9 July 2025

The National Mental Health Sector Reference Group (NMHSRG) met online on 9 July 2025 for their first meeting of the year.

Aaron Verlin, Chair and Acting Deputy CEO Service Design and Improvement NDIA, opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of the work and leadership of previous chair and Deputy CEO Corri McKenzie.

The Group acknowledged lived experience and its importance to the work of this group.

Focus of the meeting

The meeting covered:

- Feedback from the NMHSRG Lived Experience Sub-Group.
- A discussion about Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.
- A report from the Psychosocial Early Intervention Working Group.
- A discussion about Scheme data with Scheme Actuary.
- An update on New Framework Planning and the participant pathway experience.
- A presentation on the summary of feedback from the external consultation on Impairment Mapping Guide.

NMHSRG Lived Experience Sub-Group

Representatives of the group reported key feedback from their last meeting, including:

- Draft Psychosocial Early Intervention Service Report.
- Application of high intensity supports.

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing attended the meeting, and the Group heard an update about the move from the Department of Social Services to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

- All disability functions, except for the disability employment area are moving from the Department of Social Services across to the new Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.
- There is a strong focus on opportunities to work with new colleagues in addressing intersecting reforms.

- Focus on better alignment of support for psychosocial disability both within the NDIA and outside, to build a greater capacity across the service and stronger integration alongside relevant reform pathway work.

Psychosocial Early Intervention Working Group

The draft Psychosocial Early Intervention Service Report was discussed.

- Feedback was sought from the Group, and a final report will be submitted at the September meeting.
- Strong agreement was reached for the report and final feedback from members will be provided by 9 August 2025.

Psychosocial Data Report

The NDIA Actuarial Insights and Monitoring Branch attended the meeting and the Group heard about the latest Scheme Data, including numbers of participants with psychosocial disability accessing the NDIS.

Member discussions included:

- Concerns there are disadvantages for people who do not have access to resources, informal supports, carers, family, and kin who are able to assist in navigating access to the NDIS.
- Mechanisms used in assessing access to the NDIS need to be fair and adaptable to the needs of people with psychosocial disability.

New Framework Planning and Participant Pathway Experience

Aaron Verlin, Chair and Acting Deputy CEO Service Design and Improvement NDIA provided an update on the introduction of the New Framework Planning.

The Group heard about:

- The procurement of the support needs assessment tool.
- Preparation for the support needs assessment and what happens following an assessment.
- Key decisions a delegate is required to undertake:
    - Plan length
    - Funding periods

    - Flexible and stated supports
- Member discussions included:
    - The importance of considering information from those close to people, if appropriate.
    - Suggestion of including lived experience expertise in co-design work.
    - The importance of a holistic approach.

Impairment Mapping

The NDIA Participants Outcomes, Evidence and Evaluation Branch presented the summary of feedback from external consultation on the Impairment Mapping Guide and shared what has been heard during consultations.

Member discussions included:

- Significant feedback has been received about the terminology of impairment. The NDIA is committed to addressing the wording.

NMHSRG next meeting

The next National Mental Health Sector Reference Group meeting is scheduled on Monday 8 September 2025 and will be held online.

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