Intermediary Pilot Program
Role description – contracted intermediary

Role purpose

The Intermediary Pilot Program is a new initiative within the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Intermediaries are communication specialists who assist vulnerable witnesses give their best evidence. Their role is to facilitate communication between the witness and police and/or the witness and courts.

The Pilot Intermediary Pilot Program is running a pilot from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020 in:
- six Victoria Police sites located in Fawkner, Frankston, Box Hill, Geelong, Knox and Moorabbin
- Supreme Court, County Court, Children’s Court and Magistrates’ Court in the Melbourne CBD, Geelong and Bendigo.

The pilot will include witnesses who are a victim of a sexual offence, or a witness in a homicide, and are:
- under the age of 18
- an adult with a cognitive impairment.

The Secretary of Department of Justice and Community Safety may appoint intermediaries to an intermediary panel. To be appointed to the panel an intermediary must have:
- qualifications in speech pathology, social work, psychology and occupational therapy
- post qualification experience in working with clients with a range communication needs
- successfully completed an intensive five day training program being provided by the Intermediary Pilot Program (the training consists of a number of online modules and face to face training)

Key accountabilities

- Quickly establish rapport with vulnerable witnesses.
- Assess the communicative capacity and needs of child witnesses and/or adults with a cognitive impairment.
- Provide specialist preliminary advice to the police at the Visual Audio Recorded Evidence (VARE) interview on strategies how to best communicate with the witness.
- Provide written advice to the court relating to the communication capacity of the witness and make recommendations on how to best communicate with the witness.
- Provide recommendations based on professional knowledge to defence and prosecution on how to phrase questions to get the most reliable and coherent responses to questions.
- Attend the Ground Rules Hearing to answer questions, provide practical strategies and make recommendations about how to best communicate with witness.
- Attend court to assist witness communication while they are giving evidence.

Essential criteria

- Only professionals with the appropriate registration will be considered:
  - psychologists and occupational therapists: who have full unrestricted registration with Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency
  - social workers who are a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers
  - speech pathologists who are a member of Speech Pathology Australia with a practising membership grade.
- Must be available to complete online training and three (non-consecutive) days of training in September/October 2019 (and must pass an assessment).
• Work is contracted on an hourly basis; availability at short notice (within 48 hours) may be required in some cases.
• Successful candidates will be subject to a working with children check and police check.
• Professional indemnity insurance.

Qualifications / Competencies

• Holds a Bachelor degree level or above in social work, psychology, speech pathology or occupational therapy.
• The scheme requires professionals with a range of different competencies including child development, complex trauma, speech and language difficulties, mental health, intellectual disability, autism spectrum, ABI and complex communication needs.
• Extensive experience in helping vulnerable adults and/or children to communicate.
• Ability to develop strategies to help people understand and communicate.
• Excellent written communication skills, particularly report writing.
• Excellent interpersonal skills.
• General knowledge of the criminal justice system (noting that training will be provided).