

Evaluation of the Embracing Change Project

The Mental Health Coordinating Council has (MHCC) been funded by the Australian Government through the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the Commission) from July 2019 – July 2021 to deliver the Embracing Change Project (the Project) to build the capacity of NDIS psychosocial disability service providers to meet the requirements of the Standards. The project has since been extended for a further 12 months.

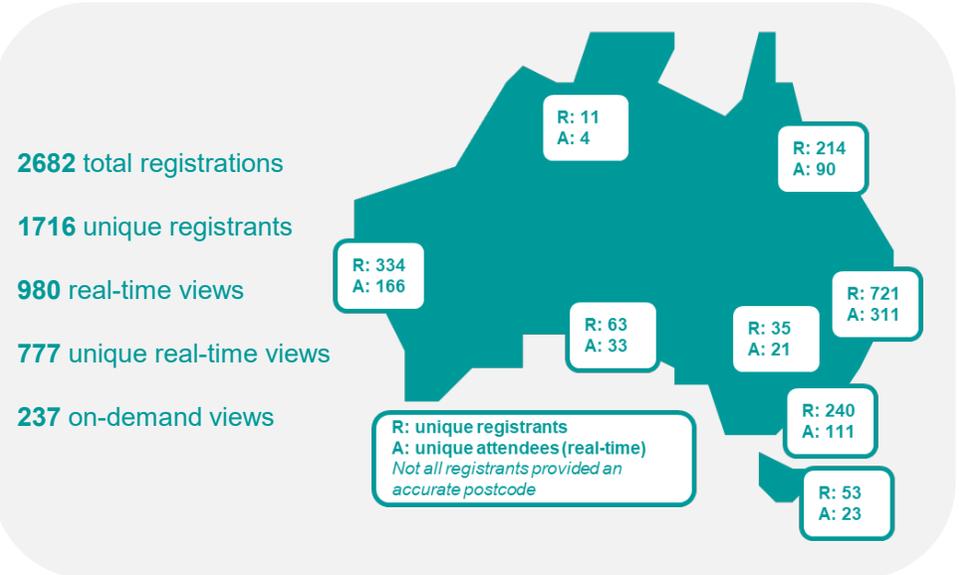
The Project has delivered a series of webinars designed to equip NDIS psychosocial disability service providers with tools and knowledge for their unique organisational context. The webinars have been viewed over 1,000 times, reaching at least 777 unique viewers across Australia.

Alongside the webinars, the Embracing Change Project delivered the hybrid online/in-person NDIS and Psychosocial Disability Quality and Safety Forum (the National Forum) on 29 April 2021.

Reach

The target audience for the Embracing Change Project is organisations that provide services to NDIS participants with a psychosocial disability.

The webinars have successfully reached their target audience - 62% of registrants work for a psychosocial disability provider, and qualitative responses suggest a sizeable proportion of other webinar participants work for providers considering or about to enter psychosocial disability provision. Networking and awareness-raising has been a central focus of the project implementation, which has resulted in effective national reach.



Webinar effectiveness

The webinars have been extremely well-received – 92% of respondents to the follow-up survey reported that they would recommend the webinars to their peers.

The webinars have built participants' knowledge about the Standards, and capacity to implement them. Before the webinars, only 9% of participants rated their knowledge of the Standards as 'advanced' or 'expert'; after the webinars, 39% did. Before the webinars, 10% rated their capacity to demonstrate compliance with the Standards as 'advanced' or 'expert'; after the webinars, 33% did. The proportion who rate their knowledge as 'low' dropped from 13% to 2%; and capacity to demonstrate compliance from 16% to 2%.

Almost all (95%) of participants acted after the webinars, including improvements to better embedding a participant-centred, amending policies and procedures, and accessing and sharing the webinars and resource pack as education resources for colleagues.

Why were the webinars effective?

The evaluation has found several factors have supported the success of the Project:

- The webinars covered useful topics, particularly given participants reported that safety and quality in NDIS psychosocial disability provision was an area that was challenging to navigate.
- The webinar format was accessible and engaging.
- The webinars focused on real world, practical examples, tailored to delivery of psychosocial disability services.
- The webinars featured a range of high-quality speakers.
- The resource packs were well-tailored and covered the key, practical information.
- Lived experience was embedded throughout the project, through active roles on the Advisory Group, and webinars featuring NDIS participants on equal footing with service providers.
- The project was very well-managed, with continuous improvement a central principle of the project team's approach to delivery.
- MHCC is an organisation that participants trust to provide them with accurate and up-to-date information.

Implications

The evaluation found that the Embracing Change Project clearly addressed a gap for psychosocial disability providers to help improve their knowledge and implementation of the NDIS Practice Standards.

Given the structural barriers many service providers face to implementing the Standards (time, resources, workforce availability and the inherent complexity of the Standards), there is a need for ongoing sector support.

As long as the current webinars and resources remain up-to-date, they should be made available and promoted to the sector.

Learning from the success of this project, future projects to improve psychosocial disability providers' knowledge and capacity to implement the Standards should:

- include easy-to-access and interactive learning modalities, such as webinars
- provide content and resources tailored to the psychosocial disability sector, including practical examples from sector peers and NDIS participants
- embed the experiences of people with lived experience, including NDIS participants, in the design and delivery of all projects, even when focused on a service provider audience.

An evaluation of the Embracing Change Project was conducted by independent evaluator, Jo Farmer, from January 2020 to June 2021. The evaluation incorporated administrative data, surveys, interviews and focus groups. It explored MHCC's delivery of the Project, and the extent to which the Project has improved psychosocial disability providers' understanding and implementation of the Standards.

Jo Farmer Consulting
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