

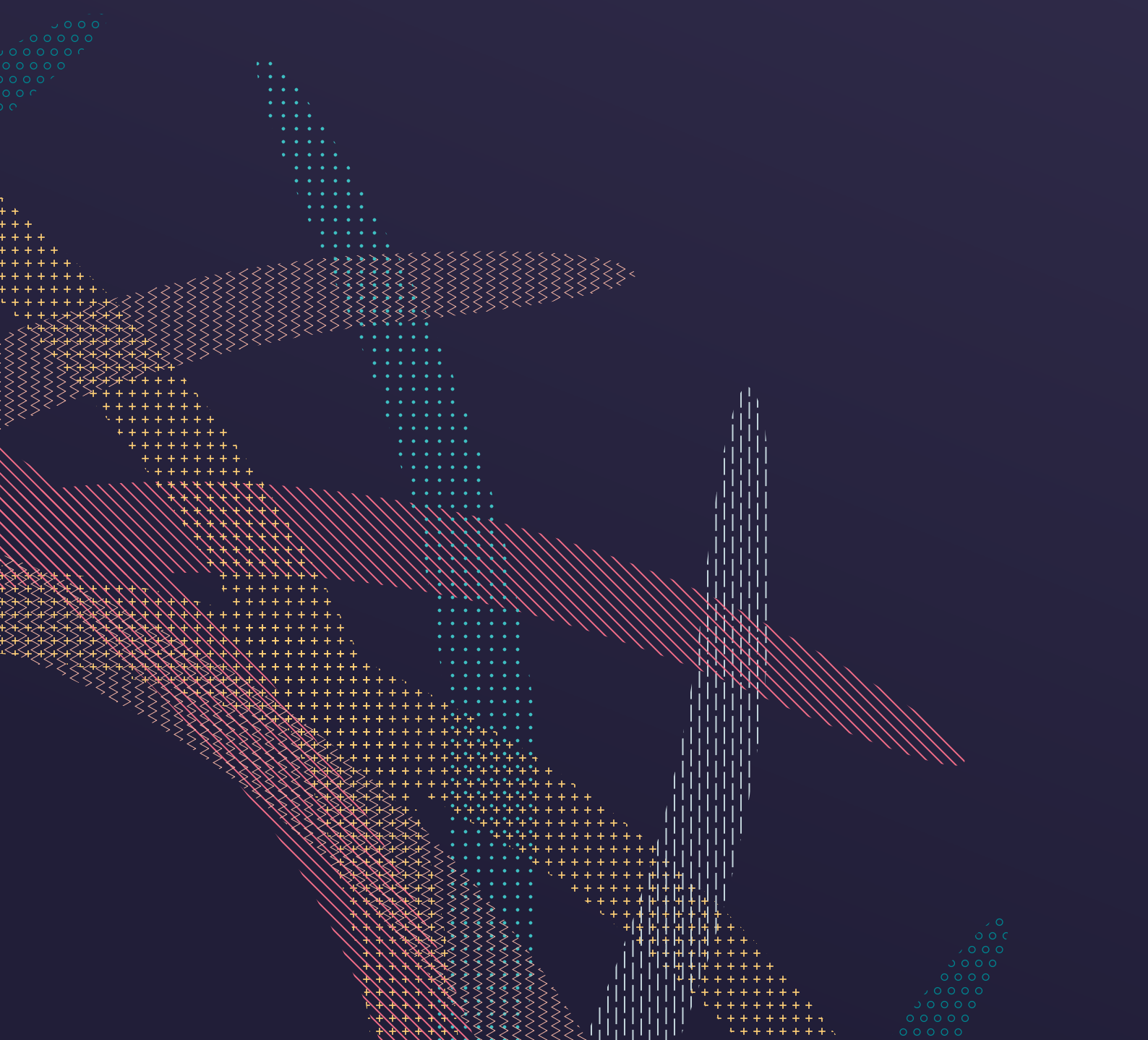


**Royal Commission into
Victoria's Mental Health System**

Final Report

Our recommendations

Easy Read version



Our recommendations

Easy Read version

Published February 2021

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Melbourne Victoria, authorised and published this document.

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This plain language report is a simplified version of the *Final Report*. The content and ideas presented in this report are similar, however, they are not the direct words of the Commissioners.

The images in this document only show models and examples of settings. They don't necessarily show actual services, facilities or participants. If the image is of a specific person or place, the document will say that. This document may include images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have died.

In this document, 'Aboriginal' means both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We use 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' when it's part of the title of a report, program or quote.

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Available at the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System website <www.rcvmhs.vic.gov.au>. If you have any questions about the Commission's work please contact the Department of Health <MentalHealth@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

How to use this report



The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (RCVMHS) wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means the RCVMHS.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 79.



