

MEDIA RELEASE

The Final Report of the Independent Review of the NDIS: a clear commitment to people living with psychosocial disability

Friday 8 December 2023: The *Working together to deliver the NDIS* report was released yesterday in which the independent review of the NDIS makes **26 recommendations with 139 actions** to change the system that supports people with disability. The review stated that it set out to ‘provide a blueprint to renew the promise of the NDIS and deliver a more accessible and inclusive scheme in Australia.’

Mental Health Coordinating Council CEO Dr Evelyne Tadros says, “The mental health sector welcomes recommendations that speak to providing a unified system of support for people with disability.”

This is described as looking to design, fund and commission an expanded and coherent set of ‘foundational disability supports’ outside individualised NDIS budgets. This would be underpinned by the development and implementation of a Foundational Supports Strategy.

“The fact that the review recommends that National Cabinet should agree to jointly invest in psychosocial supports outside the NDIS to assist people living with severe and persistent mental health conditions, currently unable to access supports, is an important statement that gives hope to many participants and people working in the sector,” Dr Tadros said.

However, it is uncertain at this point whether funding would be directed to existing community-managed organisations or whether this would require the establishment of new programs under newly established governance mechanisms. Nevertheless, MHCC welcomes the announcement from National Cabinet agreeing to 50:50 funding to address the massive unmet need for services and supports for psychosocial disability.

“A move towards greater community inclusion through collaboration between mainstream services and the NDIS, utilising a contemporary approach to disability rights, discrimination and inclusion legislation are all important to establishing fairer and more consistent participant pathways that will assist people navigate mainstream, foundational and NDIS service systems,” Dr Tadros said.

MHCC is encouraged to see that the review highlights a move to a human rights approach which is characterised by improved supports for people to maximise decision-making about how they live their lives and how to better meet their recovery aspirations.

The focus on a new approach to NDIS supports for psychosocial disability, which focuses on personal recovery is an important acknowledgement of the absence of an appropriate practice approach inherent in the NDIS culture. The advocacy work undertaken by the sector over years is clearly evident in this push to ensure more effective reform processes to support people with the psychosocial supports, needed especially for people living with severe and complex mental health conditions outside of the NDIS.

Mental Health Coordinating Council provided a response to the NDIS Review earlier this year and will continue to report on the Review and responses from Government as further details emerge.

For media queries or to request an interview with MHCC CEO Dr Evelyne Tadros, contact Communications Officer Kate Smytheman at Kate.S@mhcc.org.au or 02 9060 9633