

Q48.

Make a formal submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

The terms of reference for the Royal Commission ask us to consider some important themes relating to Victoria's mental health system. In line with this, please consider the questions below. Your responses, including the insights, views and suggestions you share, will help us to prepare our reports.

This is not the only way you can contribute. You may prefer to provide brief comments [here](#) instead, or as well. The brief comments cover some of the same questions, but they may be more convenient and quicker for you to complete.

Q71. Show information regarding submissions for;

Individuals Organisations

Q68.

For individuals

Written submissions made online or by post, may be published on the Commission's website or referred to in the Commission's reports, at the discretion of the Commission. However that is subject to any request for anonymity or confidentiality that you make. That said, we strongly encourage you to allow your submission to be public - this will help to ensure the Commission's work is transparent and that the community is fully informed.

Audio and video submissions will not be published on the Commission's website. However, they may be referred to in the Commission's reports, subject to any preferences you have nominated.

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q73. Click to write the question text

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q69.

For organisations

Written submissions made online or by post, may be published on the Commission's website or referred to in the Commission's reports, at the discretion of the Commission. However that is subject to any request for anonymity or confidentiality that you make. That said, we strongly encourage you to allow your submission to be public - this will help to ensure the Commission's work is transparent and that the community is fully informed.

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Because of the importance of transparency and openness for the Commission's work, organisations will need to show compelling reasons for their submissions to remain confidential.

Q70.

Should you wish to make a formal submission, please consider the questions below, noting that you do not have to respond to all of the questions, instead you may choose to respond to only some of them. If you would like to contribute and require assistance to do so, please contact the Royal Commission on 1800 00 11 34.

Please note, if you leave this page and come back to it later your information will still be here. Please note, it won't be provided to the Commission until you finish the survey.

Q46. Contact details

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First name	<input type="text" value="Chris"/>
Surname	<input type="text" value="Buckingham"/>
Email Address	<input type="text" value="chris.buckingham@cclc.vic.gov.au"/>
Preferred Contact Number	<input type="text" value="0405518057"/>
Postcode	<input type="text" value="3977"/>

Q47. Preferred method of contact (The Commission may contact you to discuss your submission)

Email Telephone

Q7. Gender

Female Prefer not to say
 Male Self-Described

Q10. Age range

Q11. Do you identify as a member of any of the following groups? Please select all that apply

People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origins People with disability
 People of non-English speaking (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds People living in rural or regional communities

- People from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Asexual and Queer community
- People who are experiencing or have experienced family violence or homelessness

- People who are engaged in preventing, responding to and treating mental illness
- Prefer not to say

Q12. Type of submission

- Individual Organisation Group
-

Q14. State your organisation

Public Libraries Victoria

Q15. State your position in the organisation

President

Q52. Do you have authority to make this submission on behalf of the organisation?

Yes No

-

Q17. How many people does your submission represent?

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q54. Does your submission include information which would allow another individual to be identified?

Yes No

-

Q53. I am authorised to provide that information on their behalf on the basis set out in this document

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q49. Prior to publication, the submission requires redaction to deidentify any individuals, apart from the author, to which the submission refers

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q20. Please indicate which of the following best represents you or the organisation/body you represent. Please select all that apply

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person living with mental illness | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual advocate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement with mental health services in the past five years | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peak body or advocacy group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carer / family member / friend of someone living with mental illness | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher, academic, commentator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Government agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual service provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested member of the public |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service provider organisation; Please specify type of provider:
<input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other; Please specify: <input type="text"/> |

Q21. Please select the main terms of reference topics that are covered in your submission. Please select all that apply

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Victoria's mental health services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure, governance, accountability, funding, commissioning and information-sharing arrangements |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Navigation of Victoria's mental health services | <input type="checkbox"/> Data collection and research strategies to advance and monitor reforms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Best practice treatment and care models that are safe and person-centred | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family and carer support needs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People living with mental illness and other co-occurring illnesses, disabilities, multiple or dual disabilities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suicide prevention | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural and regional communities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental illness prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> People in contact, or at greater risk of contact, with the forensic mental health system and the justice system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health workforce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People living with both mental illness and problematic drug and alcohol use |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pathways and interfaces between Victoria's mental health services and other services | |

Q66.

