



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**5 December 2016**

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### **Inquiry points to work still to do on NDIS and psycho-social disability**

WHILE the future governance of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Western Australia was recently decided, there are still key issues relating to psycho-social disability under the scheme which need to be addressed.

WA's peak body for community mental health, the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) has identified several key areas needing attention and pointed to today's announcement of the Parliament of Australia Joint Standing Committee inquiry into *'The provision of services under the NDIS for people with psychosocial disabilities related to a mental health condition'* as further evidence that more work was needed to get the scheme right for people with psycho-social disability, their families and carers.

WAAMH chief executive officer Rod Astbury said: "The announcement of this inquiry reinforces there are critical differences in how people with psycho-social disability and the community-managed mental health sector engage with NDIS and how much work is needed to get the balance and delivery of services right."

Of significant importance to the mental health community, the scheme must be based on recovery principles. The eligibility requirement of 'permanency' undermines personal recovery; instead the scheme should base access on the impact of the impairment on the person's lived need and functioning.

The inclusion of people with lived experience and mental-health specific expertise in the design, implementation and governance of NDIS is also essential.

"Mental health lived experience and recovery expertise is critical at all levels of the scheme," Mr Astbury said.

The future of Commonwealth and State-funded services to people with psycho-social disability not eligible for NDIS is also vital. As programs such as Partners in Recovery and Personal Helpers and Mentors are transitioned into the scheme, a network of essential recovery-oriented community services must remain for those individuals and families not eligible for funded support. This includes the need to ensure carers can access essential supports in their caring role.

Further to this, Mr Astbury said NDIS pricing structures should be transparent, clearly articulated and reviewed periodically, with pricing assumptions that sustain a quality workforce with the diversity of qualifications and skills required to support recovery for people with psychosocial disability.

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Access to suitable and affordable housing is essential for people with psycho-social disability to achieve their goals, and the modest funding available for housing infrastructure under the NDIS is not sufficient to address the need.

This need is evident in work WAAMH recently undertook in collaboration with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and sector partners to assist people with a psycho-social disability living in licensed psychiatric hostels in the Hills trial site, to engage with the NDIS.

“There is important momentum underway with this project in Perth which must not be lost,” Mr Astbury said. “The NDIA did excellent work in this area and it’s absolutely critical WA NDIS continues to work.”

“This will also require concerted action by both Commonwealth and State governments to ensure the availability of housing required to address the need.”

**Read WAAMH’s position paper on NDIS governance:**

<https://waamh.org.au/assets/documents/sector-development/waamh-position-ndis-december-2015.pdf>

**Read Ministerial media release on NDIS way forward in WA:**

<https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/Barnett/2016/12/Governments-agree-the-way-forward-for-NDIS-in-WA.aspx>

**Read Joint Committee’s Mental Health Terms of Reference for NDIS inquiry:**

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Disability\\_Insurance\\_Scheme/MentalHealth](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme/MentalHealth)

#### **About WAAMH**

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) was incorporated in 1966 and is the peak body representing WA’s community mental health sector, with around 200 organisational and individual members. Our vision is to lead the way in supporting and promoting the human rights of people with mental illness, their families and carers, through the provision of inclusive, well-governed community-based services, focused on recovery. In 2016, WAAMH is celebrating 50 years.

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