

## **National Disability Insurance Agency Mental Health Sector Reference Group Sector Communiqué – August 2015**

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The NDIA Mental Health Sector Reference Group (NMHSRG) provides expert advice from a cross section of the mental health sector to the NDIA about the progressive integration of psychosocial disability into the Scheme. The NMHSRG is also an important mechanism for information sharing across the mental health sector, NDIA and the broader community. As such, the purpose of this Communiqué is to provide the key outcomes of the fourth meeting of the NMHSRG which took place on 17 August 2015 in Melbourne.

The meeting was well attended with members noting the significance of the consultation session on the National Mental Health Commission's *Review of Mental Health Supports and Services* ('the Review') to inform the Government's response to issues relating to the complex intersection of mental health and the NDIS.

The NMHSRG is chaired by NDIA Strategic Adviser Mr Eddie Bartnik and includes diverse sector representatives. The following members and project managers were in attendance:

### **Members Present**

- Mr Eddie Bartnik, NDIA Strategic Adviser (Chairperson)
- Ms Julie Anderson, Consumer Representative
- Ms Marita Walker, Perth Hills Trial Site Manager
- Mr Rod Astbury, Community Mental Health Australia
- Ms Robyn Humphries, Department of Health and Human Services VIC\*
- Mr Frank Quinlan, Mental Health Australia
- Dr Russell Ayres, Department of Social Services
- Mr Peter De Natris, NDIA Scheme Integrity (For Ms Anne Skordis)
- Ms Fiona Nicholls, Department of Health
- Ms Fiona Wynn, Health NSW\*

### **Via Teleconference**

- Ms Colleen Krestensen, Mental Health Review Taskforce, Department of Health
- Mr John Feneley, Mental Health Commission (NSW)\*\*
- Ms Sarah Johnson, NDIA Scheme Actuary (Item 4.1 Only)

### **Project Managers**

- Ms Janie Lawson, Department of Social Services
- Mr Josh Fear, Mental Health Australia
- Ms Paula Zylstra, Department of Health
- Ms Kerry Hawkins, NDIA
- Ms Deb Roberts, NDIA
- Ms Petra Hill, NDIA

### **Apologies**

- Mr David Butt, National Mental Health Commission (invited guest)
- Mr Evan Bichara, Consumer Representative
- Ms Janet Meagher AM, NDIS Independent Advisory Council
- Ms Arahni Sont, Carer Representative
- Ms Anne Skordis, NDIA GM Scheme Transition and Integrity
- Dr Gerry Naughtin, NDIS Independent Advisory Council

\*representative of the Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee (MHDAPC) of the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council

\*\*representative of Mental Health Commissions

## Summary of the fourth meeting

The NMHSRG noted a number of changes to government representatives to the group, these were:

- *Department of Social Services* – Dr Nick Hartland (Member) outgoing, replaced by Dr Russell Ayres and Ms Karen Pickering (Project Manager), outgoing replaced by Janie Lawson
- *Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee* - Mr Martin Turnbull outgoing, replaced by Ms Robyn Humphries
- *National Disability Insurance Agency* - Ms Laura Green outgoing, replaced by Ms Deborah Roberts

The Chairperson extended a warm welcome to incoming members and his sincere thanks to the outgoing members for their dedication to the work of the NMHSRG and wished them well in their future endeavours.

- a) The Chairperson then provided a report on NDIA work relating to mental health and the interface of mental health and the Scheme. The *NDIA's Mental Health Work Plan* is moving to an implementation phase with the emerging developments in the following areas:
- the NDIA Mental Health Section has been aligned with the NDIA Scheme Transition and Integrity Branch (ST&I) to embed key mental health work into NDIA functions and facilitate a stronger connection with the Disability Policy Group (DPG), bilateral processes, and other NDIS transitional planning. Mr Bartnik will continue to lead the mental health work stream.
  - work to develop a formal link between the Partners in Recovery consortia, Health and NDIA is underway, to ensure a smooth transition to the NDIS
  - engagement work with the mental health sector has ramped up. The Chairperson has visited NDIS trial sites, key stakeholders across jurisdictions and will be visiting the Northern Territory with Dr Ayres (DSS) to attend major mental health forums in early September 2015. These engagement visits are crucial to the development and maintenance of partnerships nationally and to allow for deeper understanding of local issues, and
  - the NMHSRG Terms of Reference and membership are due for review and refreshment. The NMHSRG noted that the 17 August meeting marks the fourth meeting of the group since December 2014.
- b) Data on the number of people with psychosocial disability accessing the Scheme was provided. For the purposes of this Communiqué more up to date data is provided here. As at 30 June 2015, there were 1,234 NDIS participants with a primary psychosocial disability and 607 participants with a secondary condition of a psychosocial nature. Data from the NDIS Barwon trial site continues to be the most complete, and access rates for people with a primary psychosocial disability align with the Productivity Commission estimates.

