

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

SUB. 0002.0001.0054

**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?**

"Currently impossible to get treatment for a mentally unwell person with no fixed address - CAT say out of their jurisdiction or too hard - there should be dedicated people who support and assess those with no fixed address and get them help they need. Need more follow up, more support preventing people going into homelessness. My mother is on a CTO and living/staying in a public car park - no one seems to have any issue with this except me. Need more stable and safe accommodation for those who need it. She hasn't heard from anyone in 2 weeks."

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

Need community networks and support.

**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.**

"Impossible for family and carers to access mental health support for mentally ill loved ones if they have no fixed address. You need dedicated people for this. There needs to be facilities for those with mental health issues and homelessness. Hospitals just drug people up and if it doesn't work they release them, with nowhere to go. Not enough beds or resources. If they refuse psychological treatment or tests, mentally ill people don't get any of these services. It's just ignored and not treated properly. They just say ""oh we can't test this because they didn't want to do it""."

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

"Resourcing, communication and limited powers"

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

"Change the system so they are listened to and people get help they need. We are stuck with the repercussions of their illness and poor decision making, not the hospitals who make the decisions they can leave then don't have to deal with them."

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

Pay them more. Better benefits. Have better outcomes for patients so people feel they are making

a difference.

**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?**

Community hubs and accommodation which have enjoyable activities and people want to go there. Upskilling. Promote guardianship and financial administration so people with mental illness are not so bad with their money. Have financial advisors and lessons which are compulsory or part of a treatment plan. Actually make sure someone has plans and goals when they are released.

**Thinking about what Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?**

Powers and responsibilities of CAT  
Accommodation support  
Financial support  
Better support for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

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

N/A

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

"My mum was released from hospital in an acute psychotic state. 4 days later she self presented to another hospital I was so lucky, as otherwise she would have never received help. Police spoke to her 3 times, did nothing. CAT said as she was homeless, outside of jurisdiction, nothing they can do. Now she is on a CTO with no plans, no idea what to do, no contact with any support services in weeks, and living in a public car park. She was meant to have testing to assess her capacity and capabilities but she declined this. The mental health system actually causes mental health issues for family members. I am anxious, stressed, needed time off work, because of how broken the system is and how my mother is not getting help she needs. I worry all the time something will happen because she has trouble making decisions and has no plans or goals and isn't getting the support she needs"