

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Dr. Tony Helman

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?

"I strongly recommend that there be a public-accessible web-based listing of GPs with a special interest in seeing patients with mental health problems. Until several years ago, the organisation Beyond Blue maintained such a list. It was based on GP self-nomination. Based on my experience as being a GP with such an interest, it proved extremely helpful to many patients who found their way to me solely because I appeared on that list. For what seemed to me entirely unsatisfactory reasons, Beyond Blue ceased to operate that list and having asked their CEO specifically it is clear that they do not wish to do so. Since the demise of the Beyond Blue list, any patient who wants to find a GP with the time, special skills training and interest to deal with their mental health problems in depth, has no means to find one, other than trial and error. Nobody disputes that the GP has a crucial role in providing primary MH care. But the reality is that not all GPs have the time and special interest to deal with such problems in depth. Yet there are at least several thousand GPs who clearly do, as evidenced by their being certified, following extra training, by the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC) to Medicare to undertake focussed psychological strategies (FPS) counselling with Medicare rebates. It should be a trivial matter to display publically a list of those FPS certified doctors subject to the GPs consent). Yet despite my best efforts to get someone to take this on, nobody seems willing to do so, or to create something similar to the Beyond Blue list. Surely this cannot be too hard. It is a simple solution that will significantly enhance patient's access to early treatment and support. "

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

"I make the same comments as to the previous section. It may also be that a list of GPs with special interest in MH would be a valuable resource for organisations such as Lifeline that offer help lines, or CATT teams. as points of on-referral from acute suicidal crisis intervention "

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?

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?

"As above, we need a publically accessible list of GPs with special interest and expertise in mental health care"

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