

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Mr Andrew Barnard

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.

N/A

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?

"From experience as a carer, conversations with other carers and from research papers it is suggested that carers should: - be routinely involved in the development of support and care of the person they care for; - be provided with support in their own right to help them maintain a reasonable level of physical and mental health, quality of life, well being. - have ready access to services and information to help them in their caring role. Comments relating to these points are provided below. (main heading) Care relationship and involvement of carers (sub heading) Contribution of carers to support of consumers Carers often provide a significant proportion of the care and support which a person with mental health and drug or alcohol addictions (consumer) receives. (sub heading) Carers experts on consumers behaviours and needs As a result of their interaction and involvement a consumer a carer will typically have significant insight into the issues and behaviours relating to the person they care for, which can be of benefit if used appropriately by clinicians and other service providers. (sub heading) Benefit of carer support to consumer recovery Where carers are involved in a genuine way in treatment and support there are often beneficial outcomes for the consumer, the carer and the clinicians and others providing support for the person. In a recent discussion a psychiatrist mentioned that, from their observation, having a carer can be of significant benefit to a consumer. It is of benefit to carers wellbeing when they are involved by clinicians and others in the recovery process of the person they care for. Being shut

out of this process is detrimental to the carer. (sub heading) Inclusion of carers in consumer care and support Organisations who provide mental health, alcohol and other drugs related services need to have an active top down way of doing business which genuinely and actively includes the carer. The triangle of care (Carers Trust, UK) illustrates an effective and balanced relationship between the consumer (at the top), carer and service provider, e.g. clinician. (main heading) Support for carers (sub heading) Carer stressors Where the consumer lives at home, or, returns home from time to time this can provide benefits in terms of care but it can also exacerbate stresses for carers. The stress can be present 24/7. Where the consumer is not living at home stresses and worries for carers are reduced but can still be significant. (sub heading) Impact of caring on carer's health and well-being The impacts of providing care for a person who has mental health problems, alcohol or other drug problems, or a combination of both, can be significant and detrimental in terms of the carer's physical and mental health, financial situation and general quality of life. The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index shows carers to have the lowest wellbeing of any large group (Carers Australia NSW). (sub heading) Support for carers Carers need support in their own right to improve their own quality of life and to be able to continue to provide ongoing support for the cared for person. This support can help them manage their lives better, including to improve their wellbeing generally. (sub heading) Access to emergency and other information Information on the support and services available, including emergency services, how to contact these services (on-line, phone - voice or text)) needs to be readily available and easily found. Examples of other than emergency information which needs to be readily available in cities and regions includes how to care for themselves, understanding mental health conditions and addiction, legal rights and understanding the mental health system. (main heading) Continuity of support for carers (sub heading) Continuity of funding and programs A continuity of funding and service provision is important. Changes can be detrimental, for example, where funding is withdrawn and useful programs cease. For example funding changes following the introduction of the NDIS/NDIA resulted in some such changes and it is also not clear how the introduction of the Australian Government Integrated Carer Support Services, including the new network of Carer Gateway regional delivery partners (RDPs) will effect carer support services."

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