

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Mrs Joanne Savona

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

Providing more funding at a Primary school level for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access quality allied health care. In my position as an Education Support Officer, I am often an untrained employee helping children with complex needs as a result of severe trauma. Better access and early intervention would be a far better option than trying to fix it at the end when a child is 14-18. The damage is already done. At a Primary level children are still open to help and are then better moving into adolescence.

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?

I mostly see volunteering church groups doing much needed emotional support of at risk children.

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

At a Primary level I am not seeing suicide attempts.

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.

They do not have early intervention and are often unaware of the help available.

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

Disengagement from school and drugs. Early Intervention programs and more funding.

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

Access to early intervention programs to reengage with the community.

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

More funding in Primary schools via mentor programs of pre-service social workers and psychologists.

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?

Access to short courses enabling employment.

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?

Early intervention in the Primary School sector. These are our most vulnerable citizens.

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

N/A

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

I feel that too much money is being spent at the top end of mental health when the needs are more complex and it is only acting as a band-aid effect. Money could be spent in the early years when a real difference can be made.