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## **VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT PERSON VOLUNTEER</b>
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Status	Volunteer
Reports to	Designated YRIPP Regional Officer
Contact phone number	9340 3777

<b>PROGRAM AREA</b>
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YRIPP is the Youth Referral and Independent Person Program. YRIPP delivers a high quality system of adult volunteers called “Independent Persons” who attend police interviews with young people in police custody when a parent or guardian is not available. YRIPP also seeks to divert young people from future offending through early intervention at the point of police contact.

YRIPP is supported by the Victorian Government and delivered by the Centre for Multicultural Youth and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in partnership with community legal centres, *UnitingCare* and Victoria Police.

YRIPP is guided by an external reference group made up of a diverse range of stakeholders with an interest in youth and crime prevention issues.

YRIPP provides:

- Volunteer Independent Persons to attend Victorian police stations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Up-to-date training and ongoing support for volunteer Independent Persons.
- Information about helpful support services for young people.
- Resources about the youth justice system and support services for police and parents.
- Access to 24-hour telephone legal advice for young people in police custody, provided by lawyers from Victoria Legal Aid.
- Evidence based policy advice, advocacy and assistance to improve the criminal justice system for young people.

YRIPP began in 2004 and operates in police stations throughout Victoria. YRIPP provides volunteer Independent Persons to over 3000 police interviews with young people per year. This makes an important contribution to increased access to justice for young people. YRIPP depends on the generosity of volunteers; without their energy, patience and commitment YRIPP could not exist as it does today.

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## POSITION SUMMARY

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Volunteer Independent Persons attend police interviews with young people under 18 years at designated police stations around Victoria. The Independent Person is there to protect the young person from the disadvantage inherent in their age and to ensure that the young person understands what is happening to them and why. The responsibilities of the Independent Person are to:

- Provide support for the young person, monitor their welfare and assist to reduce any apprehension the young person may feel, particularly during questioning.
- Make an objective and accurate record of the young person's time at the police station to be able to present that account at any later court proceedings.
- Facilitate communication between the young person and the police, if required.
- Ensure that the young person understands their legal rights, the processes available to them and the role that Independent Persons have in protecting their rights.
- Observe whether the police or others involved in the call-out process are acting properly, fairly and with respect for the rights of the detained young person.
- Take appropriate action (based on your observations and the young person's wishes) if it appears the police or others are not acting properly, fairly and with respect for the rights of the young person.
- Offer information about local support services that may be able to help the young person and when the young person agrees, complete relevant YRIPP referral forms.

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## ACCOUNTABILITIES

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Under the direction of a YRIPP Regional Officer, an Independent Person will:

1. Perform the role of the Independent Person role in accordance with policies set out in the YRIPP Independent Person Manual, as amended from time to time.
2. Maintain an up-to-date roster of at least one 12 hour shift per week.
3. Attend a rostered police station within 30 minutes (20 minutes travel time), when contacted by YRIPP's call centre during a rostered shift, unless exceptional circumstances exist.
4. Offer information about local support services to young people that may be able to help them and when the young person agrees, complete relevant YRIPP referral forms.
5. Complete relevant documentation about each police interview fully and accurately and provide it to the Regional Officer within 7 days of each interview.
6. Participate in YRIPP training (minimum of one session each year, unless training is not offered in that year) and complete assessment requirements if required.
7. Participate in regular volunteer support meetings (minimum one session each year).
8. Provide feedback to YRIPP about program policies, direction and systems that could be improved including as part of the annual volunteer survey.
9. Accept and respond to feedback, participate in regular debriefs with the Regional Officer and comply with all directions given by YRIPP staff about the performance of the Independent Person role.
10. Attend court to give evidence about a particular call-out if required.

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## KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

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1. An interest in making a positive contribution to the youth justice process.
2. Good verbal communication and social skills and sufficient written communication ability in English.
3. A fair and balanced attitude towards the police and an ability to remain non-judgmental about young people and their behaviour.
4. An ability to maintain an up-to-date roster, be reliable in responding to phone calls and attend police stations when rostered and called upon to attend.

5. An ability to remain calm but assertive and to make good decisions in high pressure situations.
6. An ability to engage with and support young people including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
7. An ability to be self-reflective and receive and respond to feedback from YRIPP staff.

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#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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1. Independent Persons are required to be independent of police and the justice process. YRIPP has policies in place that require volunteers to declare and avoid situations that may compromise independence and perceived and actual conflicts of interest.
2. Prior to undertaking the YRIPP training program, YRIPP asks all applicants to make an initial commitment to volunteering with YRIPP for at least 12 months after completing the training.
3. Acceptance into the YRIPP training is dependent on at least one referee check from a person who has known the applicant in a professional capacity (preferably a former supervisor).
4. All applicants must successfully complete the YRIPP initial training program before being accepted as a YRIPP volunteer. The initial training program involves 10-15 hours of on-line training and at least 10 hours of face-to-face training and assessment, usually over a 2-4 month period.
5. Acceptance as a YRIPP volunteer is subject to the satisfactory completion of a Police Record Check and Working with Children Check (free for volunteers). YRIPP will pay for costs associated with a Police Record Check. YRIPP volunteers are required to maintain a Working with Children Check, disclose any criminal charges or findings of guilt that arise and submit to regular police checks if required.
6. Independent Person volunteers are subject to a probation period of three months, if four call outs are completed during this time, or four call-outs if the volunteer takes more than three months to complete four call-outs.
7. YRIPP volunteers are subject to relevant CMY policies set out in YRIPP Volunteer Policies as amended from time to time, including equal opportunity, internal complaints, Occupational Health and Safety and accident and incident management.
8. Independent Person volunteers must have access to their own means of transport that will ensure that they arrive at a police station within 30 minutes of receiving a call from YRIPP's call centre (20 minutes travel time).
9. YRIPP is committed to child safety and follows child safe standards and policies.

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#### DOCUMENT REVIEW DETAILS

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Date Reviewed: November 2014  
Date of next Review: December 2015