

Submission to the Mental Health Select Committee of the Queensland Parliament

Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders

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1. Foreword

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA or the Agency) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Queensland Mental Health Select Committee inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders. The NDIA's submission provides an overview of psychosocial disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS or the Scheme), including the interface between the Scheme and non-NDIS services, and current initiatives the NDIA is implementing to improve outcomes for NDIS participants with psychosocial disability.

2. Psychosocial Disability and the NDIS

2.1 Overview

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides all eligible Australians under the age of 65, who have a permanent and significant disability, with reasonable and necessary supports to pursue their goals and to live a life of their choosing. These goals may include greater independence, community involvement, employment and improved wellbeing.

As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people with disability early to improve their outcomes later in life. The NDIS also provides people with disability, their family and carers with information and referrals to existing support services in the community, including those provided by state and territory governments.

2.2 NDIS participants with psychosocial disability

The number of NDIS participants with a primary diagnosis of psychosocial disability continues to grow. Nationally, as at 31 December 2021:

- there were 53,123 (11%) active participants with a primary disability of psychosocial disability, an increase of 2,432 (5%) from the previous quarter
- 12% of participants entering the Scheme in quarter 2 of 2021-22 had a primary diagnosis of psychosocial disability, compared to 11% in prior quarters combined
- average annualised committed supports for NDIS participants with psychosocial disability were \$78,100 and average payments were \$57,000.

In Queensland, as at 31 December 2021:

- there were 9,905 active participants (10%) with a primary diagnosis of psychosocial disability
- committed annualised supports for participants with a primary diagnosis of psychosocial disability were \$894 million

- average annualised committed supports for participants with a primary diagnosis of psychosocial disability were \$90,300 and average payments were \$68,700.

2.3 Interface of NDIS Service Provision with other non-NDIS services

The NDIS funds the reasonable and necessary supports that eligible participants need to live an ordinary life. These supports are designed to complement the mainstream services that state and territory governments provide, such as health, education, corrections, housing, justice, transport and safety.

In 2015, all governments agreed to 'Principles to determine the responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems' ('the Principles'). In addition to these six general principles all governments agreed to Applied Principles and Tables of Services (APTOS) which are used to determine the funding and delivery responsibilities of other service systems and the NDIS, and outline how these systems can work together to support the vision of an inclusive Australian society.

In alignment with the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act), the Principles, and APTOS, the NDIS funds supports for people with a permanent and significant disability, where these supports are above and beyond the reasonable adjustments that should be made by other service systems to ensure inclusion of people with a disability.

The NDIS also provides Local Area Coordination (LAC) services that support participants to understand the NDIS, create and implement a plan, and assist a participant to understand how the NDIS works with other service systems and what other mainstream supports might be available in the local community.

2.4 NDIS interface in Queensland for participants with psychosocial disability

The NDIA is working with the Queensland Government officials to implement shared responsibilities for meeting the needs of participants with psychosocial disability. The NDIA relies on the Queensland mental health system in the delivery of its responsibilities under the Principles and the APTOS, which envisage that the Queensland mental health system will respond to the clinical mental health needs of NDIS participants with severe and persistent mental illness, whilst the NDIA responds to their non-clinical daily support and capacity building needs to sustain participants in their recovery journey.

NDIA officials understand the interdependencies between NDIS responsibilities and those of the Queensland Government in responding to mental health needs in Queensland. The NDIA is committed to working with the Queensland Government in building effective connectivity and collaboration between the Queensland systems of clinical, social housing and justice support and the daily living supports the NDIS provides for people with psychosocial disabilities who are eligible for the NDIS.

The NDIA has a strong emphasis on the participant experience, with a focus on linking participants into mainstream social and economic opportunities wherever possible. The Agency encourages planners, Local Area Coordinators and partner staff to work with and fund opportunities for participants to explore engagement with mainstream service providers. However the NDIA relies upon state and territory governments to provide sufficient high

quality clinical mental health services as a key element of the mainstream supports required by NDIS participants with psychosocial disability, to support them to lead a satisfying and contributing life.

