

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

## Organisation Name

Hearing Voices Footscray

## Name

Ms Debra Hearn

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

\*More information could be released \*More thought into state of chaos vs. mental illness or spirituality vs. brain malfunctioning \*Education \*Allow people to live in their beliefs until they disrupt or break the law

### **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?**

\*More self-help groups \*Referrals to self-help groups \*Indigenous groups healing systems \*CATT is working well \*More conversation about trauma and the ill effects \*Interventions leading to education \*Give us more responsibility \*Psychotherapy

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

\*CATT team is working \*Discussion about philosophy \*Focus on patient's views \*Suicide prevention program education

### **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.**

"\*Family situation; family may not understand or believe your illness \*Self discipline e.g. positive thinking \*Education \*Dispelling the notion that people who suffer mental illness are unreasonable; that is, we are approachable \*IQ over emotion, that is, outthink the sufferer as opposed to a force of will"

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

"\*Keeping groups going \*Lack of community hubs \*Poverty \*Violence \*Poor communication from the public sector, that is, it is emotional and not intellectual \*Willingness to listen and consider complex states of being instead of waiting for an outburst of frustration"

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

\*Reassurance that something is being done for family members suffering mental ill health \*Pamphlets \*Access to doctors and support made available \*Support group to discuss difficulties they may be having \*Carers and family members given access to discounts

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

\*Communication \*Practical education \*Reduce volatility of sufferers by treating them like thinking

beings \*A positive philosophy

**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?**

\*Self-help groups \*Doctor referrals \*Job search web sites for part-time work and for those with a disability \*Retraining in volunteering

**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?**

"\*A focus on intellectual states as well as emotional states \*NDIS is cutting supports for Mental Ill Health and we disagree \*Hospital care should be more holistic, that is, include exercise nutrition mindfulness and meditation"

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

"\*There should be a focus on curing mental ill health in order to highlight genetic pre-dispositions \*A focus on reducing violence and poverty \*Education \*Work with the sufferer to reduce feeling of shame, embarrassment and sometimes self acceptance of the illness"

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

"The medications provided by the health care system have many serious side effects, which, is just trading one illness for many others, we really feel there should be a more holistic approach to mental health care"