This Easy Read report is a summary of another report. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website at rcvmhs.vic.gov.au



In this report, we talk about some things that might upset some people.



If you read things that upset you, you should tell someone you trust.



In this report we also talk about **suicide**.

Suicide is when someone chooses to end their own life.

If you need to talk to someone, please contact:



Lifeline

13 11 14



Beyond Blue

1300 224 636



You can ask for help to read this report. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this report?

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Our recommendations



Recommendations are ideas about how to change something to make it better.



We have 65 recommendations for Victoria's **mental health system**.



Your mental health is about how you:

- think
- feel
- manage your feelings.



A system includes things that are:

- connected with each other
- work together.

Recommendation 1

The Victorian Government should:



- work together to support good mental health and wellbeing in the community
- check how well things are going and use this information to:
 - make plans for the future
 - choose where to spend more money



- tell the community about how things are going.

Recommendation 2

The Victorian Government should set up a new group to:



- talk to the community about good mental health



- help people stay well



- make the mental health system:
 - fair
 - equal



- support a mental health system that helps our **economy**.



Our economy is the total amount of goods, services and money that Australia makes and uses.

Recommendation 3

The Victorian Government should create a mental health system that:



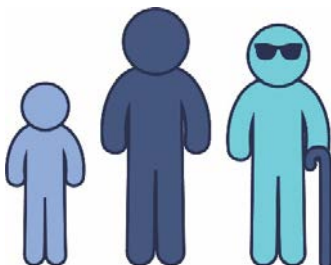
- works well with other services



- acts quickly



- lets people get the support they need in their own community



- offers services to meet the needs of different age groups in Victoria.

Recommendation 4



The Victorian Government should set up 8 groups across the state.

These groups will:



- talk to people who live in these areas



- tell the Victorian Government what they need



- check to see how well supports and services are doing in these areas



- make sure people who need lots of different support can get it easily.

Recommendation 5

The Victorian Government should make sure:



- service providers work well together



- important services are available:
 - 24 hours a day
 - 7 days a week



- services are **accessible** to everyone in the community.



When something is accessible, everyone can use it. This might be:

- a place or a building
- transport
- a service
- information
- a website.

Recommendation 6

The Victorian Government should:



- make it easy for people to get support if they need it



- create a website with clear information about the mental health system in Victoria



- support helpline services to make them better.

Recommendation 7

The Victorian Government should make sure services support people to:



- understand and use the mental health system



- find out what mental health needs they have



- find the right support for them.



Services need to focus on helping people.

Recommendation 8



The Victorian Government should make sure services can support people experiencing a **mental health crisis**.



A mental health crisis is when a person's mental health might make them:

- very upset
- hurt themselves
- hurt others
- not able to take care of themselves
- not able to take part in the community.



The Victorian Government should make sure people experiencing a mental health crisis can get support:

- anytime they need it
- quickly.



Services should check on the person after they get support to find out how they are doing.



The Victorian Government should also make sure emergency services can support people experiencing a mental health crisis.

Recommendation 9

The Victorian Government should provide:



- safe places to support people experiencing a mental health crisis



- safe places to help stop suicide.



These safe places will be across Victoria.

Recommendation 10



The Victorian Government should make sure people experiencing a mental health crisis get support from the right emergency services.



For example, help for a person's health comes first.



Mental health workers should support emergency services when they can.



Emergency services should get the support they need to help people experiencing a mental health crisis.



For example, a helpline that a police officer can call if they are with someone with an urgent mental health problem.

Recommendation 11

The Victorian Government should:



- **review bed-based services** – a type of treatment usually delivered in hospitals



When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



- find new ways to deliver bed-based services, such as in someone's home



- regularly check how many bed-based services are available.

Recommendation 12



The Victorian Government should develop new bed-based **rehabilitation** services.

Rehabilitation is support to get healthy again after you have been:



- unwell
- injured.



The new bed-based rehabilitation services should be available in the community.

Recommendation 13



The Victorian Government should keep people who experience **violence** because of their **gender** safe in mental health services.



Violence is when someone hurts you physically.



Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body is male or female.

Recommendation 14



The Victorian Government should support **mental health consultation liaison services.**



Mental health consultation liaison services can help you find services that will give you the right:

- treatment
- care
- support.

Mental health consultation liaison services can:



- give you advice about mental health services you can use



- help other health services support mental health too.

Recommendation 15

The Victorian Government should:



- support services in the community that help people with mental health needs



- find out how to get more people to take part in different activities in their community.

Recommendation 16

The Victorian Government should support employers to:



- support people with mental health needs while they are at work



- find ways to make people's mental health at work better



- make sure workplaces are **inclusive**
If something is inclusive, everyone can take part.



