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The NDIS must be more user friendly for people with psychosocial disability

Since the inception of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Mental Health Australia has advocated for improvements to NDIS assessment and service provision to better meet the needs of people with psychosocial disability.

Ahead of the Federal Election, Mental Health Australia is reminding both major parties, and all candidates, that the NDIS needs to be more user friendly, and more supportive of those with psychosocial disability.

CEO at Mental Health Australia Dr Leanne Beagley says the Scheme needs to improve to ensure we are maximising its potential to better support those with psychosocial disability.

“In its first nine years of operation the NDIS has been life-changing for many Australians, however people with psychosocial disability have faced a number of barriers in accessing the Scheme, and implementing appropriate and ongoing NDIS supports,” said Dr Beagley.

“The transition to the NDIS has also created significant challenges for the psychosocial support workforce both within and outside of the NDIS.”

“We know that the proportion of NDIS participants with primary psychosocial disability (10.6%) has remained well below the anticipated rate (13.9%), with still a fifth of the 64,000 people with psychosocial disability anticipated to be eligible not accessing the NDIS, as of December 2021.”

“This is probably because people experiencing psychosocial disability face specific and particular challenges, and issues when dealing with the NDIS. Mental ill health can be greatly exacerbated or ameliorated, depending on the quality of the individual’s experience with a complex and demanding scheme such as the NDIS.”

Mental Health Australia is also deeply concerned at reports of systemic funding reductions for NDIS participants, rendering individuals with psychosocial disability without services they rely on for daily support and recovery.

Ahead of this election and beyond, Mental Health Australia will continue to advocate for an improved NDIS which can help people to develop skills, capacity and connections to improve their wellbeing and live a meaningful and contributing life.

“In 2018, Mental Health Australia proposed a number of reforms to improve experience of the NDIS for people with psychosocial disability, based on extensive consultations with over 170 people with lived experience of psychosocial disability, carers and service providers,” said Dr Beagley.

“Two of the key messages from these consultations were that the journey to access the NDIS starts long before the application – meaning active outreach is needed to support many people with psychosocial disability to gain access to the NDIS. And secondly, it is crucial that the front-line staff who support engagement and develop the final NDIS plans have the specific skills, knowledge and experience to work with people with psychosocial disability.”

“While we know that some of the recommended changes have been introduced, and are working, we also know we still have a long way to go to improving the Scheme for those with psychosocial disability.”



Mental Health Australia

Media Release

A well-functioning NDIS has been a key issue for both parties for nearly a decade, and is just one of the many issues that will be discussed ahead of this election, where Mental Health Australia is encouraging everyone to vote with mental health in mind.

What does it mean to vote with mental health in mind? It means to vote knowing that every issue, every announcement, every debate, every election promise made, has the potential to impact our mental health, and our mental health system.

To see how the NDIS and other issues impact our mental health or to find out more go to <https://mhaustralia.org/2022-election-vote-mental-health-mind>

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