



# MEDIA RELEASE

10 August 2011

## **National Disability Insurance Scheme to provide welcome support for people with mental illness**

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) has welcomed the release of the Productivity Commission's final report into *Disability Care and Support* and applauds the inclusion of those experiencing disability caused by mental illness within the final scope of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

"The Productivity Commission's final report recognises the right of people with psychosocial disability to receive the same disability support as people with any other kind of disability" said Mr Frank Quinlan, CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia.

"This decision reflects the growing community understanding of mental illness and psychosocial disability. Yesterday's stigma and ignorance about mental illness is being replaced by a greater recognition of its effects in the Australian community."

The Productivity Commission's *Draft Report into Disability Care and Support*, released in February 2011, had questioned whether disability support should be provided for people with mental illness through the NDIS.

"Psychosocial disability can be associated with mental illness and its effects can be devastating for mental health consumers and their families. Without appropriate support, it can contribute to a downward spiral; escalating mental illness and contributing to complications like homelessness and social exclusion. This report indicates that the Productivity Commission listened to the concerns of the mental health sector and this will offer great encouragement to those who have been arguing for greater mainstream recognition of the effects of mental illness."

"For too long people with psychosocial disabilities associated with mental illness have had no voice and their disability support needs have been largely ignored. Both the health and disability sectors have a responsibility to work together to meet the needs of these most marginalised members of the community. Recognition of psychosocial disability under the NDIS is a wonderful first step."

"We also welcome the appointment of Dr. Jeff Harmer as Chair of the Advisory Group, and look forward to working with Dr. Harmer and Australian Government to support the successful implementation of this scheme."

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector, committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians.

**Media Contact: Frank Quinlan, CEO MHCA, ph 0409 655 460**