

National Mental Health Sector Reference Group Sector Communiqué – October 2016

The National Mental Health Sector Reference Group (NMHSRG) provides expert advice from a cross section of the mental health sector to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) about the integration of psychosocial disability and mental health into the Scheme. The NMHSRG is also an important mechanism for information sharing across the mental health sector and the broader community. As such, the purpose of this Communiqué is to provide the key outcomes of the eighth meeting of the NMHSRG which took place on 28 October 2016 in Melbourne.

The meeting was well attended with members focusing on the important work underway in transitioning to a national Scheme and planning the integration of mental health and psychosocial disability into the NDIS.

The NMHSRG, chaired by NDIA Strategic Adviser Mr Eddie Bartnik, includes diverse sector representatives and is attended by expert guest presenters when necessary.

The following members, project managers and invited guests were in attendance:

Chairperson

1. Mr Eddie Bartnik, NDIA Strategic Advisor

Members

2. Ms Anne Skordis, NDIA GM Scheme Transition
3. Mr Evan Bichara, Consumer Representative
4. Ms Arahni Sont, Carer Representative
5. Ms Julie Anderson, Consumer Representative
6. Ms Marita Walker, NDIA Regional Manager
7. Mr John Riley, Department of Social Services
8. Ms Robyn Humphries, Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee*
9. Ms Amy Wyndham, Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee*
10. Dr Anthony Millgate, Department of Health
11. Mr Tully Rosen, Mental Health Commission (NSW) (for Mr John Feneley)**
12. Mr Rod Astbury, Community Mental Health Australia
13. Mr Josh Fear, Mental Health Australia (for Mr Frank Quinlan)

Project Managers

- Ms Emma Coughlan, Mental Health Australia
14. Ms Joanne Llewellyn, Department of Social Services
 15. Ms Deborah Roberts, NDIA Mental Health Section
 16. Mr Mark Rosser, NDIA Mental Health Section
 17. Ms Belinda Wilson, NDIA Mental Health Section

Invited Guests

18. Ms Amanda Bresnan, Community Mental Health Australia
19. Mr Damian Griffis, First Peoples with Disability Network
20. Ms Stephanie Gunn, NDIA GM Community Linkages
21. Mr Adrian Munro, Richmond Wellbeing

Dialling in

22. Ms Sarah Johnson, NDIA Scheme Actuary
23. Ms Belinda Krause, NDIA Actuary
24. Mr Jason Leung, NDIA Program Analyst

Apologies

25. Ms Janet Meagher AM, NDIS Independent Advisory Council

26. Dr Gerry Naughtin, NDIS Independent Advisory Council

27. Mr Frank Quinlan, Mental Health Australia

28. Mr John Feneley, NSW Mental Health Commission

*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 Eighth Meeting

The Chairperson acknowledged the Wurundjeri people as traditional owners of land and paid respect to elders both past and present.

The Chairperson, Mr. Eddie Bartnik, welcomed members to the third meeting of the NDIA Mental Health Sector Reference Group (the NMHSRG) for 2016 and thanked members for their attendance.

The Chairperson acknowledged that the NDIS gives effect to Australia's obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the rights of People with Disabilities (2006)* and noted the criticality of continuance of the National Mental Health Sector Reference Group as an ongoing partnership mechanism between the mental health sector and the National Disability Insurance Agency.

The Chairperson acknowledged the valuable contribution of people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties, along with their families/ carers and all those in the sector who support them. The Chairperson reminded the NMHSRG that the core purpose of the group is to ensure people with psychosocial disability accessing the Scheme (including through the ILC) have the best life they can in the community.

Chairperson's Report

The Chairperson welcomed returning member Ms Amy Wyndham and acknowledged invited guests:

- Mr. Adrian Munro – presenting to members the work completed by *Richmond Wellbeing*, Sharing the Journey, NDIS Peer Education Workshops.
- Ms. Amanda Bresnan, newly appointed Executive Director, Community Mental Health Australia.
- Mr. Damian Giffis, CEO, *First People's Disability Network* – presenting to members in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and disability.
- Ms. Stephanie Gunn, General Manager, *Community Linkages NDIA* – presenting to members the Agency's work developing a strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Chairperson acknowledged the sustained contribution to the NMHSRG of outgoing Secretariat, Ms. Petra Hill.

