

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Mrs Maureen Shaw

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

I continue to be labelled under the Mental Health act & that needs to be removed. With that label also insinuates that a person will always be classified as MENTALLY ILL. I was misdiagnosed & am still considered to have a mental illness. My biggest concern is that the treatment I received of ECT is BARBARIC. The Bendigo psych centre tried to FORCE me into theatre every treatment even when I was vomiting black. I was up to the 10th treatment after signing 6 & got a solicitor to stop them. I have never recovered from the treatment

### **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?**

"I called police when [REDACTED] & I was told they were NOT a Social Welfare group, at that stage there was no where for me to get help."

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

"I have found over the years that thankfully there is help available & well advertised but I don't believe that drugs are a cure for everyone, Counseling is necessary to discover the real cause of Depression or Suicidal thoughts. People need help NOT a label which will always be with you & that is the STIGMA & SHAME I carry"

### **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.**

"When I was in a position where my safety was threatened I became extremely scared so I went for an emergency visit to my counsellor who took me to hospital where I thought she was taking me just to have me checked out but I ended up in a Psych hospital & held against my wishes, that did more damage to me than anything else. Once again I was misdiagnosed as Depressed when in fact I was suffering PTSD. My own GP took me off the meds I had been given & she has helped me to overcome my fears. There must be a correct diagnosis"

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

"A correct diagnosis to begin with. If they don't talk to the patient instead of just saying oh they are depressed & just giving drugs, this will not help to get better"

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

The family need to be given advice on how to help the person

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

After my experiences unfortunately too many of the workers I have come across have treated me as a text book patient instead of looking at me as a person. They need to be better trained to listen to the person & there are some who haven't bothered to talk to me to discover what the underlying problem is but just dish out drugs

**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?**

"I think the police are the ones who need education on how to deal with the emotions of a person with a mental illness. At the time I was going through a period where I had an Order on a violent neighbour, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. This caused me to become very ill in that I was so frightened I went from weighing 45 kg down to a mere 35 kg in 6 weeks. My biggest mistake was making a complaint against police"

**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?**

Firstly that ECT must be abolished. It made me forget a lot of things but to the extent that I didn't understand where I was & what I was doing there. I didn't know what day it was & just cried all the time. The worst of it was when I started vomiting black & they still tried to FORCE me to have another treatment. I was treated like a criminal when I refused & injected with a tranquilizer & locked in a padded room. I knew my right to refuse as they had gone over the amount of treatments signed for

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

More public understanding & help that's available such as councilors but councilors better trained. I rang Lifetime once & the girl I spoke sounded just like a person from a call centre & didn't understand how I was feeling so I think they need to be better trained

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

Only that I have never got over the trauma to me by the ECT treatment & needs to be stopped