



Research to help Victorians with brain injuries in the criminal justice system: Grants announced

16 April 2014

Victorians with acquired brain injuries in the criminal justice system will benefit from major new research grants arranged by the Office of the Public Advocate.

Public Advocate Colleen Pearce congratulated the recipients of grants announced today valued in excess of \$400,000, which have been funded by private donations.

She said that Victorians with an acquired brain injury (ABI) were over represented in the criminal justice system, inadequately identified and lacked appropriate supports.

“The successful projects will bring about important and innovative research and policy developments that will improve the way our society treats people with an acquired brain injury,” Ms Pearce said.

The successful grant recipients are:

- **RMIT University’s Centre for Innovative Justice** and **Jesuit Social Services** for a project to enhance the rights and wellbeing of people with acquired brain injuries through the establishment of an ABI Justice User Group. The group will be available to give input to law reformers, educators and others on issues relevant to dealing with people with ABI in the context of the justice system.
- **Monash University** for a project to enhance the rights and wellbeing of people with ABI through law reform and improved education within the legal, judicial and law enforcement professions. The project will take input from people with ABI and professionals within the criminal justice system to develop and implement improvements to the education of criminal justice professionals and also to formulate and advocate for desirable law reform.
- **Diverge** for a project to build bridges between agencies in the ABI, disability and justice sectors by increasing contact, communication and collaboration, and enhancing the knowledge base of workers. The project will deliver training workshops that promote a better understanding of disability and justice issues, involve peer consultation and service-mapping activities, promote access to appropriate services for people with ABI moving through the justice system, and disseminate resources to guide best practice regarding people with ABI involved with the criminal justice system.

People with ABI constitute over 40 percent of male, and over 30 per cent of female, Victorian prisoners. ABIs affect around two per cent of the general population and can be acquired through accident, illness, or substance abuse.

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