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

Public Libraries are safe welcoming spaces where people can participate in community life without fear. They provide universal and free access to information through wifi, personal computers, books, magazine and guides. Many public libraries provide free or low cost access to workshops, seminars and presentations that inform people about how to embrace healthier lifestyles. This includes specific activities focused on improving community understanding about mental illness.

Q55.

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?

Public libraries are welcoming places in the heart of the community. No other institution is able to offer safe and inclusive public spaces at the same scale. Public libraries reduce social isolation and exclusion, connecting communities through 47 public library services, 272 individual branches, 336 mobile library stops and 72 other library outlets across Victoria. Today's libraries are vibrant neighbourhood hubs offering social interaction and shared cultural experiences. They help build strong and engaged communities, where everyone belongs, and offer a platform for state-wide community development. Victorian public libraries receive more than 30 million visitors per annum. We are widely recognised as one of the last free open doors in our society: • They are places of safety and understanding for people with mental health issues who seek respite from the pressures of school, college, work and home. • They encourage interaction through group activities and have quiet spaces for individual reflection. • They provide information for people who are looking for information and answers about ways of managing mental health issues. • They offer events and health promotion initiatives which raise awareness of mental health issues in the local community. • They run programs and services to help improve people's quality of life. Public libraries across Victoria provide and facilitate invaluable, community-focused workshops and programs for people with, or at risk of developing, mental ill-health. We provide information, raise awareness and aim to help remove any stigma from mental health issues. Reading plays an important role in maintaining good mental health, by allowing people to explore other places, times, people, situations, and look for meaning in their own lives, the role that libraries in providing free access to books cannot be undervalued. As public libraries are safe, air-conditioned public spaces, they are often used as 'drop in spaces' by people experiencing homelessness. Public Libraries Victoria are proud of the work our members do support social inclusion, resilience and well-being in our community. We believe that with increased resources and support from State Government we can do so much more.

Q59.

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

Public Libraries Victoria believe there is an opportunity to position public libraries as the safe place for people maintain good mental health, recover from mental illness and indeed find a form of free and accessible respite. Public libraries are seeing visitation and engagement with our services increase. Our work is becoming increasingly complex as we help people navigate their way not just through the library, but life in general. The people who work in public libraries have a keen understanding of their role encouraging a sense of inclusion and well-being. They play a critical role assisting people as they seek quality information and support. Library staff do not often come from a social work background, but there are shared values and principles at play. Public Libraries Victoria believe it is worth exploring a model of service delivery that would see social workers embedded in public libraries as a readily available and highly accessible resource for people seeking help.

Q57.

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.

Victorian Public Libraries receive more than 30 million visits per annum. We are an accessible and open front line community service with an incredible catchment. As public libraries are safe, airconditioned public spaces, they are often used as 'drop in spaces' by people experiencing homelessness. We believe there is an opportunity to leverage our infrastructure and services to make mental health services more accessible to the broader population - particularly on the prevention and recovery side. We are a trusted source of information and a safe space where everyone is welcome. This means that with adequate resources we can make an even bigger contribution to community health and wellbeing.

Q58.

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

Public libraries can provide a highly efficient way of engaging community in the solutions to our Mental Health crisis. We have proven models of collocation with ancillary health services, the creative sector, education providers and community services. While Victoria's network of public libraries is significant, there are increasing infrastructure gaps. Many new communities do not have easy access to a public library. Many rural and regional libraries are in need of refurbishment and repair. Our recurrent funding from State Government is declining in real terms on a per capita basis – we need additional operational funding to support the vital work we do in the community.

Q56.

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

Public Libraries Victoria offer safe welcoming places where people can gain free respite from the challenges of day to day life. Many of the services we provide people suffering from mental illness are accessed by family members and carers. (Please see our response to section titled '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?')

Q60.

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

It is really important that the mental health workforce feels valued and appreciated by the broader community. As libraries provide support for library patrons it often falls on individual libraries to train their staff in mental health first aid, conflict resolution and prevention. Public Libraries Victoria would welcome increased support for training of library staff that better equips us to address the needs of people impacted by poor mental health.

Q61.

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?

