

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

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Name

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

Better funding. Better public health with joint partnership with the media. A justice system that works. Discrimination doesn't just need to be understood it needs to stop.

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?

"What is working well includes the history of health, public health and mental health. It has taken humans a long time to evolve to where we are now (a few hundred years ago no one was making it past the age of 35). What can be done better; follow the quality standards frameworks and upgrade national health; Fund education adequately, Pay people adequately, Don't allow poverty to breed, Don't allow large multinational companies to get away with not paying proper tax, Don't allow the natural environment to erode as there is a direct link to human mental health. In a pro-mental health world we would be investing in the future and in the potential of each individual's potential as a human of self-actualization (Marlow)."

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

"There is a large international body of people whom get up everyday with the mission to improve their lives and the lives of others and their greater community; this is what is working well. In preventing suicide; I am shocked and overwhelmed at the rate of indigenous youth suicide. This has been going on for many years and has hit an all time new "crisis" level. The media does not cover any of it adequately. The cost of living continues to rise. And the Gap between Indigenous health and 'other' Australian's has not closed; which directly correlates the proper action or any action by responsible adults has not been taken!!! This is disgusting. Everyone in the Government should be ashamed; <https://thestringer.com.au/kimberley-suicide-rate-one-of-the-worlds-highest-yirimman-is-the-way-to-go-8710#.XOidRvZuLug>
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-17/indigenous-youth-homelessness-hub/6552012>
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-08/suicide-of-10-year-old-indigenous-girl-shocks-wa-community/7231052> <https://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/news/death-boy-9-central-qld-sparks-suicide-talks/3220165/> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-16/suicide-rate-in-territory-child-suicide-lifeline-warren-snowdon/10717718>
[https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2019/01/15/indigenous-youth-suicide-crisis-point"](https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2019/01/15/indigenous-youth-suicide-crisis-point)

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.

"You answered your own question. Yes how services link with each other and how people find, access and experience mental health treatment and support is what makes it better and then directed effects what makes it hard for people to experience good mental health. WHAT CAN BE

DONE TO IMPROVE THIS; *proper attention; in the media and out of the media *proper funding. *Acknowledging the people whom are trying and fighting the good fight in this area. *Stop giving awards to people like [REDACTED] when she helped perpetrate violence and the real victim is [REDACTED]. *have a government that goes directly into the problem and acts inline with this ""crisis"" by showing up in person to the rural area's of Australia and Victoria that are in suicide 'crisis' "

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

*Racism.....indigenous people have always experienced this; since every one else rocked up and started killing them. *The cost of living; it's getting higher * The cost of education; it's getting higher and lower quality *The natural environment is being abused. *Tax breaks are going to the rich *Large multi national companies are getting away with murder *The police force are poorly trained and have a bad internal culture (I was told by a lawyer this week that police have the legal right not to attend to crimes in the public; which means the public are not safe from violence and crime) *The rate of Violence in society needs addressing. *No one went to jail after the Royal commission into the Banking sector even though it found many peoples lives were destroyed by negligent behavior *I could go on but I won't

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

"As a volunteer advocate for a Non-English Speaking Family I can generally say something is better than nothing. I reached out to ""[REDACTED]"" and they did not help as many of the services are not free. The free services that I believed this family was entitled to I could not find a person on the phone to hook this family into so this family is still in the Dark!!! My own experience of the Mental Health system was horrible that is effected my immediate family members in a negative way and actually created the grounds for family violence. I had a nurse come to my family home and tell us that 'everything was going to be ok' and then leave a phone number to call of which my family did of which turned out to be a dead end and no referring service. I also had a number of hospitalizations; one after an episode of family violence where I was bullied into going to hospital by ambulance workers, police and family members only to get to hospital and be told ""what are you doing here"", and they sent me away. I then had to walk home back to the inflamed situation I had come from; without any counselling, without seeing a social worker; with nothing. "

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

I don't really know; I currently see a therapist. It took me some time to find my therapist as a number of other therapist were awful and made everything worse whilst taking my money. I am currently studying health at higher education institutions and I believe I am being trained very well but I have had to live in sheer poverty to afford going to school. A number of the things I have studied within my higher education I believe many of the health professionals that I have come across have not kept inline with the procedure and frameworks that they should of which makes me believe there is a lot of doggy health professionals out there. So I believe better screening of health care professionals and more money into training and upholding qualification standards probably needs to be addressed.

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?

Opportunities exist and can be created. That's what personal-centered medicine is all about. The whole community needs to be on board and I would like to highlight the great work the National broadcaster ABC Network is doing to inform the public of special needs participation in the community.

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?

"I think the recent highlight of static data of young men's attitudes towards women (of sexual violence in nature) has been eye opening for the public (<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/22/one-in-seven-young-australians-say-justified-if-women-change-their-mind-study-finds>). I do think when I was violated and rang the police and they didn't do anything and a lawyer told me they are allowed (the police) not to do anything that this is wrong. Also I think that when I was institutionalized and all the "health professionals" tried to force me onto antidepressants; this was wrong! My psychologist said I was really strong as most people can not stand up for themselves and end up getting medicated; which I think is wrong and more damaging. Also not one person addressed my pain in my multiple hospital visits. No one gave me a care plan no one addressed what was wrong with me which to this day has still not happened. "

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

"I have been studying at Endeavor College of Natural medicine and I believe that listening works, I also believe in the frameworks of personalized care, and I believe there is a direct correlation between our man made environment and our mental health; which is why I am a gardener for life. "

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

At the forum I mentioned the recent commission into the Church and the sexualization of children over the last 50-100 years. I mentioned that I believe there was a trickle down effect into generations that still needs healing. There are many adults that were victims of Church abuse that are still healing but whom also had children or helped rear children of which they too were indirectly effected. I believe this is important to acknowledge. Thank you.