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NEWS

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Michael Binney volunteers with the Office of the Public Advocate's Independent Third Person program. N13ML702

## Honest broker before the law

**People** | Lily Partland

BEING arrested and interviewed by police is distressing enough for people who have some understanding of the system and are fully cognitive.

But for people with an Intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or mental illness the experience can be traumatic.

That's where Hastings man Michael Binney comes in.

Mr Binney is one of about 180 Victorians who do their best to make the process a little less daunting, through their work as Independent Third Persons – a program run by the Office of the Public Advocate.

As an ITP, Mr Binney is on call at all hours, although volunteers can specify their available hours, and spends on average 15 to 20

hours a month attending police interviews at police stations in Frankston and on the Peninsula.

"I'm there to help them through the process," he said. "I also ensure they've been treated fairly and (look after) the total welfare of that person."

Mr Binney said an ideal volunteer would be good with people, a good listener, and someone who can remain impartial.

"My role's not to judge, that's the courts' role," he said.

Frankston is one of the busiest police stations for ITP call-outs in Victoria so the need for ITPs is high in the Mornington Peninsula area.

Anyone interested in becoming an ITP should contact DI Cahill on (03) 9503 6339 or at [dl.cahill@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:dl.cahill@justice.vic.gov.au)