

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

SUB. 0002.0029.0033

## Name

Anonymous

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

"I would firmly suggest changes should be made to the current Mental Health Plan process in Victoria, speaking as someone who has undertaken two MHP via my GP over the last 4-5 years. As someone who has dealt with Anxiety and Depression at various stages throughout the last 10 years (from around the age of 17), the current system seems to be focused on short-term solutions, that in turn do not address the systemic issues our state seems to be facing. I have undertaken fairly similar processes when I have had to seek professional assistance in both cases. I have visited my GP (the most recent MHP being in a time of 'crisis', due to a sudden onset of quite severe panic attacks), where I was been given a referral for 6 rebated sessions, followed by another 4 if required. In both instances, I visited several clinics to find a specialist I was suited to, which used 2-3 of my allocated visits. I now ask, how can a specialist treat a patient in 6 sessions, when 3-4 of those will be building rapport and a background/situation profile, and then moving on to treatment? That leaves 2-3 hours of rebated professional assistance, which is grossly inadequate when looking at the systemic prevalence of these issues in Victoria."

### **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?**

"The GP referral system works well for patients, at least in my case, but I imagine it is heavily filling our GP and family clinics, where an innovative system could be used to provide these referrals elsewhere."

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

"Further advocacy in both mainstream media and government advertising, as well as access to more affordable treatment."

### **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.**

"See above. There is no way adequate treatment can be undertaken within 10 rebated sessions. I earn just above the median salary, and it was a significant cost for me, to the point that I had to borrow money from my parents to pay for psychology appointments, and then change to fortnightly visits because I couldn't afford a weekly visit."

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

N/A

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

N/A

**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?**

N/A

**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?**

N/A

**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?**

N/A