- make sure workplaces are free from **stigma**.



Stigma is when you think badly about someone because of something about them they cannot change.



The Victorian Government should show employers the best way to create this workplace.

Recommendation 17

The Victorian Government should support schools to:



- set up programs that teach students about **bullying** – when someone says or does something to make you feel bad



- support students with their mental health and wellbeing



- pay for services schools need to support their students.

Recommendation 18

The Victorian Government should find out how they can better support:

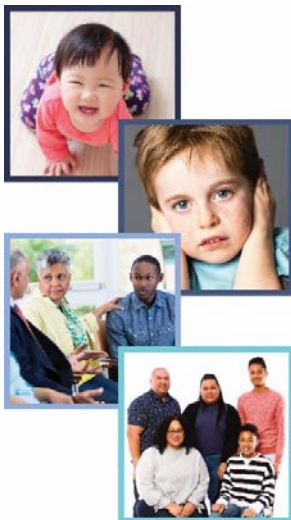


- new parents



- people about to become parents.

Recommendation 19



The Victorian Government should set up services that meet the needs of:

- babies
- children
- people under 26 years old
- families.



The Victorian Government should support parents with:

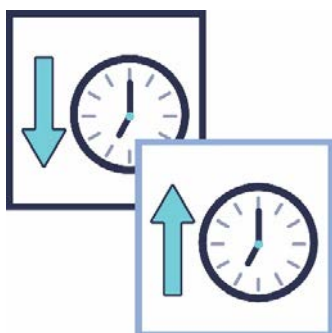
- online programs
- group support sessions.

Recommendation 20

The Victorian Government should support services for young people from:



- 12 years old
- to
- 25 years old.



The services should provide:

- short-term care
- long-term care.



The Victorian Government should support different services for young people to work together.

Recommendation 21

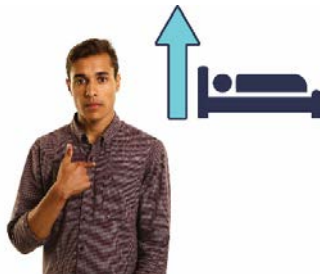
The Victorian Government should:



- review bed-based services for young people



- find new ways to deliver bed-based services, such as in the young person's home



- get more beds for young people aged 18–25 years old



- review the rehabilitation program for young people with support from:
 - young people
 - families
 - carers
 - supporters.

Recommendation 22

The Victorian Government should:



- support services that meet the needs of older people



- make sure older people can use the same services as other adults



- set up services that support older people with mental health and wellbeing needs that come from getting older.

Recommendation 23



The Victorian Government should set up a new service to support people who have experienced **trauma**.

Trauma is something bad that happens to you that can make you feel:



- sad
- scared
- stressed
- worried.



The Victorian Government should pay for the new trauma service.

The new trauma service will:



