

Media Release – (Wednesday May 8th 2024)

Embargoed until 1am AEST, Wednesday May 8th 2024

A new survey released today shows that the media, employers, and governments are failing in their obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) resulting in human rights infringements for people with psychosocial disabilities.

The survey conducted by BEING Mental Health Consumers provides damning evidence of a failure in NSW to protect the human rights of people with a psychosocial disability who face discrimination in the media and the workplace, resulting in poorer economic outcomes and directly restricting their quality of life.

Key findings show that of those people with a psychosocial disability:

- 97% had observed discrimination towards mental health consumers in everyday life,
- 49% still don't feel comfortable talking about their issues for fear of discrimination,
- 33% said they were unable to find work due to their psychosocial disability,
- 36% felt that they had been bullied, harassed or discriminated against in the workplace in the past year,
- 84% agreed that they had to compromise on employment because of their disability.

Treatment in healthcare settings is of particular concern with:

- 41% saying they were not provided with information about negative side effects of prescription medications by their clinician,
- 18% saying they were physically restrained in an inpatient unit, and
- 17% saying they had been chemically restrained in an inpatient unit.

Priscilla Brice, CEO of BEING said,

“By carving out exemptions to the UN CRPD in 2007, Australia created loopholes that enable governments to avoid their obligations under the CRPD. The human rights of people living with psychosocial disabilities in NSW are being grossly infringed upon, particularly the lack of information provided to many consumers about prescription medications, and involuntary treatments in hospital such as physical and chemical restraint.”

“Unlike Queensland, Victoria and the ACT, NSW doesn't have a Human Rights Act, so people with psychosocial disability in NSW have few protections against state-sanctioned violence like seclusion and restraint.”

BEING is calling for the introduction of a NSW Human Rights Act, as well as a comprehensive review the NSW Mental Health Act using a human rights lens, which would bring NSW into better alignment with its obligations under the CRPD.

Attachment: BEING Social Justice Report 2023

BEING – Mental Health Consumers is the independent, NSW peak organisation speaking with and for people with lived/living experience of mental health issues and emotional distress. Our primary focus is to ensure the voices of people with mental health issues are heard by decision makers, service providers, and the community, to lead and influence systemic change in services and systems.

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