

Communiqué

1 May 2024

The second meeting of the Disability Council NSW for 2024 was held on 1 May. Jane Spring AM, Chair of the Council, chaired the meeting.

The Council welcomed the following guest speakers:

- Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion, the Hon Kate Washington MP
- Professor Simon Darcy, UTS
- Department of Community and Justice representatives, A/Director James Malin and Manager Richard Hawkins
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Secretary, Kiersten Fishburn
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, People and Culture Executive Director, Catherine Grummer

Minister Washington updated the Council on the NSW response to the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) review (7 December 2023). NSW is working towards a public response to the DRC by mid-2024. The Council stressed the importance of consulting and working alongside people with disability throughout the process of reviewing and restructuring the NDIS.

Professor Simon Darcy spoke to the Council on the National Disability Research Partnerships Agenda. Professor Darcy discussed the concept of ‘disability citizenship’, and how services need to be reliable and accessible so that people with disability do not live in a ‘segregated world’. The importance of in-person service was raised, highlighting how essential services like banking are becoming increasingly digital which does not necessarily advantage people with disability. Professor Darcy discussed his research finding that support for people with disability is better in areas with larger populations such as cities.

DCJ updated the Council on the actions it is taking in response to the DRC and NDIS recommendations. DCJ has set up a taskforce to look at DRC recommendations, and the final response to the recommendations will go to the Disability Board. The process is being informed by stakeholder forums.

DCJ also updated the Council on the National Supported Employment Plan, which is guided by the principle that people with disability should have choice and control over real employment options. The Plan also supports the DRC recommendation that the Commonwealth Government develops a plan to end sub minimum wages for people with disability and end all segregated employment by 2034.

Council discussed progress against their five (5) pillars outlined in their 2022-2024 plan, noting they had made significant progress against all of these pillars. Council added a sixth (6) being education.

Secretary Kiersten Fishburn, and Executive Director of People and Culture Catherine Grummer, made a presentation on behalf of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to the Council. The Council was particularly interested in how the public sector can further support inclusive design and promote access for people with disability. Local Councils are responsible for the management of most of NSW's land and oversee 90% of all housing applications. The Council discussed a mechanism for DPHI to capture feedback on accessibility issues and inform responses. Ms Fishburn advised that DPHI runs consultative groups and is considering setting up a body of people with lived experience of disability to provide advice on accessibility and disability directly to DPHI. The Council and Ms Fishburn discussed undertaking collaborative work to improve the accessibility of NSW's waterways and national parks.

The Council will next meet on 21 August 2024.

Jane Spring AM
Chair, Disability Council NSW

Associate Professor Jill Duncan
Deputy Chair, Disability Council NSW