The Chairperson acknowledged that the NMHSRG and its continuity of membership and collective, unified voice supporting Scheme transition and psychosocial disability has been important in building sector confidence and the wider community's confidence in the NDIS.

The Chairperson spoke of the significant engagement work completed by the NDIA in recent months.

The Chairperson noted for members that the national office mental health team has developed a draft 2016/17 workplan. The plan is well considered and represents the breadth of work required to build capacity externally within the sector to embrace, understand and interface with the Scheme and internally for the Agency to ensure its regional teams and community partner focus is comprehensive enough to accommodate the particular needs of participants and carers with psychosocial disability.

The Chairperson noted that unfortunately both members of the Independent Advisory Council (IAC), Dr.Gerry Naughtin and Janet Meagher were apologies for the meeting.

Members' Reports

A 'Members Reports' session commenced the meeting, allowing shared visibility of NDIS transition and readiness planning. Of significance, the NMHSRG heard feedback including:

- Members of the National Register of Mental Health Consumers and Carers noting;
 - Strong sense of engagement by the NDIA at the moment in particular in NSW
 - Strong carer's themes in recent months include; self-management/ self-direction – carers feel the promotion of self-management is not as strong as it could be,
 - Separating the NDIS from the responsibility of jurisdictions (states and territories) – There is a sense of confusion in relation to service and support 'gaps' – NDIA seems to be receiving a lot of 'flack' in relation to mainstream service system which are state and federal government funding responsibilities,
 - The role of Support Coordination is being highly valued by participants and carers,
 - NDIS services are being considered 'cheap' forms of support. There should be a higher value placed on services. There is an emerging perception issue about the 'quality' of NDIS supports,
 - NDIS should not replace a suite of existing community services including; rehabilitation and recovery.
- That a recent media report in relation to accessing the NDIS in the ACT and the perception of potential participants missing out had now been resolved. The NDIS legislation requires that people can apply to access the Scheme when it is available in their area. The Agency has 21 days to assess access. The issue in the ACT related to planning appointments and relied on communication from government after bilateral targets specific to the ACT had been met. That communication had now been received and planning appointments had recommenced. The NDIS does not have a 'cap' in relation to participant numbers.

- The NDIA's capacity to achieve first quarter targets for transition to full scheme had been impacted by problems with the web based portal. The Disability Reform Council has agreed to a plan to recover and achieve 100% of agreed targets by the end of December 2016. In relation to provider claims - 97% are now progressing as they should.
- A presentation describing – *Sharing the Journey, NDIS Peer Education Workshops* which were auspice by Mental Health Australia through the Sector Development Fund and completed by Richmond Wellbeing nationally was given. The presentation highlighted that a total of 649 people participated in the workshops and that participants' placed a high value on the workshops featuring presentations from people with the lived experience of mental health issues. The presentation also highlighted that the workshops had strong engagement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.
- The concept of a community/non-profit driven national NDIS conference to be organised by CMHA had progressed with a target date being set for November 2017. Sydney will be the preferred location.
- Dr. Peggy Brown has been appointed the new CEO of the National Mental Health Commission.
- The Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee's recent work includes: 5th National Mental Health Plan (*plan*). On the 21st of October a draft of the 5th *plan* was released for consultation. Seven action areas have been identified including; severe and complex mental illness, coordinated treatment and the NDIS. A consultation process includes an online survey, written submissions which can be lodged up until mid-December and 10 direct consultation events to be held in states and territories. Mental Health Australia is working closely with the Department of Health on the consultation process. Both Mental Health Australia and Community Mental Health Australia will provide written submissions. The NDIA has previously provided a written submission to inform the development of the *plan*.
- The NDIA has implemented a 'first plan' process. Challenges in relation to efficiencies and bringing people into the Scheme through transition and meeting bilateral targets needed to be addressed. A speedier and less stressful process is the overall aim of the 'first plan' process. Feedback from trial indicated participants and carers needed time to understand the Scheme so as to maximise choice and control, establish goals and envisage what's possible through reasonable and necessary supports provided through the Scheme. A 'guided conversation' will provide for a description of goals and reduce delay in processes from access through planning to receiving supports. Further information about first plans will be made available.
- The Department of Health have recently completed a series of events nationally through the Transition Support Project (facilitated by Flinders University). Partners in Recovery and Day to Day Living providers have been provided briefings and presentations in relation to transitioning to the NDIS.
- Section 55 (S55) letters were sent by the NDIA 31/10/2016 to Partners In Recovery and Day to Day Living providers.
- A national forum was held in October in Canberra for Primary Health Networks (PHN) – CEO's were in attendance and work in relation to mental health was highlighted. Work to understand the interface between PHN's and the NDIS will be progressed in the new year. This area of work is included within the NDIA Mental Health Work Plan for 2016/17.

