

Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System
PO Box 12079
A'Beckett Street
VICTORIA 8006

5 July 2019

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Chairs of the Metropolitan Partnerships, I am writing to make a submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. In the various engagement activities the Metropolitan Partnerships have undertaken over the last two years, we have heard that mental health is a significant issue for our community, for our young people in particular.

The state of one's mental health and collective society's mental wellbeing can have implications for all social measures across our communities and suburbs. It impacts people's economic and social participation and has implications on the liveability, sustainability and prosperity of our city and our State.

All six of the Metropolitan Partnerships have prioritised improving community health and wellbeing, both mental and physical, as part of their annual advice to the Victorian Government. This not only demonstrates its importance for the future success of our communities and suburbs but is indicative of the need for a change in the way services are provided.

Key Themes from the Metropolitan Partnerships' Advice

Key themes across the advice of the six Metropolitan Partnerships as they relate to Victoria's Mental Health System are as follows:

- There is a need for more timely planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure to new suburbs in the face of unprecedented population growth;
- A Place-based approach is required to address service gaps in established suburbs;
- The accessibility of mental health services for different cohorts needs to be thoroughly examined;
- Aspects of human service delivery need to be integrated to provide an easily navigated, user centric system that increases accessibility for specific cohorts in need;
- Embedding a prevention and response focus for mental health services in schools to support them in their roles as a frequent first point of contact; and
- Designing services to fit the needs of Victoria's Aboriginal communities and CALD communities
- There is a link between the lack of secure housing and mental health, therefore the system that supports people experiencing homelessness has a key role to play.

Reforming Victoria's mental health system is a great opportunity, requiring contribution from all policy areas to ensure significant reforms are achieved. The Metropolitan Partnerships are pleased to assist by bringing a whole-of-government lens to the complex issues facing our diverse metropolitan communities – an approach underpinned by our engagement and interaction with suburban communities.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share some of the insights and experiences we have heard from our diverse communities and would welcome any further opportunity to assist with your Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Alicia Darvall, Chair Inner South-east Metropolitan Partnership;
Chair, Metropolitan Development Advisory Panel