21 October 2022

The third meeting of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Mental Health Sector Reference Group (NMHSRG) for 2022 was held on 14 September 2022.

The Chairperson, Dr Gerry Naughtin, welcomed new members to the NMHSRG, and noted apologies. He welcomed Christine Morgan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Mental Health Commission to the meeting.

He also welcomed John Stanway and Dr Sue Page who are new Strategic Advisors on Health and the Health System Interface with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Finally, he welcomed Sandra Higgins, Acting CEO of the Consumers of Mental Health Western Australia (CoMHWA) as the new representative of the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance to the meeting.

The Chair noted that Janet Meagher, a member of the NMHSRG, has recently been one of five international experts who undertook a review for the Taiwanese Government of their compliance with United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The meeting congratulated Janet for her contribution at this international forum.

The meeting focused on the following issues:

- An update on the implementation plans for the Psychosocial Disability Recovery-Oriented Framework.
- Breakout group discussions about issues for the improvement of the NDIS for participants with psychosocial disability, as a basis for discussion with the Minister for the NDIS, the Hon Bill Shorten.
- A briefing by Erin Ingham, Director Psychosocial Disability Policy Reform Team about the work underway on the development of a co-designed Participant Safety Policy.
- A discussion on the NDIA’s approach to the funding of allied health professionals for participants with psychosocial disability.
- The meeting discussed that planner practice on the ground is inconsistent with the guidance provided in the NDIS Operational Guidelines: Mainstream and Community Supports.
    - It recommended that the NDIA needs to re-state its operational guidelines on funding for allied health for functional recovery. It also recommended that additional training and guidance be provided for NDIA planner and Local Area Coordinator staff on the NDIA’s policy position on this issue.
- Christine Morgan advised the meeting that through her national conversations on mental health issues, there is a strong theme that the community does not understand the distinction between NDIS-funded allied health supports, and health and mental health system funded treatment by allied health professionals. There is a high level of confusion

and misunderstanding about what the NDIA funds in regard to supports provided by allied health professionals.
    - In addition, she noted there are many more people looking for assistance to access mental health services in response to mental health challenges that arose during the pandemic.
- Members provided feedback reports to the NMHSRG.
- The NMHSRG is seeking a meeting with the Minister for the NDIS, the Hon Bill Shorten, to brief him directly on issues in regard to further reforms needed for participants with psychosocial disability in the Scheme.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 23 November 2022 from 1.00 p.m. (AEST) to 4.00 p.m. (AEST).
This meeting will be held face to face for those members who are able to attend. This will be the first face to face meeting for the NMHSRG in over two years.

Attendees

Chairperson

Dr Gerry Naughtin OAM, Strategic Advisor (Psychosocial Disability and Mental Health)

Members

Ms Judith Drake, Consumer Representative

Ms Kerry Hawkins, Carer Representative

Ms Sandra Higgins, National Mental Health Consumer Alliance

Ms Lorraine Powell, Lived Experience Australia

Ms Katrina Armstrong, Mental Health Carers Australia

Ms Ingrid Hatfield, Mental Health Australia – proxy for Harry Lovelock.

Mr Bill Gye OAM, Community Mental Health Australia

Ms Jessica Walker, Branch Manager, NDIA Agency Policy Branch

Ms Christine Morgan, National Mental Health Commission

Ms Anthea Raven, Australian Government Department of Health

Ms Jacqueline Hrast, Branch Manager Participant Outcomes, Department of Social Services

Ms Donna White, Director Behaviour Support, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Dr Bill Pring, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Ms Tamara Cavenett, Australian Psychological Society

Ms Amanda Curran, Allied Health Professions Australia

Ms Chris Faulkner, Branch Manager NDIA YPIRAC/Hospital Discharge Branch

Ms Erin Ingham, Director, NDIA Psychosocial Disability and Policy Reform Team

Invited Guests

Mr John Stanway, Strategic Advisor on Health and the Health System Interface, NDIA

Dr Sue Page, Strategic Advisor on Health and the Health System Interface, NDIA

Ms Laura Giltrap, National Mental Health Commission

Mr Kieran O’Brien, Director, Department of Social Services

Ms Siobhan Carrigan, Assistant Director, Department of Social Services

Ms Katherine Hoggett, Policy Officer, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Ms Susan Hayward, National Mental Health Commission

Ms Laura Giltrap, National Mental Health Commission

Ms Susie Zhang, Office of the Scheme Actuary, NDIA

Secretariat

NDIA Psychosocial Disability and Policy Reform Team

Apologies

Ms Janet Meagher AM, Independent Advisory Council Liaison

Mr David Gifford, Deputy Scheme Actuary, NDIA

Ms Nicola Wright, Executive Manager, Policy, Practice and Research, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of

Psychiatrists

Ms Amy Wyndham, NSW Health, Mental Health Branch

Mr Harry Lovelock, Mental Health Australia

Mr Phil Watson, Department of Health Victoria, Mental Health and Wellbeing Division

Mr Ivan Frkovic, State and Territory Mental Health Commissions

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