

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Ms Jane McCracken

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

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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?

"There is much that can be done to better prevent mental illness. There is mounting evidence that a focus on primary prevention, addressing protective factors as well as risk factors, in the early years, childhood and adolescence can have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing across the life course. A focus on the modifiable risk factors in the early years in the context of family, educational settings and community is important. Furthermore, a commitment to addressing policy level interventions in areas which are known to influence psychological distress including: homelessness, drug and alcohol use, family violence and financial support (including the new start allowance)"

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?

"It is well known that rural communities face poorer health outcomes across numerous health and wellbeing indicators. Rural communities face many and varied issues with access to services, in the local government area of Mildura this includes no access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation services within 400kms. The intersection between drug and alcohol misuse and mental health outcomes is well known. The failure to adequately address gaps in the drug and alcohol treatment system in the Mildura LGA - namely the complete lack of access to a rehabilitation facility within an acceptable distance- perpetuates poor mental health outcomes. Furthermore, mental illness is impacted upon by the intersection of various social determinants of health including income level, socio-economic disadvantage, intimate partner violence, and education levels. It is well documented that in addition to poorer access to services than their metropolitan counterparts, rural and regional Victorians are more likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage, have lower education levels and some of the highest levels of family violence in the state are in rural and regional areas. "

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

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

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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?

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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?

"An ideal system would not only be adequately funded, but it would adequately address prevention through to tertiary treatment, from an individual focus right through to community level and policy intervention. A clear focus on place-based primary prevention in the early years through to adolescence would represent an excellent financial investment according to the current evidence-base. In the treatment area of the system, consideration needs to be given to distance to the nearest treatment centre, and completeness of systems in rural and regional areas. The Mildura LGA a glaring omission from the treatment system is a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Travelling over 400kms at a time when you are vulnerable, away from the support of family and friends from an area that already has poor transport connections is not acceptable. Without this vital link in the treatment system, the rest of the system will not perform optimally and will be over stretched unnecessarily. While this is certainly not the only problem the region faces, it is certainly a large and prominent service gap in a community that faces multiple and entrenched markers of disadvantage. "

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