

## **4 What is your experience?**

The questions in this section will help you to share your experiences and knowledge of the criminal justice system for people with disability who need communication supports or who have complex and multiple support needs.

You don't have to answer all these questions if they are not relevant to you.

### **Questions**

1. *What are the biggest barriers for you or other people with disability in the criminal justice system?*

2. *What could be done to remove these barriers and help people with disability in the criminal justice system?*

3. *Can you provide information about support that has helped you or other people with disability to participate in the criminal justice system?*

4. *Please tell us about any time that you or another person with disability experienced barriers to justice.*

*My family recently had an incident where my young grandson committed a crime that required a court hearing.*

*The first court appearance was in May last year and finalised in September last year with a total of eight court appearances. Only after we hired a solicitor, the matter was concluded.*

*Our grandson has Asperger's Syndrome. The first day we appeared, we advised Legal Aid he had a disability. We were told not to go down this road, as the Magistrate of this Court sees many with mental problems and proving Asperger's was a contributing factor, would be almost impossible. In other words, let's just get on with it and get it over. My grandson is fortunate that on leaving year 12, he has been doing a two year course to help him into the work force. Through this place, he was given the help of a retired solicitor, who encouraged us to insist his Asperger's be taken into account.*

*After seven adjourned appearances, my daughter hired a private solicitor. On the eighth time, we by chance were directed to another Magistrate, who heard the case and took into account the fact he has Asperger's. No conviction was given, but he was given a six month good behaviour bond.*

*My grandson is lucky he has family support, but I worry for those out there with disabilities who have no access to a private solicitor. Legal Aid do their best, but when it comes to those with disabilities, the courts resources are stretched too far.*

5. *Do you have any other thoughts, ideas or comments you would like to make about people with disability and the criminal justice system?*

*They need a voice*