



Statement on public hearings

19 March 2020

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System has taken the preventative measure of cancelling its second and final round of public hearings in response to the latest advice about COVID-19. The public hearings were scheduled to commence in late-April and to run for four weeks.

Commission Chair, Penny Armytage said the decision to cancel public hearings has been made to assist public health services in their efforts to maintain the health and wellbeing of the community and to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"We are incredibly grateful for all the input that our witnesses are contributing to the work of the Commission and this important work will continue over the coming months, including through written witness statements which we plan to start publishing online from May," Ms Armytage said.

"The Commission will also continue to be informed by the huge amount of information received so far, through consultations, submissions and the first round of public hearings in 2019."

The Royal Commission is considering the implications of the evolving COVID-19 situation on its timetable and will continue to gather evidence and engage with the community in a range of ways, including in the form of witness statements, to inform its final report. More details about other engagement activities will be announced in the coming months.

"The Commission recognises the significant impact of events including the recent bushfires and now the COVID-19 outbreak on the Victorian community. We acknowledge the heightened levels of anxiety and stress in the community and wish to remind everyone about the importance of kindness and compassion at this time," Ms Armytage said.

The Commission will continue to provide regular updates online, on social media and in our newsletters.

ENDS

If you or a family member has immediate concerns or requires assistance, contact Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Beyond Blue has [online resources](#) to help you look after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak.

To stay up to date, follow the Commission on Twitter ([@RCMentalHealth](#)). You can also contact the Commission on **1800 00 11 34** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email contact@rcvmhs.vic.gov.au.