



### **Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition response to the Review of the NDIS Act 2013**

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this review process. The Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition (NTMHC) is the peak body for the community managed mental health sector, non-Government organisations in the Northern Territory.

The role of the Coalition is to engage and consult regularly with the community mental health sector, to advocate and support community based services. The Coalition and its members have strong concerns about the expression of the NDIS Act 2013 in the implementation of the NDIS in the Northern Territory.

Some of our member services currently receive funding for Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMS), Day to Day Living in the Community (D2DL) and Mental Health Carers: Respite for Carers (Respite) from the Commonwealth, all programs that are within scope for the NDIS. Other services receive only Northern Territory Government funding for services whose status in relation to the NDIS is yet to be determined, leaving our members uncertain about their future.

A clear majority of participants in the PHaMS, D2DL and Respite programs in the Northern Territory will not be eligible for the NDIS, and there may be other people that chose not to participate. The Act is silent on the services for the people with mental illness who are not eligible for the NDIS.

The Coalition is also concerned for our member services that currently provide the Partners in Recovery (PIR) program across the Northern Territory. This is also within scope for the NDIS and as with PHaMS, D2DL, and Respite providers, PIR providers also face uncertainty around continued funding beyond June 2016. The PIR program helps people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs and their carers and families, to access and coordinate the services they need for their recovery.



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The roll out of the NDIS in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory has already highlighted major issues in taking a 'nationally consistent approach' in a remote region. The Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition strongly encourages the NDIA to ensure the Act is responsive to the following factors:

- The cultural needs of Aboriginal people living in the region
- Language barriers is a factor when English is not the person's first language
- Geographical remoteness and extreme climate conditions pose a disadvantage for people living with disabilities and
- Very few service providers in the region highlights the complexities of delivering a comprehensive service to clients

While the physical and the cultural environment of the Barkly region of the Northern Territory alters the way in which services can be provided to people with disabilities our members, through their programs, work to increase the independence, social and economic participation of their clients.

The Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition support the detailed feedback provided by Helen Egan, CEO, TEAMhealth. Helen is currently the President of the Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition.

The Northern Territory Mental Coalition raises the above concerns in relation the NDIS Act and emphasises that any lack of clarity in the act and its implementation creates uncertainty and concern about future service provision and recognition of the need for ongoing funding.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Yours sincerely

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Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition (NTMHC)