

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Ms Amanda Sorenson

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

N/A

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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?

N/A

Thinking about what Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?

"I would like to see the Royal Commission prioritise for change the need for intensive services/support to be established when primary services need upstream access to higher level MH services. [REDACTED] has schizophrenia. It has been a real ongoing struggle and challenge to

ensure she has all that is needed for best recovery and to have a life of some joy and satisfaction. Families in the position of needing more expert medical care for their child with a serious, complex mental illness, require access to professionals/information with experts who can answer their many, endless questions. No one wants their child to die. So, supports to enable continual management when primary care is no longer adequate, is essential, vital and a human rights issue. We don't give up on cancer and cardiac patients at any point, nor should we with complex mental health cases."

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

"Daniel Andrew's Government has made a public and strong commitment to 'fixing' Victoria's MH system. Andrew's government can continue to show its ongoing allegiance with the RC by affirming its commitment to implement the recommendations made by the commissioners and fully fund the recommended changes as promised. Photo shoots with Andrew's, with the commissioners, or appearing at the commission for a session. Show the public out premier is treating this RC seriously and is committed. Let's have a media response from him at this stage of the commission. Keep the issue in the media, regularly remind the public we are heading into new territory which will improve lives that to date have either been lost or not achieved functional recovery. Highlight the benefits of the changes to come; personalise the impact. So changes are completed and permanent, we need a realistic cost appraisal for these major, systemic changes and a commitment beyond the election cycle. "

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

"For these significant changes in our MH service to eventuate, and be maintained at the highest level in terms of expertise, accountability and overall adequate primary and secondary care, Victoria will need to be regionalised. Each region will have a Director who has a CEO/manager who reports directly to her/him weekly if not more frequently. For such a service system, structural change to occur, in whatever physical shape, place, location, it will need to be vigilantly monitored with a regular reporting to the management team/board. The appointed Executive Director will oversee all the regions with a clear brief, agenda and statement of expectations in every single aspect of MH that now covers primary care and the forward/transitioning of care to a higher level services able to manage complex medical situations. We want this structural redesign to be fully planned in every aspect of its inception through to establishment. Adequate funding is a must. We can't be expected to quickly create an upscaling of our MHS to the current provision of cancer or cardio service provision; this change will take significant time, careful and thorough planning in every area. This change will create a new MH landscape which we must have in Victoria. It is not about showing the way or leading the other states to follow us, it is all about doing the right thing by our Victorian citizens. The change starts at home."