

2019 Submission - Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Mr Damien Griffiths

What are your suggestions to improve the Victorian community's understanding of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination?

I am a former policeman with chronic PTSD. I have lost two significant relationships due to this injury. I have lost massively financially as a result. I lost my job. It also destroyed my physical health resulting most recently in open heart surgery. First responders need to be better looked after. There should be mandatory regular psych debriefing. Ex first responders need to be looked after as well and not just thrown on the scrap heap like I have. No wonder so many take their own lives.

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent mental illness and to support people to get early treatment and support?

Nothing is working well.

What is already working well and what can be done better to prevent suicide?

Nothing is working well.

What makes it hard for people to experience good mental health and what can be done to improve this? This may include how people find, access and experience mental health treatment and support and how services link with each other.

Being exposed to constant trauma as a first responder makes it hard to maintain your mental health. Then when you are isolated and alone because of PTSD makes it impossible to maintain your mental health.

What are the drivers behind some communities in Victoria experiencing poorer mental health outcomes and what needs to be done to address this?

Seriously? How many first responder and ex first responder suicides do you need before you wake up?

What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?

Mine have abandoned me. Best ask them.

What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce, including peer support workers?

Peer support is only as good as the people in it. The Victoria Police retired peer support program is a farce. Pro active measures need to be taken. Everything at the moment is reactive.

What are the opportunities in the Victorian community for people living with mental illness to improve their social and economic participation, and what needs to be done to realise

these opportunities?

There are no opportunities.

Thinking about what Victorias mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?

Proactive assistance programs for ex first responders so that we are not isolated or forgotten.

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?

"Stop talking crap and do something. Royal Commissions generally are a money spinner for the legal fraternity. A big talk fest and generally at the end of the day achieve very little or nothing. The Government of the day can later say to defend themselves, ""Oh, but we had a Royal Commission in relation to that..."""

Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?

Do not forget first responders and ex first responders. Presumptive legislation re PTSI is a must.