



mental health  
community coalition ACT

Mental Health  
Australia

## Media release 14 October

### NDIS ACT shutdown sees the vulnerable put at risk

Mental Health Australia, Community Mental Health Australia and the ACT Mental Health Community Coalition have today labeled news that the NDIS is now full as a “breach of trust”.

‘NDIS is a legislated rights-based program. Access to the NDIS is regulated by eligibility criteria and the concept of ‘reasonable and necessary’ supports. Capping the number of people who can access the NDIS is completely contrary to the intent of the NDIS Act and bilateral agreement,’ said Simon Viereck, Executive Officer, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT.

‘This is a return to the old first-come, first-served disability supports which the NDIS was created to change. This is really a breach of trust for everyone living with a disability in the ACT’.

Frank Quinlan, CEO, Mental Health Australia criticised the timing of the announcement, at a time when other mental health programs are ending in the ACT.

‘Funding for other services has either ended or is being withdrawn. This development will see highly vulnerable people without the support they desperately need.’

‘Tragedy will follow if governments do not stop the blame game and resolve this issue immediately.’

‘Mental Health Australia and its members have been pleading with governments to take mental health reform seriously for more than a decade. We have been sounding alarm bells on NDIS numbers since before the current intergovernmental agreements were signed. Yet people living with severe mental illness still lose out when governments can’t work together effectively.’

‘This represents a significant failure of government policy and a transfer of risk to people who live with disability’, Mr Quinlan said.

Liz Crowther, President, Community Mental Health Australia said the decision of the NDIS would make the scheme unworkable.

‘The numbers in the agreements have all along been estimates, as with mental health, we do not have definite numbers of the level of need in the community – this is something the Government well understands. The scheme will become completely unworkable if states and territories have to continually renegotiate when the ‘estimate’ is reached.’

'This announcement is contrary to the stated aims and intentions of the NDIS and leaves individuals and organisations across the country uncertain about their future. We know of a large number of people with psychosocial disability who have yet to transition and will be left without supports if this is not resolved' Ms Crowther said.

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