded by a general grant from the Victoria Law Foundation.

Launching the DVD, Acting Public Advocate, Michael Wells, said that OPA encouraged more police to utilise the program and that the DVD would be used in both education at the Police Academy and in the training of new volunteers.

“Thanks to the Victoria Law Foundation, we have a new DVD explaining the benefits to police members of using ITPs,” Mr Wells said.

“ITPs can facilitate communication between police and alleged offenders, victims or witnesses who may have a cognitive disability or a mental illness.

“They assist the person to understand their rights and support them through the often-stressful process of being interviewed by the police. They are independent and support people through the interview process.”

Police are required to utilise ITPs under the Victoria Police Manual. The benefits to police include more credible evidence and hence a higher chance of success in court.

“But ultimately, we all want fairness and justice and this is what the ITP is able to enhance in the criminal justice process,” Mr Wells said.

Last financial year, OPA supported 178 ITPs. They attended 1425 police interviews throughout the state.

Copies of the 20-minute DVD will be made available to every police station in the State, including every Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (SOCA) Unit.

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