



24 January 2019

Mental Health Royal Commission Establishment  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
1 Treasury Place  
Melbourne Vic 3002

To Whom It May Concern

**Terms of Reference, Mental Health Royal Commission**

The Old Colonists' Association of Victoria is pleased to submit its suggestions to the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Our suggestions are framed from an older person's perspective, and are based on our in-depth knowledge of working with and for older people in need.

**Old Colonists' Association of Victoria**

The Old Colonists' Association of Victoria (OCAV) is a leading not-for profit retirement village provider offering a continuum of care from independent living, assisted living and aged care in Victoria. Our four villages in Berwick, Euroa, North Fitzroy and St Helena are home to 500 older Victorians in need.

The OCAV was established in 1869 by Victorian founding families including George Selth Coppin, a Member of Parliament and philanthropist. The association's first village is located at Rushall Park, North Fitzroy after the Government of Victoria gifted an acreage of land.

Around half of our residents were either homeless or at risk of homelessness before entering an OCAV village. Around 80 per cent of our residents are single, older women with limited financial means.

The OCAV recently committed to become a dementia-friendly residential community as part of its Vision 2020. We have a robust wellbeing program at Liscombe House, our Aged Care Home.

**Survey questions**

**1. Our priority order is:**

1. Prevention and early intervention
2. Social isolation, depression, anxiety and trauma
3. Deliverable reform to improve outcomes for people living with a mental illness
4. Accessibility and navigating the mental health system

5. Preventing suicide
6. Workforce development and retention
7. Community mental health services
8. Integrations between alcohol and other drugs and mental health services
9. Forensic mental health services.

**2. Additional themes that should be included are:**

- Mental health and homelessness; lack of services (including accommodation that caters effectively to this growing population)
- Effective funding especially for social mental health issues (isolation, depression, sadness and episodic mental illness); the current funding is skewed to treatment
- Effective funding for mental health among the middle aged population (funding for younger people with serious mental illness is plentiful; however the middle aged person misses out on funding which has long-term consequences for how we care for older people with mental illness)
- Effective funding for research especially mental health among the older population; this should embrace social issues as well as treatment
- The NDIS and older people; as a consequence of the start of NDIS, people over 60 are missing out on essential services that were previously funded through the Victorian health system
- Carers of older people and their mental health

**3. Additional comments about the Royal Commission into Mental Health**

We urge the Commissioners to consider past recommendations relating to mental health and older people including:

- The National Men's and Women's Health Strategies
- Past inquiries in aged care

4. Our interest is as an aged care and retirement village operator where we provide accommodation and support to elderly Victorians with a need.

5. Postcode (main village) 3068

**Other information**

We attach facts and figures about mental health and older people.

We look forward to being able to contribute further in due course.

Yours faithfully

Phillip Wohlers  
Chief Executive Officer