c) A 'Members Reports' session followed allowing shared visibility of NDIS transition and readiness planning. Of significance, the NMHSRG heard feedback that consumers and carers continue to grapple with NDIS language around access requirements to the Scheme, additionally that uncertainty remains about the implementation of the Scheme for people with psychosocial disability. For example, the issues of staff capacity to appropriately address psychosocial disability mental health issues was raised. It was noted that current work of the NDIA and broader sector will assist in addressing these issues. For example, the Victorian Mental Illness Council (VMIAC) has been funded by NDIA to implement an NDIS Capacity Building program to assist up to 20 local peer support or mutual support groups in providing NDIS information, resources and to build community networks between participants and others. Outcomes from the *NDIA Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability* are also expected address some of these concerns. For more information about VMIAC's work, please visit

<http://www.vmiac.org.au/publications.php>

d) The focus of the meeting was a consultation session on the *National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services*. A summary of the this consultation was developed out of session, with feedback from the NMHSRG, and provided to the Review's Expert Reference Group (ERG) for consideration at their 21 August meeting. The NMHSRG highlighted the significant work undertaken by the NDIA since the release of the Review's report to address issues of access to the Scheme for people with psychosocial disability (see Recommendation 3 of the Review). In regards to the implementation of the Review's recommendations and the interface issues of mental health and the NDIS, the following key points were raised by stakeholders. That:

- coordination of services and supports across systems
- outreach and engagement strategies are required for 'hard to reach' populations
- there is currently a service gap in the area of psychosocial supports which the NDIS was not originally designed to provide, and
- staged transition to the NDIS and the timely resolution of issues

In addition to the key points above, the NMHSRG provided the Review's ERG with a high level overview of the NDIA's mental health work to date and a paper from Mental Health Australia outlining the need for access to appropriate psychosocial services for all those who require it, certainty to the sector during the transition to the NDIS, and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

A session focusing on the progress of key NDIA mental health projects, and opportunities for feedback on these, then took place. A summary is provided here:

### **NDIA Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability**

Link to document: [NDIA Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability](#) (internal link)

Project Director, Ms Kerry Hawkins provided the update on the Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability. It was noted that the draft Master List of Recommendations of the Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability was endorsed by the NDIA's Executive Management Group (EMG) in July 2015. Lived experience expertise will continue

to inform the implementation of the project's recommendations. Recommendations have been grouped into two categories – those of an operational and practical nature, and those recommendations aimed at *laying the foundations* for the future.

Recommendations of an operational and practical are now in implementation with leadership and oversight from the *NDIA Mental Health Community of Practice: Enhancing Practice for People with Psychosocial Disability*. Priority activities for implementation include:

- amendments to the language used in NDIA and sector materials in line with the project's recommendations. These materials will form the basis of a NDIA National Access Team Resource Kit and staff training package to be rolled out nationally
- an NDIS and Psychosocial Disability webinar to be held during Mental Health Week, October 2015
- the development and circulation of an NDIA newsletter piece about the current project, co-produced with people involved in the Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability, and
- the review and refreshment of the NDIA Engagement Style Guide with guidance from consumers and their families. The NDIA Engagement Style Guide is intended to guide NDIA Communications and Engagement in the development of future NDIA materials.

