

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Mr John Brooks

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

We need support in the workforce. I have had to leave the workforce due to my illness and there is not enough support from the government agencies in helping people like who are skilled and educated etc get another job. We need advocacy in the workforce to welcome capable people who have or have had mental health problems get an opportunity to re-join the workforce. At the moment discrimination is rife especially if you are over 45

### **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?**

"We need the employers to take this seriously and allow if necessary a medically approved sabbatical. Trying to keep down a job to support your family whilst suffering a mental illness with no way out is forcing, especially middle aged men like me to take their lives - it's unbearable and this is the high demographic dying at the moment "

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

The 6 free psychology appointments is good but too few Access to good medications cost effectively is great We need more acute hospital beds It's always the police who pick the overdosed person like myself - it's too late then and they are not trained in 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.**

"Good working environments Access to psychiatry is expensive If you don't have private health then good luck in getting meaningful treatment Public facilities? it's like being in ""One flew over the cuckoo nest"" - effectively being lock in with disturbed, abusive and aggressive people "

### **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 employment Poverty - many like me are on Newstart and you cannot survive on this - it's driving more to suicide due to lack of hope. Isolation - can't the government fund NGO engagement here to address this. There are lots of volunteers who would help

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

Close support from Psychologists and mental health workers. Good substance abuse support not just from NGO's such as AA but qualified addiction specialists

### **What can be done to attract, retain and better support the mental health workforce,**

**including peer support workers?**

"There is not enough of them, more facilities for inpatient referral are needed GP's can't really do much other than provide a script which is not save a really sick person - I've been their"

**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?**

"As stated we need focused job / employment support to assist people to stay and get back into the workforce (I had to leave due to mental health problems and now I can't get a job) The Centrelink approach is totally unhelpful, in fact being in the Centrelink system would make anyone depressed. We need to encourage employers to take and support people with mental health issues. Many are skilled, educated and really good employees they need a fair go. All my best staff had inherent anxiety. People with many mental illnesses can work with the right job and support - they don't need to be stigmatised left is dire poverty with no job - this is why many die "

**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?**

Employment and workplace support

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

"This is a national problem so the Federal Government and all State/Territory governments should be involved,. we should have workplace participation rates monitored and always on the COAG agenda"

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

"More continuous communication to the community on the REAL abstract suffering that the Black Dog brings.... ""No light rather darkness visible, served only to discover sights of woe Regions of sorrow, doleful shades where peace and rest can never dwell; hope never come That comes to all, torture without end"" John Milton (Paradise Lost) - this is what it is like; Hell I feel the wider community (those who don't suffer) just don't really care, certainly company management "