

Media Release

14 May 2026



Concerning NDIS senate inquiry pace

Today the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026 was introduced to the House of Representatives. It has been referred to the Senate for a full committee inquiry, with a turnaround that gives the sector very little time to respond.

Community Mental Health Australia has been closely tracking the progression of this legislation and we are across what it contains.

"We understand the intent of this Bill. The NDIS must remain sustainable. That is not in dispute," said Kerry Hawkins, CEO of Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA).

"What is in dispute is whether the pace of this process allows for the kind of rigorous, community-led scrutiny that legislation of this magnitude deserves," said Kerry.

The Bill proposes significant changes across access and eligibility, plan management, pricing, fraud controls and governance. Some of these changes, particularly around strengthened provider oversight and cleaner administrative processes, are sensible and overdue. But several provisions carry real risk for people with psychosocial disability, and that risk cannot be waved through on a tight legislative timeline.

Key among our concerns is the provision enabling Ministerial determinations to progressively reduce funding for social, civic and community participation and capacity building supports from October 2026. These are precisely the supports that keep people connected, contributing and out of crisis. For the community mental health sector, they are not peripheral. They are foundational.

"Reform done poorly is not neutral. It has consequences. And the communities who bear those consequences are rarely the ones at the table when decisions are made," said Kerry.

"A compressed Senate inquiry is not the same as genuine consultation. We will be making a submission, and we will be ensuring the voices of people with lived experience of psychosocial disability are heard in that process," she added.

CMHA also notes the irony that the Government has committed to genuine community consultation as a condition of further NDIS reform, while simultaneously compressing the window for exactly that consultation on a Bill that reshapes the scheme in fundamental ways. Unintended consequences do not emerge because policymakers are careless. They emerge when the time needed to surface them is not given.

"We welcome the NDIS being put on a sustainable footing. We have always said that. But sustainability cannot be achieved at the expense of the people the scheme was built to serve," said Kerry.

"Our sector is ready to contribute to that work in a meaningful manner. What we need is the time and the genuine access to participate," she concluded.

CMHA will lodge a submission to the Senate inquiry and will continue to engage with members, people with lived experience, and government throughout this process.

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For media interviews, please contact Kerry Hawkins CEO Community Mental Health Australia

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Photo included for editorial use caption: Parliament House, Canberra