

# Criminal Justice Support Network Newsletter

Number 2, April 2004

A project of the Intellectual Disability Rights Service Inc.



IDRS Board Member Brendan Crumpton with Police Officers, become actors in a photo-shoot to create visual resources to be used by CJSN and IDRS.

## A CJSN Support

The CJSN recently provided court support to a young man, Pete (not his real name), who had been the victim of harassment and intimidation from a neighbour in his block of flats.

After ongoing harassment, he was also assaulted by this neighbour, and was so terrified that he left his home and moved into a boarding house. It was almost eleven months later when his case was to be heard by the court, and he was required to attend court as a witness.

A disability service providing recreation and social support to people in boarding houses knew that this date was coming up and referred Pete's case to the CJSN.

A support worker from the CJSN was able to meet with Pete before his court date and talk to him about what was likely to happen at court. Pete was terrified of going into the court building, and very, very scared of seeing the offender.

The support worker was able to organise a safe room for Pete at the nearby police station, was able to organise a visit to the court house prior to the court date, and was also able to assist Pete talk to the police prosecutor about his fears.

(continued next page)

## Welcome to the second newsletter of the Criminal Justice Support Network

It has been a very exciting few months for the CJSN. We have completed the first training sessions in Sydney and the Illawarra and appointed a new regional coordinator in the Hunter (welcome Kylie!).

We have commenced the first supports to people with intellectual disability in Sydney, and expanded the existing service in the Illawarra. We have also been developing promotional materials for services and for people with intellectual disability including some of the photos reproduced here in this newsletter.

We continue to work closely with the police and courts, particularly in Surry Hills and Wollongong (including Shoalhaven) in implementing and promoting the service.

The CJSN has developed a brand new training package for volunteer support workers, which has specific information about the processes in police stations and courts, as well as the role of the support person within these processes.

As well as training the first groups of volunteers and attending meetings with other service providers, the CJSN has been involved in training other services about the issues faced by people with intellectual disability in the criminal justice system.

As noted in the last newsletter, the support that the CJSN is providing has a strong rights focus. It is the aim of the project to make sure that people with intellectual disability have access to the same rights as all other people in criminal justice system processes.

This can mean assisting people to understand their specific legal rights as well as enabling people to understand what their choices might be in what are sometimes complicated judicial processes. †

(A CJSN Support continued)

The support worker was also able to sit with Pete for over three hours while he waited for his case to be heard. Pete said if it weren't for the support worker he wouldn't have stayed around and got the chance for his story to be heard. ✦

### Farewell Mindy...

Mindy Sotiri the Sydney Regional Coordinator has left IDRS, though she will still work in a voluntary capacity for the Criminal Justice Support Network. We will inform you of any news about the appointment of a new Sydney Coordinator. ✦



IDRS Staff members Kim Walker and Diana Beaton act as a victim of crime and a support worker along with Police Officers in a photo-shoot to create visual resources for the CJSN.



IDRS staff Peter McGhee and Diana Beaton with IDRS Board member Brendan Crumpton 'acting' with Police Officers for a CJSN photo-shoot.

### How about becoming a volunteer?

The CJSN is looking for people who are interested in becoming volunteer support workers for the network.

We are particularly interested in people who have some experience working with people with disabilities. Volunteers need to be over 18 years of age, have good communication skills, be able to work well with police and court staff and have a commitment to social justice and improving the rights of people with intellectual disability.

A one day orientation program is offered to all people who would like to learn more about the project. Detailed training about police and court processes and the role of the support worker is then offered to those people who decide to become volunteers.

The first groups of people to complete the training in Sydney and the Illawarra have a range of different backgrounds and experience. We are very lucky to be starting this project with such a fantastically skilled and committed group of people.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer support worker, or hearing more about the Criminal Justice Support Network, we would love to hear from you.

Please fill in the form on this page, and fax or mail it to IDRS. Alternatively, give us a call to find out when the next orientation training is on. ✦

✂

### CJSN Volunteers

I am interested in:

- Keeping in touch with the CJSN
- Finding out about becoming a CJSN Volunteer

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Post Code .....

Phone: (W) .....

(H) ..... (Mob.) .....

Email: .....

FAX TO: 02 9318 2887 or  
MAIL TO: IDRS, Level 1, 128 Chalmers St  
Surry Hills, NSW 2010