

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

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

Not applicable

**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?**

The sector that focuses on treating (and preventing) mental illness should take note of and follow the example of the UK not-for-profit/charity 'Mind'. Mind represents people with mental illness and seeks to inform the public. Stephen Fry has worked with them on campaigns. They are advocating for and providing evidence of the successful use of sport for improving the lives of those with mental illness. I will attempt to attach one of their pamphlets to demonstrate their work. However the website and submission process does not fill me with confidence that I will be able to attach it. Please contact me via email if there is no attachment. The work of Mind has parallels in Northern Ireland (whose government have published on the topic) and in Germany amongst community groups around Frankfurt.

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

See above - sport provides social contact and thereby could be expected to counteract individuals' sense of isolation. It also offers since scope for natural stimulation of endorphins.

**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.**

N/A

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

Sport participation rates vary greatly across Victoria. Disadvantaged people are particularly unlikely to participate

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

**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?**

The pamphlet from the UK charity Mind outlines how sporting can structure their activity and outreach so as to make it our easy for those with (or at risk of) mental illness to get active

**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?**

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

No