

# Communiqué – May 2025

The second full-day meeting of the Disability Council NSW for 2025 was held on 1 May. Jane Spring AM, Chair of the Council, chaired the meeting. The Chair welcomed Morwenna Collett to her first meeting as Member.

## Guest speakers

The Council welcomed guest speakers including:

- Minister for Disability Inclusion, and Minister for Families and Communities, the Hon Kate Washington MP
- CEO of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), Paul Martin
- Secretary of Transport for NSW, Josh Murray
- CEO of Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA), Sophie Cusworth.

Minister Washington provided an update on initiatives including the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and foundational supports for people with disability. Key points included the formation of an advisory group for foundational supports, ongoing consultations for the Disability Inclusion Plan, and efforts to improve reasonable adjustments in education. The Minister also highlighted the importance of collaboration with the disability community and addressed concerns about accessibility and discrimination in housing and transportation. The update concluded with a commitment to continuous improvement and open dialogue with stakeholders.

Paul Martin discussed NESA's commitment to equity principles across various educational aspects, including curriculum, teacher accreditation, and school registration. He noted the challenges and ongoing efforts to improve HSC disability provisions, emphasising the need for more accessible and equitable processes. The current review by Urbis aims to address these issues, potentially allowing schools more autonomy in providing support. The discussion also covered the implementation of the Auslan syllabus and the importance of clear communication and collaboration with parents and students to ensure inclusive education.

Secretary Josh Murray outlined the Transport for NSW' focus on creating a safe, equitable, and integrated transport system. Key initiatives include the Transport for NSW Disability Inclusion Plan, which aims to embed accessibility in all aspects of transport policy and service delivery. The Department is also addressing issues with wheelchair-accessible taxis and improving customer information and planning tools. The discussion highlighted the need for better communication about service disruptions and the importance of considering accessibility in all transport infrastructure projects, including regional areas and bus services.

Sophie Cusworth presented on WWDA's work and priorities, particularly in response to the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review. She stressed the need for gender-specific considerations in disability policies, emphasising issues such as

violence against women with disability, legal definitions of family and domestic violence, and the prohibition of non-therapeutic sterilisation. Ms Cusworth also discussed the importance of a Disability Rights Act and the need for a national redress and reparations scheme. She called for better data collection and reporting, and advocated for a gender strategy within the NDIS to address persistent inequalities faced by women and girls with disability.

## **Council focuses - pillars**

Council members were encouraged to engage with focus pillars to achieve Council goals. Four subcommittees were formed to work strategically on each pillar, and they presented preliminary action plans at the meeting for feedback.

The **Accessible Communities** subcommittee aims to create inclusive and accessible communities by advocating for universal design in public spaces, buildings, and transportation, ensuring digital platforms meet accessibility standards, expanding accessible public transport, and enhancing emergency preparedness and disaster resilience. They also plan to collaborate with NSW libraries to improve accessibility for people with intellectual disability.

The **Education** subcommittee aims to empower students with disabilities and their families in their learning journeys. Key priorities include implementing an inclusive curriculum, supporting assistive technology, ensuring accessibility standards, and upskilling teachers in inclusive practices. They also focus on the needs of students in out-of-home care and embedding trauma-informed, culturally safe approaches. Additionally, they plan to engage with education authorities to test curriculum inclusivity and teacher training efficacy, address fragmented approaches, advocate for standardised assessments, and support disadvantaged children, bringing these issues to the Minister for Education.

The **Employment** subcommittee emphasised engaging with the Office of the Public Service Commissioner to enhance job opportunities and workplace adjustments for people with disabilities. The subcommittee suggested crafting a letter to the Public Service Commissioner for a report on disability employment initiatives. They also discussed the role of audit and risk committees in monitoring diversity and inclusion metrics to ensure accountability and progress.

The **Housing** subcommittee focused on improving housing accessibility and supply for people with disabilities. They highlighted the importance of influencing policy reform, increasing accessible housing supply by engaging with developers and leveraging surplus government land, and improving data collection on tenants with disabilities. They proposed collaborating with local councils to ensure new housing projects include accessible features and suggested promoting modular construction for cost-effective solutions. They also discussed refurbishing existing social housing and integrating accessible features in new developments.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for 13 August 2025.

Jane Spring AM

Chair, Disability Council NSW

Associate Professor Jill Duncan OAM

Deputy Chair, Disability Council NSW