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Mental health services and programmes and support pensions - two sides of the one coin

Mental Health Australia today welcomed the release of the McClure Review of Australia's Welfare System - A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes.

"This much awaited report brings welcome attention to some of the systems that support Australians with mental illness," Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said today. "But as Patrick McClure has said before, we cannot consider the welfare system without consideration of the system that provides recovery support."

Mental Health Australia highlighted the importance of considering the McClure Review's recommendations alongside the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Services and Programmes, to complete the picture for those who live with mental illness.

Mental Health Australia is calling for the urgent release of the National Mental Health Commission's Review as well, followed by thorough consultation with those living with mental illness and the mental health sector regarding reform.

"As the National Disability Insurance Scheme is demonstrating so clearly, assessing the impact of mental illness on someone's life can be very difficult. Mental illness is often episodic, with periods of wellness interspersed with periods of manifest illness.

"We need to ensure people are well supported through the whole course of their illness and recovery.

"So we appreciate, as a good first step, that the report acknowledges the flexibility that is needed for people experiencing episodic mental illness.

"There is no doubt the vast majority of people living with a mental illness would prefer to work, but the barriers they face are often not of their own making.

"We are pleased the report recognises governments must support employers as they assist people with episodic mental illness to stay in work, and cope with the challenges they can face.

"The recommendation regarding carer payments is also welcome, as are the recommendations surrounding mutual obligation requirements in the context of mental illness.

"We are now very eager to have proper consultation on this Review and the National Mental Health Commission's Review, which McClure explicitly states will have interactions."

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