**Communiqué**

**26 February 2020**

The first meeting of the Disability Council NSW (the Council) for 2021, which was a planning day meeting, was held virtually on Friday, 26 February 2021.

The new chair of the Council, Ms Donna Purcell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Mr Greg Davies from Insight Partnership to facilitate the planning for the Council’s strategic priorities.

While the session was focused on planning for 2021 and beyond, the Council took some time to reflect on its 2020 priorities and achievements.

Members acknowledged it was a challenging year for all, with many having to become familiar with working in an on-line environment.

Members shared their experiences and discussed key achievements of the Council. Highlights included:

* Raising disability employment awareness, including the importance of inclusion and accessibility during recruitment. Additionally, the Council has expressed interest to work collaboratively with the Public Service Commission to support the NSW Public Sector meet its disability employment targets.
* Successfully hosted three community forums with the disability sector to identify needs and opportunities in NSW. The Council has decided to use insights and feedback from the forums as a guidance to decide its strategic priorities.
* Lodging multiple submissions to both state and federal governments on policies impacting people with disability, which included:
* The National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Outcomes Frameworks
* 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005
* Submission to the NCC
* NSW Housing Strategy
* Regulation of (Restrictive Practices) Bill 2021.
* Writing to both state and federal ministers on matters concerning the interest of people with disability and their families, including - COVID-19; NDIS; the impact of bushfires; minimum standard exemptions policy for students appearing in HSC.
* Continuing to promote the inclusion of people with disability in the community via participating in various committees, such as - Accessible Transport Advisory Committee with NSW Transport; Disability Strategy with NSW Education; COVID-19 Disability Community of Practice with Ministry of Health.

While reflecting on 2020 achievements and planning for 2021 and beyond, members agreed on the need to narrowing the Council’s priorities.

It was also discussed that to support the Council fulfil its legislated responsibilities meaningfully, it was necessary to refine actions into measurable goals.

When developing the new goals, the Council considered feedback provided in the 2020 community forums.

The Council has finalised its three high-level priority areas for action. These will be:

1. Employment
2. Education and
3. Accessible and Inclusive communities.

Members will meet again on 19 March 2021 to determine actions under each priority area and finalise the Strategic Plan. Potential ways the Council are planning to fulfil its actions include:

* Leveraging the resources that are available such as Disability Inclusion Action Plans.
* Utilising the avenues and opportunities such as meeting with Secretaries of NSW Government Departments to monitor progress on employment for people with disability.
* Organising forums and developing partnerships with other community disability representatives to explore issues in areas that are less familiar to gather evidence.
* Being part of Community of Practice forums, advisory groups to continue promoting the inclusion of people with disability in the community.

At the meeting, member Ms Carolyn Campbell-McLean shared her intention to resign as a board member of the Council. The Chair on behalf of the Council thanked Ms Campbell-McLean for her work with the Council to improve the rights of people with disability and appreciated her contributions in organising successful community forums.

**Donna Purcell**

**Chair - The Disability Council NSW**