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NDIS UNCERTAINTY THREATENING THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental Health Australia has today called for governments to ensure the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) does not reduce services for people with mental illness.

At the *Integrating Mental Health into the NDIS* conference today, Mental Health Australia described the experiences of consumers with a psychosocial disability at the trial sites across the country.

"While it's true that some people have received good support under the Scheme, we are consistently hearing feedback from the trial sites that people with a disability relating to mental illness are too often being left confused and disheartened," Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said.

"The NDIS is too important to be rushed without proper planning and design. Good intentions are not enough.

"Eligibility remains a major point of confusion. Indeed, we have heard that some apparently eligible people are still being rejected for support. We are very concerned that programs are being absorbed into the NDIS and people currently using these services will no longer be able to access them.

"The notion of permanent disability also remains problematic. Many people with psychosocial disability do not identify themselves as being disabled. Some fear that signing on for support means signing on forever.

Mental Health Australia is calling for governments to:

- Be clear about what services will be absorbed into the NDIS and ensure those currently using these services are not left without the support they need
- Ensure that the full roll-out of the NDIS does not result in the reduction of services for people with a mental illness
- Urgently clarify what services people will receive if they are not eligible for an individual support package, and
- Amend the existing legislation where necessary to clarify the idea of permanent disability.

"We want a Scheme that will make a real difference in the lives of people with psychosocial disabilities and those who care for them. We must get the foundations right, with clarity on eligibility and the provision of services," Mr Quinlan said.

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