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Royal Commission puts community-based mental health first

The final report from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System marks the first step in the much-needed reset of Victoria's broken mental health system.

In welcoming the report, Wellways CEO Laura Collister applauded the Royal Commission findings that supporting people in the community in which they live as fundamental to helping people in their recovery.

"At Wellways, we know that in order to return to overall health, we need to build inclusive communities in which everyone has the opportunity to lead meaningful and satisfying lives. Access to care in the community is essential to achieving this," said Ms Collister.

"This is how Wellways has operated since its inception – without putting people first, the system will remain broken. This report and the recommendations are ambitious, but necessary.

"There is strong evidence that supporting people in the community improves health. Community-based mental health services like Wellways have been working to build inclusive communities, providing urgent and critical services to participants, especially those with severe and persistent mental health issues.

"The shift toward this model of care in the Commission's report will help improve the health, resilience and support for many of the most vulnerable within the community," said Ms Collister.

In recognising the vital work of the entire not-for-profit mental health sector, the Commission has placed greater emphasis on the role the sector plays in generating innovation within the Mental Health system.

"The not-for-profit sector's united commitment to the wellbeing of participants has been integral to delivering programs that go beyond what has been done before. We look forward to continuing to deliver innovative and meaningful programs with our partners as the Victorian Government delivers on these much-needed reforms," said Ms Collister.

"The recommendations to expand services in the community must be met with a commitment to adequate and sustainable funding," said Ms Collister.

As Wellways continues to assess the report in-depth, the organisation is encouraged by recommendations which specifically reflect our submission to the Commission including:

- promoting inclusion, and the importance of community;
- valuing the input of people with lived experience, their families and carers;
- the design and delivery of anti-stigma programs to provide more meaningful support to participants and community education;
- the ongoing impact of support provided by the lived experience workforce, our dedicated peer supporter roles
- the importance of a stable housing for mental wellbeing, and the need for more mental health-related tenancy support services which are tailored to the needs of people experiencing mental health issues, such as the Wellways Doorway program.

The Royal Commission's final report has outlined 65 recommendations. Wellways looks forward to working with the Government and other industry participants on assessing and moving forward with implementation. Throughout this process Wellways will continue to listen to the voices of those with lived experience to ensure Government stands by its commitments and the Commission's recommendations are implemented.

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About [Wellways Australia](#)

Wellways Australia is a leading for-purpose mental health and community services organisation dedicated to ensuring all Australians lead active and fulfilling lives in their community. We work with people with mental health challenges, people living with disability, carers, those requiring community care and others facing disadvantage to help them create the life they want to live.

We have a commitment to ensuring that all the people we serve have opportunities to fully participate in the community, and we actively work to build communities that seek out and welcome the participation of everyone. Community inclusion underpins all our efforts as an organisation.

We advocate for policy change to make sure people can access the best possible care and information when they need it. We recognise for people to succeed there needs to be equitable access to services and supports for all and the elimination of barriers to community participation, including stigma and systemic discrimination.

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