

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

SUB.0002.0025.0113



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

"Focus on psychotic and personality disorders, depression and anxiety have lots of media coverage already. The media coverage surrounding psychotic disorders is very generalised and degrading to the clients with these illnesses."

## **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?**

"Extend the number of psychologist visits a person can use after completing a mental health care plan at their GP. Create methamphetamine and amphetamine specific care facilities, with specialised treatment for withdrawal and drug induced psychosis. Fund more supported residential services. Increase funding to acute psychiatric facilities."

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

Easy access to treatment in the community - get with the times (live chats) Education about mental illness in high schools.

## **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.**

Stigma.

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

"Funding is being thrown at metro hospitals while rural/regional communities are suffering. Geelong has an extremely large catchment area. It's acute unit is unsafe for staff and patients, understaffed, burnt out nurses and allied health, no high dependency unit (?!). We need a new building, not a refurbishment - you can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig."

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

Better systems to ensure treating teams must keep family involved in recovery and treatment phases - as long as the client has no objections. Counselling and education for family when their loved one is diagnosed.

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

"Increase safety! Increase wages. Better debriefing post clinical incidents. Zero tolerance for

aggression - and actually mean it, laws to protect staff from harm."

**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 groups in Geelong but they are poorly advertised.

**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?**

"Safety as a priority. Listen to the staff who are in the front lines 24/7. Ensure all acute units are on par - facilities between Catchment areas are vastly different. Our facility is decades old, whereas a facility less than 50kms away was completely upgraded. Why should rural/regional clients living with mental illness receive poorer quality of facility because of where they live?"

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

"Urgent reviews of acute inpatient facilities to ensure they are safe - Geelong is not safe, nurses are scared to come to work."

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

"I hope there is a major increase in funding to rural/remote services. Too many critical incidences are happening which are avoidable - IF we had the right facilities to manage unwell people in. Ensure all acute wards have the same set up so we are all on the same page, we just want to help people at their most vulnerable time. We need the facilities to do that. Build a children's acute ward, the closest is royal melbourne (over 70kms away)."