



AADDM

Australian Association of
Developmental Disability Medicine

30 April 2020

Ms Christine Morgan

CEO, National Mental Health Commission

enquiries@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au

Dear Ms Morgan,

The Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine (AADDM) is an organisation of medical practitioners who specialise or have an interest in the health of the over 500,000 Australian children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disability (ID). The key aim of AADDM is to improve the health of children, adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disability. In collaboration with NSW CID and Inclusion Australia, we have advocated for enhanced inclusion in primary health care and specific strategies to address the marked disparity in access to services. Members of our organisation have recently participated in a roundtable organised by your Department and for which you delivered an opening address via video. This Roundtable which discussed the unmet complex health needs of this population and a mapped a strategy to address the gaps.

AADDM is very supportive of developing a national pandemic mental health response or plan given the growing recognition of the direct and indirect impact of the pandemic on the mental health of Australians. Despite the apparent effective containment of the pandemic in Australia, we recognise that concerns about mental health are understandably increasing.

It is critically important that the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are specifically addressed in this response. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience mental health problems at rates of 3-4 times greater than the general population, and that at least 40% of young people with intellectual disabilities have a mental health problem. Research also shows that they are far less likely to receive diagnosis and management for these concerns.

People with intellectual disabilities also experience poorer general health, premature mortality and significant barriers to accessing health services. These factors, along with poorer socioeconomic status compound the effects of mental health problems.

We commend to you the National Operational and Management Plan for People with Disabilities during Covid 19 pandemic that embeds a human rights approach to supporting people with disabilities and the exceptional work under Prof Trollor's leadership at the Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry, UNSW.

President: Dr Jacqueline Small
Vice-President: Prof Julian Trollor

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AADDM is very keen to support this process further, please don't hesitate to contact us as noted below.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Jacqueline Small MBBS MPH(Hons) GAICD FRACP, President

And

Dr Cathy Franklin MBBS FRANZCP MPhil Cert CLPsych, Secretary

CC Melanie Cantwell CEO, Mental Health Australia Melanie.Cantwell@mhaustralia.org

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