- Disability Reform Council update – Western Australian trials of the NDIS have been extended by 12 months. Previous commitment to an October 2016 announcement about whether the NDIS would be rolled out in Western Australia will be delayed to ensure comparative trials can be further analysed.
- A scheduled Productivity Commission review of the NDIS is approaching and Terms of Reference are currently being drafted. This is the last major scheduled review before full Scheme transition and community mental health supports will be included as a part of this review.
- As part of the NDIA Co-design framework, the *Psychosocial disability and recovery* factsheet is currently being reviewed by key external and internal stakeholders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Approach

Ms. Stephanie Gunn, General Manager, *Community Linkages NDIA* and Mr. Damian Griffis, CEO, *First People's Disability Network* then gave presentations to members in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and disability.

The presentations gave members a comprehensive insight into the work the NDIA is currently developing to support engagement, access and support provision with Indigenous communities and the complexities in understanding prevalence rates and the impact of disability for Aboriginal people.

- Some key presentation highlights from Ms Gunn included:
 - Currently the Scheme has 6% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participant representation:
 - Utilising a community partnership model the NDIA is looking to advance on the 6% of current participants.
 - Defining and measuring disability within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a challenge.
 - Engaging with communities has been challenging and requires further work
 - A specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group has helped drive engagement and collaboration.
 - Eight core themes within the Strategy including: meaningful engagement, accessible information, flexible agency service delivery, leveraging partnerships and markets response to consumer choice. From these core themes further notions are actively promoted and supported including employment opportunities within communities which build on common demand when individual needs are seen in total.
- Some key presentation highlights from Mr Griffis included:
 - A10 point plan in relation to Aboriginal people with disability has been developed and launched 3 years ago and are on the whole incorporated in the 8 points within the NDIA strategy.
 - Research and data in relation to Aboriginal people with disability is a contested space and clarity needs to be gleaned – an example is the 'normalising' of hearing loss within communities. So wide spread that the community don't necessarily consider this a disability.

- No current prevalence rate for psychosocial disability in Australia amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
 - Very little reference material on disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
 - Family/ community is the key provider of supports currently – disability is not considered a point of difference.
 - Denial of human rights – access to shelter, education, employment and its impact on Aboriginal people needs to be considered when reflecting on disability prevalence within communities.
 - Rural and remote access to supports will have a higher percentage impact on Aboriginal people.
 - Community by Community approach is the only way to go in relation to genuine engagement and ‘buy in’ to the NDIS. This is something that will be easy to say and not so easy to do.
- The presentations were welcomed by all members with acknowledgement of the importance, value and impact of the information given.
 - The NDIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement strategy will be published once approved by the Disability Reform Council.

