

National Mental Health Commission Meeting 22 and 23 March 2017

COMMUNIQUE

The National Mental Health Commission held its 35th meeting on Wednesday 22 March and Thursday 23 March 2017 in Canberra. National Mental Health Commissioners welcomed engagement and discussion on mental health and suicide prevention and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Commissioners valued hearing the experiences of consumers and carers and service providers at the Community Forum.

Parliament of Australia

Commissioners attended Parliament House and met with The Hon. Minister Hunt MP and The Hon. Minister Wyatt AM MP. Commissioners welcomed the opportunity to provide a brief on the work of the Commission and discuss areas of priority for mental health and suicide prevention reform, and opportunities for collaboration to improve mental health outcomes.

ACT Legislative Assembly

Commissioners welcomed discussions with Minister Rattenbury MLA and Shadow Minister Dunne MLA on mental health and suicide prevention in the ACT. Commissioners provided a brief on the work of the Commission and the Work Plan 2016-17, and discussed mental health and suicide prevention reforms, challenges in the ACT and opportunities for ongoing collaboration.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

Department of Social Services

Department of Health

Commissioners were provided with an overview of the current NDIA mental health work plan and were updated on the progress of the roll out including the work being done with provider forums, joint forums, pre-planning and engaging with clinical services. The NDIA also provided Commissioners with the current data for participation and access to the scheme. Commissioners were briefed on the transitioning of Commonwealth mental health programs into the NDIS and continuity of support.

Wellways Australia Limited

Commissioners were briefed on the challenges for individuals in getting into the NDIS with concerns raised about the lack of pre-planning and case coordination support for individuals with psychosocial disability, with the onus on the individual to advocate for packages and manage services. Concerns were also raised about the lack of care coordination for people with complex, episodic needs under the NDIS and carers and families not being included in plans.

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network

Health Care Consumers ACT

Carers ACT

Commissioners were briefed on the concerns for individuals currently receiving support from Partners in Recovery and Day to Day Living that may not be eligible for the NDIS and how their ongoing needs will be met when both programs are transitioned into the NDIS. Concerns were also raised that clients of these programs might not apply for the NDIS without support and assistance. Discussions included the benefits of eligible individuals seeing a draft plan before it is finalised and ensuring NDIS planners assessing psychosocial needs, have skills and qualifications in psychosocial disability.

ACT Council of Social Service Inc .(ACTCOSS)

Community Mental Health Australia

Commissioners were briefed on the experiences and challenges of the NDIS including discussion about the need to ensure people living with a mental illness have their support needs met whether eligible for the NDIS or not. Discussions included providing support to the community mental health sector during the transition, the importance of capturing the learnings from the transition to inform change, and the need to develop a quality assurance process for psychosocial support services to be included in the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework.

ACT Health

ACT Community Services Directorate

Commissioners were advised the definition of psychosocial disability is evolving and not clearly articulated in the NDIS and individuals need assistance to apply as it is not clear what people need to do. There are challenges with interdependencies with other services such as housing and eligibility for packages is based on what an individual is currently receiving rather than what the individual needs. There are challenges for individuals and families with the NDIS being a complex system to navigate.

Community Forum

Commissioners were pleased to attend a forum with consumers and carers, service providers and community mental health organisations and valued hearing the experiences, challenges and successes of individuals, including the discussions about the NDIS.

Commissioners consider the NDIS as an important initiative with its promise of individualised care and choice for eligible people with psychosocial disability. As managers and funders of both disability and mental health systems, the NDIS presents many challenges for governments. The Commission is particularly interested in the interface of these systems and the impact of this complex far-reaching reform for people with severe mental illness (including those who gain access to the NDIS and those who do not) and their families and carers. Commissioners will continue to engage with consumers and carers, service providers, community organisations, government agencies and other stakeholders to inform the Commission's work.