



Planning your submission
to the Royal Commission
into Mental Health



Online submissions

What to expect, screen by screen

The Royal Commission encourage submissions on their website, but you can also make a submission by post if you prefer.

This flyer is packed with info about how to make an online submission.



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Check our website for other Royal Commission tips and cheat sheets

www.vmiac.org.au/RCMH

Submissions
open until
5 July 2019

The Royal Commission into Mental Health has been set up to look at how to improve mental health services across Victoria.

It's running until the end of 2020.

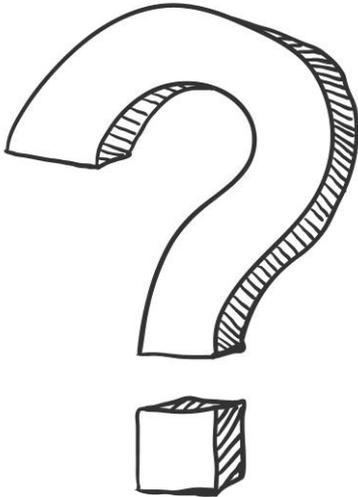
Right now, they are asking the public to make 'submissions' to tell them about what's working, what's not working, and ideas to improve the system.

A submission can be as simple as a few short sentences, or it can be a long and complicated document—it's up to you.

This is an important opportunity for consumers to have their say about the issues that matter most to you.

Common questions

About online submissions



What should I say in my submission?

This is the big question for everyone.

You are the only person who can answer this—because it’s important that every person talks about what matters most to them.

A good starting point is to think about your own experiences and decide:

- What’s really **good** about the mental health system (if anything) that they should keep, or do more of?
- What’s really **bad** about the mental health system (if anything), that they should stop or change?
- Do you have any **ideas** that might make mental health services, or consumer’s lives, better?

You can share stories and examples from your own life. You can say as much or as little as you want.

This flyer has some ideas in it, but they are just things we have heard other consumers say. You don’t have to say any of them—it’s your choice.

Where do I make the submission?

Go to this web page:

<https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/submissions>

Then click on this button to make a detailed submission:

Make a formal submission (opens in new window)

Or click on this button to make some brief comments:

Provide brief comments (opens in new window)

What if I stop halfway? You can't save your submission, but if you leave the screen open, the info should still be there when you come back. Your info won't be submitted unless you complete all the screens and press the submit button.

Can I be anonymous? Yes. You will have to fill out a contacts details page (with your name and a phone number or email address). But there is a section at the end where you choose to make your submission anonymous, or ask to restrict who can see it.

What if I make a mistake? You can go back to a previous screen by clicking 'back' in the left-hand side of each page (at the bottom of the screen).

Can I do more than one submission? Yes. It looks like you can do as many different submissions as you want.

Should I prepare? You don't have to prepare, but if you have a lot to say, it may be a lot easier to write or type up your answers first, then paste them into the website later.

Do I have to do it by myself? No. You can do an individual submission, or as part of a group. Organisations can also make submissions. VMIAC is also here to support you.



Screen by screen

What you'll see and be asked

1

SCREEN 1: Info to read

There is text to read that explains the process.

You'll be asked to select if you're an individual or organisation.

The site doesn't verify email addresses, so double check your email is correct

2

SCREEN 2: Name & general info

You'll be asked for personal information. You must answer all these questions:

Name

Email and/or mobile number

(later on you can say if you want this kept confidential or not)

Postcode

Preferred method of contact

(email or phone)

Gender

(options include: female, male, prefer not to say, self-described)

Age

Type of submission:

individual, organisation or group

(if you click 'group' it will ask how many people your submission represents)

Groups you identify with:

1. People of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origins
2. People with disability
3. People of non-English speaking backgrounds
4. People living in rural or regional communities
5. People from LGBTIAQ community
6. People engaged in preventing, responding to & treating mental illness (workers)
7. People who are experiencing or have experienced family violence
8. Prefer not to say

You must choose at least one group and you can choose several groups.

Did you provide info that would allow another person to be identified?

Screen by screen

What you'll see and be asked

3 SCREEN 3: Select topics, 5 optional questions

Select your topics: Click on the main terms of reference topics that are covered in your submission. 15 buttons are provided, you can select as many as you want. See page 6 and 7 for the list of buttons and topics.

Five questions with open text boxes. You can type in the boxes, or cut and paste from something you've already written. See our 'cheat sheets' for more info about answering the questions.

You can answer some, all or none of these 11 questions.

On the last screen you can upload files that say what you want in the way you want to.

4 SCREEN 4: 6 optional questions

Six questions with open text boxes.

You can type in the boxes, or cut and paste from something you've already written.

Includes questions 6 to 11 (see our cheat sheets).

5 SCREEN 5: Privacy, Cover Sheet, Upload Files

Preferences: Choose one of these options for your privacy:

- **Public:** They can publish what you say AND your name
- **Anonymous:** They can publish what you say but NOT your name or identifying info
- **Restricted:** Your submission AND your name should be kept private

They encourage 'public' submissions, but you should make your own choice. Many consumers want their submission published for all to see, and many others prefer to stay private. There are good reasons for both. If you choose 'restricted', they will ask you to give a reason. *Note: Written submissions may be published, but audio and video submissions will not be made public (but they may be referred to in reports, subject to your preferences). Despite your preference, they may redact (hide) any part of a submission for privacy or legal reasons.*

Cover sheet: Complete a cover sheet if you're attaching files (**Do the cover sheet first** as a way to prepare your answers. Be warned it's **NINE** pages long, and repeats every item from the website and all the questions)

Uploads: Upload up to 10 files. Files must be less than 100mb (.zip and .exe files not accepted). You'll be asked to give a brief description of each file.