Scheme Actuary’s Report

- Ms Sarah Johnson, Scheme Actuary presented the report: *People with Psychosocial Disability and the NDIS – as at 30 June 2016*. It was noted that the June 2016 Quarterly Report, a Sustainability Report and Trial Site ‘dashboard’ are now available on the NDIS website.
- As at 30 June 2016, across all trial sites 3,615 (10.1%) of all scheme participants have a psychosocial disability, and 2,747 participants (7.7%) have psychosocial disability recorded as their primary disability. It was also noted that 37% of all participants with a primary or secondary psychosocial disability have more than one disability listed.
- Ms Johnson then took the NMHSRG through the *People with a Psychosocial Disability Report* in detail. Information on people who had completed an access request as at 30 June 2016 included a breakdown of the numbers of participants with a psychosocial disability across trial sites.
- For the purposes of this communique, a Key point’s summary of data *People with Psychosocial Disability and the NDIS – as at 30 June 2016* is included. Refer to *Attachment A*.

Project Updates

Papers on the progress of key NDIA mental health projects were tabled. A summary is provided here:

Reference Packages

Find out more: [NDIS Reference Packages for Psychosocial Disability](#)

- Work to develop a reference package for people with psychosocial disability is underway but requires significantly more work than for other cohorts including:
 - Review of international approaches to reference packages.
 - Investigation of population data for the identified mental health outcomes.
 - Investigation of local data external to the Scheme which may be helpful.
 - Detailed analysis of data with the Scheme.
- The Expert Panel has met on 2 occasions and will meet again as these investigations progress. Opportunities and options to collect additional data are being explored.

For further information relating to this project, please contact:

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Joint Support Design Project

Find out more: [MHA / NDIA Design of Supports for Psychosocial Disability](#)

- The project produced a number of jointly agreed recommendations for the NDIA to consider.

Next steps of the project include:

- The development of an implementation plan to address the project recommendations in liaison with all other relevant divisions including NDIA Media, Communications and Engagement, NAT, Operations and Market & Sector. Some of these recommendations are already being addressed.
- A final report and implementation actions arising from the report will then be considered by the NDIA's Executive Management for joint publication.

For further information relating to this project, please contact:

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Access Review

Find out more: [Operational Access review for Psychosocial Disability](#)

- NDIS access through early intervention requirements (Section 25 of the legislation) for people with a psychosocial disability. A background paper and Executive Management Group (EMG) paper with recommendations has been approved by senior management. Work to implement the endorsed recommendations will be incorporated in the Mental Health Work Plan for 2016/17.
- Literature review: Early Intervention and psychosocial disability has been completed by MIND and was received by the NDIA on the 28th of April.
- National Mental Health Communication and Engagement Events. The calendar of events rescheduled to August - October 2016 is now predominantly complete. Two distinct one day sessions – An **Invitational Roundtable** NDIS and psychosocial disability and an NDIS and psychosocial disability **information session** have been completed and or proposed for early 2017. Roundtables have been completed in:

Brisbane, Perth, Darwin and Adelaide. Sydney is scheduled for November 2. Melbourne, Canberra and Hobart will be rescheduled to early 2017. Information Sessions have been completed in: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Darwin, Adelaide and Ballarat (regional Victoria). The information sessions have been completed in collaboration with the Department of Health and Flinders University as a part of the Transition Support Project. Key themes arising in each jurisdiction have been captured with a summary sent to delegates. These themes will help inform part of the work to be completed within the Mental Health Team Work Plan 2016/2017.

