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## **Royal Commission report a roadmap for a mental health system for all**

The landmark final report and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System provides an opportunity to rebuild the system to work for all Victorians, says Jesuit Social Services.

“The Royal Commission has identified that Victoria’s mental health system has been failing for decades, and that systemic gaps have been highlighted by the bushfire and COVID-19 crises of the past two years. Today is a significant day as it provides a clear roadmap for an evidence-based, person-centred system that meets the needs of people living with mental illness as well as their families, carers and supporters,” says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

Recommendations include the development of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework to drive collective responsibility and accountability for mental health and wellbeing outcomes across government portfolios and the establishment of a responsive and integrated mental health and wellbeing system, to provide most services locally and in the community.

“Too many Victorians have found the mental health system difficult to navigate or unable to provide the support that is needed when it is needed. This Royal Commission was established to provide a roadmap for reform – today’s report is the culmination of input and expertise from service providers, experts and people with lived experience of the mental health system and provides a way forward for a system that works for all Victorians.”

Jesuit Social Services is pleased to see the Royal Commission recognise the importance of postvention services that support people bereaved by suicide. Since 2004, Jesuit Social Services has delivered the Support After Suicide program, which provides support including counselling, group support and online resources for people left behind after a loved one has taken their own life.

“The Royal Commission outlines that all Victorians bereaved by suicide should have access to evidence-informed postvention bereavement services. We thoroughly welcome this, and will work towards sustainable funding models to ensure that all Victorians have access to effective services to help them navigate the complex grief and trauma associated with the suicide of a loved one.”

Last year, Support After Suicide released a report drawing on the experiences of 142 former and current participants of its counselling services. The report indicated that almost three quarters (70 per cent) of people who died had previously sought help from the mental health system.

“We are very pleased to see the Royal Commission acknowledge the vital role played by families, carers and supporters of mental health service users, and recommendations to support them including a statewide call back service for those caring for people experiencing suicidal behaviour.

“This is a landmark report that will ultimately support a stronger, better resourced and more effective mental health system which will ultimately save the lives of many Victorians.”

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