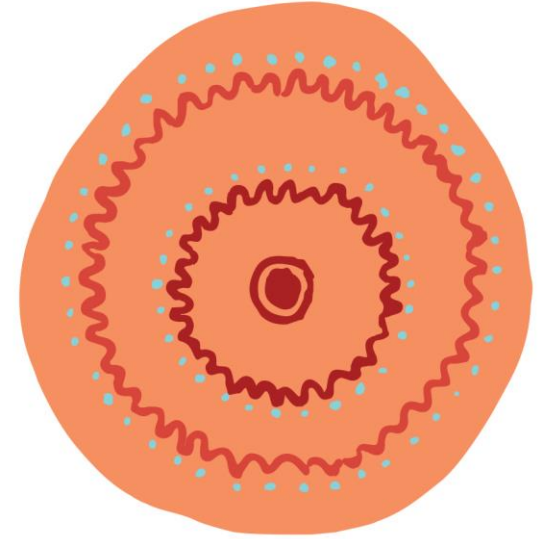




**Australian Government**

**National Mental Health Commission**

**Making  
Connections  
with your  
Mental Health  
and Wellbeing**



**Bendigo, VIC**

**26 July 2019**

**50 Participants**

This snapshot identifies key points from the  
Town Hall Meeting

Content from all Town Hall Meetings is being  
collated by the Commission



# Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.

Responses included:

- No trust, faith or confidence in the system
- Lack of access to services – availability, after hours, locations, wait-lists for GP's, cost
- Embarrassment, shame and stigma
- Fear that no-one is listening, no-one will care
- Being sent home - early discharge without follow-up, lack of ongoing support

Direct comments included:

- 'Having to tell my story over and over again, with no result'
- 'As an Aboriginal, I find the language used in the wider sector is not culturally inclusive or welcoming. Where's the understanding of the multiple generations of dislocation, of recurring trauma, of spiritual wellbeing?'
- 'Tired of fighting the system'
- 'There's no choice or control over my path to recovery'

# Big Ideas or Initiatives

Participants were asked for one big idea or initiative to improve mental health in their community.

Direct comments included:

- 'Do mental health care plans have to be initiated by a GP? Can this type of plan be given to a nurse practitioner or mental health nurse / social worker to complete, to make the process quicker and easier to access?'
- 'Preventative measures like exercise programs for people with depression. This could save government money in the long run in mental health and general health as well'
- 'Funding for crisis assessments in the home'
- 'Training for teachers, managers, employees, coaches, etc on mental health first aid. Equip the community to help their members. It takes a village around you to get better'
- 'A safe, supervised site, staffed by mental health specialists that allows access to community members to sleep, eat, shower, access assessments and CBT/medication as required'
- 'Specific mental health triage at Emergency Departments, in a separate space, using teleservice in more remote locations'
- 'Better education for people in psych services and at hospitals, so they don't call the Police unnecessarily'
- 'Programs that teach people to keep a companion animal'
- 'Funding for more Grow groups and Clubhouses to provide peer support'
- 'Accreditation for therapy and emotional support pets'

# Big Ideas or Initiatives

In an open discussion session, the following ideas were further developed:

- An area in Casualty where a person can be kept in safety, with food and support, over a period of time, at a time of crisis
- Community based systems like the AA movement where people can meet and discuss issues, operating as a type of triage group, with professional help as a back-up
- Support Grow groups as community based support groups that meet regularly and have been operating for over 60 years
- Embrace telemedicine systems to get professional support where distance is a factor, and to increase in-home assessments via Skype
- Train up Centrelink staff to better identify mental health issues and needs
- Establish accreditation system that can attest to the therapeutic benefits of pets and companion animals for mental health recovery
- Have a dedicated Mental Health (Wellness) Minister in Victoria, to encourage a whole of Government response to mental health
- Widespread mental health first aid training courses throughout the community
- Encourage the Clubhouse movement which provides an environment of support that is led by people with lived experience

# Thank You, Bendigo

The Commission thanks the community for their comments and suggestions on improving our mental health system

## Ways to stay connected:

- ✓ Attend a Town Hall meeting
- Read the snapshots from your community and other communities in Australia
- Take the survey online (coming soon)
- Follow us on Facebook (@NMHCAustralia) and Twitter (@NMHC)
- Join the conversation online using #ConnectingWithYou

