

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Mr Mathew Cross

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

"Creating Ads on TV of real life situations of people that have been, like myself, sitting there contemplating whether or not I am going to pull through with this suicidal tendency of thinking, make it raw, don't cover it up because from the Life I had come from, to wanting to throw it all away, I feel I would be a great person to be apart of this team to develop real life situations that are currently going on, which will actually get people asking questions. Facebook is ruining the Mental Health stigma, with so many young adults taking control of their understandings through stupid Memes, large group driven posts of which deter the focus of Mental Health away from the care of the person, rather than attacking a certain way of lifestyle or way they have been in the passed is the reason for their issues. Heavily focused advertising on these networks, would HUGELY generate awareness and I feel the more and more it is publicly seen, our people as a whole will slow down and start to realise that their inner-circles need more focus rather than this ""Fast, Microwave like, lifestyle we are living"""

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?

"Being a person who has been in the Nightclub Industry, DJing at local house parties/events and other public venues, meeting people was an attribute of which I developed through my line of work, and speaking to a lot of those people, their is a huge stigma that to get help is a lot harder than what it is to say purchase some marijuana, or access to drugs is so easy that it becomes easier to cope once using substances, which from personal experience, Marijuana was a huge assistance, but as I was aware of the negative affects, I had to cut my use to clear out the noise in my own head to try attempt to fix what I go through, which I feel a lot of people are in the circle of."

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

"Being on edge 3 times from life and death. Not trying to sound brutal or upfront, but theirs no ad, no phone call, no attention you can receive when you are at the point of suicide of which that you can even take in or even notice that will make you second guess. Suicide is the result of a failed method of relief for that particular person is question, that they had such a great understanding of the misunderstanding of them existing, that the outlet of suicide is the result of finally realising you are not enough. What stopped myself from suicide was purely luck, I don't know what happened, but pulling through at that point, its like flicking through a deck of cards, yet each card represents a thought and you scatter through these on re-assurances of why you need to be dead, why no one loves you, why no one understands you. It sucks, it really does, I am just thankful I didn't make that choice and finding any opportunity I can, because if I can stop 1 person from this self-destruction situation, the relief I personally would feel, is a huge weight off my shoulders."

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.

"Personally, I feel a lot of the groups currently setup, focus on the education and what has been learnt to deal with Mental Health suffers is not aligned with how severe some cases are, which causes uncertainty of the system from the person who is receiving help. When I was admitted into hospital, it took 8 hours for someone to even give me an update, I sat in ██████████ Hospital for 8 hours, slowly generating thoughts of, "I should just get hit by a car out on the main road to hurry this up, rather die trying to get help if its going to cause this many issues. (Some staff would kinda of look at you like, what the hell, you look normal, how do you even get to this point") that experience seriously sucked and then I began to lose interest in even wanting help because every time I had to deal with a "Health Professional" I would get this look of disgust. I will add, after my 3rd or 4th day talking to the Head of Mental Health, I was told my diagnosis was Cannabis Over-Use Syndrome, when being told this, I literally left all reliance on the health system in the bin and just took that response as well, if that's really what people have labelled me as, after being so truthful and so upfront about my thoughts, that I was just some marijuana user, like Thanks guys, Now I know you wern't listening to me if that's your response."

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

"I think cost and time availability is a huge attribute which is deterring the motivation from wanting to get help, because in the workplace I strongly am pushing that Mental Health is just a "softies excuse for not wanting to try" I will be happy to prove this, the little chit-chats after a discussion of "My work load" "oh hes just going through that sook phase" "everyone has one, i dont know why matt just doesnt push himself harder The Workplace mental health phone number that you are to call if you are feeling blue and like you need a breath, I feel does the reverse to people actually wanting help, as the questions you are asked when going through some discussions you are made to feel like, a child who got in trouble who they are trying to get words out of Example: Myself: I feel seriously so suicidal, I have tried so many different avenues of resolution yet none are even making waking up slightly easier I need help. Responder: Aw, how does that make you feel, why do you feel that, what do you think you feel that for? ^ The above questions are so far away from what I feel the purpose of these phone lines are for. "

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

"Family members would probably be the last place to focus on with mental health from experience with what I have gone through, or maybe I just grew up differently where family isn't that focus, but I feel that families are best aware of the persons situation, they know their little secrets, how they act, what they do in their spare time. All of the arguments that will really be detrimental to the person wanting help. Example: Example 1: (saving money for me just was not a situation I was in control off, but I had finalyl saved \$500 for the first time, so for me this was a huge achievement: Reply from Parents: Well your 25 and your happy you saved \$500, what are you happy for? its \$500, your sister works casual and has \$5000. This response will always be taken as a "F you, why do you think that's an achievement, you are nothing to anyone" Understood, this is how I perceive the language, now multiply that by the amount of people in the same boat, throw full time work/bills, bad relationships, social media.and then put the numbers together for Drug Use/ Violence increase figures, all the % numbers and align these to mental health and I feel people will

begin to see how big this problem really is. "

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

"I think example of real life people who found the light and just went with it, but stop with the ""I took anti depressants and I feel great"", It needs to be raw, in depth, physically uncomfortable to watch type of content. Real life stories, let it be intrusive to the situation. If you need someone to create media ideas, my head is a whirlpool as psychotic crap that would bring to light, how dark and how scary being the person with the issue, let alone having to treat carefully around someone with the issue/"

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 feel this question reveals the uncertainty of mental illness from a corporation point of view. I was presented with opportunities at my lowest, some of which I wish I just did, but when in that state, I simply didnt want anything, I dont care if I got \$1,000,000, I wouldnt spend it wisely, I didnt care if a magician could change my whole materialistic life for the better, I was not in a state to realise the opportunities that I was always presented with, thats the scary part and where I feel we have severely dropped of as a society, we are treating people like they slowly developed this illness on purpose, its unfair, because it reassures your mind that your not apart of the social norm "

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?

"Prescription Medications. I was wrongly prescribed 3 medicines, 1 of which ""Zyprexa"" almost made me take my own life knowing and feeling it was wrong, and when telling ██████████ Hospital my issues, they always would say You should never have been on this medication and vice versa, this was prescribed by a GP because I felt suicidal, so no direct attack to this GP, but Ever since I "

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

"I think advertising real life scenarios. Using Key People as proof that anyone can go through this, and discuss the story, discuss the feelings and how words and the way they are manipulated that make people feel useless or unworthy. "

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

"I would love to be contacted and even sit down, and discuss my story with the team who is going to be pushing for change, as I love to challenge ideas and from personal and friends experiences put these into play when trying to find the right pathways for the specifics situations that people have experienced."