

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

Organisation Name

N/A

Name

Miss Katherine Steen

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

"Need focus on showing that people with mental illness are normal people and valuable people that are worthy of investing time and effort into, just as much as someone who has good mental health. It's ok not to be OK..... Workplaces and employers need to be taught and more aware of the repercussions of poor treatment and workplace bullying and injury that is caused to people's mental health in turn. It's a problem that is not taken seriously by employers, worksafe, insurance agencies, unions.... Stop workplaces from treating people like garbage then referring them on to talk to a service, it's as if employers don't care about the harm they are doing anymore to people because they can pass them off."

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?

"Prevent mental illness caused to injured workers as a secondary injury after poor treatment by employers, insurance companies, agents, case workers, worksafe. Stop injured workers being fired because they can't get better quickly, keep them at work with injury employer to maintain dignity and best hope for future to support their families. Stop injured workers falling through the cracks. Remove the distress caused to injured workers who are already suffering enough. Fix the workcover system, get rid of a 52 week period that allows employers to run riot and push people aside if they can't get 100% better. Make employers accountable for the physical injuries for the life of those injuries, so that mental injuries do not occur! If an employee is not more than 30% disabled from injury where they can receive disability and compensation, make it so that employers must keep them at work if they want to retain employment. Injured workers should not suffer further than the physical injuries they already live with. Get rid of self insurance scheme/ scam with insurance agencies working for employers to detriment if injured workers and advantage if big business. "

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

"I think it's a great idea to have mobile mental health care providers, I think it's great that there is a small number of Medicare funded appointments for psychologists, but do think it needs to increase to at least 18 1hour visits, not just half hour visits to see a professional. My focus is on injured workers and the feelings of self worth that go through the floor with the current broken system. People who one day feel valuable and the next after accident feel they are not valued, and suffer distress about how they will support children and families..... depression, anxiety, distress is felt by the whole family not just the injured worker and often changes their lives. Employers need to ensure job retention (especially large businesses) to help injured workers from falling into depths of depression and anxiety that they cannot get out from. These workers who get terminated and pushed aside (spat out to unemployment) sometimes consider harming themselves and this could

be prevented with law changes, system changes and policy changes."

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.

"Access to funded appointments with psychologist need to grow to hour appointments and atleast 18 a year so can go a little more often than once every 5 weeks at times when needed. Take away need for GP refferal to access these appointments, it's a step that only holds up treatment for those who need professional help fast. Having to talk to too many people about issues before finding or accessing the right treatment or help only worsens the issues with people feeling they have to justify and price their struggles are good enough for treatment "

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

Worksafe system for injured workers needs overhaul. Laws need to be changed to get rid of 52 week period and to stop employers carelessly terminating injured workers who end up with secondary mental health issues in many cases. Self insurance needs to be banned to stop collusion and insurance agencies working fir employers instead of best interests of injured employees

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

Worksafe needs to answer to family of injured workers so they can help their family members navigate the system. Employers need to be made to be accountable to keep injured workers working so children and families do pp not get affected by mental health issues that come with unemployment with injury and difficulty to move forward.

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?

Keep injured workers in their jobs! Employment retention

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?

Fix law andsystems if workcover and stop rouge employers terminating injured workers

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

"Law changes, policy changes, enforcements on employers."

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

N/A