

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

Organisation Name

Peninsula Carer Council Inc.

Name

Peninsula Carer Council Inc. Denise Hassett

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

"Media Education, Positive TV advertising. Community, workplace, and school education, to give correct perspective and accurate definitions of the variety of Mental Health conditions, "

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?

"From the perspective of our carer group, very little is working to optimum requirement. Expand Headspace services to ALL age groups. Early intervention and recognition when there are signs of Mental Health Issues. Provide services which are effective, accessible, function well and are available 24/7. "

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

Outreach and Early Intervention. Psychological support in schools. Bulk billing of all services for Mental Illness. More services needed in rural areas. Ensure equitable and consistent services Statewide..

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.

"Too expensive to access appropriate help for many people. Address the Homelessness issue. More well trained staff and continuity of treatment. Involve the unwell person, Carers, and advocates in hospital admission, treatment, planning and discharge.. Engage with them. They are a wealth of knowledge which cannot be obtained in a 30 minute interview. Where to go when a person has a first episode (000? or GP ? ???) Networks need to be linked to appropriate services. "

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

See Above

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

"Funding for small organisations that support carers and families. Group activities, and support centres. Carer Consultant who is available to carers, and hands on, and not solely in an administrative role. A Carer Consultant, a valuable resource to train peer workers and give clear direction and links to support services. Clear Information for access to services. A clear discharge policy, and follow up and support for accommodation and care. Financial assistance with accommodation for everyone diagnosed with severe Mental Illness. NDIS package for all people

receiving a Disability Support Pension."

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

"Increase Pay, More workers with appropriate training and qualifications. Aptitude test for all levels of people working in the field. More research into interstate and overseas training programmes. Adoption of best practice, i.e. Open Dialogue Approach."

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?

"More Outreach to vulnerable and disadvantaged people enabling them to access the services. Education to the wider community. Schools, Community Leaders, Employers, General Public, to overcome current misunderstanding and discrimination. Ongoing support for people in employment. "

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?

"Fund Active Support Agencies. Acknowledge new research and successful practices which are working overseas. E.G. Open Dialogue Approach. Effective admission and discharge policies involving the Patient, Carer and significant support person. Taking time for correct diagnosis and treatment. Supported and well planned Clinical and community care after discharge. "

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victorias mental health system and support improvements to last?

"Access to NDIS and My Aged Care. EQUAL TREATMENT OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. Include carers - Carers are under immense stress with related health issues. Increase funding, Employ more suitably qualified staff. "

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

"Open communication with Carers and person with Mental Illness. Implement Open Dialogue Approach for all involved. Outreach to vulnerable, disadvantaged people who are unaware of resources and services. Engage and include the elderly and young people in supporting people with Mental Illness. Access to treatment: Be treated where you are, regardless of catchment area. Equal treatment of Mental and Physical illness. E.g. A young man was suicidal. He came home to family, but was refused treatment at a local hospital because he was 'out of area' to where he was living and attending university. He drove into a pub at 100kpm that night. Compare- a person suffering a heart attack would be taken to the closest hospital. "