Recommendations aimed at *laying the foundations* for future work have been prioritised and identified as potential discrete projects for submission to the NDIA's Executive Management Group for endorsement and resourcing as part of the *2015 - 2016 NDIA Mental Health Workplan*. There are 7 priority areas for potential further work, including the:

1. establishment of a pilot Aboriginal Engagement project
2. establishment of a 'how to reach the hard to reach' engagement and outreach strategy
3. establishment of an NDIA Lived Experience Participation Framework
4. development of a literature review for Early Intervention and psychosocial disability
5. development of a literature review for co-occurring psychosocial disability and substance use issues
6. implementation of a national mental health sector communication strategy, including a proposed NDIS and mental health *National Roadshow* for NDIS
7. establishment of a highly integrated NDIS national network for psychosocial disability

An ongoing mechanism for reporting on the progress of the above work and a final Report will be finalised shortly.

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## **MHA / NDIA Design of Supports for Psychosocial Disability**

Link to document: [MHA/ NDIA Design of Supports for Psychosocial Disability](#) (internal link)

An update on the progress of the NDIA/MHA Joint Support Design project was provided by Ms Deborah Roberts and Mr Josh Fear. In particular, it was noted that:

- the NDIA's consultant (Synergia) completed its contract in July 2015 and provided 2 papers to NDIA, Mental Health Australia and Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA) for use in planning and running stakeholder consultations lead by CMHA
- consultations will assist in identifying 'typical' kinds of support items and support packages for NDIS participants with psychosocial disability and what 'other' supports might be useful
- consultation will be conducted nationally in order to capture the broad perspective of mental health consumers, families, carers and service providers about the nature and range of support items required by people with a psychosocial disability. Findings will be used to inform the NDIA in the development of individually funded plans for people with psychosocial disability.
- a key challenge for the consultations will be helping stakeholders provide input consistent with the scope of the support design project and assisting people to think of what could be possible as a support. Additionally, questions are likely to arise regarding the link between this project and the support coordination elements described in the new pricing catalogue.

For further information relating to this project please contact:

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## **NDIA Outcomes Measures and Reference Packages**

Link to document: [NDIA Outcomes Measures and Reference Packages](#) (DOCX)

The Scheme Actuary outlined the utility of reference packages in safeguarding the sustainability of the Scheme and that information contained in these assist in determining whether a proposed statement of supports aligns with what is expected for a Participant of similar characteristics and needs. Reference packages do not determine Scheme access or allocation of resources; however, are important tools for monitoring Scheme effectiveness and costs. This project is designed to assist shaping optimal access arrangements for people with psychosocial disability by enabling greater sophistication of reference packages and outcomes measures. Progress on the project includes that:

- the first report *Review of Measures for Psychosocial Disability Currently Used in the Mental Health and Disability fields* has been finalised. The report contains recommendations regarding appropriate psychosocial 'severity indicators' and/or 'functional assessments' for use by the NDIA. Recommendations accounted for whether there is widespread use of these in the mental health sector and the presence of pre-existing population data from these assessments.

The Scheme Actuary then called for the NMHSRG to provide nominations, including for a Joint-Chair, to Expert Panel to inform the Outcomes Measures and Reference Packages project.

To be put in touch with the project team, please contact:

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### **NDIA Community of Practice: Enhancing Practice for People with Psychosocial Disability**

The internal *NDIA Community of Practice: Enhancing Practice for People with Psychosocial Disability*, chaired by Ms Marita Walker, has met 4 times and will meet again on Thursday 1 October 2015. Membership of the CoP has been extended to National Office representatives including the National Access Team and Communications and Engagement Team. This will facilitate the implementation of the operational and practical recommendations arising from the Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability. NDIS trial site representatives share local issues and solutions arising from working with people with psychosocial disability as well as knowledge of current best practice.

- e) Lastly, an Information Linkages and Capacity building (ILC) policy framework update was provided by the Chairperson. It was noted that Mr Nick Chiam (NDIA) is leading work in this area. Updates included that:
- a 7 point commissioning framework is in development which will link to investment priorities
  - mapping of ILC initiatives across jurisdictions has revealed different approaches to information linkages and capacity building
  - there is an opportunity for some co design in the ILC space
  - ILC funding will be provided progressively, over three years. This will require jurisdictions to continue their efforts in areas outside of phasing until full coverage.

For further ILC information, please contact Nick Chiam:

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The next meeting of the NMHSRG will take place in November 2015

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