

Key reports put national mental health reform on the agenda

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Mental Health Victoria has welcomed the release today of two important national mental health reports: the Final Report of the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health and the Interim Advice of National Suicide Prevention Adviser Christine Morgan.

Mental Health Victoria CEO Angus Clelland said these expert reports will play a crucial role in shaping national mental health reform over the coming decade, as Victoria prepares for significant work when the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system is handed down in February 2021.

"Australia's mental health landscape involves multiple tiers of government policy and practice that need to work seamlessly together to deliver desperately needed services so it is imperative that we can work towards reform at the national level as well as within our own state and territory jurisdictions," Mr Clelland said.

Like Victoria's Royal Commission, the Productivity Commission's inquiry and its long-awaited final report is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver the real change that has for so long been urged by people living with mental illness, their carers, and the services that support them.

Its focus on person-centred approaches, prevention and early intervention, choice and control, community-based services, and governance and evaluation demonstrate that it has listened closely to people with lived experience and the broader sector in the development of its report.

Mr Clelland said Mental Health Victoria strongly endorses the Productivity Commission's recommendation that states like Victoria that lack a Mental Health Commission establish one.

"A Mental Health Commission is an essential governance measure to safeguard the reform process in Victoria and we hope to see this reflected in the Victorian Royal Commission's final report in February 2021," he said.

"We also welcome recommendations for improved national coordination and oversight, regional planning, the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the need to expand primary and preventative health, as well as digital service delivery and education, workforce expansion, employment, and income and workplace supports," he said.

Mental Health Victoria also welcomes recommendations in the National Suicide Prevention Adviser's Interim Advice Report for a National Suicide Prevention Office to provide national coordination, accountability and oversight for suicide prevention, and its recognition also of the importance of lived experience of suicide in finding solutions and pathways to support.

"We look forward to working with the Victorian mental health sector to review and respond to both reports in detail as we wait for the final report of the Royal Commission. Given the level of commitment already shown by both the Commonwealth and State Governments, we can be confident that long-term and sustainable mental health reform is within our reach," Mr Clelland said.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Angus Clelland, please contact Joshua Finn on 0468 309 662.