# Communiqué

**1 May 2023**

The first meeting of the Disability Council, after the NSW election, was held at the NSW Trustee and Guardian, and we thank them for their hospitality. The meeting was chaired by Jane Spring.

The Council welcomed the following guest speakers:

* the new Minister for Disability Inclusion, the Hon. Kate Washington MP
* the new Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion, the Hon. Liesl Tesch MP
* Paul Martin, CEO and Kristy Kirkham, R/Principal Curriculum Officer, Diversity, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)
* Eileen Baldry, Professor of Criminology, Faculty of Law & Justice, UNSW (and former Disability Council Deputy Chair)
* Melinda Norton, Director Disability Policy, Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
* Katherine Tollner, Executive Director, Infrastructure and Assets, DCJ
* Representatives of Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
* Representatives of the NSW Trustee and Guardian.

Issues discussed included:

* the Minister’s approach to disability inclusion, and the importance of disability awareness amongst members of parliament
* the overrepresentation of people with disability, especially First Nations people, in the criminal justice system
* the lack of available wheelchair accessible taxis
* the HSC minimum standards, the Exemption policy and other initiatives being undertaken by NESA in relation to students with disability
* DCJ’s approach to accessible infrastructure, including challenges.

The Council’s priorities for 2023, as outlined in the Disability Council Plan 2022-2024, are:

* Accessible communities
* Ensuring the voice of people with disabilities is heard
* Employment
* Justice and rights
* Housing.

Council members continue to advocate for people with disability through participation on a wide range of committees and involvement in key forums and events at both a state and national level.

The Council will next meet on 31 July 2023.

Jane Spring Associate Professor Jill Duncan

Chair, Disability Council NSW Deputy Chair, Disability Council NSW