Public Libraries are the welcoming front door for people seeking a sense of belonging and participation in community life. There is no stigma attached to visiting a library. People from all walks of life visit public libraries in the knowledge that they are less likely to be judged, that if they want to engage with people (particularly library staff) they will be treated with warmth and respect. Public libraries across Victoria provide and facilitate invaluable, community-focused workshops and programs for people with, or at risk of developing, mental ill-health. We provide information, raise awareness and aim to help remove any stigma from mental health issues. Libraries Work! A recent report produced by SGS Economics showed that every dollar invested in Victoria's public libraries generated a \$4.34 return. They also found that if funding was increased the return would continue at comparable levels. Increased investment in public libraries represents an increased investment in vital social infrastructure that will help address the Mental Health crisis in Victoria.

Q62.

Thinking about what Victoria's mental health system should ideally look like, tell us what areas and reform ideas you would like the Royal Commission to prioritise for change?

Public Libraries Victoria would like the Royal Commission to reflect on the importance of safe, welcoming spaces for people impacted by poor mental health. Public libraries are well placed to support a whole of government approach to addressing Mental Health issues in our community. It is vitally important that the full potential of public libraries as critical social infrastructure is recognised and celebrated. Public Libraries Victoria recommends that there be more formal support and funding for public libraries to facilitate literacy, universal access to information, lifelong learning and social inclusion.

Q63.

What can be done now to prepare for changes to Victoria's mental health system and support improvements to last?

Public libraries have a strong track record of working collaboratively with our partners to deliver good outcomes for our community. We like many other sectors working in the community recognise the need for a united approach to overcoming one of society's biggest and most pressing challenges.

Q64.

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

Public Libraries Victoria's submission is unashamedly focused on the public libraries play supporting social inclusion, literacy, lifelong learning and well-being in our community. In many respects we are the quiet achievers who by virtue of our commitment to a universal and free service find ourselves in a position to make a more meaningful contribution. Public Libraries Victoria believe that with increased investment public library infrastructure and services across Victoria we can help solve the wicked problem being addressed through the Royal Commission.

Q23.

Please identify whether this submission is to be treated as public, anonymous or restricted
While you can request anonymity or confidentiality below, we strongly encourage your formal submission to be public - this will help to ensure the Commission's work is transparent and the community is fully informed.

Please note:

This cover sheet is required for all formal submissions, whether in writing or by audio or video file. Written submissions made online or by post, may be published on the Commission's website (at the discretion of the Commission) subject to your nominated preferences. Audio and video submissions will not be published on the Commission's website. However, they may be referred to in the Commissions reports subject to any preferences nominated. Please note that while the Commission will take into account your preference, the Commission may redact any part of any submission for privacy, legal or other reasons.

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q50. Please include a short explanation as to why you would like your submission restricted

This question was not displayed to the respondent.

Q47. Please note:

- You can upload up to 10 files
- Files cannot exceed 100mb
- .zip and .exe files cannot be accepted
- A brief description of each uploaded file is required
- Please contact the Royal Commission if you have any difficulty uploading your submission at <https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/contact-us>

Q28. File 1

[Libraries Work! The Socio-economic Value of Public Libraries to Victoria.pdf](#)

19.6MB

application/pdf

Q58. Privacy Acknowledgement



I understand that the Royal Commission works with the assistance of its advisers and service providers. I agree that personal information about me and provided by me will be handled in accordance with Commission's Privacy Policy available at www.rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Q29. Brief description of the uploaded file

Supporting document

Q31. File 2

[Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework.pdf](#)

1.9MB

application/pdf

Q50. Brief description of the uploaded file

Supporting document (please note due to be revisited this year)

Q32. File 3

[Libraries Change Lives Booklet FINAL.PDF](#)

1.7MB

application/pdf

Q51. Brief description of the uploaded file

Supporting document - PLV Budget Submission 2019 - 20

Q33. File 4

Q52. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

Q34. File 5

Q53. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

Q35. File 6

Q54. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

Q36. File 7

Q55. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

Q37. File 8

Q56. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

Q38. File 9

Q57. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

Q39. File 10

Q58. Brief description of the uploaded file

e.g. Formal submission or supporting document

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- I understand that the Royal Commission works with the assistance of its advisers and service providers. I agree that personal information about me and provided by me will be handled in accordance with Commission's Privacy Policy available at www.rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Location Data

Location: [\(-37.833297729492, 144.96670532227\)](#)

Source: GeoIP Estimation