- do research



- teach mental health workers about supporting people with trauma



- connect people with trauma experts

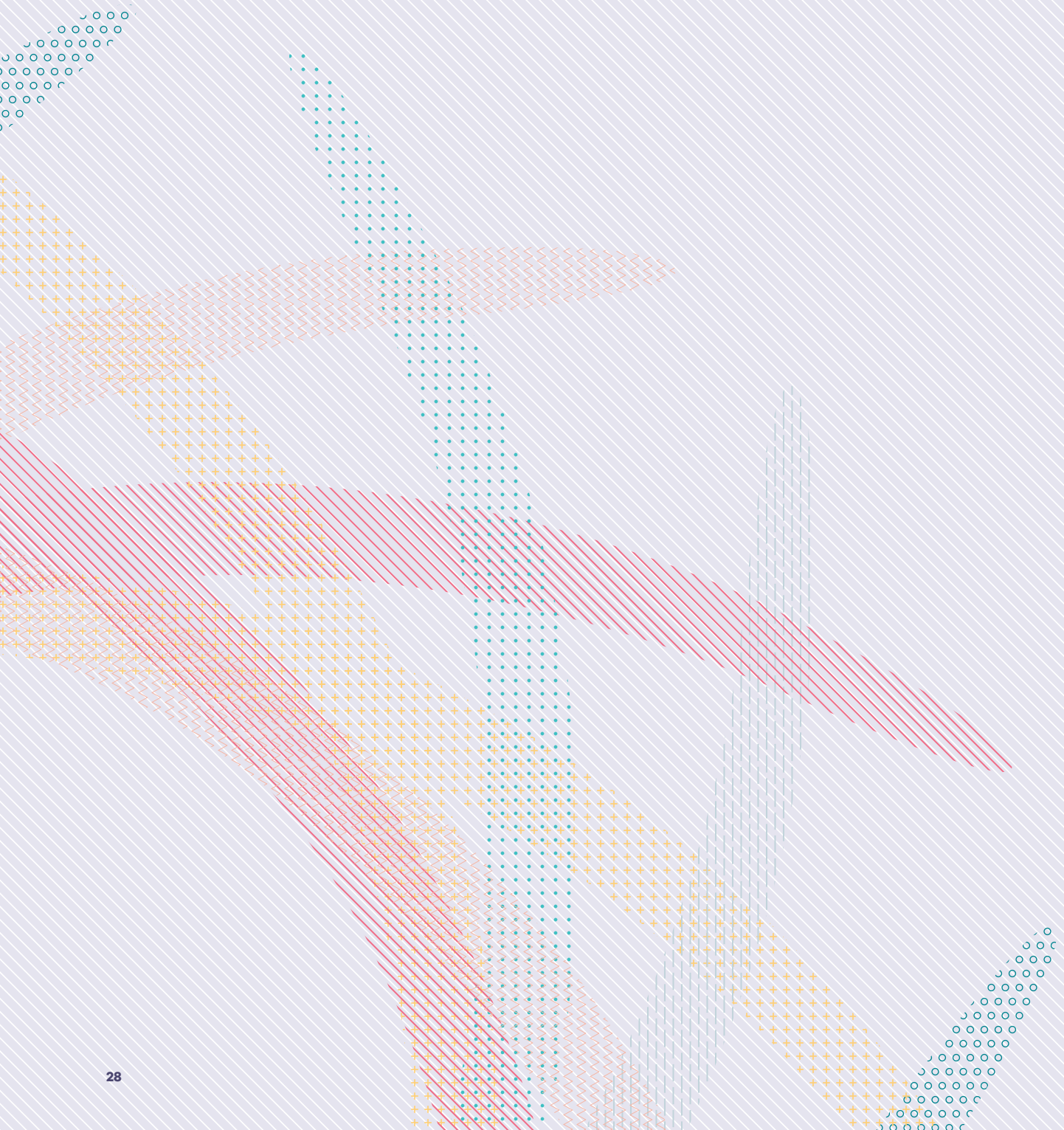


- develop **peer-support** options.



Peer support is when someone helps other people in a similar situation by using their:

- experience
- knowledge.



Recommendation 24



The Victorian Government should work with the new trauma service to find new ways to support people who have experienced trauma.

Recommendation 25



The Victorian Government should support services that provide homes for:

- young people with mental health needs
- adults with mental health needs.

The Victorian Government should:



- make sure there are enough homes for people who need support with their mental health



- build more homes



- provide different types of homes



- make sure the homes are in good locations.

Recommendation 26

The Victorian Government should set up a new group to:



- make a plan to stop suicide



- work with people who have experience with suicide, such as:
 - people who have tried suicide
 - families
 - carers



- work with the Australian Government to make sure supports to stop suicide in Victoria are the same as supports around Australia.

Recommendation 27



The Victorian Government should find ways to support people who think about suicide.

This includes:



- training mental health workers in the best ways to provide support



- providing online training for people to learn about:
 - suicide
 - how to stop it

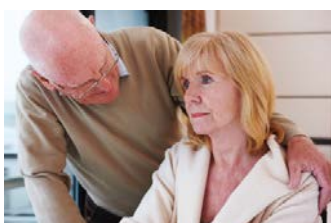


- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop training that meets their needs.

It also includes:



- supporting businesses to set up programs for workers



- supporting people who know someone who has died by suicide



- supporting **LGBTIQ+** people who have tried suicide



LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning.

Recommendation 28



The Victorian Government should create jobs in the mental health system.



These jobs would be for people who have experience in seeking support for their own mental health.

These people should be able to:



- become leaders



- have a say in decisions that affect them.

These people should be able to make programs that:



- deal with stigma around different mental health needs
- help people learn about the experiences of people with different mental health needs.

Recommendation 29



The Victorian Government should set up a new mental health and wellbeing agency.



The agency should be run by people who have experience in seeking support for their own mental health.



The agency will be separate from the Victorian Government.

It will:



- set up mental health and wellbeing services run by people who have experience in seeking support for their own mental health



- support these services with:
 - training
 - resources



- help these services work together.

Recommendation 30



The Victorian Government should create jobs for families and carers in the mental health system.

Families and carers should be able to:



- become leaders in the mental health system



- take part in training.



Families and carers should be included when the person with mental health needs gets support.

Recommendation 31

The Victorian Government should support organisations to:



- give families, carers and supporters information, including a new website



- work with families, carers and supporters to:
 - work out what they need
 - connect them to the supports that will meet their needs



- deliver peer support groups in different areas.



