25 July 2023

National Mental Health Sector Reference Group (NMHSRG) members met on 21 June 2023 via videoconference. This was the NMHSRG's second meeting for the year.

Chairperson Corri McKenzie, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Service Design and Improvement, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), gave an overview of the 2023-24 Budget.

As part of the budget the Australian Government has committed $732.9 million to improving outcomes for NDIS participants and aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the Scheme for future generations.

Ms McKenzie outlined the 6 key initiatives of the 'Reform for outcomes program', the work to be done to implement the budget reforms. The initiatives include:

- Workforce capability
- Better planning
- Flexibility
- Independent living
- Evidence-based supports
- Fraud and non-compliance.

The NDIA will establish 6 working groups to lead co-production of the detailed design and implementation of work under each initiative.

These working groups will include participants and representatives from the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) to the NDIS and Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCO).

It was noted and supported by NMHSRG that this work will build on and commence implementation of the Psychosocial Recovery Framework.

NMHSRG members discussed:

- Clear and transparent information about the working groups, including the process used to determine membership.
- Inclusion of people with a disability who often feel they don't have a say in policies and the services that affect them.
- Linkage with existing projects, NMHSRG networks, and existing work at the jurisdictional level to help inform the working groups and initiatives.

NMHSRG members:

- Supported the need for a specialised workforce, including building psychosocial capabilities of NDIA and partner staff, as well as the broader market and sector.

- Highlighted that many people with disabilities may also experience psychosocial disability.
- Stressed that evidence-based supports and/or research should be consumer-led.

The NHMRSG also discussed the importance of a psychosocial disability lived experience advisory group.

The meeting also received a briefing from the NDIA's Analytics, Data and Actuarial division regarding six monthly data on NDIS participants with psychosocial disability.

In reviewing the data members raised:

Potential barriers for NDIS access, including those deemed ineligible due to a lack of evidence.

- The employment challenges faced by older people with a psychosocial disability.
- A need for more information and data around the work of NDIA psychosocial recovery coaches and capacity building providers.

Next meeting

The NMHSRG will next meet on 20 September 2023.

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