

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Miss Kathryn Wilson

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

"My suggestion is that there is better education on this throughout school, I learnt what depression and anxiety was through social media such as tumblr and instagram, which had a ripple effect and ended up triggering me into having mental health issues from a young age. I think its also important to share that mental health issues arent only for certain people, boy can have mental health issues, just as much, even more than girls, its important to encourage people to talk about their feelings with the people they can trust. "

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?

"Whats working well to support people currently is mental health care plans, I think its such a great way to provide affordable health care to Australians."

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

"Personally I have contacted beyond blue before and it just caused me to feel like I was overreacting and feel stupid, obviously I was feeling suicidal and overwhelmed, but I wanted to just be with people I knew and trusted, but I think there should be better help for family members and friends in how to help and care for people who are feeling this way."

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.

" I have found that having a subsidy for only 10 of my appointments isnt a lot, I have gone through trauma therapy at the start of the year and I found it really hard and needed multiple appointments, by February I had already used 6 of my 10 appointments for the year on this, I still had over 10 months of the year left and felt pressure to not go back for a while to avoid having to pay full price for my therapy which is incredibly expensive, I love therapy , and it helps me so much, I miss it, I havent been in two months because I dont want to waste my last 4 subsidised appointments. This isnt what people with mental illnesses should go through, I personally need consistent check ups, I have anxiety with depressive traits, and its chronic for me , my mood fluctuates a lot and its really important for me to be seeing someone regularly to work through what I deal with, but I cant do that with only 10 subsidised appointments a year. I also struggle to get motivation to make an appointment without my psychologist initiating the next booking throughout my appointment. I know that what I deal with daily is not much compared to what many other Victorians but if I struggle to contain my appointments into 10 a year I can just imagine how it is for others. This doesnt even address the cost of psychiatrists, for a half an hour appointment with my psychiatrist to give me a prescription and a general chat, it is over \$100 out of pocket, its unreasonable and unfair for people to have to pay this much. Honestly I am incredibly blessed by my parents who do

pay for my healthcare, but it causes them financial strain and strain on their relationship at times. This literally causes me to have anxiety because I feel guilty for doing this to them, and feel pressure to make sure I'm progressing in my therapy. Which isn't right, therapy should be a safe space for me to focus on my mental health, and improving mental health is a slow process and needs many appointments, up to 20-25 I think would be ideal, obviously only if necessary. But the thing is, people with physical illnesses get treated in public hospitals for free, why do people with mental illnesses not get the same level of care?"

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?

"There needs to be better support for family and friends, I know how hard this is on people, I have multiple people who are friends and family of mine who have been incredibly distressed by what I go through, there needs to be more support for family members, not just the person, to encourage positive and supportive relationships."

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?

"I have had opportunities to gain support throughout my year 12, through special considerations and seas, in my VCE, I think this helped considerably and allowed me to be able to achieve the results I aimed for and have universities acknowledge what I have gone through during my senior years of school. Although I haven't felt like I have had any other support. Uni has been hard as it's up to me to reach out to support services and it's hard because I need a reference from my psychologist, but I haven't been to my psychologist in two months because of the cost and I don't want to use up one of my 10 subsidised appointments just yet. I don't have a lot of confidence to explain my situation to people which means I don't get acknowledged and supported by my uni for what I deal with."

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?

N/A

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?

N/A