

LGBTI communities strongly encouraged to participate in the Royal Commission into Mental Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 April 2019 – Thorne Harbour Health and Rainbow Health Victoria are calling on Victoria's LGBTI communities to take action and have their voice heard during the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

In addition to the community consultations already underway, earlier today the Victorian Government unveiled their online portal for community submissions to the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Thorne Harbour Health (formerly the Victorian AIDS Council) and Rainbow Health Victoria (formerly Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria) have developed consumer talking points to assist LGBTI individuals attending community consultations or making submissions via the government's online portal. The new resource developed by the two organisations outlines recommendations for action as well as the background research to support each area for improving Victoria's mental health system.

Recommendations outlined in the document include building upon the existing model to increase accessibility to community-controlled services as well as workforce development for mainstream services to ensure there is "no wrong door" for LGBTI Victorians to access the support they need to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

"With higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide compared to the general population, LGBTI Victorians need a mental health system that is welcoming and responsive to their needs. It's vital that our voices are heard," said Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth.

"We'll only get our needs met if the government hears from us. If our communities are silent on this issue, we'll never see progress."

Rainbow Health Victoria's Co-Director Dr Jen Power added, "It's important that LGBTI communities are equipped with the research evidence to support what many of them already know — that LGBTI Australians are experiencing poor mental health outcomes, often associated with marginalisation, discrimination, stigma, violence, and abuse."

Community consultation sessions are being held at various locations now through May, and registration closes at 5pm on the day before each consultation session. A full list of community consultations can be found at: rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/whats-happening-now.

Through the online portal (rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/submissions), people can submit formal submissions and brief comments. Brief comments will be accepted until 20 May 2019 and formal submissions will be accepted until 5 July 2019.

[The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System – Consumer Talking Points document can be downloaded here.](#)

If you or someone you know is in crisis or requires support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or BeyondBlue on 1300 224 636 or Switchboard on 1800 184 527

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