

## Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Ms Lily Edwards

**Organisation Name:**The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry

**Your position or role:** Policy and Advocacy Advisor

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this inquiry into homelessness to consider::**

Mental health,Rough sleeping,Services,Public housing,Indigenous people,Family violence,Housing affordability,Employment

**What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :**

A peak body

**Are there any additional themes we should consider?**

### YOUR SUBMISSION

**Submission:**

**Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:**

### FILE ATTACHMENTS

**File1:** [5ee1aabb48ea-LTR Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness - Vic Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry.pdf](#)

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**

Lily Edwards



11 June 2020

Parliament of Victoria  
Legislative Council, Legal and Social Issues Committee  
Parliament House  
East Melbourne  
VIC 3002

Dear Legal and Social Issues Committee

**Re: Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria**

The Victorian sub-committee of the Forensic Faculty of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry.

We are aware that the Victorian Branch of the RANZCP has made a [submission](#) dated 28 January 2020. The submission highlights the complex relationship between housing, homelessness and mental illness. The submission emphasises the importance of appropriately resourced housing options and effective integration of mental health and social services. We wholeheartedly support the recommendations.

The Royal Commission into Mental Health is currently investigating how to improve access to mental health care and build a well-resourced integrated mental health service for the state.

As experts on mental illness and offending we are keen to highlight the complex relationship between homelessness, mental illness, offending and imprisonment. Research over recent decades, locally and internationally, has brought to light the growing problem of offending and imprisonment of persons with serious mental illness (SMI) (1). Locally we have observed a significant growth in prisoners with SMI which has outstripped the capacity to provide treatment.

A key problem for persons with a SMI who offend is a lack of effective communication and co-ordination of care pathways between the criminal justice and mental health sectors. As a result, they fall through the gap that places them at risk of becoming homeless and cycling in and out of contact with the criminal justice system and prison.

Evidence from the US, Netherlands and Scandinavia indicates that substantial benefits for the individual and society can be achieved when there is investment in housing and social support by reducing contact with the criminal justice system ('Justice Reinvestment') (2-4).

We would therefore encourage the committee to also consider the need for effective pathways for this particularly vulnerable population.





Victorian Branch

We would welcome further opportunity to advise the committee either in writing or in person and can be contacted via RANZCP Victorian Branch Policy and Advocacy Advisor [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

A/Prof Andrew Carroll  
Chair, Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry Victorian sub-committee

#### References

1. Australian Institute of Health Welfare. The health of Australia's prisoners 2018. Canberra: AIHW; 2019.
2. Redondo Illescas S, Frerich N. Crime and justice reinvestment in Europe: Possibilities and challenges. J Victims Offenders. 2014;9(1):13-49.
3. Taxman FS, Pattavina A, Caudy M. Justice reinvestment in the United States: An empirical assessment of the potential impact of increased correctional programming on recidivism. J Victims Offenders. 2014;9(1):50-75.
4. Allen R. Justice reinvestment and the use of imprisonment: Policy reflections from England and Wales. J Criminology Pub Pol'y. 2011;10:617.