

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Ms Erin Hill

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

Greater implementation of education programs in schools that paint a nuanced picture of the nature of mental illness and how it affects Victorians

## 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?

"More tailored care that is consumer driven, with autonomy lying in the hands of the consumer "

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

"Longer term care with those struggling with suicidal ideation, not one off quick fixes when people are feeling acutely suicidal. More funding and access to programs like this. "

## 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.

"The tendency for programs and access to be reactive rather than proactive. Mental healthcare is a LOT more difficult after the fact, and preventative approaches are the best. Ensuring access to empathetic/ mental healthcare trained staff at say Emergency Rooms to ensure that people have a positive experience the first time they present in a crisis of mental healthcare."

## 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 education about what mental illness actually looks like and what it means to have a mental illness/ illnesses Societal predispositions about say how men should act as compared to women, how parents should act as compared to children, and biases in regards to people who have committed crimes, use alcohol and other drugs, or present as ""psychotic"" or ""crazy"""

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

More support in providing care to their loved ones and access to mental healthcare supports to address their own mental health independently of being a carer

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

"Better wages for Peers, Greater respect and understanding of the role of Peer Support Workers, Career trajectories and Opportunities for involvement in other areas. "

## 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?**

Greater understanding of a realistic idea of recovery and scope to support the episodic/ fluctuating nature of mental ill health in policies.

**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?**

Better youth and adolescents programs More education for the population in general Advocating and promoting lived experience to help challenge stigma and discrimination. More funding to employ more people across the board.

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

"Greater power being handed to consumers and allowing consumer voices to be heard more loudly in service provision. Weeding out limited, prejudiced, old-school thinking about mental ill health before it seeds rot in a new generation of mental healthcare providers. "

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

"This is a really important opportunity to reform a tragically bereft system and I would hope that the expertise of those with experience, whether that be as consumers or as healthcare providers, will be heeded and heralded as the resource that it truly is. Make no mistake, mental health is life and death. "