- In addition to the above schedule the NDIA Mental Health Team have conducted a range of other engagement events including targeted cohorts; forensic clinicians' and services in Victoria and Queensland and Carers in Queensland and nationally through a webinar format.
- Enhancement of NDIA materials.
 - A review of documentation used by the National Access Team has been completed.
 - Consultation with key NDIA teams; National Access Team, Operations, Communications, Engagement & Media and Markets and Pricing is ongoing. This will facilitate improved language, communication and processes for potential participants and their carers as well as the wider mental health sector.
 - A Communication and Engagement Strategy for the mental health team is being developed in collaboration with Communication, Engagement and Media. This will incorporate a body of work to be completed within the 2016/17 Mental Health Work Plan.
 - An NDIA Products and Resources document has been developed. In addition the following resources have recently progressed; See *Attachment C*
 - Completing the access process for the NDIS, Tips for communicating about psychosocial disability, is now available for public use and is on the NDIS website.
 - Recovery fact sheet is in the final stages of approval for public use.
 - 2 page easy read NMHSRG Communique is now available on the NDIS website. See *Attachment B*.
 - A contract for the development and implementation of a digital resource specific to psychosocial disability and the NDIS with Mental Health Coordinating Council of NSW has been finalised. A work plan has been approved. Approximate completion timeframe is March 2017.
- Resource kit and staff training package for NDIA staff. The NDIA through the Learning and Development Branch have purchased a two year licence from the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) (NSW) for exclusive use of their capacity, mental health eLearning recovery suite.
 - A working paper observing the Agencies Learning and Development Strategic Plan 2015-16, Learning and Development Model and Growing Capability Map and providing recommendations for the inclusion or development of mental health and wellbeing training components is ongoing. Ongoing meetings with representatives from Learning and Development are in place to facilitate enhancing mental health focused training initiatives for all NDIA staff.

- Mental Health First Aid training for Geelong based staff was held on May 18 and 19.
- NDIA Community of Practice. Quarterly meetings are ongoing.
- 'Hard to reach' cohort. Included within the original recommendations stemming from the Operational Access Review Working Groups was the inclusion of a strategy to understand how to reach and engage with the 'hard to reach'. A pilot initiative funded through the NDIA has commenced in the Barwon region to test strategies in relation to how to engage hard to reach cohorts. This initiative will be delivered by Barwon region community support provider Diversitat who specialise in supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

For further information relating to this project, please contact:

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NDIS Psychosocial Resources Online

- In July 2016, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) commenced working in partnership to deliver an online resource to provide information to people with psychosocial disability, their families and carers, concerning the NDIS.
- This NDIS Psychosocial Resources Online Project (Project) aims to assist people with psychosocial disability, families and carers on the recovery journey to understand what it means to have choice and control and build their capacity to exercise this choice and control. This is done by providing quality information on and connections to the types of supports that are available, including NDIS supports and how to start preparing for the NDIS, including tools and information about NDIS access requirements and planning.
- The Project seeks to deliver a resource hosted on the MHCC website that acts as an easy to use, interactive one-stop shop for people with psychosocial disability. As such, it is critical that the Project is user-led, involving people with lived experience in the designing and testing of the resource.
- The Project will use co-design methodology (*the first co-design workshop was held in September*) to work with people with lived experience who are both NDIS participants and prospective participants as key contributors to the decisions and design of the product that they will be using. As well as this, the Project will be informed by an Advisory Group (*first meeting was held in November*) made up of people with lived experience, including representatives from the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, who will provide strategic advice and direction.
- A staged approach will be used to undertake the Project, with the following timeframes:
 - research and development in November 2016,
 - piloting in November/December 2016,
 - build and implementation in January 2017 and,
 - Go Live in March 2017.
- The expected completion of the Project is March 2017 and the online resource will be updated and reviewed by MHCC for a period of five years after which the on-going need and viability of the resource will be reviewed.

For further information relating to this project please contact:

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Meeting Close

The Chairperson reminded members that the focus of the NMHSRG's work is the NDIA's *Mental Health WorkPlan 2016-17* including projects captured in the plan. Additionally, the NMHSRG is an important mechanism for information sharing across the mental health sector, NDIA and the broader community.

The NMHSRG agreed the following topics be added to the NMHSRG Forward Meeting Plan:

- Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) and Local Area Coordination (LAC) implementation,
- more dedicated focus on markets, providers and pricing and,
- Workforce considerations (where to come from, training, retaining, competency, quality).

The next meeting is expected to take place in February 2017.

For further information regarding the National Mental Health Sector Reference Group, please contact:

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Attachments

Attachment A: Key Data on Psychosocial Disability and the NDIS as at 30 June 2016

Attachment B: Two Page summary of the Sector Communique

Attachment C: NDIA Products and Resources on Psychosocial Disability