

Royal Commission into Mental Health

Name: [REDACTED]

Hello

I want my story to be public for everyone to hear. This is my experience...

There's waiting times up to 6 months for a psychologist/eating disorder psychologist, psychiatrist & the GP won't put me on an antidepressant until I've seen a psychiatrist. And I've been so desperate. I struggle just get out of bed & complete my personal hygiene routine. Along with this, I'm responsible for the full time care 24/7 of my partner of 10 years, as he has Parkinson's disease. Most people couldn't cope with my situation. I've worked & contributed to society like everyone else & after the loss of the relationship with my daughter 17 years ago, via estrangement because I stepped in between her & her law breaking boyfriend, I become estranged from her because I just simply loved my daughter. It was after this that my mental illness plummeted to an all time low & remains there, due to the lack of immediate services, that might have otherwise seen me recover from this absolute nightmare of day after day of sheer struggle, just to put on foot in front of the other. I've had several admissions to psychiatrist facilities because I'm wanting to get better, but the services available had a huge waiting list. That's not the case for drug, alcohol & gambling problems, which are self generated addictions. My mental illness comes from years of family abuse & lack of the love & support I've needed & deserved. I've gone to the ED of my current local public hospital, because even though I have private health cover & I'm on a carer's pension, the private hospital charges me \$199 in the ED just to see a doctor & then there could be added costs on top of that initial \$199. And I've waited for 6 hours, just to be told to see my GP in the morning, but the waiting time for my GP is between 7-14 days. If I have a drug or alcohol problem, there's help immediately. Why aren't I able to get the specialist help I so desperately need, but people with other life threatening conditions are taking priority over chronic mental illness?? Why is that acceptable in 2019. That could be your mother, wife, partner, girlfriend, sister, niece, aunt, grandmother, neighbour, friend or any other family member. And yes much is spoken about the effects & causes that can lead to suicide, but it's all talk & no action. Somebody MUST hear the cries of all our extremely broken mental health services & begin to find a way to treat our incredibly sick mental health patients & now. Or we will keep on seeing suicide deaths amongst our families, friends, work colleagues & in the community. But because I've only got an eating disorder, depression, anxiety, BPD & PTSD., I have to just be patient & wait for help. This is a crisis & something needs to change immediately. Mental health is just as important as any other health condition. And the attitudes of all medical staff must remain professional & sympathetic, so EVERY mental health patient is given the utmost care & relevant treatment options. Not sent home with a bandaid, or we are going to lose our loved ones because of lack of care. I remember a Ballarat ambulance paramedic telling me once, that I needn't think I'll get seen to any quicker just because I've arrived at the hospital feeling suicidal. This was at a time when my partner & I were homeless because we had lost our home due to his Parkinson's disease & my mental illnesses. What sort of professional could be so damn cruel & unsympathetic. He must've thought I was an actor & could turn my situation on & off when it suited me. Probably, if he had of

lived my life, he may not have been so strong to make it this far. Those words made me want to take my own life. Be something stopped me. I really do love life when my mental illness is controlled & managed ongoing. I only wish I had of report that inconsiderate idiot. But I didn't have the strength to go through with what the procedure was to report him. How he got to work for such an amazingly professional service is beyond me. I have nothing but respect & praise for the Victorian Ambulance Service. They have to work under extremely stressful circumstances & with a lack of sufficient staff. If something isn't done to help mentally ill people immediately, Ballarat & many regional & rural towns are in BIG TROUBLE. My appointment is still 5 weeks away. Could you wait that long if you were desperate for help or watch a loved one suffer because of the lack of vital services in your area?? The answer is NO & why do we have to when the government can inject much more funding into staffing & vital support services.

OFF TOPIC BUT THIS ADDS TO MY STORY...

MORE DELAY WITH EYE SURGERY... I've been waiting over 14 months for cataract surgery & can't get new prescription eyewear lenses until the surgery is complete. Whenever that happens. How long is a piece of string?? That's over 3 years since my last prescription was filled for my earwear lenses. I'm having trouble as I type this. Now I can't drive at night & have made a requested that if I pay for the surgery myself out of my carer's pension income, could this surgery be sped up. I have to wait just to talk to the eye surgeon on 21 August, over one month away. What an absolute disgrace. I can't afford to not see but can't afford surgery. I will have to go without food & utilities, to pay to have this surgeon done privately, but this surgery shouldn't take years for a name to reach the top of the list. This has put extra strain on my fragile mental state. I want the person in charge of this Royal Commission to hear my story. I speak on behalf of the many mentally ill patients that are no longer able to, due to suicide & the many who haven't got the opportunity to speak. Please do something to help ALL mental health patients, so we can lead better & fulfilled lives & contribute to our society & help teach the world about importance of mental health & wellbeing. Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

Sincerely yours

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