

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

SUB: 0002.0023.0002

Name

Anonymous

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

N/A

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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.

"If we are to improve the mental health system in Victoria we need consider the context. Many people with mental health problems are living in poverty and have limited access to affordable housing. Poverty and housing insecurity contribute to poorer mental health outcomes. It marginalises and disempowers an individual and not being able to afford the basic necessities is a constant stressor. The link between poverty, homelessness and mental illness is now well established and we seeing the evidence on a daily basis. At least one third of people living on Newstart have a mental illness, however the Newstart allowance is well below the poverty line. In the 2018 Poverty in Australia Report (<https://www.acoss.org.au/poverty/>) the poverty line was calculated at \$433 per week for a single adult and Newstart, for a single adult, is \$135 below this figure. The recent tightening of the DSP eligibility criteria has seen even more people with mental illness moved onto Newstart, with their income dropping from \$463pw to below \$300pw. Newstart recipients struggle to afford treatment, medication or to pay for the running of a car to access services. Access to public transport in regional areas, outside of the main centres, is very limited. Our local train line runs two trains per day. At the same time, distribution points for Emergency Relief funding have become more centralised as have specialist Mental Health services so people are required to travel further. In some cases people are driving 50km for a \$100 fuel voucher. There are now no affordable rental properties in Australia for those living on Newstart. This is particularly so in regional communities. Public housing is also very limited and waiting lists are getting longer. Many do not register for public housing because they believe they will never have an offer of housing within their lifetime. There are many people in our region living in caravan parks and sleeping rough who have not registered for housing so the waiting lists do not accurately reflect the number of people under housing stress. "

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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?

N/A

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A