

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Ms Barbara Wielechowska

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

N/A

## 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?

N/A

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

N/A

## 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?

N/A

## 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?

"Mental health workforce attraction retention and support can be a function of the workforce culture. Human Resources (HR) policies, procedures, initiatives may be wonderfully worded, promoting fairness inclusion creating a perception of workplace which is non discriminatory, inclusive respectful engaging in ethical practices safe ect ect. However, these are the top of the iceberg only. What really matters is the workforce culture which is invisible like the submerged part of the iceberg yet so powerful it provides the driving force for the entire mass including the tip of the iceberg. The workforce culture can be defined as a pattern of behaviour symbols of reward and punishments and the daily demonstration (or not) of employer's core values that lead to the forming and morning of a workforce culture. Workforce culture is the way we do things around here, it is how the tip of the iceberg is driven and most importantly how the leaders in the workforce demonstrate these values in their everyday work. In my experience as a former member of a public mental health workforce I was a subject to misconduct by an executive of that serviced. When I raised my concerns with the HR, my complaints went missing for several weeks - this

coincided with a selection of a new key service person for that establishment. It also transpired that injury reporting through Riskman was not encouraged for this incident; a bogus investigation of my complaints was eventually initiated. As my complaints laid unresolved I was further subjected to an incident of similar nature. It appeared that the original incident of misconduct relating to the executive misconduct had trickle-down effect through the establishment. It presented that people thought it must be ok to do these things since the CEO is doing these. My pursuits for resolution of my concerns eventuated among other things in my manager releasing my sensitive personal data to a third party without my consent. Furthermore, my (then) manager together with the establishment's HR reduced the rating on my OHS Riskman injury incident so it would not see the daylight. Injury Register did not exist in my workplace. The end result: a discriminatory culture against its workforce member, workforce culture lacking integrity and accountability where disrespectful degrading behaviour is tolerated and apparently acceptable, no true support - unsafe and unhealthy workplace where workplace member is subjected to damaging practices and detrimental outcomes among other things. My workplace was experiencing ongoing shortage of mental health clinical nurses; I too left despite loving to be a public servant. Who would want to work in a workplace which is toxic, unhealthy and most importantly unsafe? My complaints remain unresolved to this day and I lost trust in the system. The workforce culture needs to change for the service to attract retain and support the mental health workforce. I think this can be achieved through investing in programs which support staff tertiary education in such areas as the ethics, integrity, accountability, public service core values and prevention of corruption. HR policies, initiatives, practices must be truly conducive to practicing workplace health and safety at all times from the top down. "

**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 Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?**

N/A

**What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victoria's 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