

STATEMENT

19 August 2026

THE NDIS BILL HAS PASSED THE SENATE. THE RISK HASN'T GONE ANYWHERE*James Maskey, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia*

Last night, the Senate voted 28 to 12 to pass the [NDIS Amendment \(Securing the NDIS for Future Generations\) Bill 2026](#). For the psychosocial disability community, for their families, kin and carers, and for the organisations that walk alongside them every day, this outcome runs directly against what the evidence given to this Inquiry showed.

We keep coming back to what this Bill actually cuts. Strip away the legislative language, and look at someone's actual week. Social and Community Participation funding pays for the person who gets someone dressed and out the door, and back into a community that would otherwise carry on without them. It pays for someone noticing the fridge has gone empty, or the script hasn't been filled, or a bill hasn't been paid, and stepping in before any of that becomes an emergency. Underneath all of it, it pays for connection to another person, and to a community, and connection is not a small thing to take away. And it is something that this Bill will slash by half.

The Disability Royal Commission has already told this country, in plain terms, that people who stay connected like this are safer than people who don't. That funding line, the one this Bill will slash in half, is what stands between connection and disappearing for a lot of the people MIFA represents. We don't believe every senator who voted for this last night reckoned with what it will cost someone living with psychosocial disability. We would like nothing more than to be proven wrong.

We told this Senate Inquiry, in writing and in person, that this Bill shouldn't pass in its current form. It passed anyway. Not one word of the evidence has changed. What changes now is what we do next.

Sixty-three amendments were made to get this Bill through both houses, thirty in the House of Representatives, thirty-three in the Senate, through negotiation between the Government and the Opposition. Some of these amendments matter, and some are purely technical. A person who needs round-the-clock care can now appeal a minister's decision about their own funding. Someone already on the scheme before 2028 won't be forced through a new test built for people who aren't on it yet.

These are positive developments, and every one of those changes should have been in this Bill from the start.

However, sixty-three changes, and not one prevents cuts to social and community participation supports or requires government to publish what this cut will actually do to someone living with psychosocial disability. Not one requires the rules for the new permanence test to be built by people who have lived with episodic, fluctuating mental health challenges, rather than written around them. Not one requires proof, anywhere, that the services meant to catch the people this Bill pushes off the scheme actually exist yet. Parliament fixed a great deal it should have fixed. It left the part that the psychosocial disability community came here for exactly as broken as it found it.

Because of this Bill, by 2031 an estimated 240,000 people will have been moved off the NDIS. States and territories have already told this Inquiry, in their own words, that they are not ready to catch them. The Commonwealth, asked directly this week, refused to commit to any delay until they are. It's worse again outside the capitals, where whatever does exist thins out further the more remote you go. Moving hundreds of thousands of people off the scheme without supports already built, funded and scaled will widen a gap that already exists. Right now, 500,000 Australians and an estimated 900,000 family members and carers are already going without the psychosocial support they need outside the NDIS. This gap was named, in evidence, to this Inquiry, long before last night's vote.

Passing this Bill hasn't made any of that disappear. It moves. It moves into emergency departments, which are already stretched and at capacity, at two o'clock in the morning. It moves into families who will now do, unpaid, what a support worker used to do for a wage. Somebody always ends up carrying what a budget decides it can no longer afford to.

This is now where MIFA goes from here, because a vote in Canberra doesn't end our ongoing advocacy:

- We never believed the cut to social and community participation supports should have happened at all. Now that the Bill has passed, policymakers owe the people affected an honest, public account of what this actually does to someone with psychosocial disability, not modelling produced after the fact, but a proper reckoning, done before more damage lands.
- The permanence test rules have to be built with people who have actually lived episodic, fluctuating mental health challenges, not for them.

- Government should be able to prove, region by region and not just state by state, that the services meant to replace the NDIS are funded, staffed and open, in the cities, in the suburbs and in the places four hours past the last regional centre.
- We will keep fighting for Foundational Supports that are funded and scaled to the number of people who will actually need them, not to the number that made the modelling look manageable.
- And we will keep fighting for psychosocial supports to be protected and properly funded in the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, because this Bill has just made that next agreement matter more, not less.

This Bill has passed. MIFA has not finished, and neither has the work ahead.

ENDS

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About MIFA

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) provides national leadership and coordination across the Australian mental health sector, bringing together lived experience, community service delivery, and policy expertise under one federation.

For forty years, MIFA has connected frontline practice with national reform through community mental health member organisations: Selectability, Karakan, Skylight Mental Health, MIFWA, MIFANT, Mental Health Foundation ACT, and Out Doors Inc. Together, these organisations employ approximately 1,650 people and support around 12,000 Australians each year, in the communities where they already live, work, recover and thrive. MIFA's [Finding North](#), [Out From the Mist](#) and [Schizophrenia Awareness Week](#) programs extend that reach further still, providing people with lived experience a genuine platform of their own.