The Victorian Government should set up a peer support service that calls back people caring for someone who is thinking about suicide.

Recommendation 32

The Victorian Government should give more **funding** to support:



- young carers



- children and young people who have a family member with mental health needs.



Funding is money from the government to pay for supports and services.

The Victorian Government should find ways to support young carers through:



- their school



- the mental health system.

Recommendation 33



The Victorian Government should provide mental health supports that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This includes:



- setting up 2 healing centres



- giving funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations

that support:

- babies
- children
- young people



- giving funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations that deliver wellbeing support to:

- children
- young people.

Recommendation 34



The Victorian Government should make sure mental health services are accessible to everyone in the community.

The Victorian Government should make sure mental health services meet the needs of everyone in the community, including people:

- from different **cultures**.

Your culture is:

- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up.



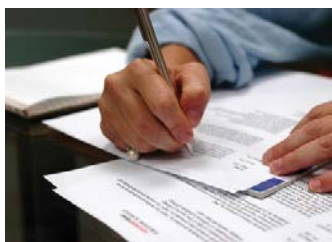
- who speak a language other than English



- who are LGBTIQ+



- with different levels of **literacy**.



Your literacy is how well you can:

- read
- write.

Recommendation 35

The Victorian Government should better support people with mental health needs who



also have:

- drug problems
- alcohol problems.

Recommendation 36



The Victorian Government should set up a new service for people with mental health needs who also have:

- drug problems
- alcohol problems.

The new service will:



- do research



- support education and training for workers



- make it easier for people to get support.

The Victorian Government should support more people to be experts in people who need support for their mental health and have:



- drug problems
- alcohol problems.

Recommendation 37

The Victorian Government should better support people with mental health needs who:



- are in the **criminal justice system**



- are at risk of being in the criminal justice system.



The criminal justice system includes:

- police
- **courts** – a place where a judge and/or a jury fix legal problems
- prisons
- services that help keep people out of prison.



This includes setting up a program to support people with mental health needs in prison.



The new program will help these people get the same support from the mental health system after they leave prison.

The Victorian Government should make sure there are programs to support children and young people:



- in the criminal justice system



- at risk of being in the criminal justice system.

Recommendation 38



The Victorian Government should make sure the Thomas Embling Hospital can provide more support.



This includes having more beds for people who need support with their mental health.

Recommendation 39

The Victorian Government should:



- better support people who live far away from big cities and towns



- give more resources to mental health services far away from big cities and towns



- support people in these areas in new ways, such as online.

Recommendation 40



The Victorian Government should find ways to get more mental health workers to work in areas far away from big cities and towns.

Recommendation 41

The Victorian Government should find better ways to deal with:



- stigma
- **discrimination.**



Discrimination is when someone is treated badly because of something about them they can't change.

The Victorian Government should set up programs to:



- teach people about different mental health needs



- change people's ideas about different mental health needs.



The Victorian Government should support organisations in the community to deliver these programs.



The Victorian Government should find out the best ways to change people's ideas about different mental health needs.



The Victorian Government should make sure people get legal support to deal with discrimination if they need it.

Recommendation 42



The Victorian Government should make a new law called the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act (the Act).



The Act will replace the *Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic)*.

The Act will make sure:



- people can have good mental health and wellbeing



- everyone who needs to can use the mental health system



- there are different services available



- people in charge know what to do.

The Act will also make sure:



- services are checked to make sure they do a good job



- fewer people are forced to have treatment



- people know how information about mental health and wellbeing can be:
 - collected
 - used.

Recommendation 43



The Victorian Government should make sure the new law is reviewed in the future.



An **independent** organisation should review the law.



When an organisation is independent it:

- has its own ideas and opinions
- can make decisions without asking the government for permission
- cannot be controlled by the government.



The Victorian Government should get support for this review from:

- people who need support with their mental health
- families
- carers
- supporters.

Recommendation 44



The Victorian Government should set up a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission will make sure:



- the mental health system works well



- the mental health system is safe



- people with mental health needs can share ideas about changing the mental health system.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission will find out how:



- the Victorian Government is going with the Royal Commission's recommendations



- to deal with stigma around people who need support with their mental health.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission will include at least:



- 1 person who has experience in seeking support for their own mental health
- 1 family member or carer.

Recommendation 45



The Victorian Government should make sure the mental health system has a good leader. The leader will be called the Chief Officer for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

The Chief Officer will make sure:



- the Victorian Government puts all the Royal Commission's recommendations in place



- people with experience in seeking support for their own mental health can be leaders.

Recommendation 46

The Victorian Government should make sure:



- the whole government works together to make the mental health system better



- teams check how well the Royal Commission's recommendations are being put in place.

