

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Mr Leslie Johnson

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

" My problems stemmed back to numerous Medical Problems . the first being a burst blood vessel in the lower Oesophagus where my son got an Ambulance and saved my life when he was 15. I had a few other episodes of medical problems that he got the Ambulance in time. Around 1st Sept. 2017 I suffered from a mental malfunction where I could not find my phone in front of me, did not know how to use it or even remember my sons birthday. I was taken to Hospital where they diagnosed a stroke and I could not even write for weeks. I eventually collapsed as I had the wrong medication. I was then diagnosed with Cirrhosis of the Liver with Hepatic encephalopathy . I Young Doctor at [REDACTED] Hospital came in to my bed and told me what I had and said "" We all know what that means"" I took it as a death sentence. He mentioned nothing about treatments. My GP was upset the Doctor at [REDACTED] said this to me. After being diagnosed that I would die, I was reluctant to let my son find me Dead at home when he had helped me so much. I hinted I was feeling not well and he took me to the Doctor as he had a night arranged to be with his friends. I thought I was doing the best thing with the least trouble by taking a massive overdose of Pain Killers for my back, amounting to 1650 mg of Codeine. I soon realised my mistake when my son got hurt from the night out and was upset with me for what I had done. I just wanted to see he was ok as I have been his sole Parent since he was 13. I had my system cleared from the overdose and told the Nurse I wanted to go home to tend to my son. The Nurse ( whom I found out later to be a Doctor but lied to avoid me seeing a Doctor) I was told that the Doctor had to see me first but hours went by with no Doctor. I attempted to leave . I was Taken to [REDACTED] Head of Psychiatrists (female). She refused to let me see my son was ok.so I reused to sign as a voluntary Patient. I was escorted through the Hospital Wards with 2 large Security Guards. I was made an involuntary Patient. I was locked in a cell like bedroom. I was being spied upon by 5 or 6 Nurses behind a glass wall in their Office. I had my mobile phone confiscated and I demanded the right to a phone call. I was denied and was faced with 5 or 6 Nurses laughing at me when I said I knew my rights and that I wanted to contact a long time friend / colleague who was, and is a Member of the Victorian govt. I eventually got my phone back and ALL my Contact Phone numbers had been deleted. When I did find the number I was looking for, my SMS was scrambled or intercepted by the Nurses. I knew this was true because I could hear the Nurses talking and giggling behind their soundproof glass partition, on my phone. When I alerted them to this they quickly stopped Playing with my Phone. Meals in the Mental Health Ward [REDACTED] were served like a jail. You were given 30 minutes to get your meal in the queue and to eat it at the tables with other Patients. You were not given meals like the rest of the Hospital did. We were treated like second rate citizens. After being in there a few days I heard one of the Male Nurses ( built like a Nightclub bouncer, like the rest of the Male Nurses) tell Everyone that they will be entitled to More rights when they did as they were told.... I Spoke up and said "" So you admit we don't have the same rights as everyone?"" The Nurse replied with "" the Problem with YOU People is that you expect to have the same rights as the general Public ! "" I Protested that "" WE ARE THE GENERAL PUBLIC ! ""

People with Mental Health Problems need to be treated with care, not like they are second rate people.... that only exacerbates everyone's problems ! I kept asking to see the Psychiatrist but they walked past us like we were not even there and not even second rate citizens. Apart from My serious Liver Diseases I have also suffered with severe back Pain, 24/7, from a Spinal Fusion 33 years ago . I have great difficulty standing, sitting or laying on my back for extended periods of time. I was told on 9th Nov. ( MY BIRTHDAY) that I could see the Psychiatrist and had to sit waiting for 6 hours and did not get to see him. I only had a walking stick at that time. When I tried to stand I got Dizzy, from the Liver and severe pain in my legs and back. I collapsed on the floor and could not move after hitting my shoulder hard on the Hard Floor. I had a Male Nurse ( who hid his name, but he was an older completely Bald Man) who started kicking my feet and telling me to get up. I told him I couldn't move...He kicked me in the feet a few more times until a few of the Female Nurses came to try to lift me in a sling. They raised me like a dead cow and my legs went underneath me. The way they were lifting me was giving me immense pain. They then tried to lower me back down and twisted my legs underneath me with even greater pain. I had asked them before the sling to get the Ambulance 2 doors up to lift me but they refused. Eventually they got the Ambulance who lifted me Properly. I had Xrays on my shoulder and returned to a new room a long way from the Nurses Station. The only Nurse on was the Bald Male Nurse. There was no buzzer in the Room and the only way to get the Nurse was to yell out for Help. I needed a Bottle Badly and started to yell out to the Nurse I held on as long as I could but after about 10 minutes I had no option but to lay in the bed ( as I could not move) in a fountain of my own Urine. It took nearly another 10 minutes before the Nurse came. He abused me for not getting up and going to the toilet and told me he said he knows I can walk as he saw me before ( This was the Nurse who was kicking my feet and who saw me before I collapsed walking with a stick) I felt so humiliated and this Nurses attitude pushed me to my limits mentally. A few other Nurses cam in to help. I was then given a bottle and had a mattress put on the floor next to the bed. About half an hour later I was getting dehydrated and needed a drink badly. They did not give me a drink to have, like inside the rest of the Hospital. I called out until I could call no more as I was so dry in the throat. I had to roll and drop onto the mattress and drag myself along the floor on my elbows to get to the Hallway. There were 2 Patients there who came to my aid and lifted me and helped me get to have a drink. They got told off for helping me. [REDACTED] Mental services ward is, or was, absolutely deplorable less than 2 years ago. I was discharged from [REDACTED] the middle of November 2017. I was still not given the right medication and doses when I was released. About 4 or 5 days later I collapsed again at home in a bad way and was taken by Ambulance to [REDACTED] as a normal Patient. I did nothing wrong so I was surprised when a Psychologist visited me there at the Hospital . After giving me the right medication the Psychologist recommended I get released to go home. The Female Psychiatrist at [REDACTED] ( who locked me up in the first place) went over the Psychologists head and demanded I be taken to [REDACTED] Mental Health Ward . I was treated ok at [REDACTED] but it took me 5 days to see a psychiatrist when I should not have been there in the first place as I went into Hospital purely for Medical reasons . When the Psychiatrists at [REDACTED] heard about my case I was released that day. I have brought these problems to several State and a Federal MP and begged that someone please investigate [REDACTED] and make some improvements on staff training and numbers. The Federal MP Andrew Giles MP asked me to put the details to him. I have not had the chance to since speaking to him as last Christmas I got Cancer in the Liver and have been doing a lot of testing and Chemo for the lead up to a Liver Transplant. It appears a [REDACTED] [REDACTED], in [REDACTED] ( a testament to ALL Hospitals and a Patient care by Nurses second to none) have killed off most of the Cancer but I still need a Transplant.) I only heard earlier this week about submissions to the Royal Commission which is why it is so late in being

lodged . I beg that something be done about Hospitals like [REDACTED] Mental health Wards. Yours Sincerely, Les Johnson"

**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?**

N/A

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

More Nursing and better trained Nursing Staff with high rates of pay than the General Hospital Nurses.

**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?**

A quicker road to recover from Mental Health Problems as a result of more Staff and better qualified Nurses.

**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?**

"Please take a CLOSE look at [REDACTED] Mental Health Wards and do an overhaul of the work system and practices there. If not, the lack of equipment such as buzzers and General care with eventually lead to Deaths in the Hospital."

**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