



12 April 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NDIS TOO IMPORTANT TO RUSH

The roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme should be focussed on getting it right, not getting it quickly says CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia Frank Quinlan following his appearance this morning on the Sky News Saturday Agenda program.

“It is a profound understatement to say that many people living with disability are anxious for change, but we should follow the old adage ‘make haste slowly,’” Frank Quinlan said.

“We also have a responsibility to ensure no one who needs support will be left without services before new systems are in a position to operate effectively - we don’t want to leave people with no choice at all.

“The reason we are building the NDIS is because our current policy and service systems have let down people who live with disability. Too often, services failed to empower people to take control of their own care or prioritised the wrong kind of services, often with not enough funding released to make appropriate services available in a timely way.

“The need for caution is particularly true for those whose mental illness leads to psychosocial disability. For these people there are immediate challenges that need to be resolved for the NDIS to achieve its great promise.

“There are critical questions surrounding the scheme which must be answered before its implementation, including eligibility for the scheme for those who experience episodic mental illness, what exactly constitutes the “reasonable and necessary” support that the scheme will offer, and what supports will continue for those who do not qualify for NDIS services.

“What supports and programs will be offered early to prevent people from progressing into permanent disability and lifelong support? What sustainable funding arrangements will ensure that psychosocial disability supports are available to people who are not eligible to access funded support under the NDIS? Most importantly, what services will continue for people who will not get access to the NDIS but who will continue to need the kinds of support the existing system has to offer.

“If we don’t think through these questions in detail, we risk implementing a scheme that will fail some of the very people who the scheme was intended to assist.”

MHCA is the peak non-government body representing the mental health sector in Australia. Our vision is for mentally healthy people and mentally healthy communities.

Media Contact: Chris Wagner - 0434 378 939