



Commission update – June 2019

In the last two months, we've been on a road trip to more than 20 locations in regional, rural and metropolitan areas, running more than 60 community consultation sessions and engaging with more than 1,600 Victorians.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible generosity of spirit that people have shown in attending these sessions and sharing very personal stories. The resilience and strength needed to participate cannot be underestimated.

I thank everyone who came along - people with lived experience, carers, workers and service providers - for taking part and sharing their experiences, stories and knowledge. Without you, this process would not have been as informative and successful as it has been.

Several common themes were shared at the sessions including there being little or no services in the gap between GPs and crisis support.

The ongoing stigma and discrimination for those experiencing mental illness also came through as a major concern as did the inequity of treatment between different locations, but also the differences in the way mental health and physical health are treated.

One of the consistent challenges was people being told they weren't sick enough to get help. Others told us how difficult it is to navigate the system – critical things like how to identify what sort of support they needed.

These sessions have provided invaluable information from people who have had direct contact with mental health services and the system.

We will release a summary consultation report soon – this will reflect some of the key themes and local issues we heard.

We want everyone to feel empowered to have their voice heard. If you missed our consultation sessions, there is still an opportunity to have your say and it's easy to get involved.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to make a submission [online](#)

(www.rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/submissions). **Submissions are open until 5 July.**

You can make a brief comment or a longer, more formal submission. You are welcome to make multiple submissions, and every contribution will help inform the Commission's reports.

If you need help to make a submission or have any questions, please call **1800 00 11 34** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email contact@rcvmhs.vic.gov.au.

The Commission can also be contacted using a phone interpreter service on **03 7005 3010**. Submissions made in languages other than English will be translated where possible.

In July we will start our public hearings at the Melbourne Town Hall. More details will be released in the coming weeks and the hearings will be streamed live on our website.

To stay up to date with our progress, you can register for updates on our [Contact Us](#) page, and you can follow us on [Twitter](#) (@RCMentalHealth).

Penny Armytage

Commission Chair, Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system