

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

SUB: 0002.0029.0055

## Name

Anonymous

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

"The public needs more information out there, regarding THE MORE SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS, EG SCHIZOPHRENIA, BIPOLAR . "

## 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?

"Due to higher profile sports people etc coming out openly about depression anxiety etc, this makes it more accepting to people. More staff in Victoria, to provide easier access for people to attend mental health services."

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

"More interaction in smaller communities, to bring people together, especially in more rural areas, coffee mornings etc?"

## 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.

"There needs to be better communication between adult mental health services and carers. To maintain better mental health after release from hospital more follow up programmes need to be made available, to help people maintain good 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?

"IN THE NORTH EAST REGION [REDACTED], On weekends and public holidays there is only one person on triage duty, {they say they have not enough funding for anymore staff}. Therefore if family or neighbours raise concerns to triage, regarding an existing client of the adult mental health service, they are unable to attend to the unwell person in their home, due to safety concerns. When someone who is unwell with resistant schizophrenia, they certainly don't wish to attend hospital, plus it's more traumatic if police have to be called. Surely it's the mental health services job? Also there is no service where taking of oral meds is supervised by staff in the client's own home, to ensure in cases where clients are known to be unreliable in taking of meds are put at risk of severely relapsing, then having to be hospitalised, for weeks at a time, causing more stress on hospital system, patient and carer. THIS SERVICE IS AVAILABLE IN BENDIGO as an example. "

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

"I have been a carer for twelve plus years for my adult daughter who has an acquired brain injury

due to a car accident and who now has a hard to treat schizophrenia. She has been under the care of adult mental health for twelve plus years, COMMUNICATION is the biggest issue, i have found you need to be extremely proactive in getting treatment, and then receiving information. Tribunal hearings can be very stressful, but only once after a hearing was i shown any concern or support."

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

"North East region needs at least one more psychiatrist, two would be great, to provide continuity of care for long term patients, plus more access for the mentally unwell. More permanent nursing staff in [REDACTED] instead of a high rate of casual again to provide continuity for patients in hospital, it is vital that mentally unwell people know that staff understand them. "

**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?**

"More rehab programmes, to get people out and about again, and offering incentives to employers to take them on."

**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?**

"IMPROVE TRIAGE STAFF LEVELS FROM ONE TO TWO IN NORTH EAST, ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND WEEKENDS. CREATE A TEAM OF TWO TO VISIT PATIENTS IN THE EVENING, WHO ARE AT HOME, TO OVERSEE TAKING OF MEDS , OF PATIENTS WHO ARE AT RISK OF RELAPSING. communication, communication between doctors, case workers and upon release from hospital outreach workers and programme facilitators. Most of all communication with carers"

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

"Make it that all state wide mental health services have the same paper work, same procedures, and same access to mental health care."

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

"I am the mother and carer of an adult daughter, and have dealt with the mental health services in north east victoria, for over twelve years, as she has been under the care of adult mental health services in Wodonga, has been admitted to [REDACTED] many times for extended amounts of time. As i have previously stated there is a a lot lacking and much hospitalisation, for my daughter {with enormous cost to the health system}, which could be prevented, if staffing and communication was improved. I would like to think that when ever i am no longer around to watch out for her that systems would be in place to provide quality of care. Thanks for having this commission"