

Media release



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Beyond Blue welcomes interim report from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

Beyond Blue has welcomed the interim report from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Commission's first report, released today, made several priority recommendations about how to improve the way Victoria supports people and families affected by mental ill-health.

Beyond Blue Chair The Hon Julia Gillard AC said the report was a step toward significant structural change.

"The first report from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System sets the scene for major reform of the state's mental health system," Ms Gillard said.

"In Victoria and around the country, there is an unprecedented appetite for change to the way we support people and families affected by poor mental health. The time for change is now and to achieve it, the sector and governments must work together with people with lived experience."

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said the report acknowledged the necessary reforms would require new funding approaches.

"These vital changes will take time and money, but we must invest in mental health. Modelling consistently shows that for every dollar we invest in mental health, there is a significant return, so it really is down payment for our future," Ms Harman said.

She said the interim report had recognised the importance of universal aftercare for people at risk of suicide, the power of peer support workforces and the need for more support for the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"There is a vital need for major structural reform, particularly in how we support people who have attempted suicide," Ms Harman said.

"As part of the overarching HOPE program, the Commission recognises Beyond Blue's **Way Back Support Service** among the options for improving how we support people to stay safe and connected to their networks following a suicide attempt."

She urged state and Commonwealth governments to work together to make prevention and early intervention key parts of any systemic change.

"The Victorian and Commonwealth governments must decide how they are going to work together to fund the various parts of the system and to fund an integrated system that's joined up and, most importantly, puts people first."

If you or someone you care about is struggling, you can talk to mental health professionals 24/7 via the Beyond Blue Support Service on 1300 22 4636, via web chat from 3pm to midnight (AEST) every night at www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support or via email.

