

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

## Organisation Name

N/A

## Name

Mr Scott Gallop

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

Local info nights in rural communities and media promoting that it's ok to have mental illness and seek help

## 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?

The mental health plan is good but the ten visits to a professional isn't enough and the cost is still prohibitive. I cannot afford the \$60 gap with my psychologist and so have had to stop attending. The same with my psychiatrist who has a larger gap. I admit I need help yet can't get it because of the cost.

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

"The call back system appears to be good. I have been asked if I'm considering suicide on many occasions and my answer is I don't have a plan however I think about it a lot, but because I don't have a plan or intend on doing it any help stops there. On bad days I see it as a way out and it should be taken more seriously I think if you're even just thinking about it. "

## 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.

The cost is my biggest problem as the worse the mental health problem becomes the less you can work and so less money and then can't afford the help you need. Even with Centrelink payments they only cover some of the daily bills like gas and electric etc.

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

"More professional help on rural communities. I have at times asked to see someone for help and been told 4-6 week waiting time. I need help immediately not down the track. They say ring lifeline or beyond blue who both do excellent work and I have spoken with both, however at bad times you need to sit and talk face to face to get help and not six weeks later. "

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

My partner struggles some days to put up with my mental health problems. Doing nearly everything together it affects him just as much as me sometimes and gets him down as well. We are struggling to stay together at the moment and he should have access to affordable professional help as well I believe.

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

I'm not sure how to answer this question. Really more funding so they are paid well and at the cost of the government not individuals.

**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?**

"Socially I believe some ppl want group therapy however for myself part of my mental health problem is wanting to be alone and blocking ppl out so professional help may have more ideas on this. Economic participation is one I have experienced and been frustrated at. I was working 10-15 hours a week casually which I struggled to do. I went to Centrelink asking for help and was told to get Newstart for some financial help I would have to see an employment agency who then told me I have to work at least 21 hours so need to get a second job. I explained my situation and was told get more work or you don't get anything from Centrelink. There was no regard whatsoever for my mental health situation and I ended up leaving in disgust, never received a cent of help from Centrelink and my partner then had to support me more financially which caused more stress on our relationship. "

**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?**

More funding for professional help so the gap or out of pocket expense is less and more affordable.

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

Increase the ten visits to a professional and increase funding.

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

I would like to say I struggle to keep going on many days and the financial cost contributes to me problem. Aside from the cost of professional help as I've outlined and the lack of help from government the cost of medication is another contributing factor in my stress. My tablets aren't covered and so cost me \$82 a month which I understand in federal government however it again makes it harder when I can't work full time and have these added costs which causes me stress as my partner ends up having to put more money in and all of this exacerbates my mental health problems.