



YOUTH REFERRAL & INDEPENDENT PERSON PROGRAM OPERATIONS: RESPONDING TO COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

INFO SHEET

The Youth Referral & Independent Person Program (YRIPP) is continuing to support young people in police custody across Victoria. In line with our Business Continuity Plan we are constantly upgrading and reviewing our policies and procedures to keep pace with the latest developments in COVID-19 (coronavirus).

YRIPP prioritises the safety and wellbeing of our volunteer workforce and our commitment to young people remains steadfast.

Like the rest of the community we are faced with many uncertainties and challenges at this time and we appreciate your ongoing support.

FOR INDEPENDENT PERSON APPLICANTS

YRIPP is continuing to accept online applications and to deliver our online training modules as usual however our in-person training programme is currently on hiatus until **1 May 2020**. This scheduled return may change as we continue to monitor the most up-to-date advice relating to COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the community.

We are currently updating our training content and materials to expand our online delivery and facilitate remote access. In the short-term this may impact on the progression of your application and we apologise in advance if you experience any delays or difficulties in accessing some of our training content. We hope that the enhancements we make now will make our program more accessible to all future applicants, particularly our remote and rural volunteer applicants from across the state. If you have any questions regarding your application or upcoming training opportunities please call YRIPP on (03) 9340 3777.

FOR CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

YRIPP takes the health and wellbeing of our volunteers very seriously. In our response to COVID-19 we have now introduced the use of mandatory screening questions and we are systematically reviewing the implementation of social distancing practices at all of our serviced police stations.

We will continue to closely monitor the latest advice from government and our health authorities regarding the control and spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the community. Volunteer safety underpins every decision we make at YRIPP and we are constantly assessing the implications that any current health warnings and advice may have on our day-to-day program operations, particularly our upcoming volunteer support schedule.

Please note that some of our usual business functions have been postponed until **1 May 2020**. This scheduled return may change as we continue to monitor the most up-to-date advice relating to COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the community.

We are experiencing disruptions to our scheduled support meetings, field-trips, and ongoing development sessions. YRIPP is continuing to provide ongoing individual-based support to all of our volunteers via phone, email, SMS and we would like to remind everyone that our 24 hour on-call support is available for practice advice and debriefing. All drop-ins and scheduled face-to-face appointments have been suspended indefinitely whilst our staff move towards remote-based working arrangements.

We are also reminding our volunteers who may have a pre-existing or underlying medical condition that places them at greater risk to please remove yourself from roster and inform your Regional Officer immediately.

For the latest up-to-date advice please visit the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS): <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#who-is-most-at-risk-of-coronavirus>. If you require any assistance or support please contact your Regional Officer directly.

For urgent matters during business hours please contact the YRIPP central office on (03) 9340 3777. For all other urgent matters outside business hours please contact our 24hr on-call support.

FOR POLICE

YRIPP remains committed to providing an efficient and effective Independent Person service for police throughout Victoria. Please note that as a consequence of public health advice relating to COVID-19 (coronavirus) we are currently experiencing significant and ongoing disruptions to our Independent Person roster. Due to internal staffing pressures and continued high demand for service requests we advise that wait times may be in excess of 60 minutes.

To request an Independent Person please call our 24hr hotline on 1300 79 11 89.

We understand that our service provides a critical support to you in your day-to-day operations and we apologise in advance if you experience any delay or difficulties accessing an Independent Person.

Important Update to YRIPP protocol:

Victoria Police Members please note that YRIPP has introduced Mandatory Screening Questions for all volunteers. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers is protected we are asking that police members provide responses to the following questions when accessing our service:

Mandatory Screening Questions -

- 1) Does the Young Person have flu-like symptoms?
- 2) According to the young person, have they been in close contact with a friend or family member with flu-like symptoms?
- 3) According to the young person, do they live with anyone who has recently returned from overseas travel?

Your responses to these questions and the implementation of social distancing practices will help us ensure the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers is protected.



If you experience any difficulties accessing our service or if you would like further clarification on our mandatory screening questions please call the YRIPP Central Office during regular business hours on (03) 9340 3777.

FOR LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

Please note that YRIPP is the statewide central service for all Victoria Police members requesting a trained Independent Person. Please note that as a consequence of public health advice relating to COVID-19 (coronavirus) we are currently experiencing significant and ongoing disruptions to our Independent Person roster. We remain committed to safeguarding the legal rights of young people and promoting their welfare interests when in police custody. If your client has been adversely affected in any way please contact the YRIPP Central Office during regular business hours on (03) 9340 3777.

FOR PARENTS

A Youth Referral & Independent Person Program volunteer is someone who is trained to safeguard the legal rights of your child and promote their welfare interests if they find themselves in police custody. If you cannot be there to support your child then police must ensure that an Independent Person is there before they are questioned in regards to a criminal offence.

Each year our volunteers support thousands of children in police custody across the state. We are currently experiencing major disruptions to our service in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. During this time we may have difficulty allocating an Independent Person for your child in a timely way.

If you would like any resources or materials on your child's legal rights in police custody or if you would like to speak to someone about our program please call us on (03) 9340 3777 during regular business hours.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We are doing everything we can to provide young people with the best support possible at a time when you need it most. Each year the Youth Referral & Independent Person Program helps thousands of young people across the state when they come into contact with police. If police want to question you in regards to a crime our Independent Person volunteers will be there to make sure you are being looked after and are treated fairly and with respect.

If you have any questions or want to speak to someone about our program please call us on (03) 9340 3777 between 9am-5pm Monday-Friday.