Recommendation 47



The Victorian Government should find out what Victorians need from the mental health system.

The Victorian Government should:



- make a plan for all of Victoria



- make a plan for different areas in Victoria



- update the plan for Victoria every 3 years



- support different areas in Victoria to update their plan every 3 years too.



Recommendation 48

The Victorian Government should:



- set new service standards for choosing mental health providers
- support mental health providers to meet the goals of the service standards.



The Victorian Government should give funding for services that meet the needs of:

- people who need support with their mental health
- families
- carers
- supporters.



The Victorian Government should make sure providers share funding fairly.



The Victorian Government should find the best way to provide funding for mental health services.

Recommendation 49



The Victorian Government should set up a new way to regularly check how well mental health providers are doing.

The Victorian Government should make sure that mental health providers can:



- make their services better



- meet the needs of:
 - people who need support with their mental health
 - families
 - carers
 - supporters.



The Victorian Government should ask people how well mental health providers are doing.

Recommendation 50

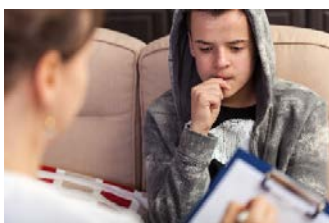
The Victorian Government should tell more people about:



- what governments in Australia must do to help stop suicide



- mental health services



- services to help stop suicide



- other services that can help, such as housing services



- how to be a leader in the mental health system.



The Victorian Government should focus on how to make sure these mental health and wellbeing goals are met.

Recommendation 51

The Victorian Government should make sure mental health providers:



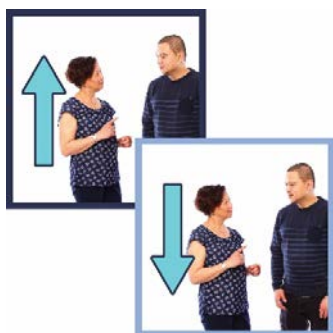
- have enough resources



- are doing a good job.



The Victorian Government should pay for projects for providers who work together in the same part of Victoria.



The projects will show those providers how to deliver different services to people who need:

- a lot of support
- a little bit of support.

The Victorian Government should:



- find out how well these projects worked



- use this information to find out how to connect more providers.



The Victorian Government should support more providers to work together to better support people with mental health needs.

Recommendation 52

The Victorian Government should set up a team to make mental health services:



- safer



- better **quality**.

Quality is how good something is.

For people with mental health needs, this can be getting good services that:



- meet their needs
- give them choice and control.

The team will:



- work with mental health services to teach them how to make their services safer and better quality



- explain why this is important



- work with people who have experience with mental health needs



- make new rules for services to follow.

Recommendation 53

The Victorian Government should support the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission to:



- check on the safety and quality of mental health services
- write reports about the safety and quality of mental health services
- make sure **complaints** about mental health services are managed well.

When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:



- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.

The Victorian Government should support the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission to find out about services that:



- give people treatment they do not want



- keep people away from other people



- stop people from:
 - moving
 - doing what they want



- have had violence because of a person's gender



- have reported suicide.

Recommendation 54

The Victorian Government should make sure mental health services don't:



- keep people away from other people



- stop people from:
 - moving
 - doing what they want.



The Victorian Government should make sure mental health services stop these things in the next 10 years.



The Chief Officer for Mental Health and Wellbeing should lead how this is done.



The Victorian Government should make sure mental health services follow the laws.

The Victorian Government should support:



- people with mental health needs to have their say



- mental health services to have their say.

They should have a say about:



- what needs to change most in the mental health system



- training for mental health workers.

Recommendation 55



The Victorian Government should make sure people with mental health needs are only forced to have treatment if there is no other option.

The Victorian Government should:



- look at how much people are forced to have treatment



- find out if this can happen less



- tell mental health services not to force people to have treatment unless there is no other option



- train mental health workers about other options.

Recommendation 56



The Victorian Government should support people with mental health needs to stand up for their **rights**.



Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated fairly.

The Victorian Government should make sure:



- people with mental health needs can get support without discrimination



- more people can get legal help when they are forced to have treatment



- laws for the mental health system are like other laws that help people make their own decisions



- people who may be forced to have treatment will get an **advocate** unless they do not want one.

An advocate is someone who can:



- support you
- speak up for you if you can't speak up
- for yourself
- give you information and advice.

Recommendation 57

The Victorian Government should make sure the mental health system:



- has enough workers



- has workers with different skills



- is **diverse**.

When a workplace is diverse, lots of different people work there. This includes:



- men and women
- people with disability
- people from different backgrounds
- people with different beliefs.



The Victorian Government should find ways to get more workers into the mental health system.



