

# Justice Support Service: Quick Reference Guide

This resource is intended to assist in navigating the multiple services and programs available in Victoria when supporting a Person with Disability who is in contact with the Criminal Justice System.

## Legal Services:

- **Disability Discrimination Legal Service** - <http://www.ddls.org.au/>
- **The Homeless Persons' Legal Service** - specialist legal service that provides free legal assistance and advocacy for people who are homeless and charged with minor criminal offences - <https://justiceconnect.org.au/about/>
- **Mental Health Legal Centre** - The Mental Health Legal Centre provides a free and confidential legal service to anyone who has experienced mental illness in Victoria where their legal problem relates to their mental illness. <https://mhlc.org.au/>
- **Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)** - VLA provide legal advice and representation at court. There are VLA Duty Lawyers available at many courts and tribunals across Victoria. Legal aid is prioritised for people who have an intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or mental illness. VLA Assistance can be provided at the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), Administrative Assistance Tribunal (AAT), Mental Health Tribunal, Magistrates Court, Family Court and Children's Court - <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/>
- **Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)** - VALS plays an important role in providing referrals, advice/information, duty work or case work assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the State of Victoria. Solicitors at VALS specialise in one of three areas of law, being Criminal Law, Family Law and Civil Law - <https://www.vals.org.au/>
- **Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service** - Villamanta's mission is to protect and advance the rights of Victorians with a disability by advising, informing and representing them and acting as an advocate on disability related legal and justice issues - <http://www.villamanta.org.au/>

## Rights and Advocacy Support:

- **Office of the Public Advocate** - The Office of Public Advocate (OPA) works to safeguard the rights and interests of people with disabilities. They provide an advice service for people with disability, their families, carers and friends. <https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/>

- **Public Advocate Independent Third Persons program** – An Independent Third Person (ITP) is available for a suspect, victim or witness of crime who has a cognitive impairment during police interview. ITPs are volunteers trained by the Office of the Public Advocate who support people with cognitive disability or mental illness. Police are responsible for arranging an ITP to be present.  
<https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/volunteering/independent-third-persons>

### Court Support Services:

- **Assessment and Referral Court List, Melbourne Magistrates' Court (VIC)** - The Assessment and Referral Court List is a specialist court list designed to meet the needs of accused persons who have a mental illness and/or a cognitive impairment and aims to help people address underlying factors that contribute to their offending behaviours. A referral must be made before a matter can be heard in the ARC. An assessment by an ARC case manager is also required to ensure the person meets the eligibility criteria.  
<https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/about-us/assessment-and-referral-court-arc>
- **Court Integrated Services Program (CISP)** - The Court Integrated Services Program aims to provide the person with disability appearing before court with a variety of services and supports such as social welfare, mental health, housing services and drug treatment.  
<https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/find-support/bail-support-cisp>
- **Drug Court** - post sentence program focusing on the rehabilitation and treatment of offenders with a drug and/or alcohol dependency.  
[https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/about\\_us/drug-court](https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/about_us/drug-court)
- **Mental Health Court Liaison Service** - The Mental health Court Liaison Service is a court-based assessment and advice service that can provide short term assistance before sentencing to people with social and health needs, case management support to assist with causes of offending behaviour and priority access to treatment and community supports.  
[https://www.forensicare.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Forensicare-MHCLS-6pp-DL\\_v6-Final-Spread.pdf](https://www.forensicare.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Forensicare-MHCLS-6pp-DL_v6-Final-Spread.pdf)
- **Victoria Legal Aid** - a free guide for people going to Magistrates Court for less serious criminal offences.  
<https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/free-publications-and-resources/your-day-in-court>

### Specialist Justice Support Services:

- **Corrections Victoria** - After prison support for offenders to access support services and programs. Support programs can focus on access to a number of different areas such as housing, legal services, employment, drug and alcohol programs, parenting skills training and domestic violence safety plans. Some offenders are eligible to participate in the ReConnect or ReStart programs which are generally commenced in prison and offers continued support after release. For more information about pre and post-release support programs refer to [Transitional programs](#) or <https://www.corrections.vic.gov.au/release/after-prison-support>