Privacy: You will be asked to click on an acknowledgement about who might see what you submit. Read their privacy policy here: <https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/privacy>

How do I know if it was uploaded? You will see a new screen that says: *We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.*

Terms of reference TOPICS

Which ones should you click?

Screen 3 will ask you to select one or more of the 15 'terms of reference' topics that you cover in your submission – you may also select none.

What does 'terms of reference' mean?

It's the list of things the Royal Commission has to think about.

Click at least 1

This is how you tell them what topics you want to talk about.

The table below gives a short explanation about each topic.

VMIAC has produced a cheat sheet with more detailed information about the terms of reference. It's on our website (www.vmiac.org.au/RCMH), but you don't need to read it. It might be helpful if you're not sure which topic is best for what you want to say.

| Terms of Reference. You'll be asked to select one or more of these topics, or none of them. | Simple Explanation. |
|--|--|
| Access to Victoria's mental health services | Ways people get into mental health services. |
| Navigation of Victoria's mental health services | How you find or access mental health services |
| Best practice treatment and care models that are safe and person-centred | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment, staff and services that are helpful (or that don't help) • Treatment, staff and services that are safe (or that are unsafe or harmful) • Services that do what you want (or ignore what matters to you) |
| Family and carer support needs | What do families , carers and support people need |
| Suicide prevention | Ways to stop suicide |
| Mental illness prevention | Ways to stop mental illness from starting in the first place |
| Mental health workforce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What workers need. • What you need from workers (skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour). • What kind of workers you need. |

| Terms of Reference. You'll be asked to select one or more of these topics. | Simple Explanation. |
|---|---|
| Pathways and interfaces between Victoria's mental health services and other services | How you get from a mental health service to another service . For example, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing services • employment services • the NDIS • or any other service you might need |
| Infrastructure, governance, accountability, funding, commissioning and information sharing arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The buildings, rooms and equipment in services • Are services managed properly? • Are services made to be responsible? • Do services have enough money? • How the government decides which services to give funding to. • Does information get to services when it needs to? |
| Data collection and research strategies to advance and monitor reforms | Is there enough information and knowledge to improve the mental health system? Or do we need to learn more? |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities | Issues and needs that might be different for people from these communities |
| People living with mental illness and co-occurring illnesses, disabilities, multiple or dual disabilities | |
| Rural and regional communities | |
| People in contact, or at greater risk of contact, with the forensic mental health system and the justice system | |
| People living with both mental illness and problematic drug and alcohol use | Do people using alcohol or other substances need something different? |

What if I want to say something that's not on this list?

The Royal Commission has to consider things beside the terms of reference when they make recommendations. Listed below are official areas to be considered when they make recommendations, so you can speak about these too, if you want, even though they're not really highlighted:

- stigma and discrimination
- human rights
- least restrictive treatment
- participating in decision-making with consumers
- existing laws, including Mental Health Act and privacy

Planning your submission

Look after yourself

This process is asking some pretty big questions, especially for those of us who have been consumers of mental health services.

Making a submission means you might have to remember lots of distressing things, like your experience of mental health problems, or bad experiences in hospital.

Hopefully you will also have some positive memories to think about, like the things that have given you hope, but we know that's not true for all of us.

Our advice is to:

- Focus on the things you most want to say. You don't have to tell the Royal Commission everything, just the things that are most important to you.
- If it feels overwhelming, spread out your writing over a few days, or even a few weeks. Do a little bit at a time. (Just don't miss the deadline of 5 July).
- Or, you might find it easier to do it all at once and get it out of the way.
- There is no right or wrong way, so go easy and do what works for you.

Think about a group submission

If you know some other consumers, you might like to make a group submission together. The process can be less distressing if you can talk it over with other people who get it.

Ask for help

Call VMIAC's Royal Commission peer support workers on Mondays and Wednesdays if you want to talk anything over.

Contact VMIAC (Mon & Wed): **(03) 9380 3900**
or email RCsupport@vmiac.org.au

You can also call the Royal Commission for help on **1800 00 11 34**

Come to a VMIAC workshop

We'll be holding workshops through June until July 5th to support consumers to make submissions.

We'll list workshops on our webpage, and send out emails to anyone who has registered with us for Royal Commission support.

Register with us here: <http://bit.ly/supportRC>

Or call **(03) 9380 3900**

Or email RCsupport@vmiac.org.au

Work out what you want to say

The Royal Commission website has a cover sheet that you can download. It's a Microsoft Word document, which means you can type into it on most computers. Or you can print it and write on it by hand.

We recommend that you fill out the cover sheet before you start entering things on the Royal Commission website. Then, if you like, you can just 'cut and paste' onto the website when you are ready.

We found it's a less stressful way to do it.

Download the cover sheet here:

<https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/submissions>

(it's right down at the bottom of the page)

Uploading files

If you have a document, video or audio file to upload as part of your submission, make sure each file is less than 100mb.

This is quite small for a video, so you will need to compress your files.

For more info, check out VMIAC's
Royal Commission web page:

www.vmiac.org.au/RCMH