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## Townsville experience lights way

### **Townsville's experience of early transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is providing valuable lessons to mental health service providers across the state.**

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic said the roll-out of the scheme in Townsville showed it has the potential for enormous benefit to people experiencing mental illness.

"Giving people with a lived experience of mental illness a choice in the supports they receive can contribute to their wellbeing and recovery," he said.

Mr Frkovic said while it can take service providers a lot of upfront time and effort to set up as registered providers under the scheme, the investment is worth it.

"There is huge opportunity for better service integration, adaptation and innovation in the NDIS environment that will ultimately mean better services for consumers and better mental health outcomes.

"One of the biggest challenges, however, remains how to adequately support those people who don't qualify for an NDIS package, including families and carers who may also have support needs.

"There is a risk that people who are ineligible for the NDIS will miss out on the vital support they need to manage their illness and ongoing recovery.

"There is still a lot of work to do on this front to make sure people don't fall through the cracks."

Mr Frkovic also met with the Townsville Suicide Prevention Network to hear about local initiatives to reduce suicide in the region.

He said well-coordinated local health and community services were the cornerstone of effective suicide prevention.

"Individuals and communities also have a role to play in reducing the tragic impact of suicide," Mr Frkovic said.

"We all need to prioritise our own wellbeing and continue to develop our ability to cope with life's challenges.

"As a community, we need to learn more about what we can do to help others if we are concerned about them.

"The Townsville Suicide Prevention Network plays a key role in helping get this message to the local community."