- **Dardi Munwurro** – state-wide service covering family violence, healing and behaviour change programs and services, to break the cycle of inter-generational trauma in Aboriginal families and communities.  
<https://www.dardimunwurro.com.au/mens-family-violence-healing-behaviour-change-programs>
- **Disability Justice** - operates throughout Victoria. Disability Justice can provide assessment of people with a cognitive impairment who have been sentenced or placed on an order through the Victorian judicial system and will work with the judiciary in sentencing people with a disability through focus on rehabilitative goals relevant to the offending.  
<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/forensic-disability-program>
- **Forensicare** - Forensicare delivers a range of mental health programs targeted at patients with different needs at different stages of recovery. Services are delivered through their secure mental health hospital: Thomas Embling Hospital. They provide a range of specialist mental health clinics and services across Victoria's men's and women's prisons and Community Forensic Mental Health services - <https://www.forensicare.vic.gov.au/>
- **Forensic Disability State-wide Access Service (FDSAS)** - is available at DHHS and provides the access point into the Forensic Disability Program. They provide information and advice to people with a cognitive impairment who have come into contact with the justice system, as well as information to all relevant stakeholders. Referrals are triaged to ensure service to people most in need of forensic disability treatment and support. FDSAS is a central point of contact for all other services within Victoria's Forensic Disability Program, including secure residential treatment, Community-based assessment and treatment services, Consultancy services and Community Forensic Disability Mental Health Clinic.  
<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/forensic-disability-program>
- **VACCA Justice Support Program** - Assistance for Aboriginal people and their families who have been in contact with the justice system to heal and reintegrate into the community.  
<https://www.vacca.org/page/services/justice-support>

### Specialist Youth Justice Support Services:

- **Central After Hours and Bail Placement Service** - a state-wide after-hours service available to young people who commit an offence when aged from 10 to 18 years. The service may be utilised voluntarily by a young person being considered for remand by police or where bail accommodation may be required.  
<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/central-after-hours-assessment-and-bail-placement-service-cahabps>
- **Dardi Munwurro** - Aboriginal Youth Support Service (AYSS) aiming to intervene early and divert young people away from the youth justice system by addressing the underlying causes of offending and risk-taking behaviour.  
<https://www.dardimunwurro.com.au/youth-journeys-program>
- **Koori Youth Justice Program** - The Koori Youth Justice Program is operated in the community mainly by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Aboriginal custodial workers are employed by youth justice custodial services to work with and support young Aboriginal people while they are in custody.  
<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/koori-youth-justice-programs>

- **Youth Justice Community Support Service (YJCSS)** - provides integrated and intensive support and services to young people involved with the youth justice service to complement case management undertaken by youth justice workers. <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/youth-justice-community-support-service>
- **Youth Justice Court Advice Service** - provides information on the youth justice service and community-based options available to divert young people from progression into the criminal justice system. <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/youth-justice-court-advice-service-yjcas>
- **Parkville College** – specialist Victorian Government School that provides education to students who are, or have been, detained in custody, a secure welfare setting, or transitioning from these settings. <https://www.parkvillecollege.vic.edu.au/>

### Useful Websites:

- **Australian Human Rights Commission** - List of the programs and services that assist people with disability in the criminal justice system - <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/programs-and-services-assist-people-disability-criminal-justice-system>
- **Centre for Innovative Justice**  
The Centre for Innovative Justice researches, advocates and applies innovative ways to improve the justice system with a particular focus on therapeutic jurisprudence, restorative justice and non-adversarial dispute resolution - <https://cij.org.au/>
- **County Court of Victoria**  
Factsheet 9: Mental Illness and Criminal Law - <https://www.countycourt.vic.gov.au/files/documents/2018-08/factsheet-9-mental-illness-and-criminal-law.pdf>
- **Department of Health and Human Services**  
Information about compulsory treatment and related resources - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/compulsory-treatment>
- **Inclusion Melbourne**  
A guide for people with disability, their support professionals, family, friends and advocates - <https://inclusionmelbourne.org.au/projects/support-for-justice/>
- **Supporting Justice**  
Practical resources designed for support workers, carers and people with disability on how to get support in the criminal justice system and the community to improve justice outcomes - <https://supportingjustice.net/resources/for-support-workers-carers-people-with-disability>

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