

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

## **Organisation Name**

N/A

## **Name**

Ms Lyn Edith Sarah Roberts Burt

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

The police should undergo further specialized training in determining the safety of the public & the personal safety of the patient before transporting someone with a mental health record to hospital. For example, the police should determine if someone is a danger to themselves or others, not the CAT Team.

## **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?**

"Navigating the Mental Health System has given me PTSD!...It's invasive, uncoordinated, underfunded & impossible to survive on Newstart Payments."

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

Nothing is working well...The statistics for deaths in custody & suicides are testimony to that. The Mental Health Act itself is being misused to enforce compliance with antipsychotic medications which may themselves be dangerous when combined with substance abuse and or be the cause of the disease or illness itself.

## **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.**

"It's difficult to improve mental health & wellbeing on Newstart payments because housing is unaffordable or unavailable or both. Services are either incompetent, negligent or impossible to achieve in the time frames allocated to meet the guidelines within set budgets per person. Navigating the System & accessing information is arduous at best & impossible at worst!...The IMHA has been an Essential Service & it's Imperative that support be extended beyond the Community Treatment Order to achieve Continuity and Stability. "

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

All communities experience the same of Circumstances however Newstart Payments & the Disability Employment System is Incompetent & mostly Negligent in their Duty of Care toward the Recipients of the Payment(s). Sickness Allowance Payments are non-existent & the Disability Payment System contributes to ill health.

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

Carers need to receive the Carers Payment as more often than not it's a full-time job & many have to forego full or part-time employment to provide stability for the patient & other family members.

For children caring for a parent require extensive peer support to assist in their education & home care.

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

There are only 16 IMHA Advocates for the whole of Victoria...it's a disgrace!...It's not Mandatory in Victoria to provide a Legal Representative to all patients hospitalized on Community Treatment Orders.

**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?**

There are none.

**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?**

"1. There's no opportunity to obtain an independent psychiatric opinion or diagnosis, just a review of the files. 11. It should be Mandatory that all patients on Community Treatment Orders are appointed a Legal Representative. No one should attend a Tribunal Hearing without a Lawyer and or Witness. 111. The Statement of Reasons should accompany the Tribunal Hearing Documents. And information should be supplied in writing regarding the Appeal Process including Statutory Deadlines. 1v. Patients should not have to apply through Freedom of Information to read or obtain copies of their File(s). V."

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

"The Mental Health Act does not provide a safety net for the patients or recipients of enforced Clinical Drug Trials. There are no protection mechanisms in the Act to prevent being transported to hospital in relation to ""hearsay"". For instance I was arrested for laughing on my balcony & discussing my finances in my front garden which was translated into being hysterical and deluded!."

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

"The Budgets for Legal Representatives and IMHA Advocates need to be vastly increased. Training of Mental Health Clinicians is vastly inadequate, incompetent, negligent and potentially dangerous to the patients personal safety & the general public at large."