# Communiqué

**21 February 2024**

The first meeting of the Disability Council NSW for 2024 was held on 21 February. 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
* Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Communities, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion, Liesl Tesch MP
* Strategy Policy and Commissioning A/Director,, James Malin
* Synapse NSW State Lead, Christine Culnane
* Synapse National Director, Adam Schnickerling.

The Council welcomed Quang Nguyen as a new member. Quang is also the chairperson of the Council for Intellectual Disability and is on the board of the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association. Quang has been appointed as a member of the Disability Council until December 2027.

Digital accessibility and the NSW Digital Strategy were recurring discussions throughout the meeting. The Council spoke on the challenges people with disability encounter when engaging with digital technology and online services. Supporting the development of Easy Read material and ensuring safe, easy ways to access personal information and Government services were identified as important areas for development. The Council will work with the Hon Jihad Dib, NSW Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, to address these concerns.

The Council was updated on the NDIS Review (7 December 2023) by Strategy Policy and Commissioning Acting Director James Malin. The report has 26 recommendations, with 139 supporting actions. The Review proposes that a foundational support system operates below the NDIS to offer targeted support to specific cohorts. The council is considering this report with the possibility of working alongside the NSW Government to achieve shared goals and ensure that people with disability are consulted throughout the process.

The National Director of Synapse Adam Schnickerling and their NSW State Lead Christine Culnane spoke to the Council on brain injury and disability. Synapse provides a range of support services to those impacted by brain injury. Synapse is connects knowledge, policy, services, and systems to ensure the rights of those impacted by brain injury and reduce the unmet need for services and support in Australia.

Synapse is seeking to develop tools and processes within Australia to account for the unique cultural and geographical needs people with brain injury may have. This lack of development disproportionately affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who can encounter significant barriers when undergoing the screening process for brain injury.

The Council reviewed its activities to ensure it can continue to influence Government policy and promote disability inclusion. To further support this, the Council will continue to connect with DENconnect, the network for disability employee networks within the public sector. The Council acknowledged the wealth of lived experience that these networks provide, and discussed how it can be utilised to support Council work and the processes of Government.

The Council will next meet on 1 May 2024.

Jane Spring AM Associate Professor Jill Duncan

Chair, Disability Council NSW Deputy Chair, Disability Council NSW