2.5 Improving experience and outcomes for NDIS participants with psychosocial disability

The NDIA recognises that people with severe and persistent mental illness have distinct needs which require a specific approach from the NDIS and other service systems. In response to feedback from state and territory governments, sector peak bodies such as Mental Health Australia and the wider community, the NDIA is implementing a range of initiatives to improve the experience of participants with psychosocial disability within the Scheme. The enhancements that have been implemented over the past 2 years and further significant improvements now planned are outlined in this submission. Further information is available at www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/how-ndis-works/mental-health-and-ndis.

2.6 NDIS Psychosocial Disability Recovery-Oriented Framework

In August 2019 the NDIA Board recommended the development of a framework to improve the NDIA's responsiveness to participants with psychosocial disability. In consultation with over 450 key stakeholders including participants, families and carers, peak bodies, service providers, clinical mental health services, state and territory governments, and NDIA staff, the NDIA developed the NDIS Psychosocial Disability Recovery-Oriented Framework (Recovery Framework), drawing on evidence and best practice in the field of mental health and recovery-focused support. The Recovery Framework was endorsed by Disability Ministers and released in December 2021.

The Recovery Framework sets out six principles and a series of high level implementation strategies designed to improve the experience of participants with psychosocial disability in the NDIS. The guiding principles identified in the Recovery Framework are:

1. Supporting personal recovery
2. Valuing lived experience
3. NDIS and mental health services working together
4. Supporting informed decision making
5. Being responsive to episodic and fluctuating nature of psychosocial disability
6. A stronger NDIS recovery-oriented and trauma informed workforce.

The NDIA is currently developing and coordinating a detailed implementation plan that underpins the 14 high-level initiatives. Implementation of principle three will improve outcomes for NDIS participants by better integrating the respective investments, services and supports of the Queensland Government and the NDIA. Further consultation will be conducted in early 2022 to ensure stakeholders continue to be involved in the implementation of the Recovery Framework.

2.7 Health system interface

The NDIA continues to work with state and territory authorities to assist with the timely discharge of NDIS participants from hospitals and other health facilities to other accommodation, where they are clinically ready for discharge and in response to their individual needs.

The NDIA has in place a number of activities to assist in the timely discharge of NDIS participants from hospital. These include:

- Of the national network of 35 Health Liaison Officers (HLOs), 6 are based in Queensland to assist medically ready NDIS participants to be discharged from hospital.
- A designated Senior Executive position within the Agency with responsibility for oversight of the issue of NDIS-related hospital discharge, including:
- Streamlined access and planning approval processes for NDIS participants who are hospitalised
- Improved sharing of operational information between NDIA and states and territories to identify NDIS participants currently in hospital, or those at high risk of entering hospital.
- Regular engagement with Local Health Districts on operational matters, and
- An expedited process for approving Home and Living decisions for NDIS participants who are hospitalised.

The NDIA will continue to work closely with the Queensland Government to expedite the discharge of medically ready NDIS participants from hospital, including those with psychosocial disability. The NDIA would expect that a person transitioning from a long-term mental health facility back to the community would be supported by a step-down approach over time with a focus on recovery, which is necessarily a staged process that better preserves an individual's recovery from mental illness.

2.8 Public data sharing and information releases

The NDIA regularly releases data, analyses and reports on specific aspects of the Scheme. These include:

- The NDIA's Quarterly Reports to Disability Ministers. These provide the disability ministers with information (including statistics) about participants in each jurisdiction and the funding or provision of supports by the NDIA in each jurisdiction. The NDIA Board provides these reports to disability ministers following the end of each quarter. Quarterly Reports are available for download at www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports.
- NDIA Outcomes Framework surveys, which measure how the lives of participants, families and carers have changed from when they first joined the NDIS. The most recent of these was released on 9 December 2021 and are available at <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/outcomes-and-goals>.
- "Deep dive" reports and analyses have also been released in previous quarters, including one on people with a psychosocial disability in the NDIS. These are available at <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/participant-groups>.

Further publications, including the NDIA Annual Report, Corporate Plan 2021-25 and other corporate documents, policies and monthly summaries are available at www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications.

Public data releases are available at <https://data.ndis.gov.au/>.

3. Conclusion

The NDIA thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission, and will continue to work with all jurisdictions, including the Queensland government, to improve outcomes for NDIS participants with psychosocial disability.