

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Disability support needs of mental health consumers and carers recognised

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) welcomes the inclusion of people with a psychosocial disability in the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The decision, outlined in the final report of the Productivity Commission's inquiry into *Disability Care and Support*, is a watershed moment in mental health reform.

The recognition of psychosocial disability, often referred to as psychiatric disability, marks a significant shift in the attitudes of policy makers and the community.

"Mental health consumers and carers have waited too long for their psychosocial disability support needs to be acknowledged – we are delighted by this decision" said Janet Meagher, Consumer Co-Chair of the NMHCCF Psychosocial Disability Working Group. Margaret Springgay, Carer Co-Chair of the Working Group said "this is a long overdue acknowledgment of the devastating and disabling effects that mental illness has on so many lives".

The Productivity Commission report estimates that there are about 57,000 people in Australia with a psychosocial disability associated with mental illness that will be eligible for intensive support under the scheme. The NMHCCF believes that this figure is higher, but lack of recognition and appropriate assessment methods means that there is little data available to support this.

The NMHCCF anticipates that inclusion in the NDIS will ensure that psychosocial disability support receives a more focussed and strategic approach than it has in the past. It should also give the disability and health sectors the impetus to begin an important dialogue about psychosocial disability support with consumers and carers.

The NMHCCF has developed a Position Statement *Unravelling Psychosocial Disability Associated with Mental Health Conditions*, currently in press. The Position Statement will be an important reference for mental health consumers and carers, policy makers and service providers in the mental health and disability sectors and in the broader community.

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) is the combined national voice for mental health consumers and carers participating in the development of mental health policy and sector development in Australia.

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