



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Sport**

Ref No: <PDR No>

<address>

Dear Minister

I am writing in relation to the availability of community mental health (CMH) supports for people with severe mental illness resulting in a psychosocial disability and potential changes as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is rolled out.

As you know, effective mental health service provision requires clinical services to be balanced, supported and complemented by an array of non-clinical support services that provide practical assistance for people in areas such as personal care and social support.

The NDIS is a new way of providing support for people with disability, their families and carers. There is broad stakeholder support for the inclusion of psychosocial disability in the NDIS, with feedback suggesting that participants are receiving better and more effective support and assistance under the NDIS than was available to them before accessing the scheme. However, there is growing stakeholder concern around eligibility for the NDIS and the loss of psychosocial support services outside of the NDIS as Commonwealth and State and Territory CMH programs transition.

The NDIS is intended to provide specialist disability support services to people with a severe and permanent (or likely to be permanent) disability and to complement (not replace) mainstream services. Outside the NDIS, CMH services remain primarily a state responsibility. It is important that state governments maintain CMH supports outside of the NDIS for those people with psychosocial disability who will not meet NDIS eligibility criteria. Without these supports, some people may experience increasing mental illness and disability, which would increase pressure on the health and mental health systems.

I am keen to work with you around the availability of psychosocial disability supports across both mainstream and NDIS service systems. To do this, we need a clear understanding of the current service system and the changes that may occur with the rollout of the NDIS.

I am therefore seeking your advice regarding the intentions of the New South Wales government in relation to its CMH programs and the NDIS, including details of the mainstream psychosocial disability supports that will be continued outside of the NDIS, the program funding which will transition to the NDIS and whether it is anticipated that this may result in some people losing access to supports.

This information will support our consideration of CMH service availability outside of the NDIS and how we can work together to ensure that all people with severe mental illness and psychosocial disability have access to the supports necessary to engage in an active and meaningful life in the community.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt
1 May 2017

Cc: The Hon Christian Porter MP, Commonwealth Minister for Social Services

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