

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

SUB. 0002.0028.0294

## Name

Anonymous

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

"Public Health Campaign National mental health crisis numbers Non crisis mental health support lines ""Psychiatric first aid"" Education in schools about mental illness Social Workers/Mental Health professional "

### **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?**

"Public Health Campaign National mental health crisis numbers Non crisis mental health support lines ""Psychiatric first aid"" Education in schools about mental illness Social Workers/Mental Health professional Mental health clinicians in schools Private psychiatrists, psychologists, OT's, social workers available to people on a low income Cross government approach to reduce child abuse Cross government approach to reduce child sexual abuse Early intervention in schools Cross government poverty reduction efforts Cross government efforts to reduce homelessness Effective prevention of family violence which actually protects children from perpetrators Better resourced hospitals, mental health services and community services Actually having housing available for homeless people Mental health act actually supporting recovery Treatment of mental health in prisons for people who do not have understanding of their mental health, including MH Act covering people in prison Harm reduction model of drug use, including drug courts "

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

"Public Health Campaign National mental health crisis numbers Non crisis mental health support lines ""Psychiatric first aid"" Education in schools about mental illness Social Workers/Mental Health professional Mental health clinicians in schools Private psychiatrists, psychologists, OT's, social workers available to people on a low income Cross government approach to reduce child abuse Cross government approach to reduce child sexual abuse Early intervention in schools Cross government poverty reduction efforts Cross government efforts to reduce homelessness Effective prevention of family violence which actually protects children from perpetrators Better resourced hospitals, mental health services and community services Actually having housing available for homeless people Improved services for suicidal people Holistic response to people at risk of suicide - community based support for psychosocial needs eg. financial counselling, housing, support work Mental health act actually serving the people"

### **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.**

"Difficulty accessing services Once contacting a service, not meeting the services strict criteria Homelessness Drug and alcohol issues "

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

"Racism Gender Discrimination towards LBGQTI people Mistreatment of refugee communities by the government Homelessness Domestic violence Childhood sexual abuse Poverty Lack of education Under resourcing of mental health services, community services, and hospitals. "

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

Require involvement in all levels of service Better staffing of the mental health services would support family involvement

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

"Pay for staff training Have adequate staffing levels in services so that staff are not constantly exhausted and are able to use their skill set to help people, rather than just keeping above water Ensure staff safety from assault, aggression, threats Better resource the psychiatric hospitals so that there are enough beds Allow creativity in the mental health workforce Celebrate success "

### **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?**

Housing Reduced discrimination Access to NDIS to all people with mental illness

### **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?**

"Serious commitment to upstream cross government efforts to: - reduce homelessness - keep children safe from trauma - address domestic violence to reduce its impact - support employment - support education - support aboriginal and torres strait islander populations to develop culturally appropriate mental health services and fund these fully - reduce racism in Australia - support migrants and refugees Adequate resourcing of services to match population needs including inpatient services. Increase in number of subacute services. Holistic, responsive services (staffed to do so), staffed with a multidisciplinary team including peer workers IT systems which support health services efficiently "

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

"Nationwide frameworks with ongoing strategies reviewed regularly A serious commitment to work to prevent mental illness by supporting children to grow up in safe environments, free of harm, not in poverty, with housing. Resource the mental health service. Public health campaign"

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

"Please make this Royal Commission count. Please keep the big picture in mind. Mental health services cannot address the psychosocial and economic drivers of mental ill health; two people can have very similar mental health illnesses and mental health treatments; it is the psychosocial factors such as family support, income, employment, housing, access to resources, childhood or current experiences of physical, sexual or emotional abuse - these things make the difference in outcomes and these are the things which need to be urgently addressed. Hold the government to

account and ask them to provide safe childhoods for the children growing up today. Stop racism in government policies and media. Make the government sign the treaty so that the Aboriginal people have legal protection to support them in what they need to recover from colonisation. Treat migrants and refugees fairly. Mental health does not exist in a vacuum - please look at the big picture psychosocial factors because without addressing these issues even the best and most well resourced mental health service in the world cannot do enough - it needs to come from the whole government. Also, please do not let the Royal Commission turn into a witch hunt of mental health staff. Mental health staff genuinely care about the people living with mental health issues that they work with. They work late, all the time; they do training and study from their own pocket; they shed tears for their clients; they give homeless clients a sandwich from their own lunch; they experience abuse on a daily basis - the mental health workforce is doing its best in a system and society which does not work to support our vulnerable people. We care, we really do, and we want the mental health system to be better too - we want our services to be resourced to do our jobs, and resourced to be innovative, creative and holistic in our work."