



## Commission update – 2 December 2019

### Interim report released

At the heart of an inclusive and humane society is a mental health system where people who are living with mental illness are supported to live full and contributing lives. Victoria's mental health system has, however, failed to aid those who are most in need of high-quality treatment, care and support.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System was established because there is widespread acknowledgment that mental health services have reached crisis point.

We have now delivered our interim report to the Victorian Government, which has committed to implementing all recommendations made by the Commission.

The interim report includes some initial recommendations, which are an important first step, not an attempt to address the significant systemic issues highlighted to the Commission so far – that's part of the challenge that lays ahead.

We won't be calling for formal submissions on the interim report - this is an update on our work so far that includes initial recommendations, rather than a draft report seeking feedback.

Our work doesn't stop here. We will deliver a final report in October 2020, which will present a bold and innovative approach for transforming Victoria's mental health system.

You can read the full interim report and a summary at [rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/interim-report](https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/interim-report). You can also watch this [short video](#) to learn more about the interim report.

My fellow Commissioners and I led a stakeholder briefing event on Thursday, where we gave an overview of the report, our early recommendations and next steps. This was followed by a short Q&A session. You can watch a video of the event and see the presentation [here](#).

### Initial recommendations

Our recommendations to address immediate challenges include:

- a new approach to mental health investment, to ensure a substantial increase – not just now but into the future
- the creation of a Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing to bring together different skills and expertise to drive better mental health outcomes for all Victorians
- an additional 170 acute mental health beds for young people and adults to help address critical pressures in areas of need



- expanding the Hospital Outreach Post-suicidal Engagement (HOPE) program into all area mental health services and providing recurrent funding for the program, to increase the availability of support and outreach for Victorians following an attempted suicide
- expanding culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the creation of an Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Centre. This will support the right to Aboriginal self-determination, by ensuring Aboriginal communities design and deliver their own mental health services
- establishing Victoria's first residential mental health service designed and delivered by people with lived experience of mental illness
- expanding consumer and carer/family lived experience workforces through a work program co-produced with people with lived experience
- providing more training and recruitment pathways to boost the number of graduate nurses and allied health professionals in public mental health services – an additional 180 staff annually
- establishing a Mental Health Implementation Office to start work on delivering these recommendations

### **Contributions**

We've had generous support and goodwill for our work so far – we've received more than 8,200 contributions, including:

- More than 1,650 people attended 61 community consultation sessions in 21 locations in regional, rural and metropolitan Victoria during April and May.
- We heard from 99 witnesses during 19 days of public hearings in July, including 30 community witnesses.
- We received more than 3,250 submissions from individuals and organisations.
- We heard from more than 3,000 people through a community sentiment survey.

The stories that have been shared with us have often been deeply personal. People have shown tremendous strength in telling these stories, and people with lived experience of mental illness have shown a real commitment to sharing their experiences and ideas to help make the mental health system better for everyone.

These stories are a critical way of informing our work, and you'll see some of them featured as case studies throughout the interim report.

I would like to personally thank everyone who has taken the time to contribute to our work so far. We are listening, and your contributions will make a real difference as our work continues to design a new, contemporary mental health system.

Formal submissions have now been published on our website and you can read them [here](#).

### **Stay in touch**

Follow us on Twitter ([@RCMentalHealth](#)) to stay up to date with our latest news. You can also contact the Commission by calling **1800 00 11 34** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email [contact@rcvmhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@rcvmhs.vic.gov.au)

### **Penny Armytage**

**Commission Chair, Royal Commission in Victoria's Mental Health System**