



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 14th August 2019

Wait Times Need to Be Cut for Regional Mental Health Help

Member for Western Victoria Stuart Grimley has asked the State Government in Parliament today to commit to cutting wait times for regional Victorians seeking help for mental health issues.

In his speech in Victoria's Upper House, Mr Grimley spoke of the recurring theme he was hearing whilst meeting with those suffering from mental health issues: the limited accessibility and affordability of mental health services within the Western Victoria region.

Mr Grimley spoke of the Royal Commission into Mental Health which has shed light on many cases where regional Victorians have faced inadequate services and extremely long waiting times for psychological help – in some cases of up to six weeks.

Whilst the Royal Commission will submit an interim report by November this year, the final recommendations won't be handed down until October 2020. Mr Grimley emphasised the need for *urgent* and effective support for regional Victorians.

The questions raised by Mr Grimley stemmed from many conversations he has had with constituents and organisations since becoming an MP in late 2018, but also from disappointment in the [Royal Commission only visiting one location outside of Melbourne](#) recently.

Considering nearly 22% of people over 18 have a lifetime prevalence of anxiety and depression within the Colac Otway region^[1], Mr Grimley said it was concerning that the Royal Commission didn't visit any other regional towns in Western Victoria.

Whilst Mr Grimley commends the State Government on their efforts to reduce effects of depression such as the current [PROMPT](#) trial in Geelong, he said more publicly accessible preventative care was needed as a matter of urgency.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

“Depression and complex mental issues don't discriminate and we need to ensure that those most vulnerable have access to services without excessive financial burden.

Whilst I commend the Government on their effort to establish the Royal Commission, we need preventative mental health care in regional Victoria with full consultation of the community.

I am absolutely committed to working with the State Government to expand mental health services in Western Victoria.”

[1] – Western Victoria Primary Health Network



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Parliamentary Speech:

My constituency question is to the Minister for Mental Health (Hon. Martin Foley)

Over the past few weeks, I have travelled around my region of Western Victoria and have heard about the many issues facing my constituents. A recurring theme is the limited accessibility and affordability of mental health services. The recent Royal Commission into Mental Health which travelled to Western Victoria has heard that police are called to incidents of psychiatric crisis and attempts or threats of suicide every 12 minutes and that such callouts increased by almost 88 per cent between 2014 and 2018.

Many of my constituents rely on publicly funded services for mental health support including Headspace which is the beneficiary of recent Federal and State funding commitments. Despite the additional funding announcements, many constituents have still expressed their frustration at long wait times at each of the five Headspace centres in Western Victoria. In some cases, people are reportedly waiting up to six weeks in order to access needed support.

Can the Minister provide any insight into whether the State Government is considering expanding existing mental health services in Western Victoria? If so, what is the approximate timeline?