

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Mr Philip Watson

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

"Promote using the terms 'emotional well-being' and 'wellness', rather than using the terms mental and psychological. There is too much baggage with these terms now unfortunately. Although we still need to use the terms, so I can understand that there is a dilemma in not using them, we can create further issues in making it taboo, but I think we can promote alternative language and continue to talk about emotional well-being to encourage open communication. We also need more social opportunities for people to engage, like town square dialogue, and special interest groups, such as sport clubs. These can be funded by government with support staff on hand to help. "

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?

"Provide early treatment and support in an easy way, without the need to be unwell. NGOs could deliver more general case management support without so much eligibility criteria and red tape. CAT teams that go to people's homes without police or ambulance would be better. People are afraid to ask for help in case the police come. PACER has a place, but too often the triage to get help is either, GP, or PACER, we need CAT teams and the middle response again. Bring back MHCSS services with flexible response, but KPIs that promote early intervention and reward NGOs that perform. "

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

"Beyond blue. Black dog Institute. Sane. All help. Improve access to lifeline, to reduce wait times. Promote days like are you okay RUOK for workplaces and clubs. "

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.

"Need a mh system that is simple to access without the red tape like ndis. Ndis has so much red tape that you can't even access the support and it is not appropriate for Mental health issues. Need to adequately fund mh services, and ngo sector. "

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

"Lack of services. Could rebrand headspace to be broader than head. This is getting reputation as a place for people who are unwell, rather than just a health service and a community front door for young people to have someone to talk to. "

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

them?

"More rights for carers, and maybe we should get everyone to have a support person listed on their Medicare card, who can be informed about all health related matters. And that this can't be revoked when someone goes to hospital, as the person could be too unwell to make the decision. "

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

Permanent contracts. Higher pay.

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?

Funding for clubs. Make poker machines safe by limiting spending and making minimum 1 dollar bets. With fairer returns. Move them away from shopping precincts. Cap total machines.

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?

"More NGO funding for easy access to services. More clinical services available, with psychologists available for weekly sessions on demand without limits, such as 10 per year. State funded psychologists. "

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

Stop promoting ndis for mental health.

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

Recommend that the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System points out that the cash out of the MHCSS funding for NDIS was a mistake. This was not a like for like service change.