The Victorian Government should update the roles of workers so people get the support they need for their mental health.

The Victorian Government should:



- collect information about mental health workers



- use this information to plan for the future



- support mental health workers to work together to put the Royal Commission's recommendations in place.

Recommendation 58



The Victorian Government should make sure mental health workers get the right training.

The Victorian Government should:



- work out what skills mental health workers need to do their job well



- explain how workers will get the training they need



- create good training programs for mental health workers.

The Victorian Government will get support to create these programs from:



- training providers
- mental health services
- people who need mental health support
- families
- carers
- supporters.

Recommendation 59



The Victorian Government should set up a team to take care of the health and safety of mental health workers.

The team will:



- find out what makes workers unsafe



- take away these risks.



The Victorian Government should:

- check on the mental health of workers
- support the mental health of workers.

Recommendation 60



The Victorian Government should make sure mental health providers offer enough digital services, such as **telehealth**.



Telehealth is support you get:

- over the phone
- on a video call.



The Victorian Government should support mental health providers to use more digital services.



The Victorian Government should support mental health providers to let people use:

- mobile data
- devices, such as smartphones or tablets.



The Victorian Government should support mental health providers to learn how to use digital services.

Recommendation 61

The Victorian Government should make rules about:



- collecting mental health information



- sharing mental health information.

Mental health services should make it easy for people to:



- see their information



- change their information.



Mental health services should make sure it's OK to share information about a person.

Recommendation 62



The Victorian Government should pay for a new digital system where mental health services can keep information.

The Victorian Government should look at what information mental health services collect to:



- run their service
- check how well people who use the service are doing.

The Victorian Government should make a new digital system where mental health services can share information with:



- each other
- services that are not part of the mental health system.



The Victorian Government should make a new online system for people who use mental health services.



The online system should let people:

- look at information about them
- share information about them.

Recommendation 63

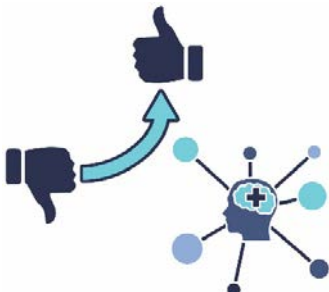
The Victorian Government should support:



- research into how to make the mental health system better



- researchers to share what they find out.



The Victorian Government should make sure this information is used to make the mental health system better.

Recommendation 64



The Victorian Government should support an organisation to find new ways to deliver mental health services.

The Victorian Government should pay this organisation to:



- support services to work together to find new ways of delivering mental health services



- support services to try new ways of delivering mental health services.

Recommendation 65

The Victorian Government should make sure mental health services:



- know they will have to show how they spend funding



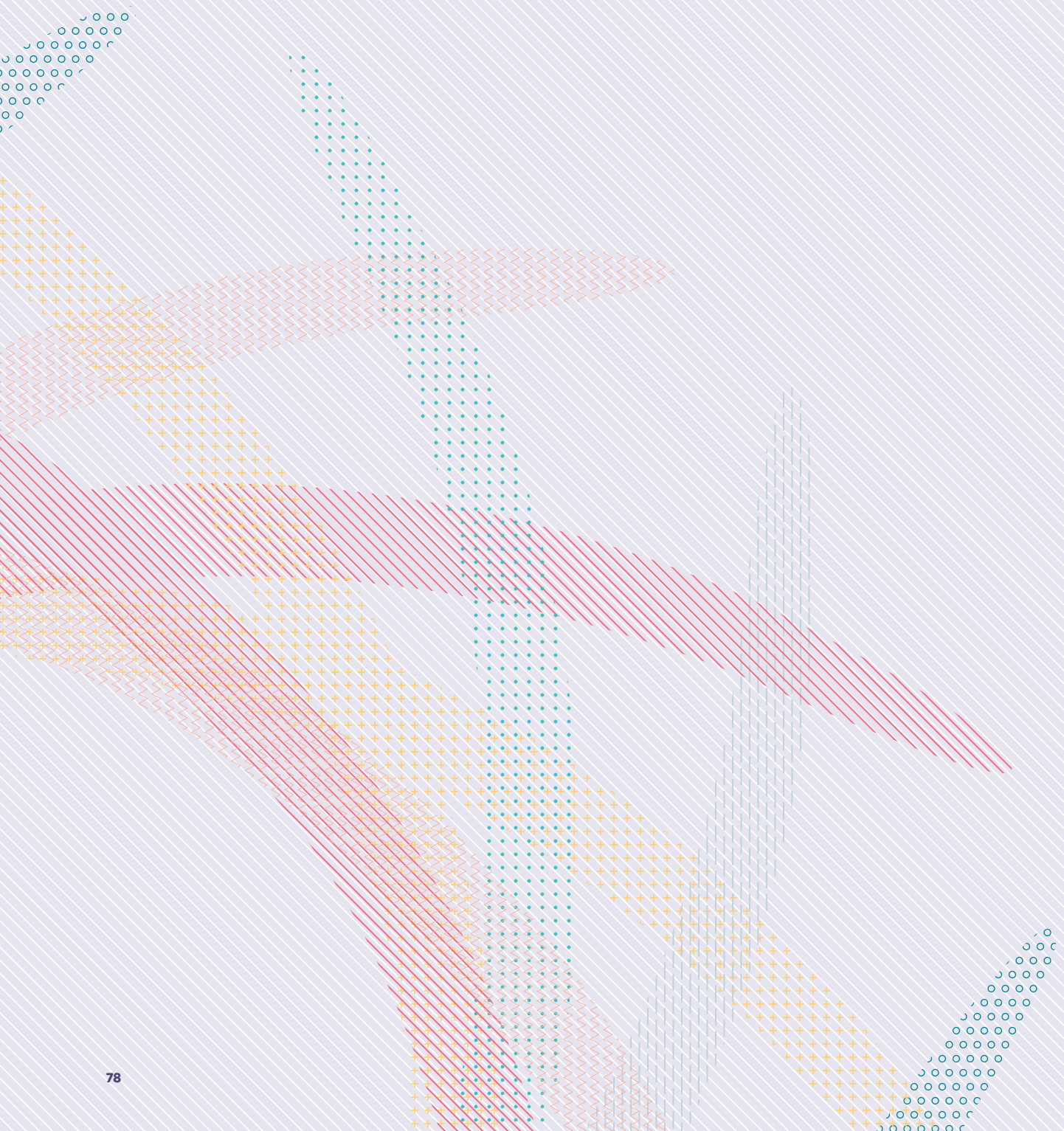
- look at how well they have done things in the past



