

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

SUB: 0002.0018.0024

## Name

Anonymous

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

No comment.

### **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?**

"1. Local programs such as [REDACTED] seems to work for some young people.  
2. Fund more research into causes of mental illness in order to prevent it. 3. Early treatment and support should be delivered on a local level where possible allowing ready access to clients. Mental health clinics should be as accessible to clients as the local secondary school. "

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

No comment.

### **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.**

No comment.

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

No comment.

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

"Family members and carers want treatment to be available to the patient in a timely manner, not just in a crisis as now. Regular contact with a case manager or social worker would help. Family members and carers need someone (maybe a social worker) to guide them through the system."

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

"Adequately fund the system and pay the workforce well, it's that simple. The state government should fund the training of its workforce to remove HECS debt pressures of its workers. We greatly need to increase the number of students being trained to work in the mental health system as other countries (i.e. United Kingdom) are also experiencing large staff shortages, refer <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/workforce/our-workforce-census>. So instead of poaching staff, implement a long term goal of training more staff locally. We need to set a long term goal of increasing the per capita ratio of psychiatrists, psychologists and psychiatric nurses

similar to best practice countries such as Finland, France and Belgium. "

**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?**

"Given that many homeless people also suffer with mental health issues, providing public housing in a timely manner would go some way to improving this situation."

**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?**

Provide dedicated mental health hospitals and local clinics. Both had existed prior to de-institutionalisation in the 1990's. Whilst we probably don't want or need the large psychiatric hospitals that existed back then we need more beds than currently exist and in more appropriate (i.e. calming) environments rather than located within large public hospitals.

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

No comment.

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

"My mother (deceased) suffered from chronic schizophrenia for about 25 years during the 1970's, 80's and 90's. During that time she had a number of admissions to [REDACTED] hospitals as well as regular appointments with the local [REDACTED] mental health clinic. At the time of de-institutionalisation the Kennett state government promised that the funding for mental health services would merely be transferred from the psychiatric hospitals to facilities at a more local level. This did not occur at the time or since. Basically many state governments have failed the population of this state. I also have a daughter with severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Accessing treatment for her has been quite difficult and it's apparent that the local mental health services are overwhelmed by the demands on them. Greatly increasing funding to provide for more trained personnel and local clinics would go some way to improving the delivery of mental health services in Victoria. "