

It is estimated that over 50% of people who are incarcerated have a cognitive impairment and these rates are much higher for Aboriginal people in custody

INTRODUCTION

The Justice Advocacy Service (JAS) supports people with cognitive impairment in contact with the NSW criminal justice system, including as victims, witnesses and suspects/defendants to exercise their rights and fully participate in the process. The service provides support to both adults and young people with cognitive impairment.

PARTNERS

- Department of Communities and Justice
 - Diversity Services
 - Courts and Tribunal services
- Aboriginal Legal Services
- NSW Police
- Legal Aid NSW

OBJECTIVES

- Supports for suspects/defendants with cognitive impairment in police custody
- Supports for victims and witnesses with cognitive impairment when in contact with police
- Supports for people with cognitive impairment attending court
- Supports for people with cognitive impairment attending legal appointments
- Training for Justice agency staff on working with people with cognitive impairment in contact with the criminal justice system
- Capacity building and peer mentoring for people with cognitive impairment in contact with the criminal justice system
- Free legal advice from a trained solicitor for suspects with cognitive impairment in police custody



JAS is a free service that supports Aboriginal people in contact with the Criminal Justice System across the North Coast

P 1300 665 908

www.justiceadvocacyservice.org.au



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



IDRS acknowledges JAS funding from the New South Wales Government

METHODS

- The Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) has provided the Criminal Justice Support Network (CJSN) since 2005
- The CJSN has been expanded into the Justice Advocacy Service (JAS) due to funding from The Department of Communities and Justice
- JAS operates 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week and assists people with all types of Cognitive Impairment:
 - Intellectual disability
 - Borderline intellectual functioning
 - Dementia
 - Acquired brain injury
 - Drug and alcohol related brain damage
 - Autism spectrum disorder
- JAS has placed Advocates across the state and are recruiting and training volunteers for both court and police supports
- A Training Needs Analysis of the Criminal Justice System is underway and will inform the JAS training plan that will be rolled out to Justice agencies. This training will increase justice services' capacity to identify and support people with cognitive impairment
- The core milestone of the program is to be able to provide face to face support in police stations within 2 hrs of a request

IMPACTS/WHAT'S NEXT?

- This project is funded till June 2021
- An evaluation is running alongside the program to determine impact for clients, justice agencies, funding body and social outcomes
- The training needs analysis will provide informed direction for the justice agencies' capacity building component