



**MentalHealth
Victoria**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Royal Commission's interim report will kick start urgent reform process and save lives

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Mental Health Victoria welcomes the release of the interim report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and commends the Commissioners for their outstanding work to date.

Mental Health Victoria CEO Angus Clelland today also commended the Victorian Government, particularly Premier Daniel Andrews and Mental Health Minister Martin Foley, for its decision to hold the Royal Commission and pledge to implement all recommendations.

"The 13 months since Premier Andrews committed to the Royal Commission at the Kyneton Men's Shed in October 2018 has been worth the wait," Mr Clelland said.

"This interim report and its recommendations will help kick start the reform process and offers genuine hope to tens of thousands of Victorian families who live with mental illness every day and struggle for the supports that they need and deserve," he said.

"While the costs to transform our mental health system will be high, we know they will be an investment that delivers large economic returns to the state."

Mental Health Victoria particularly welcomed the emphasis from the Royal Commission on consumers, families and carers being at the centre of the design process for new services.

That includes recommendations for Victoria's first ever residential mental health services designed and delivered by people with lived experience of a mental illness and major expansion of the lived experience workforce for consumers and carers.

The interim report also includes a welcome and strong focus on the mental health needs of Aboriginal Victorians, including the establishment of an Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Centre and expanded social and emotional wellbeing teams.

Mental Health Victoria worked closely with stakeholders across and beyond the mental health sector over the past year to develop in-depth submissions to the Royal Commission.

We were pleased to see key recommendations from those consultations adopted in today's report, including:

- the statewide expansion of the HOPE program targeting people at particular risk of suicide
- an increase in acute care mental health beds, noting that Victoria has one of the lowest bed-to-population ratios in the country and hospitals are stretched to the limit
- recognition that building the mental health workforce will be critical and will need large scale growth across all disciplines – echoing the recent draft findings of the national Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health
- establishment of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing to bring together expertise in lived experience, research and clinical and non-clinical care.

“We look forward to working with government and the wider mental health sector in implementing the early recommendations of the Royal Commission and to its continuing work ahead of the delivery of its final report in October 2020.”

For further comment, please contact Danielle McLeod, Senior Policy Adviser, on 0438 998 043 or Mental Health Victoria on (03) 9519 7000.