

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

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## **Name**

Anonymous

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

Introduce workshops in schools Provide access to mental health care through Medicare with the ability to bulk billed people with a health care card Treat mental illness as you would physical illness

## **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?**

"There are non profit organizations that assist with information and support for people with mental illness and their carers. Make mental health care accessible. 6 psychologist visits on a mental health plan with a possible extension of 4 more visits is not enough for ongoing support. Students and children should be eligible for unlimited support. Lots of schools have wellbeing departments now, this should be in all schools and staff should be adequately trained."

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

"Suicide is finally not a dirty word, but more needs to be done. I have been a carer for 2 children and my daughter's boyfriend and I have taken all 3 to emergency for suicide attempts and self harming countless times. We are sent away pretty quickly. My daughter's boyfriend finally killed himself. I have cried and begged at the hospital for help, and no one cares. They say that I am there now so there is no immediate threat. My son of 13 years has been taken several times and he is not eligible for the youth mental health services. I am scared that I will come home and find him dead. [REDACTED] have waiting times of an hour."

## **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.**

There is not enough access to mental health. I can't afford regular psych sessions for my child and the govt only support 10 a year. It can take a psychologist that time to assess the patient before they even begin to work on their mental health.

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

"There is a lot of pressure on people. Living costs are high, employment is low and the minimum wage barely covers the cost of living. Mental health of parents has affected lifestyles and experiences of kids and it becomes a circle. Drugs are a cheaper way to self medicate. Mental health needs to be accessible in schools and available through Medicare "

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

"Taken seriously, listened to and services and specialists available to them easily and through medicare"

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

Employ properly trained staff and pay them a decent wage

**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 some non profit services that provide information sessions, social events and even camps. These need to stretch to meet a broader community "

**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?**

"Affordable mental health care through Medicare. The ability to access ongoing support from a psychologist at an affordable rate, heavily subsidized by Medicare. Perhaps the reintroduction of long term care such as Mont Park or Larundel"

**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?**

"As a parent and carer, I feel very alone. I know that my son needs ongoing support to help him. He self harms and attempts suicide and has high anxiety. He is medicated, but that's not enough. He benefits from regular sessions with his psychologist, but I can't afford regular sessions. When we go to the hospital after him self harming or attempting suicide, they send me home. With no plan except the number for youth mental health. I can't leave him alone. He needs to be with me all the time. The psychologist sessions help. I wish I could send him more often."