- use this information to plan for the future.



The Victorian Government should support the mental health system to keep checking how well its doing.



Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Accessible

When something is accessible, everyone can use it. This might be:

- a place or a building
- transport
- a service
- information
- a website.



Advocate

An advocate is someone who can:

- support you
- speak up for you if you can't speak up
- for yourself
- give you information and advice.



Bed-based services

A type of treatment usually delivered in hospitals.



Bullying

Bullying is when someone says or does something to make you feel bad.



Complaint

When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



Courts

A place where a judge and/or a jury fix legal problems.



Criminal justice system

The criminal justice system includes:

- police
- courts
- prisons
- services that help keep people out of prison.

Culture

Your culture is:

- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up.





Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated badly because of something about them they cannot change.

Diverse

When a workplace is diverse, lots of different people work there. This includes:

- men and women
- people with disability
- people from different backgrounds
- people with different beliefs.



Economy

Our economy is the total amount of goods, services and money that Australia makes and uses.



Funding

Funding is money from the government to pay for supports and services.



Gender

Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body is male or female.



Inclusive

If something is inclusive, everyone can take part.

Independent

When an organisation is independent it:

- has its own ideas and opinions
- can make decisions without asking the government for permission
- cannot be controlled by the government.



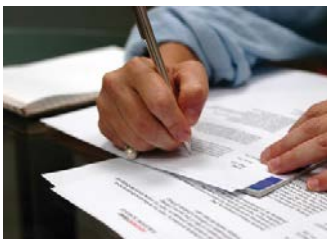
LGBTIQ+

LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning.

Literacy

Your literacy is how well you can:

- read
- write.



Mental health

Your mental health is about how you:

- think
- feel
- manage your feelings.



Mental health consultation liaison services



Mental health consultation liaison services can help you find services that will give you the right:

- treatment
- care
- support.

Mental health crisis



A mental health crisis is when a person's mental health might make them:

- hurt themselves
- hurt others
- not able to take care of themselves
- not able to take part in the community.

Peer support



Peer support is when someone helps other people in a similar situation by using their:

- experience
- knowledge.



Quality

Quality is how good something is.



Recommendations

Recommendations are ideas about how to change something to make it better.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is support to get healthy again after you have been:

- unwell
- injured.



Review

When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



Rights

Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated fairly.



Stigma

Stigma is when you think badly about someone because of something about them they cannot change.





System

A system includes things that are:

- connected with each other
- work together.



Telehealth

Telehealth is support you get:

- over the phone
- on a video call.

Trauma

Trauma is something bad that happens to you that can make you feel:



- sad
- scared
- stressed
- worried.



Violence

Violence is when someone hurts you physically.

More information



You can find out more information about the Royal Commission at – rcvmhs.vic.gov.au



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