

Comments from ASU member Bianca Villella:

- *NDIS is full of access barriers which discriminates against people, even if they are eligible:*
 1. *NDIS is a racist framework. Firstly asylum seekers and refugees not eligible for support under NDIS. I am hugely concerned about what will happen to the asylum seekers supported by my workplace, whose mental ill health is often linked to the very experience of isolation, seeking asylum and the trauma that accompanies these experiences. For those that are eligible for NDIS support that speak languages other than English, there are no line items/funding for interpreters or translation of documents. This is blatant and appalling discrimination.*
 2. *Another access barrier my workmates and I have noticed is about computer literacy and access to computers and internet. A huge proportion of the people we support do not have easy access to internet or a computer they can easily use. Many do not have computer literacy either. The NDIS processes rely heavily on consumers use of online access; setting up emails, myGov accounts and accessing portals. It has also been very difficult for workers to access these online things on behalf of consumers as we receive different directions each time we contact the NDIA. For many consumers this barrier is causing increased distress and negatively impacting on their mental health.*
- *Consumers have stated to me numerous times that the lack of consultation and the dramatic, thoughtless change created by NDIS roll out has enforced their idea that the Australian government does not care about them, their mental health recovery or their futures.*

The loss of the Peer Support Worker (PSW) role. NDIS has no line items for peer work. My team and the consumers we support lost an invaluable peer support worker recently. The worker told me that they were very stressed and worried about their future and therefore felt the need to take another role, leaving a role that they loved and did fantastically. My team has not had a replacement peer support worker since, meaning that the promise we give to consumers of accessing a peer worker is unmet. It is also felt that this example underlines the fact that peer work itself is not being valued or recognised as an important part of mental health recovery. The fear is that peer support work will no longer exist which in itself rips consumers and workers off from a highly valuable service.