

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

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## Name

Anonymous

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

"My experience as a mental health clinician and someone living with a mental illness is that most people believe that someone is either 100% "normal" or 100% "crazy". Providing something like a "mental health screen" or even education telling people that it is normal to feel emotions when stressed would be a way of explaining where a mental illness deviates from normal emotional reactions / life circumstances. "

### **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?**

"GP's with knowledge regarding MH issues are typically well-equipped to see people with a high-prevalence low impact diagnosis such as depression. At the moment in Regional Victoria there is a lack of acute community mental health services, GP's, counsellors, Psychologists and Psychiatrists compared to Metropolitan Areas. People often need to wait 3-4 weeks to see a GP, 2-3 months to see a Psychologist and 2-3 months to see a private Psychiatrist. Those people who engage with Acute Community Mental Health Services, who are not in immediate crisis, are referred to these non-existent supports and continue to deteriorate whilst waiting to see an appropriate support. Providing more funding, to hire more clinicians, in mental health services in Regional and Country areas would decrease wait time and enable people to engage earlier. "

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

"Suicide awareness information has encouraged more people to speak regarding suicidal thoughts. More funding for preventative measures, proactive follow-up and positive interventions may help identify people that are at risk. "

### **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 is currently a divide between the Mental Health and AOD service sectors, which prevents people with dual diagnoses (AOD + Mental health issues) from receiving well co-ordinated interventions to assist substance use and mental health issues. Many health services are unable to share information with each other without explicit client consent, which prevents effective cross-service follow-up. Many people are still reluctant to speak regarding mental health issues. "

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

"1. Lack of available services. More funding needs to be allocated to Regional and Country areas in order to increase the availability of local clinicians. The current telepsychiatry services aren't working, due to a lack of Psychiatrists that staff these services. 2. People in Melbourne with

complex health needs being offered cheap DHHS accommodation in areas such as Wonthaggi and Morwell, that do not have adequate community services to meet the needs of these people. More investment needs to be put into MH services. "

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

N/A

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

More support and formalised training.

**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?**

N/A

**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?**

Effective management of MH staff in hospital inpatient settings.

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

N/A

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

N/A