

# **MEDIA RELEASE – Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health**

**April 8, 2019**



The Latrobe Health Advocate, Jane Anderson has made a submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health. The inquiry is considering the role of mental health in supporting economic participation, enhancing productivity and economic growth.

Jane's conversations with people in Latrobe, have shown mental health and wellbeing as one of the most common issues raised. Most of the time, concerns about mental health are associated with other factors such as alcohol and drugs, access to employment and education and the impacts of social isolation.

Recently the Advocate sought the views of people in Latrobe via an online survey asking how communities, workplaces and family and friends can support the enjoyment of good mental health.

The responses received, along with other conversations with the Advocate informed the substance of the submission, which includes 12 recommendations. These recommendations reflect the complex nature of mental health and wellbeing and identify areas for change, including:

- Improve the pathways to employment for people with a multicultural background, and those experiencing disadvantage and identify what can be done to accelerate their transition into the workforce.
- Consider ways other than employment, to help local communities provide what is described by people as a 'sense of purpose' or 'reason to get out of bed'.
- Recognise the value of local communities and bring them into decision making processes. Design policies and funding models that enable organisations at all levels to be responsive to communities putting them at the centre of interventions and solutions.
- Understand more deeply the existing pressures and expectations on GPs and consider ways to boost mental health supports in the GP setting and ways to reach out to communities with GPs and mental health professionals available at times and places convenient to them.

The Advocate acknowledges the people who contributed to this submission by putting forward their ideas on how services can be delivered differently in Latrobe. In coming months, a submission will be made to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The Advocate welcomes opportunities to meet with people across Latrobe to talk about this and any other issues around their health and wellbeing.

## **Quote attributable to Jane Anderson, Latrobe Health Advocate:**

**"I have been listening to people in Latrobe about their aspirations and concerns around their health and wellbeing. The Productivity Commission inquiry has given me an opportunity to present the voices of Latrobe to Government and enable our communities to contribute to effective change in the delivery of services."**

The full submission is attached to this media release for your information. If you have any questions, please contact Kylie Jones at the office of Latrobe Health Advocate on 1800 319 255 or via email at [info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@lhadvocate.vic.gov.au)

