

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

SUB. 0002.0028.0663

Name

[REDACTED]

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

"This is a supplementary submission....I have already answered this question more broadly in my earlier submission. However I neglected to add that of all the organisations of assistance to families, Tandem Carers (formerly the Victorian Carer Network) is by far the most valuable. And it could have an even greater role in helping to improve the Victorian Community's understanding of mental illness and to reduce stigma and discrimination. Nevertheless, it is not at all well resourced and if it were more generously supported it could play a much greater role in assisting GPs to stay abreast of family issues where there are mental health concerns."

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?

"Again, I have made some points in my previous submission but would like to add that Tandem has done a valiant job with limited resources to support families especially when they are uncertain where to turn in order to connect a family member or someone they care for in accessing services. They return calls which in itself is a blessing!!!"

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

I am not so conversant with the work being done in this area....but access to services which are funded appropriately would be a very good start.

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.

"Isolation, homelessness ..I've already addressed some of the issues earlier. However, I would again mention Tandem. They are knowledgeable across services in both Metropolitan and Regional areas and work tirelessly to connect individuals with appropriate services. They monitor the results of any advice they give and generally have a huge role in linking people and networking across the State. I would like to add that Carers Vic who, prior to the establishment of Tandem, did a valiant job - they are not the organisation to which a mental health carer would turn. They are highly professional but haven't the specialist knowledge needed given that they serve the whole range of disability including aged care across Victoria. We would be absolutely lost without Tandem! "

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

I have answered this question already in my previous submission.

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

them?

"Families need education and basic moral support. They need a sympathetic, knowledgeable ear and practical advice as to where to turn. The mental health sector has been in turmoil for the last 20 years with a constant stream of enquiries and reports - if had not been for the creation of Tandem - due to the efforts of people like Margaret Leggat, Jenny Burger and Beth Bailey - families would have been even more at sea. The mental health sector is dreadfully under-resourced and consequently CRICIS DRIVEN. In fact if community services could be rebuilt, whilst not reducing the number of beds in psychiatric institutions (In Victoria below the national average) it might take pressure off a system starved of funds. Successive Governments have undermined mental health.....closure of the asylums was needed, but simply putting the proceeds into consolidated revenue was a disgrace. Another example of Government neglect of mental health in our region was the transfer of the Waiora Clinic in Kooyong Road to 'Very Special Kids'" under Kennett. What did that say to those with mental illness who previously attended a range of services at the Waiora Clinic in its garden setting. Where did they sit in the food chain?!!! Stigma personified!! There is no longer anywhere offering any sort of peaceful asylum and a greater opportunity to recover.....community clinics are operated out of an office building in St Kilda Road. Not an environment which sits comfortably with consumers although they recognise and sympathise with the difficult choices needing to be made by [REDACTED]."

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

As said already in my first submission - the MH sector is severely under -resourced. Staff work under intolerable pressure. ICE has raised the level of violence and severely affected addicts need to be humanely treated in a different facility (probably not a police cell (if one could be found) where they would be vulnerable to suicide. Good leadership and sufficient funding to allow time to be taken for comprehensive training. There have always been families willing to participate in this and the Carer Consultants within each region are an extremely valuable resource. It is one of the advantages of Tandem that Carer Consultants are brought together for training and are able to network with each other helping to achieve best practice.

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?

Re-instatement of community services! More Federal Government support for Centrelink

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?

Already addressed in previous submission but the emphasis should shift to outreach. Teams such as [REDACTED] CATT and the [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] do a fantastic job but are fully stretched. Community hubs providing a social forum for recovering individuals who feel isolated. Community housing is desperately needed....very hard to recover whilst living on the streets. Moving to the country in order to access cheaper accommodation is fruitless because mental health services in regional areas are even more stretched and isolation more extreme. So CONSIDERABLY INCREASED FUNDING FAR MORE EMPASIS ON OUTREACH COMMUNITY CLINICS COMMUNITY HUBS COMMUNITY HOUSING ACCESS TO D&A REHABILITATION ACCESS TO BETTER REHAB. IN JAIL LONGER TERM FUNDING not CONSTAMT COMPETITIVE

TENDERING FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE BOUVERIE CLINIC AND TANDEM!!! :

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

A COMMITMENT TO A MUCH GREATER LEVEL OF SPENDING BOTH DIRECTLY INTO THE MH SYSTEM BUT ALSO TO THE DETERMINANTS OF GOOD MENTAL HEALTH: PUBLIC HOUSING/SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION COMMUNITY BUILDING: REDUCTION IN DEPENDENCE ON THE REVENUE FROM GAMBLING AND ALCOHOL REVIEW DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICIES REVIEW THE PRACTICE OF COMPETITIVE TENDERING OF SERVICES

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

SOMEHOW PERSUADE GOVERNMENTS TO ACT ON YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS....THERE HAVE BEEN FAR TO MANY ENQUIRIES AND FAR TOO LITTLE ACTION FOR FAR TOO LONG. RESTORE FUNDING DIRECTLY TO ORGANISATIONS WITH CAPACITY TO SUPPORT RECOVERY IN THE COMMUNITY! DHS ALREADY KNOW WHO THEY ARE ...IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY FOR THEM TO TENDER!