

## COMMUNIQUE ON WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The following communeque highlights the outcomes of a workshop with mental health consumers and carers held on 29 January 2015.

The Workshop was funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) under the [NDIS Mental Health Capacity Building Project](#) and was attended by one consumer and one carer from each state and territory and two consumers and two carers from the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum.

The purpose of the workshop was to identify NDIS capacity building priorities for mental health consumers and carers and explore the NDIA aim to:

*Increase the capacity of people with a disability and their families to exercise choice and control, both in engaging with the NDIS and in purchasing support in an open market to realise their aspirations:*

- *Improve understanding of the operation of the NDIS and the principles which underpin it among people with disability, their families and carers and service providers*
- *Build the capacity of people with disability to exercise choice and control*
- *Encourage and enable people with disability to move towards self-management, greater independence and meaningful community inclusion.*

*(from the NDIA Sector Development Fund Guidelines)*

Attendees emphasised this workshop was a good start to the consumer and carer capacity building planning process. However they also advised such a complex task would require ongoing discussion, further consultation with their own networks, provision of better information about the NDIS and the resolution of some key policy issues on psychosocial disability and NDIS implementation.

Mental health consumers and carers advised that the following initiatives would support effective capacity building for mental health consumers and carers:

- Key messages about NDIS need to be identified for mental health consumers and carers. These should address eligibility for NDIS, how permanency and recovery fit together, what to do and how to prepare for the NDIS if you are a mental health consumer or carer. These should also include a clear and consistent message about what the NDIS will provide funding for and how the NDIS will ensure support to sustain carer supports. Different sets of messages are needed for those within and outside trial sites and across states and territories. Confusion already exists because of inconsistent messaging. Careful preparation of these messages will need to occur to avoid this being compounded. Messages will also need to be updated regularly.
- A staged, recovery focussed pre-planning process should be made available to mental health consumers and carers through a range of channels. For example, this could be done through service providers, partners in recovery and stand-alone workshops accessible to people who are not in contact with the NDIA or other services.



- Peer workers (particularly those trained in a Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work) are crucial in engaging, educating and supporting mental health consumers and carers. They need to be supported to do so. This would include being trained and resourced to:
  - » facilitate workshops to promote these messages and educate consumers and carers about the NDIS
  - » support consumers and carers through pre-planning, planning, service support and coordination phases of individually funded support plans.
- Supported decision making for people with psychosocial disability needs to be explored, promoted and implemented within the context of the NDIS and mental health consumers and carers should receive messages and training on supported decision making as part of the NDIS information workshops and pre-planning processes.
- Local mental health consumer and carer advisory groups (facilitated through the state/territory consumer and carer peaks) should be engaged to feed into NDIS planning and implementation at the trial site level and state/territory level.
- Local networks for people with a psychosocial disability need to be developed and supported to participate in information provision and ensure that messages are made available to more marginalised consumers and carers, not just those who have access to services.
- An online community hub for consumers and carers would support mental health consumers and carers to share experiences, and provide support each other through NDIS transition.
- An independent advocacy service with mental health expertise needs to be funded to assist individuals to access the NDIS and participate in any review processes.
- Key access points to consumers and carers outside the NDIS such as Centrelink, employment services, homelessness services and GPs need to be educated about psychosocial disability and the NDIS to assist bridging gaps in information provision.
- Further research needs to be undertaken into mental health consumer and carer psychosocial disability support needs to inform capacity building planning.
- Specific groups such as people from culturally diverse backgrounds, rural and remote groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups need targeted supports to access NDIS information and engage with the NDIS and providing this should be an integral part of any capacity building process.

Attendees recognised that not all of the proposed activities could be undertaken within the timeframe and budget of the [NDIS Mental Health Capacity Building Project](#), but welcomed the opportunity to be involved in identifying priorities that affect their participation in the NDIS.

