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Joint Media Release

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NDIS 'reforms' strips away our right to live with dignity, autonomy and equal participation.

The National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (the Alliance), the national peak body for mental health consumers including people with psychosocial disability, says the passing of the NDIS Reform Bill is a step backwards.

"That is not reform. It's a fundamental retreat from the promise of the NDIS: that people with disability are entitled to the supports they need to live with dignity, autonomy and equal participation," said Mx Brice – CEO of the Alliance. "This legislation ignores the original rights-based framework the Scheme was built on and reduces it to a cost-containment mechanism, where human rights are subordinated to economic efficiency," continued Mx Brice – CEO of the Alliance.

Savings that cause harm are not acceptable:

Sustainability cannot be achieved by weakening rights, reducing access, or shifting responsibility onto people with disability, their families and already overstretched service systems.

"These amendments will have a devastating, generational impact on all people living in Australia with psychosocial disability – both those diagnosed and those who will likely never be considered," added Ms Darwin, Interim Chairperson of the Alliance.

Cuts to social and community participation supports do nothing to improve the sustainability of the NDIS and instead harm people who rely on these services to stay connected with their communities. The government's push for these reductions is driven by short-term budget savings which will affect vulnerable people. As outlined in the [independent report](#) by the Grattan Institute, these cuts may help meet short-term fiscal targets, yet they fail to address the real challenges facing the NDIS in the long-term.

Greater risk of social isolation, worsening mental health, crisis episodes, hospitalisation and suicidality:

People with psychosocial disabilities represent one of the largest groups receiving Social, Community and Civic Participation (SCCP) supports, and these reductions will significantly impact them and their families.

Social and community participation supports are essential to recovery and daily functioning for people with psychosocial disability, enabling them to attend appointments, maintain relationships, engage with their communities, and participate in education, employment and volunteering.

"Reducing SCCP supports will shift costs to more expensive crisis and health systems in the absence of adequate alternative psychosocial supports and put more people at risk," adds Mx Brice.

The Alliance was disappointed to hear over the past weekend that the NDIS Minister – Senator The Hon Jenny McAllister – would not commit to delaying the removal of participants from the scheme even if foundational supports are not ready, yet at the same time insisted that the government would not leave people without supports.

Individuals may be forced to undergo harmful treatments to get access to supports:

This Bill introduces stricter permanence requirements, requiring participants and prospective participants to have undertaken all "appropriate treatment" before a disability can be considered permanent.

While an amendment has been secured to ensure treatment cannot be a restrictive practice, such as forced medication, this does not resolve concerns for mental health consumers. "Under these reforms, a person could still be locked out of the NDIS simply for refusing to undergo electroconvulsive therapy. How is that 'reasonable and necessary' in 2026?" commented Mx Brice.

Impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

The Indigenous Australian Lived Experience Centre (IALEC) stated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be disproportionately affected by the passing of this bill.

"The passing of this Bill will have long-reaching impacts on those individuals currently receiving NDIS supports, as well as their families and communities. It does not reflect a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's right to the highest attainable standard of health. Our deep networks of care and connection will carry the burden of this decision," said IALEC Policy & Reform Officer, Mx Hanrahan-Lawrence.

About the Mental Health Consumer Alliance

The Mental Health Consumer Alliance is the national peak body for mental health consumers, led entirely by mental health consumers. It operates through a federation of state and territory consumer peaks and their 8000 members – ensuring its voice is shaped from the ground up rather than imposed from the top down.

The Alliance is led by an independent Chairperson and guided by two independent First Nations board members. Its position is grounded in lived experience and shaped through a layered, participatory structure designed to ensure diversity, inclusion, and accountability.

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